

# matrix

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The News Magazine of the  
British Science Fiction Association

Issue 121

September / October 1996

## A Decade of Clarkes

Colin Greenland

Steve Jeffery

Gwyneth Jones

Paul Kincaid

Paul J. McAuley

Rachel Pollack

Geoff Ryman

on the

**Arthur C. Clarke Award**

David Pringle  
on

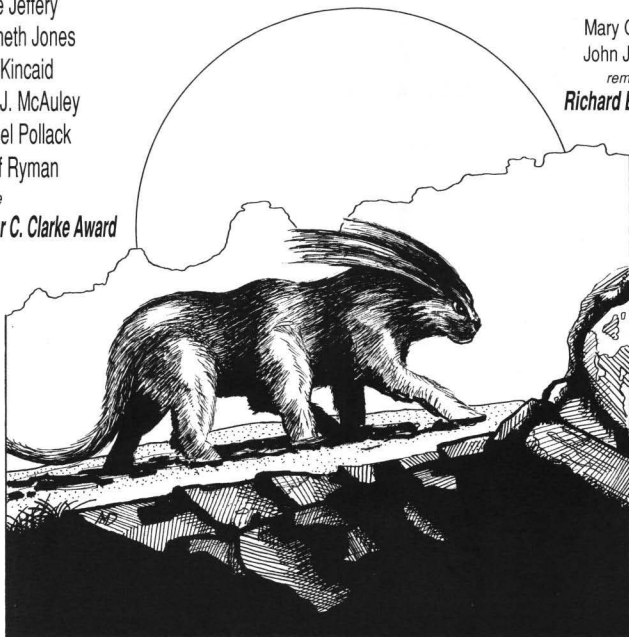
**interZone**

Mary Gentle

John Jarrold

remember

**Richard Evans**



Full Hugo Results . . Independence Day . . Speller on Speller . . Books . . Videos

# matrix

the news magazine of the

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Friday 1 November 1996

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# contents

issue 121

sep / oct 1996

News ← 03 → the happening world

Mailbox ← 06 → is anybody out there?

BSFA News ← 07 → read me first

Recent And Forthcoming Books ← 08 → turn over a new leaf

Richard Evans Remembered ← 11 → **mary gentle** and **john jarrod**

A Decade Of Clarkes ← 12 → **colin greenland**  
Ten years of the  
**steve jeffery**  
**Arthur C. Clarke Award**,  
**gwyneth jones**  
pondered on by winners,  
**paul kincaid**  
judges, and the  
**paul j mcauley**  
administrator  
**rachel pollack**  
**geoff rymann**

The MKS System ← 15 → **maureen kincaid speller**

Independence Day ← 16 → **john ashbrook** and **andy mills**

American Gothic ← 17 → **andy mills**

Mining The ← 18 → **david pringle**  
**interZone** interviewed

Videos: ← 21 → **john ashbrook**  
**Johnny Mnemonic**, **Judge Dredd**

Events Diary ← 22 → what a con

Vector Back Issues ← 23 → bargain basement

Members' Noticeboard ← 23 → buy me, sell me

Skull Crackers ← 24 → **roger robinson**

Big Butt ← 24 → **aleph** sits on mars

# 1996 Hugo Awards

## NOVEL

**Neal Stephenson** *The Diamond Age*

## NOVELLA

**Allen Steele** "The Death of Captain Future"

## NOVELETTE

**James Patrick Kelly** "Think Like a Dinosaur"

## SHORT STORY

**Maureen F. McHugh** "The Lincoln Train"

## NON-FICTION BOOK

**John Clute** *Science Fiction: The Illustrated Encyclopedia*

## DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

"The Coming of Shadows" (*Babylon 5*)

## PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

**Gardner Dozois**

## PROFESSIONAL ARTIST

**Bob Eggleton**

## ORIGINAL ARTWORK

**James Gurney** *Dinotopia: The World Beneath*

## SEMI-PROZINE

**Locus** (ed. **Charles N. Brown**)

## FANZINE

**Anisble** (ed. **Dave Langford**)

## FAN WRITER

**Dave Langford**

## FAN ARTIST

**William Rotsler**

This year's Hugos were presented at LACON III in Los Angeles, on 1 September. A total of 939 valid ballots were cast; the full voting figures will appear in the next issue.

British interest was limited to **John Clute** and the ever-reliable **Dave Langford**, who now has thirteen Hugos and is searching for a cure for triskaidekahugophobia. It's the first time *Anisble* has won at a non-UK Worldcon, and the first time John Clute has won an unshared Hugo.

**Stephen Baxter's** *The Time Ships* came second in the Novel category, but he did collect a Seiun Award (the Japanese equivalent of the Hugo) for *Timelike Infinity*, presented in the same ceremony. Also given out was the John W. Campbell Award for the best new writer (not to be confused with the John W. Campbell Memorial Award – see over), which went to **David Feintuch**.

The first appearances of the short fiction winners were: Steele's "The Death of Captain Future" in *Asimov's*, Oct 95; Kelly's "Think Like a Dinosaur" in *Asimov's*, Jun 95; McHugh's "The Lincoln Train" in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, Apr 95.

## Starlog Guilty

*Anisble* reports that *Starlog* magazine has agreed to pay eleven artists a total of \$30,000 for "breach of copyright and unfair competition in respect of a set of 42 'trading cards' published in 1993 without their permission". The artists involved were Ron Miller, Don Dizon, David A. Hardy, Den Ellis, Chesley Bonestell, Don Davis, Ludek Pesek, Rick Sternback, Adolf Schaller, Joe Bergeron, and David Egge. The suit was settled on 16 July.

## Savoy Blues

More legal news from *Anisble* concerns Manchester's Savoy Books, victims of much police interest over the years. The company lost its High Court appeal for the right to trial-by-jury over whether comics seized by the police in 1991 – including *Lord Horror* and *Meng and Ecker* – are obscene. Parliament has been assured by legal officers that 'serious' publishers will always get a jury trial in obscenity cases if they wish; but Savoy, apparently, aren't serious enough.

## Australia in 99

The 1999 Worldcon will be held in Melbourne, Australia, and the guests will be **George Turner**, **Gregory Benford** and **Bruce Gillespie**. Melbourne won the vote at LACON III, which will doubtless make the following year's Olympics in the same city seem like a beach barbie. The voting was as follows: Australia 808, Zagreb in Croatia 158, Alcatraz 19, misc 10.

Contact: UK agent is Martin Hoare, 45 Tilehurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT

## AI On Hold

The much-anticipated **Stanley Kubrick** film *AI* has been delayed again by other projects, though filming has now started. Based on Brian Aldiss's "Super-Toys Last All Summer Long", and with script help from Ian Watson and Bob Shaw, the film will feature much state-of-the-art computer animation.

## Coming Attractions

New TV shows in the US autumn schedules include a number of *X-Files* clones, as well as a new show from the series' creator **Chris Carter**: *Millennium*. This concerns a telepathic cop pitted against an evil cabal bent on ensuring the destruction of the world by the year 2000, and stars **Lance Henriksen**. *Deep Red* is about alien DNA transplanted into humans to extend their lives. **Dick Stiles** claims that the aliens amongst us killed Kennedy, and *The Burning Zone* is a pot-pourri similar to *The Outer Limits*. *The Sentinel* is about a cop with superhuman powers, while *Profiler* is – daringly – about a female cop with superhuman powers. And apparently *Baywatch Nights* is transmuting itself into an *X-Clone* too, complete with vampire mermaids. Expect one or more over here next year: you have been warned.

# Baxter Wins Campbell, George Orwell Gets A Hugo

• The **Retro Hugos** were presented for the first time at LACON III, awarded for works which should have received a Hugo 50 years ago had the Hugos been around then.

NOVEL: Isaac Asimov *The Mule* (later incorporated into *Foundation and Empire*)

NOVELLA: George Orwell *Animal Farm*

NOVELETTE: Murray Leinster "First Contact"

SHORT STORY: Hal Clement "Uncommon Sense"

DRAMATIC PRESENTATION: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

PROFESSIONAL EDITOR: John W. Campbell, Jr

PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Virgil Finlay

FANZINE: *Voice of the Imagi-Nation* (ed. Forrest J. Ackerman)

FAN WRITER: Forrest J. Ackerman

FAN ARTIST: William Rotsler

Rotsler becomes the first winner of the same Hugo twice in the same year.

## "FIRST I'D LIKE TO THANK..."

• **Stephen Baxter** won the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for *The Time Ships*, given on 12 July at the (unfortunately dry) campus of the University of Kansas; Baxter flew out to receive the award. Second was Neal Stephenson's *The Diamond Age*, and Ian McDonald's *Chaga* came third.

• The newly inaugurated **Sidewise Awards** are given for alternative history sf.

LONG WORK: Paul J. McAuley *Pasquale's Angel*

SHORT WORK: Stephen Baxter "Brigantia's Angels" (from *Interzone*)

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT: L. Sprague de Camp *Lost Darkness Fall*

• **John McDaid** picked up the **Sturgeon Award** for his first and so far only short story "Jigoku no Mokushiroku" (from *Asimov's*).

• The **Mythopoeic Awards** are given by the Mythopoeic Society for excellence in fiction "in the spirit of the Inklings" (J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, and Charles Williams).

ADULT LITERATURE: Elizabeth Hand *Waking the Moon*

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: Diana Wynne Jones *The Crown of Dalemarr*

MYTHOPOEIC SCHOLARSHIP (INKLINGS STUDIES): Wayne G. Hammond & Christina Scull *J. R. R. Tolkien, Artist and Illustrator*

MYTHOPOEIC SCHOLARSHIP (MYTH & FANTASY STUDIES): **Marina Warner** *From the Beast to the Blonde: Fairy Tales and Their Tellers*

The Awards themselves are small inscribed statuettes of a seated lion, "intended to evoke thoughts of, but not officially named after, Aslan from C. S. Lewis's 'Narnia' books".

• At the memorial event for Gollancz's **Richard Evans** in the Princess Louise pub in London on 16 August, it emerged that efforts are under way to endow an annual prize in his honour, for authors who have done good work without gaining much recognition. Contact: John Parker, 45 Fitzroy Street, London, W1P 5HR.

• Nominations for the 1995 **World Fantasy Awards**, to be presented at the World Fantasy Convention in Schaumburg, Illinois:

NOVEL: James P. Blaylock *All the Bells of Earth*; Vikram Chandra *Red Earth, Poring Rain*; Nina Kirsh Hoffman *The Silent Strength of Stones*; Graham Joyce *Requiem*; Tim Powers *Expiration Date*; Christopher Priest *The Prestige*

NOVELLA: Nina Kirsh Hoffman "Home For Christmas" (F&SF Jan); Ursula K. Le Guin "Ether OR" (Asimov's Nov); Jonathan Lethem "The Inspired Profession of Jonathan Homeborn" (Full Spectrum 8); Tim Powers *Where They Are Hid*; Michael Marshall Smith "More Tomorrow" (Dark Terrors); Michael Swanwick "Radio Waves" (Omni Winter).

SHORT STORY: Gwyneth Jones "The Grass Princess" (Seven Tales and a Fable); Kit Reed "The Singing Marine" (F&SF Oct/Nov); Petrina Smith "Angel Thing" (She's Fantastical); S. P. Somtow "Dragon's Fin Soup" (The Ultimate Dragon); Robert Charles Wilson "The Perseid" (Northern Frights 3); Douglas Winter "Loop" (Dark Love).

ARTHOLOGY: Nancy A. Collins, Edward E. Krome & Martin H. Greenberg *Dark Love*; Stephen Jones & David Sutton *Dark Terrors*; Lucy Sussex & Judith Raphael Buckrich *She's Fantastical*; Steve Rasnic Tem *High Fantastic*; A. Susan Williams & Richard Glyn Jones *The Penguin Book of Modern Fantasy by Women*.

COLLECTION: Brian Aldiss *The Secret of This Book*; Jonathan Carroll *The Panic Hand*; Hugh B. Cave *Death Stalks the Night*; Charles de Lint *The Ivory and the Horn*; Gwyneth Jones *Seven Tales and a Fable*.

ARTIST: Tom Canty; Alan Clark; Bob Eggleton; J. K. Potter; Gahan Wilson.

SPECIAL AWARDS (PROFESSIONAL): Richard Evans; Stephen Jones; Kristine Kathryn Rusch; Gordon van Gelder; Paul Williams.

SPECIAL AWARD (NONPROFESSIONAL): Fedogan & Bremer (publishers); Robert J. K. Kilheffer, Meg Mahood & Jenna Felice; Marc Michael; Steve Paschuck; Robert Weinberg.

## In The Studios

✴ Ye gods and little fishes... Kevin Costner is set to star in the movie version of **David Brin's** *The Postman*, which begins shooting in the new year. Try to bring this one in under 200 million dollars, Kev.

✴ Canadian auteur **David Cronenberg's** extremely controversial adaptation of J. G. Ballard's *Crash*, starring James Spader (*Music of Chance*, *Stargate*) and Holly Hunter (*The Piano*, *Copycat*), has been earning astounding amounts of money in Paris. Apparently, in its opening week, one in five cinema tickets bought in the city were for *Crash*. It is due here early next year.

✴ Disney have signed a distribution deal with Japanese anime giant Tokuma Shinsai. This means that the long-gestated medium will finally hit the big time here in the West. They have picked up the video rights to eight of Hayao Miyazaki's full-length movies (long a hot favourite on the pirate circuit, but never legally available here), as well as cinema distribution rights to *Princess Mononoke*, his latest film. In the opinion of this columnist, Miyazaki is the greatest animator alive today, and arguably the greatest who ever lived. If you haven't seen *Nausicaä* or *My Neighbour Totoro*, you haven't seen what majesty mere lines on paper can achieve. And soon you will have no excuse.

✴ America's most popular comic book *Spawn* is about to spawn a movie adaptation. The budget is set at \$50 million (which is the top end of average these days) and there will be no big-name stars as most of the characters will be computer generated by George Lucas's Industrial Light and Magic effects company. Does Equity know about this?

✴ **James Cameron** does. He has recently announced the start of production on a film called *Avatar*. Set for release in three years, it will feature a cast made up entirely of 'synthespians', characters generated by the computers of his special effects company Digital Domain. But isn't that what *Toy Story* was?

✴ **Carl Sagan's** *Contact* (well, I suppose it's sf) is being brought to the big screen by *Forrest Gump* director Robert Zemeckis. I'll star the awesomely talented Jodie Foster, and Hollywood's star-of-the-month Matthew McConaughey (who can already be seen in *A Time to Kill* and will hit the big time next year when *Speed 2*

comes out). Rather like an Irwin Allen disaster movie, the supporting cast will be made of huge names – so far Glenn Close, Sidney Poitier, James Woods, and Paul Newman are set for walk-ons.

✴ **William Hurt** (*Altered States*, *Until the End of the World*) will take the lead in 'a futuristic thriller' called *Dark City*, to be directed by Alex Proyas (*The Crow*).

✴ **Gremilins** creator **Joe Dante** hasn't done much of note in the 90s; he is hoping to rectify this with *My Favorite Martian*. Martin Short (who starred in Dante's *Innerspace*) is to play the Ray Walston rôle. Expect more news like this as the ramifications of *Independence Day's* unprecedented success percolate through the 'brains' of Hollywood's Neanderthal producers.

Case in point: 20th Century Fox (*Independence Day's* distributors) have pushed *Really Big Bugs* into the fast lane, a 50-minute B-movie spoof that has so far been plodding towards production for over a year.

✴ John Boorman (*Zardoz*, *Excalibur*) is girding his loins to tackle a special-effects heavy, live-action version of **C. S. Lewis's** *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

✴ Director **Paul (Shopping, Mortal Kombat) Anderson's** next feature is to be *Soldier*, starring Kurt Russell and written by David Webb Peoples (*Blade Runner*, *Twelve Monkeys*). No news yet as to whether it is based on Harlan Ellison's legendary *Outer Limits* episode "Soldier", which was, of course, the inspiration for *Terminator*.

✴ **Denzel Washington** has reportedly been paid \$12.5 million to come aboard *Fallen*, a gothic tale about a police officer who learns that the killer he is chasing is possessed by a demon.

✴ But the golden news nugget of the year is, I can impassionately and objectively report, the publication of Christmas stocking sized *Crimetime Filmbook* which, as its name indicates, is not going to be chock full of features of fever-inducing excitement to sf film fans, unless they also happen to be crime film fans. But it will contain an exclusive interview with **William Gibson**. How do I know? Some say it's because I wrote it. I couldn't possibly comment....

— John Ashbrook

# Forward The Foundation



From left: Edward James (editor, Foundation); Canadian author Candas Jane Dorsey; Foundation boss Andy Sawyer; Prof. Philip Love (Vice-Chancellor, University of Liverpool); Brian Aldiss; Czech writer Josef Nesvadba.

**AROUND SEVENTY** delegates from around the world attended Liverpool University in July for "Speaking Science Fiction", a conference organised by the SF Foundation's Andy Sawyer. The guest speakers were Brian Aldiss, Josef Nesvadba, Candas Jane Dorsey and Edward James, and other attendees and speakers included sf scholars and writers such as Brian Attebury, Istvan Csicsvari-Ronay Jr, Veronica Holliger, George Slusser, Gwyneth Jones, Sue Thomas, Andy Butler, Roger Robinson, and Caroline Mullan. Stephen Baxter was due to attend, but cried off at the last minute with the best possible excuse: he was urgently summoned to Kansas to receive the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for *The Time Ships*.

The conference brought together a number of friends and colleagues, but more importantly it linked together people working in various areas of science fiction and fantastic literature and film who were only barely aware of each other's work. Several people stayed on to research in the SF Foundation Collection – of which the BSFA Library is part – in the University library, which put paid to Andy's plan to have a quiet day or two off. Liverpool University Press plan to issue a volume of the papers presented at the conference, edited by David Seed and Andy Sawyer.

## THE ADVENTURES OF ANDY SAWYER

• The main part of Andy's job involves sorting out the huge amount of sf-related material in the Foundation Collection, and a milestone was recently passed: the 10,000th book catalogued in the collection was Larry Niven's *Protector*. Most of the periodicals have been catalogued, and there are over 2,000 articles and major reviews in the journal database, which should be publicly accessible on the World Wide Web at some point.

• Recent donations include the papers of Colin Greenland, the correspondence archive of *Omnifiction* editor Ellen Datlow, a number of rare works of early sf from Prof. I. F. Clarke, and the small press and fanzine collection of the *British Fantasy Society*.

• Andy will be a guest at the Infinity convention in Cardiff, July 1998, and there's an illustrated interview with him on the HarperCollins *Voyager* web site. He's also regularly popped up in the media, from Radio 1's *Newsbeat* to the BBC TV series *Fantasy Fantastic* to various local radio stations.

• Donations to the Foundation Collection are always welcome. Andy would be especially grateful for: critical works and non-fiction about sf / fantasy; recent US fiction and small-press magazines; audio-visual material (CDs, tapes, records); and virtually any manga / anime sf, in any format. ☐

Contact: Andy Sawyer, University of Liverpool Library, PO Box 123, Liverpool, L69 3DA. Tel: 0151 794 2696 / 2733 Email: [asawyer@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:asawyer@liverpool.ac.uk) Web: <http://www.liv.ac.uk/~asawyer/sffhome.html>

## Virgin Birth

Virgin are expanding their publishing interests next year, and as part of the drive they are starting a new sf imprint. Called "Virgin Worlds" and edited by Rebecca Levine, they are particularly looking for novels from new authors and innovative sf writing. They don't want "epic sub-Tolkienesque fantasy sagas; cyberpasta as a theme rather than background; dystopias; or slasher horror". They do want "mainstream fantasy, sf and psychological horror, but of a fresh and original variety; or slipstream material" (examples given are *The Wasp Factory*, *Mir Vertigo*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Slaughterhouse Five*, anything by Dick, and that sf classic *Train-*

*spotting*). They would "prefer character-driven stories to novels based on plots or abstract ideas", but then go on to say, paradoxically, that they want books with "plenty of page-turning quality". Without a plot?

Up to now, Virgin's main presence in the sf arena has been the *Dr Who* books, which represent 5% of the UK sf market. There have been signs that even in this line they have been showing some adventurousness; for example David Bishop's interesting *Who Killed Kennedy* (punctuation sic). There are extensive writers' guidelines available, which are essential.

Contact: AS SAE to Fiction Dept., Virgin Publishing, 332 Ladbroke Grove, London, W10 5AH.

## snippings...news...gleanings...rumours...cuttings...

➔ **X-FILES CREATOR ACCUSED Chris Carter**, creator of *The X-Files*, has been named in a sexual harassment law suit brought by former 20th Century Fox employee Judith Bell. She accuses Carter and the show's co-executive producer Howard Gordon of "discrimination, sexual assault and battery", and claims that Carter regularly had strippers visiting the offices, displayed pornographic material including videos called *The Sex Files* and *The XXX Files*, and once demanded that she lie on his couch "so that he could get her pregnant". 20th Century Fox claimed the suit was "trivialous".

➔ **SCREEN PRISONER** A film of the 60s cult TV series *The Prisoner* has long been rumoured, but at August's Six of One convention in Portmeirion some more definite news emerged. According to Polygram's Frank Radcliffe, "The project is certainly very much going ahead, and Patrick McGeehan will be creatively involved from beginning to end... I think Polygram would not have said that the project was moving ahead if it weren't, and so in my mind it's a definite go."

➔ **SPACE OPERA** St poet **Steve Sneyd** was a guest on Radio 4's relentlessly middle-brow *Afternoon Shift* on 7 August, participating in a light-hearted slot on sf and opera. The two genres – both equally reviled in their different ways, though only one is state-supported to any great extent – have "a grand scale" in common. Who knows what the R4 audience made of Steve's mention of *Hawkwind's* appearance at *Wormwood Scrubs*?

➔ **GOLLANCZ MOVES** Following the untimely death of Richard Evans, **Humphrey Price** takes over as editorial director of *Vista*. **Jo Fletcher**, Evans's former colleague, is in overall charge of the sf, fantasy and horror lists.

➔ **PAT CADIGAN** recovered quickly after a gall bladder operation in America in July, shortly after her marriage to **Chris Fowler**. She's now moved to London.

➔ **IT'S ALL TRUE** ... In his past life as an engineer at Procter and Gamble, **Gene Wolfe** was indeed part of the high-powered team which designed the machinery used for manufacturing *Pingrines*, a snack product distantly related to potatoes.

➔ ... **EXCEPT WHEN IT ISN'T** A small piece of metal alleged to come from the so-called Roswell UFO has been proved to be of terrestrial origin: tests at Los Alamos showed that the silver and copper isotopic content matches earthly samples exactly. But believers still claim that the metal shows a remarkable lack of corrosion.

➔ **CARRY ON PLUGGING** Upcoming signings:

• At Manchester Waterstones: 4 Oct **William Gibson**.  
• At Peterborough Waterstones: 5 Nov **Rob Grant** (*Red Dwarf*); 14 Nov **Tom Holt**, **Haydn Middleton**, "**Jonathan Wylie**" (Mark & Julia Smith); 21 Nov **Stephen Baxter** & **Michael Marshall Smith**; 24 Nov **Andrew Harman**, **Peter F. Hamilton** and others.  
• At London's Forbidden Planet: 5 Oct, 4.00pm **Dan Gemmell**; 12 Oct, 1.00pm **Gerry Anderson** & **Stan Nicholls**; 12 Oct, 4.00pm **Brian Lumley**; 19 Oct, 1.00pm **Robert Rankin**; 26 Oct, 1.00pm **Michael Marshall Smith**; 2 Nov, 1.00pm **Michael White** (*The Science of The X-Files*). All held on Saturdays at Forbidden Planet, 71 New Oxford Street, London. Some signings may be held in the nearby Conservatory pub (behind Centre Point), so check with the shop first. Post-signings, fans and sometimes the authors gather in the Angel pub on St Giles High Street.

## Many thanks to

John Ashbrook, Stephen Baxter, Elizabeth & Paul Billinger, Brum SF Group, Andrew M. Butler, Tony Cullen, Bernie Evans, Mary Gentile, Carol Ann Green, Colin Greenland, Paul Hood, Steve Jeffery, Gwyneth Jones, Dave Langford, Paul J. McAuley, John Ollis, Peterborough SF Group, Julie Rigby, Andy Sawyer, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Martin Tudor, and Waterstones in Leeds



## Andromeda Galaxy

Many writers turned up at the opening of the Andromeda Bookshop's new premises in Birmingham on 6 July. Above: **Michael Marshall Smith** looks quietly pleased as he reveals his new novel *Spares* has been optioned by Stephen Spielberg. Above right, from left: imperturbable **Maggie Furey**, **Peter F. Hamilton** does his amazing Rory Brenner impression, **Storm Constantine** looks suitably gothic, **Eric Brown** wonders what on Earth Andromeda's proprietor Rog Peyton put in his drink, and **Chris Evans** isn't going bald. Below: **Harry Harrison** and **Brian Aldiss** being avuncular. (Photos: **Paul Hood**)

*Andromeda* can now be found at 2-5 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, B1 1LT  
Tel. 0121 643 1999



## Scribble, Scribble, Scribble

- **Arthur C. Clarke** has contracted to write the positively last final part (honest) of the 'Odyssey' series. The working title is *3001: The Final Odyssey* and he hopes to have it ready for HAL's birthday celebrations in 1997. The advance was reputed to be £650,000.
- Work on the ever-expanding *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* continues: draught editor **John Clute** has now delivered A-R, which is being proof-read. If all goes well a launch next Easter is possible.
- The 32nd 'Dumarest' book - previously only available in French as *La Retour* - by **Ted Tubb** will finally be available in English in 1997 from US small press publishers Gryphon Books.
- **Mary Gentle** is putting the finishing touches to *Ash*, "a fifteenth century science fiction novel". It should be out next year from Gollancz.
- Meanwhile, out on Hallowe'en from Sony is the computer game *Zombierville*, with script and voice direction by Gentle. She writes: "Zombierville allows the player, in the person of Matt Black, *Daily News* reporter, to fearlessly investigate the outbreak of a bio-weapon at a US military base, blow away the resultant zombies, and chat cheerfully (between bouts of fiendish problem-solving) to Agnes the gun-toting farmer, Margie the female marine, Terri the lumberjill, and Rosa the amazing talking rat (No, no, don't worry about me; I'll just stay here in this dark dank graveyard; I'll be fine... You never phone, you never write...). And of course there are even nastier Things lurking in the background. Zombierville is a deeply serious gaming experience, and not at all a script in which I got to use all the jokes that were too bad-taste even for *Grunt!* Honest, guv."
- **Books To Films**: James Cameron's feature film and TV production company Lightstorm Entertainment has acquired the rights to **Patricia Anthony's** *Brother Temyer*; John Sayles will adapt... **Heinlein's** *Stranger in a Strange Land* is being co-produced by Tom Hanks, who may star... **Robert J. Sawyer's** Nebula-winning *The Terminal Experiment* has been optioned by Metrodome Films.
- *Hallowe'en* is a new horror-oriented APA (Amateur Publishing Association) administered by Eunice Pearson. If you're interested in writing about horror contact The Crypt of Terror, 2 New Houses, Pant, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 2AB.

## mailbox

### T-Shirt Winner

From **John Ollis**

PO Box 347, Luton, LU1 1RL

Thanks for the new *Matrix*; for old fogies like me who haven't got used to the last design yet, can we please have some warning of the sort of radical changes in the new one? I had to get out my dark glasses. Once again I shall have to think carefully when the renewal notice arrives...

The idea of a T-shirt for the best letter is a good one, and congratulations to Mr J. P. Mowatt. How sensible of you to award the prize to a fellow Leeds resident, thus saving the BSFA money on postage. ☺

Shame on you, sir, no nepotism here! The T-shirts are despatched from sunny Folkestone, and in a craven display of cringing it shall be proved to you. —Ed.

From **Elizabeth Billinger**

82 Kelvin Road, Linsington Spa, Warricks, CV 32 7TQ

John Ashbrook's news and movie reviews bring an interesting new voice to the issue, and I imagine his introductory article will provoke a few comments. I agree with him that much of the 'problem' with media sf is its inherent mainstream nature, but I would like to offer a different interpretation of the problem. I don't feel that I'm being precious about sf, after all I

find myself trying to 'sell' the concept to anyone who will listen (and that goes for other media as well as books). What does make me cringe about media sf is that so much of it is bad sf, coupled with the fact that so many people watch it. How can you defend the proposition that sf is a wonderful thing which everyone should know about when you are talking to someone whose experience of sf is limited to *Star Trek* and *Space Precinct*? OK, there is just as much bad *written* sf / fantasy out there; but it doesn't get the same mass exposure, and therefore the problem doesn't arise when you're talking books. If you are advocating sf to a reader who doesn't do so, then it is unlikely that you will have to overcome prejudices and preconceptions resulting from reading bad sf.

So, if it wasn't for TV and film sf I could hold my head high and defend the genre without embarrassment, denying to myself the existence of all those dire novels that never should have been published. The price I pay for the pleasures of *Babylon 5* and thrilling sf films is widespread familiarity with all the dire TV series and films that never should have been made. ☺

From **John Leggett-Bailey**

Kroegerstrasse 9, 60313 Frankfurt/Main, Germany

To Members of the BSFA:

Through the good offices of your Administrator Maureen Speller I am able to draw your attention to a need that you may not have noticed. I refer to close on 500,000 readers (retail and

media statistics) waiting for your stories to jet- or Net-propel them into the new biological scene which will confront every one of us by, or shortly after the millennium; a situation now offering you the big chance to profit from a revolution that will turn school biology on its head.

Your skills, your fantasy and your imagination, are required to continue a project designed to both entertain the public and, it is hoped, help them to join in future debates. All types of writing are welcome but the spearhead for a while will be a continuous series of science novels in various styles and embracing different disciplines. There are no rules beyond the need for the science to be simple and accessible. As the author Keith Brooke advises in *Focus 28*, "The writer doesn't need to know about most things in depth." You are welcome to join a small science novel group or workshop where outlines of plots are available for discussion, and a panel of experts is ready to advise on most scientific matters. You will see how to exploit a whole range of fascinating phenomena based on simple science in unusual situations which may well be speculative but still remain within the bounds of credibility. Startling, hair-raising adventures are ranged before you, so join us now, put your erudition and fantasy to good purpose and profit, before the new breed of bio-hackers get there first with their incredible real-life stories. For more information please contact me at the above address. ☺

• More letters on page 20...

## AT THE CUSP

## BSFA NEWS

## \* An Apology

Yes, it happened again. Publications Manager **Steve Jeffery** extends humble apologies to you all for the lateness of the last mailing, and wishes to reassure everyone that – this time, at least – it really was out of our control. The postal strikes not only delayed everything, they also caused the loss of some critical items, notably the mailing labels. And things were not helped by... well, we've now changed the company which bundles up and delivers your mailings to you: 'nuff said.

Again, we're very sorry about this – let's hope this mailing reaches you before the deadlines for the next one. And those prizes are piling up, so take this chance to enter all the competitions you've missed. And don't forget to vote for the BSFA Awards!

## \* Renewals

Please remember to send all address changes, renewals, and general membership queries to

**Paul Billinger**  
82 Kelvin Road  
New Cumbings, Leamington Spa  
CV32 7TQ

## \* London Meetings

If you're within reach of London, why not come along to one of the BSFA's monthly meetings? Admission is free, and they're at the Jubilee Tavern on York Road near Waterloo Station. They're held on the fourth Wednesday in each month, and start at 7pm in the upstairs room of the pub. This month's meeting is on the **27 October**, and the guest is **Michael Marshall Smith**, author of *Only Forward* and the forthcoming *Spares*.

Contact **Paul Hood** on 01621 816440 for further details.

## \* SSSI Map

On ongoing BSFA project is a map of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the UK and Ireland. Many thanks to all of you who have sent in ideas, but we're still looking for more: book settings, author birth-places, buildings used in novels, whatever. Send your suggestions to the Matrix editor; we hope to present the results of this project next year.

## \* Write For Matrix

I'm always interested in new writers, so if you think you could contribute to *Matrix* why not give it a go? Film or video reviews, convention reports, science articles, opinion pieces, news reports from your area... write to me at the editorial address.

## \* Awards

The **1996 BSFA Awards** (for books, stories and artwork whose first UK appearance is this year, 1996) are using a 'rolling nomination' method. Simply put your suggestion(s) on a postcard marked '1996 BSFA Awards' and send it to:

**Kev McVeigh**  
37 Firs Road  
Mlinthorpe  
Cumbria  
LA7 7QF

If you have any queries you can ring Kev on 01539 562 883. Kev's also interested in some ideas for a suitable and distinctive trophy. If anybody has any suggestions, in any form or area, let him know, preferably with relevant contact details, and even costs if known.

Some nominations so far received include:

**Gill Alderman** *The Memory Palace*

A fantasy. In *Vector 188* Steve Jeffery said: "I don't think I've been so thoroughly delighted by a work of fantasy since Elizabeth Hand's *Winterlong* or Crowley's *Ægypt*. Gill Alderman steps up as one of our best and most accomplished fantasy writers. Highly recommended. A real treat."

**Iain M. Banks** *Excession*

Exuberant and witty space opera.

**Maureen F. McHugh** *Half the Day Is Night*

"This novel is a thriller, an in-depth study of two characters in relationship to each other, and an evocation of film-noir alienation and depression." (Sue Thomason in *Vector 188*.)

**Stephen Palmer** *Memory Seed*

First novel from a regular BSFA reviewer and contributor. Dan Abnett wrote in *SFX 12*: "Palmer's style is purposeful and fluent, and engages from an early stage. This attractive voice, coupled with a complex and fascinating plot [...] makes *Memory Seed* a notable debut novel. Stephen Palmer is obviously a writer to watch out for."

**Kim Stanley Robinson** *Blue Mars*

The final part of Robinson's *magnus opus*.

**Dan Simmons** *Endymion*

Follow-up to the multiple award winning *Hyperion Cantos*.

**Bruce Sterling** *Holy Fire*

A tour of a post-modern European utopia, with a winning central character. The editor's choice in *Matrix 120*.

## \* Internet

Plans are under way for a BSFA Web page, and to put the mailing list – tested out last year – on a permanent footing. More on this next issue.

— Chris Terran

## Foodie Corner

There's a curious correlation between people who like chocolate and people who like sf. This recipe, courtesy of Andy Butler, may help to explain why.

## BSFA Chocolate Puddle

Serves six, or one hungry fan.

You will need:

- 4 oz margarine or butter
- 4 oz sugar
- 4 oz flour
- 1 egg
- cocoa powder
- milk (fresh or evaporated)
- baking powder
- vanilla essence (optional).

For the pudding dissolve about a tablespoon of cocoa and a tablespoon of sugar in about half a pint of boiling water. Set aside to cool, stirring occasionally. To make the pudding, cream together the margarine or butter and the sugar, then sift together the flour, a teaspoon of baking powder and a generous tablespoon of cocoa powder. Beat the egg in about the same amount of milk or evap and a splash of vanilla essence if you can find any. Bung it all together in the same bowl; alternately bung it all at once to start with. Stir until bored. Pour most of the mixture into a 2 litre (ish) casserole Pyrex thing, using a wooden spoon and a spatula so you can lick up as much pudding mixture as you possibly can later. Remember that you should have greased the Pyrex and say "soed it". Pour the pudding over the pudding and shove in a moderate (Gas 4 or thereabouts) oven. It will be ready when the pudding has – magic! – risen through the pudding and has begun to be like a crust – approximately 30-45 minutes. Serve immediately, before anyone else realises what you've cooked.

— Andy Butler

Next up: Tuna Chowder!

## Could This Lot Even Find A Whelk Stall?



The BSFA Committee caught in the act on the Folkestone seashore during the committee meeting back in June.

On the left, **Steve Jeffery** gets all recursive while **Vector's Tony Cullen** exercises his critical savvy on *Matrix* and its editor, who took the picture. **Paul Kincaid** tells **Maureen Speller** and **Carol Ann Green** what he really does with *Star Trek* spin-off books, and **Paul Hood** attempts to persuade member **Steve Kerry** to come along to a London meeting. **Paul Billinger** is smiling – it probably hadn't yet sunk in that he was now Membership Secretary. **Claire Braley** is eclipsed by **Mark Plummer**, who thereby proves that Promotions begin at home. Just visible is **Elizabeth Billinger's** extremely valuable head, while **Mark's** partner **Kay** ensures that **Andy Butler** is right at the cutting edge of things, as usual.

And no, we didn't find a whelk stall.

— Chris Terran

# —recent & forthcoming books—



Including Little, Brown, Warner



Including Millennium, Phoenix



Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle & Steven Barnes *The Dragons of Heorot* (Sep; \$6.99 pb) — Sequel to *The Legacy of Heorot*.

L. E. Modesitt, Jr. *The Death of Chaox* (Oct; \$6.99 pb) — Fantasy. Continues the story of Lemis from *The Magic of Recluse*.

J. V. Jones *A Man Betrayed* (Nov; \$16.99 hb, \$9.99 pb) — Fantasy, volume 2 of 'The Book of Words' trilogy; the first was *The Baker's Boy* and the final volume, *Master and Fool*, will be published next year.

David Feintuch *Midshipman's Hope* (Nov; \$5.99 pb) — First volume of 'The Seafarer Saga', sf adventure on the high seas of space — "Reads like a collaboration between Heinlein and C. S. Forester," says David Gerrold. Even the covers look like recruiting posters. Three further volumes will be issued monthly.

★Tom Holt *Paint Your Dragon* (Dec; \$15.99 hb) — Humorous fantasy. "Sculptress Bianca Wilson is a living legend. St George is also a legend, but not quite so living. However, when Bianca's sculpture of the patron saint and his scaly chum gets a bit too life-like, it's bound to open up a very unpleasant can of worms... especially when the Dragon decides that it's time to set the record straight."

Tom Holt *My Hero* (Dec; \$5.99 pb) — Paperback of Holt's previous novel.

David Feintuch *Challenger's Hope* (Dec; \$5.99 pb)

David Feintuch *Prisoner's Hope* (Jan 97; \$5.99 pb)

David Feintuch *Fisherman's Hope* (Feb 97; \$5.99 pb)



Including Robinson



★Richard Glyn Jones (ed.) *Cybersex* (Jun; \$9.99 pb, 416pp) — Anthology of sf stories about sexuality. The coup here is an extract from Ian Watson's notorious unpublished 1976 novel *The Woman Machine* (though an earlier version appeared in *France as Orgasmachine*). There's a characteristic foreword (and a story) by Will Self, and tributes from Jeff Noon, Connie Willis (the powerful 'All My Darling Daughters'), Pat Murphy, Harlan Ellison, Kurt Vonnegut ('The Big Space Fuck'), Candace Jane Dorsey, Maureen F. McHugh, Greg Egan, Rudy Rucker, Martin Amis, Storm Constantine, and many others. Recommended.

Stephen Jones (ed.) *The Best New Horror* (16 Sep; \$6.99 pb, 512pp) — Last year's best horror stories, with contributions from Ramsey Campbell, Michael Marshall Smith, Kim Newman, Paul J. McAuley, Poppy Z. Brite, Stephen Gallagher, and others. There's also a review of the year from Jones.

Mike Ashley (ed.) *Space Stories* (Robinson: 16 Sep; \$4.99 pb, 400pp) — Young Adult anthology of 30 space-related stories, introduced by Dennis Hamley. Contributors include Arthur C. Clarke, Ray Bradbury, Nicholas Fisk, Douglas Hill, and Stephen Baxter (who, according to the PR, is "best known for [his] children's stories"). So there.

Mike Ashley (ed.) *Fantasy Stories* (Robinson: 16 Sep; \$4.99 pb, 400pp) — Young Adult anthology of 30 fantasy stories, introduced by Garry Kiworth. Contributors include Dianna Wynne Jones, C. S. Lewis, Tolkien, Ramsey Campbell, Tanith Lee, Joan Aiken, and Kiworth.

★Gardner Dozois (ed.) *The Best New SF* (21 Oct; \$7.99 pb, 608pp) — The new edition of the annual collection contains 250,000 words in 23 stories from writers including Greg Egan, Brian Stableford, Paul J. McAuley, Nancy Kress, Maureen F. McHugh, Pat Cadigan, and Ursula K. Le Guin.

Robert Phillips (ed.) *The Omnibus of 20th-Century Ghost Stories* (Robinson: 21 Oct; \$7.99 pb, 384pp) — Contributors include Graham Greene, Dylan Thomas, Tennessee Williams, Virginia Wolfe, Shirley Jackson, John Updike.

Jay Russell *Blood* (21 Oct; \$5.99 pb, 320pp) — Second horror novel from the author of *Celestial Dogs*. In Los Angeles, "street gangs from hell are slaughtering each other for control of an addictive drug with terrifying side-effects — it is the route of transmission for a deadly virus that turns a man into a vampire-like killing machine." Sounds a bit like Wobly Bob.



pb = paperback; hb = hardback; tp = trade paperback  
pp = page count; ill. = illustrated; ed. = edited

coll. = story collection (same author); anth. = anthology (different authors)

★ = Highlight      \* = Editor's choice

All unquoted remarks by Chris Terran.

Quoted comments are from publishers' material — caveat emptor!

Poppy Z. Brite *Exquisite Corpse* (Jul; \$15.99 hb, \$9.99 pb, 256pp) — Smoky and sexually charged horror from the New Orleans writer. "A convicted serial killer has escaped prison and is on the run, first in London then in New Orleans. There he meets Jay, a southern star fallen from grace, and the two men live out their darkest fantasies in an orgy of violence born out of love."

K. W. Jeter *Blade Runner 2: Edge of Human* (Jul; \$5.99 pb) — Paperback of Jeter's sequel to Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* and the film *Blade Runner*. The next volume, *Replicant Night* is due in October.

Angus Wells *Exile's Challenge* (Aug; \$16.99 hb, \$9.99 pb, 416pp) — Fantasy, conclusion of the 'Exile' diptych.

H. G. Wells *Science Fiction Volume 2* (Phoenix: Aug; \$9.99 hb) — Second volume of Wells's complete st.

★Michael Moorcock *War Among the Angels* (Aug; \$15.99 hb, 256pp) — Sequel to *Fabulous Harbours*.

Mercedes Lackey *Storm Rising* (Aug; \$4.99 pb) — Fantasy.

William Hjortslev *Nevermore* (Aug; \$5.99 pb) — Hjortslev wrote the sf novel *Gray Matters* and the noir 'tc / horror hybrid *Falling Angel*.

Michael Moorcock *Fabulous Harbours* (5 Aug; \$5.99 pb, 228pp) — "Continues the adventures of the von Bek family, of Captain Quetch and Sundry Other Characters from *Blood: A Southern Fantasy*."

Roger MacBride *Allen Isaac Asimov's Utopia* (19 Aug; \$16.99 hb, \$9.99 pb, 320pp) — Final volume in Allan's trilogy of novels based on Asimov's 'New Laws of Robotics', communicated to Allen shortly before Asimov's death; the first two were Isaac Asimov's *Caliban* and Isaac Asimov's *Inferno*. For those interested, the New Laws are: 1. A robot may not injure a human being, 2. A robot must cooperate with human beings except where such cooperation would conflict with the First Law, 3. A robot must protect its own existence, as long as such protection does not conflict with the First Law, 4. A robot may do anything it likes, except where such action would violate the First, Second or Third Laws.

Mickey Zacher *Reichert Beyond Ragnarok* (Sep; \$5.99 pb) — Fantasy.

Steve & Stephani Perry / David Bischoff *Allen Omnibus* (Sep; \$14.99 hb, \$9.99 pb, 464pp) — Contains *The Female War* and *Genocide*.

★K. W. Jeter *Blade Runner 3: Replicant Night* (Oct; \$15.99 hb, 340pp) — Sequel to *Edge of Human*.

★Alison Sinclair *Blueheart* (Oct; \$15.99 hb, \$9.99 pb, 320pp) — Second of novel from the author of *Legacies*.

Adam Nichols *The Pathless Way* (Oct; \$15.99 hb, \$9.99 pb, 352pp) — Fantasy set in the same world as *War of the Lord's Veil*.

Michael Moorcock *Dancers At the End of Time* (Oct; \$5.99 pb) — Vol. 7 of the 'Eternal Champion'.

Mercedes Lackey *Storm Breaking* (Oct; \$15.99 hb, \$9.99 pb, 384pp) — Fantasy.

Eileen Dattlow (ed.) *Wild Justice* (Nov; \$15.99 hb, \$9.99 pb, 320pp) — Anth. of original stories themed on revenge: contributors include Joyce Carol Oates, Michael Marshall Smith, Christopher Fowler and Pat Cadigan.

Steve Perry *Allen's Labyrinth* (Nov; \$14.99 hb, 256pp) — Novelisation of the 'Dark Horse' graphic novels.

Terry Goodkind *Stone of Tears* (Nov; \$5.99 pb) — Book 2 of 'The Sword of Truth'.

Terry Goodkind *Blood of the Fold* (Dec; \$16.99 hb, 672pp) — Book 3 of 'The Sword of Truth'.

Michael Moorcock *Eric of Melniboné* (Dec; \$5.99 pb) — Vol. 8 of the 'Eternal Champion'.

★Greg Egan *Distress* (Phoenix: Dec; \$5.99 pb) — Hard sf with much philosophical speculation. Egan's much anticipated follow-up to the extraordinary and award-winning *Permutation City* is a thriller concerning quantum physics and physicists, a pernicious disease (the 'Distress' of the title), Theories of Everything, pseudo-science cults, near-future politics, questions of identity, and more. Brimming over with enough ideas to fill ten novels by lesser authors, and with a decidedly Australian — or perhaps 'Pacific' would be more accurate — viewpoint, this novel attempts to marry the most abstruse physics with human concerns. Egan again makes great play with the idea of the universe as 'information', but puts a more expansive (and somewhat less claustrophobic) spin on it than in *Permutation City*. Unfortunately, the thriller aspects of the book don't quite work; it all seems rather rushed, and occasionally the action jars with the slightly too dense info-dumps which permeate the book. The viewpoint character is a journalist covering the Einstein Centennial Conference at which three rival TOEs are to be presented, and as he gets involved in the various factions and political shenanigans his own problems, which started the book, get a little lost. But despite these caveats, anything by Egan is worth reading; this is only his third novel, and he's getting better all the time. Highly recommended.

[In a letter in *Interzone* 109, Syd Foster argues well against Chris Gilmore's rather negative IZ 105 review of *Distress*, and makes a good case for a deeper reading of Egan's characters than is usually given. I point this out because Egan does have one mark of a (though yet-to-be, in my opinion) great st writer, which is depth and multiplicity of readings.]





## Legend

Including Arrow, Century, Hutchinson



Robert Jordan *Conan the Invincible* (1 Aug. £4.99 pb)

**St. Jude, R. U. Sirius & Bart Nagel** Cyberpunk Handbook (Arrow: 1 Aug. £6.99 pb) — Foreword by Bruce Sterling. It's hard to tell from the publicity if this is a parody or not: 'Your chance to... get on the same funky wavelength as those other dudes... Do you know where to find the cool places to hang in Cyberspace? Do you own Terminally Hip Widgets and High-Tech Toyz [sic]? Are you aware of the books and films you must have read [sic]?' R. U. Sirius

Anne Rice *Memoirs of the Devil* (1 Aug. £5.99 pb)

**Andrew Harman** *The Daily Dozen* (1 Aug. £16.99 hb, £4.99 pb, 320pp) — Another groanworthy title, another Harman book... this one's about the bureaucratisation of Hell by a demon whose startling new concept is 'efficiency'. OK, but didn't Terry Pratchett do that one in *Faust* Eric?

★ **Ken MacLeod** *The Stone Canal* (5 Sep. £15.99 hb, 322pp) — Follow-up to the highly successful *The Star Fraction* (see below) from the West Lothian based author. A tale of sexual and human politics, Als, and revolution. 'Jonathan Wilde is dead. His memory is immortal. The young man who walks into Ship City remembers all of Wilde's life and death. That 21st century anarchist agitator took some of his secrets to the grave, and beyond. His clone is back and looking for a man who sent him to a cold and lonely death.'

★ **Ken MacLeod** *The Star Fraction* (5 Sep. £5.99 pb) — Paperback of the Clarke Award runner-up. Recommended.

## Hodder & Stoughton

Including NEL, Coronet



**Frank Lovece** *The X-Files Declassified* (1 Aug. £9.99 tp il.) — Unauthorised new guide to the cult TV series. Includes every license plate number ever shown in the series, and who could resist that?

**Piers Anthony** *Yon Il Wind* (15 Aug. £16.99 hb) — New fantasy.

**Piers Anthony** *Roc and a Hard Place* (NEL: 15 Aug. £5.99 pb) — The latest 'Xanth' novel.

★ **Mary Turledove** *World War: Uprising the Balance* (15 Aug. £5.99 pb) — Third in the alternative-world trilogy concerning an invasion by lacertine aliens during World War II.

**David Wingrove** *Days of Bitter Strength* (NEL: 15 Aug. £5.99 pb) — Penultimate 'Chung Kuo' book.

**J. D. Robb** *Naked in Death* (NEL: 15 Aug. £5.99 pb) — SI: crime hybrid.

**John Douglas** *Zoo Event* (19 Sep. £16.99 hb) — Splatter horror.

**Will Baker** *Star Beast* (NEL: 19 Sep. £5.99 pb) — SI.

**Will Baker** *Shadow Hunter* (NEL: 19 Sep. £5.99 pb) — SI, new edition.

**Chaz Brencley** *Dispossession* (19 Sep. £5.99 hb) — Horror.

**Philip G. Williamson** *Enchantment's Edge* (19 Sep. £16.99 hb) — Fantasy.

**Michael Slade** *Zombie* (NEL: 19 Sep. £5.99 pb) — Horror.

★ **Stephen King** *Desperation* (21 Sep. £16.99 hb)

★ **Richard Bachman** *The Regulators* (15 Aug. £16.99 hb) — Horror novel from the archives of the deceased 'Bachman', who is of course Stephen King.

**Brian Lumley** *Neuroscope: The Lost Years Vol. 2* (3 Oct. £16.99 hb) — Horror.

**J. D. Robb** *Glory in Death* (3 Oct. £16.99 hb) — SI: crime hybrid.

**Stephen Laws** *Somewhere South of Midnight* (3 Oct. £16.99 hb) — Horror.

**Robert Jordan** *Conan the Defender* (5 Sep. £4.99 pb)

★ **Richard Adams** *Tales From Watership Down* (Hutchinson: 5 Sep. £14.99, 198pp) — Long-delayed sequel to the classic *Watership Down*.

**Stephen Fry** *Making History* (Hutchinson: 19 Sep. £15.99 hb, 389pp) — Fry's novel *Liar* had snail elements, and this does as well. Fry can occasionally not be found in Bruges.

★ **Tim Powers** *Earthquake Weather* (17 Oct. £16.99 hb, 496pp) — Powers's new novel 'mixes Multiple-Personality Disorder with a network of corporations and corporate politics.'

**Tim Powers** *The Anubis Games* (Oct. £5.99 pb) — Reissue of the exuberant Dick Award winning fantasy. Recommended.

**Oliver Johnson** *The Forging of the Shadows* (3 Oct. £5.99 pb, 608pp) — Epic fantasy, Book One of 'The Lightbringer Trilogy'. This is getting a big autumn push: Johnson contributed to *White Dwarf* magazine, has written five children's books, and is currently an Editorial Director at Random House.

**Alan Dean Foster** *A Call to Arms* (17 Oct. £5.99 pb) — SI.

**Terry Brooks** *First King of Shannara* (17 Oct. £5.99 pb)

**Simon Archer & Stan Nicholls** *Gerry Anderson: An Authorised Biography* (17 Oct. £14.99 hb, 256pp) — The lavish colour promotional material says that Anderson is responsible for, among better known works, a series called *Stringray*, type of the month, I think. A live action version of *Thunderbirds* is being mooted, which presumably had to wait until computer special effects had advanced sufficiently to show really convincing strings.

★ **Greg Bear** *Country of the Mind* (21 Nov. £15.99 hb) — New hard sci novel.

**Maggie Furey** *Dhamarra* (21 Nov. £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, first publication.

**Robert Jordan** *Conan the Unconquered* (21 Nov. £4.99 pb) — Heroic fantasy.

**Christopher Stashell** *The Witch Doctor* (21 Nov. £4.99 pb) — Humorous fantasy.

**Harry Harrison & John Holm** *King and Emperor* (5 Dec. £5.99 pb)

**Alan Dean Foster** *The False Mirror* (5 Dec. £5.99 pb)

**Brent Monahan** *The Uprising* (NEL: 3 Oct. £5.99 pb) — Horror.

**Martha Lawrence** *Murder in Scorpio* (NEL: 3 Oct. £5.99 pb) — Horror / crime.

**Mark Pepper** *The Short Cut* (1 Nov. £16.99 hb) — Horror.

**Chris Curry** *Level 13* (1 Nov. £16.99 hb) — Horror.

**Stephen Spruill** *Daughter of Darkness* (1 Nov. £16.99 hb) — Horror.

**Ben Bova** *Moonrise* (1 Nov. £16.99 hb) — Near future Yankee id.

★ **Buzz Aldrin & John Barnes** *Encounter With Tiger* (NEL: 21 Nov. £5.99 pb) — An 'epic of space exploration and alien contact by a dream team' — one of whom really has been there, done that! Arthur C. Clarke says: 'I'm quite stunned. Buzz and John have written a classic. Its scope is astonishing, and it contains much wisdom and profound philosophy.'

★ **A. A. Attanasio** *The Dark Shore* (NEL: 21 Nov. £5.99 pb) — High fantasy. Two sequels are on the way.

**Jonathan Nassau** *The World On Blood* (NEL: 21 Nov. £5.99 pb) — Horror.

★ **Mary Turledove** *Escape Velocity: Cyberspace at the End of the Century* (Coronet: 5 Dec. £6.99 tp) — Non-fiction about the darker side of net culture, about which J. G. Ballard says: '[it] is without doubt the best guide I have read to the new computer culture that will soon dominate our lives.'

★ **Martha Lawrence** *Cold Heart of Capricorn* (5 Dec. £16.99 hb) — Horror.

★ **Harry Turledove** *World War: Striking the Balance* (5 Dec. £16.99 hb) — Final volume in the alternative-world trilogy concerning an invasion by lacertine aliens during World War II.

**Simon Clark** *Dark* (NEL: 19 Dec. £5.99 pb) — Third novel from the Doncaster-resident author of the interesting *Blood Crazy*.

**Michael Williams** *Arctady* (NEL: 19 Dec. £5.99 pb) — Dark fantasy from the author of *Weasel's Luck*. 'Williams's passion for the works of Milton, Blake, Wordsworth and Shelley informs the imagery and culture of *Arctady* in a wonderful swirling book reminiscent of Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast*.'

★ **William Hodge** *The House on the Borderland* (NEL: 19 Dec. £5.99 pb) — Classic dark fantasy / horror / sf story. Importantly, this is an unabridged edition — most recent paperback editions have been cut. There's an afterword by Ian Sinclair.

## Signet

Including Michael Joseph, Roc



**Christian Barnard** *The Donor* (Michael Joseph: Aug. £15.99 hb, 416pp) — Yes, that Christian Barnard. This novel concerns breakthroughs in genetic engineering and medical technology, and the hero is, 'a respected heart transplant surgeon'.

**Stephan Grundy** *Attila's Treasure* (Michael Joseph: Aug. £15.99 hb, 608pp) — Historical fantasy about a foster-son of Attila the Hun who follows the old gods and undergoes shamanic training, written by an academic who specialises in Old Norse and Germanic mythology. 'A rousing story of battle-training and war, of arranged marriages and love, of divided loyalties, religious tensions and shamanic power.' Nothing at all like a BSFA Committee meeting, dear me no.

**Andrew Collins** *From the Ashes of Angels* (Michael Joseph: Aug. £16.99 hb, 304pp il.) — Non-fiction. Investigation of 'the sons of God, the Nephilim, the angels and fallen angels of Judeo-Christian myth, the titans and giants of ancient mythology'. Stop me if you've heard this one before. Mr von Daniken, but Collins claims that he's found evidence of an advanced race in the near East during pre-historic times, the Sphinx being one of their relics. Try *Storm Constantine* (below) for more fiction on this theme.

★ **Graham Joyce** *The Tooth Fairy* (Sep. £5.99 pb, 352pp) — 'A modern parable of loss and maturity... delft, canny and highly readable' — Iain Banks.

**Felicity Sarge** *Delta City* (Roc: Sep. £5.99 pb, 384pp) — Fantasy, sequel to *The Humility Garden*.

**Bernard Cornwell** *Enemy of God* (Michael Joseph: Sep. £15.99 hb, 384pp) — Arthurian fantasy. Second volume in 'The Warlord Chronicles', begun with *The Winter King*. Cornwell is better known for the 'Sharpe' series of historical novels.

★ **Storm Constantine** *Scintillating Hollowed Blood* (Oct. £5.99 pb, 368pp) — Second in the 'Grigor' trilogy — the first was *Stalking Tender Prey* — about tallen angels loose on Earth.

**Graeme Base** *The Discovery of Dragons* (Michael Joseph: Oct. £14.99 hb, 366pp il.) — Picture book concerning three legendary explorers and the dragons they search out.

**Dean Koontz & David Robinson** *Beautiful Death* (Michael Joseph: Oct. £20.00 hb, 176pp il.) — Photographs of European cemeteries with text by horror-writer Koontz, including an account of his own near-death experience.

**Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling** *Black Thorn, White Rose* (Nov. £5.99 pb, 400pp) — Original art, of modern retellings of fairy stories, follow-up to *Snow White, Blood Red*.

**David Morehouse** *Psychic Warrior* (Michael Joseph: Nov. £15.99 hb, 320pp) — Non-fiction. Written by an ex-officer in the US Army, this is 'the incredible true story of a twenty-year-long CIA and Pentagon backed psychic espionage program', which apparently included covering up the true cause of Gulf War Syndrome. The book is currently being filmed by Interscope Pictures for 1997 release.

★ **Nancy Kress** *Oaths and Miracles* (Nov. £5.99 pb, 304pp) — SI thriller about genetic engineering from the author of *Beggars in Spain*.

# Richard Evans

## Remembered

Although the name of Richard Evans may not be familiar to you, if you read science fiction or fantasy you have good reason to thank him. As of editor at Orbit / Futura, *Headline*, and – since 1989 – at *Gollancz*, he was responsible for publishing much of the best sf of the last two decades, and his tragically early death in May robbed the field of both a great and skilled champion and a fine, much-loved man. He also started the careers of many people who have since gone on to vindicate his faith in them. Amongst their number are John Jarrold, editor at *Legend*, and author Mary Gentle, who here remember Richard and his part in their lives.

### John Jarrold

I STILL FIND it impossible to believe that I won't see Richard Evans again. I fully expect, next time I walk into a convention bar, to find him ensconced in a corner, chatting about Wales, or aircraft, or ... anything.

After I met Richard, in the early 80s, we spoke at cons from time to time. Then, when Toby Roxburgh left Macdonald Futura in late 1987, I had two conversations with Richard, and he offered me the job of running Orbit, Futura's sf and fantasy list. Since I had no full-time experience in publishing, this could well be described as a "brave" decision. I owe my career in publishing entirely to Richard Evans.

He was always known as a writer's editor, and he published first novels by Mary Gentle and Michael Scott Rohan, amongst many others. More recently, he had been in charge of the Victor Gollancz sf list, and published a wonderful variety of authors. He was probably the most enthusiastic editor I've ever met, always happy when talking about books, writers and publishing.

I was lucky enough to consider Richard as a friend. He wasn't only the best and most sensitive editor I've ever met, he also combined intelligence, wit and insight on both a personal and professional basis. The next time I'm in a bar with Richard's many friends we'll be raising more than one glass to an irreplaceable man.

— John Jarrold

### Mary Gentle

THE FIRST TIME I met Richard Evans it was over the phone. He said, "We'd like to publish your book."

He said more than that, but I don't remember it. It was one of those moments that define your life. In the hall of a bedsit house, holding on to a payphone. I was finishing the first year of a degree course – because it had taken me two years to write *Golden Witchweed*, and no one wanted to publish it, and so obviously I wasn't a writer, *A Hawk in Silver* was a long-ago fluke, and I had better get a qualification and a proper job.

And Richard, as a remember it, unflusterable and cautious, said, "Are you still there?" I burred at him. And he was calm and friendly and nice.

We met in person fairly soon after. This was sixteen or so years ago; I don't think he looked much different then than this year. He explained that Arrow were going to publish my book, which he had read from the slush-pile and loved. Maybe at that time I didn't appreciate how few books came off the slush-pile. Richard loved new writers. His commercial sense was spot-on (*Golden Witchweed* was a bestseller), but he was equally interested in building his writers' careers.

There are editorial methods and editorial methods. Richard had a way of walking through the book with you as if it were a country, pointing out the sights you might have missed; of being that other voice in one's head with whom one debates while story-constructing, testing weak spots, admiring strong points, always open to the emotional impact. With the nicest possible way of saying "this bit doesn't work, does it?" Being edited by Richard was a joy, and it happened to me with several books; the last of which, *Ash*, he now won't see published. We were in the middle of things.

Almost the last time I saw Richard, we went through the progress of a synopsis together, and we sat down over lunch together with Lisa, his assistant, and went over ideas for the cover. As ever, Richard was hard-working, sympathetic, alert for scandal, and displayed his wicked sense of humour. The very last time I saw him, he was at the launch party for his sf line, Vista. He was in a suit, and enjoying being teased about it. Then I got a phone call to say that he was dead. I thought – and even months later, I still think – oh, that's interesting. I must tell Richard. People don't die at his age, they just don't. But they do.

I miss him; and when I try to explain exactly why, it occurs to me that no one had a bad word to say about Richard. No one. Not because he was dull or boring, but because he was one of those rare people, a good man. He leaves such loss behind.

— Mary Gentle

## The Rest

**Mark Valentine** *Arthur Machen* (seren [capitalisation sic]; May: £12.95 hb. £6.95 pb; 140pp il.) — Literary biography of the neglected Edwardian fantasist, admired by such diverse people as M. John Harrison, Oscar Wilde, Julian Lloyd Webber, W. B. Yeats, H. G. Wells, and Barry Humphries. Machen wrote the horror novel *The Great God Pan* and *The Hill of Dreams*, translated Casanova, and was a war correspondent during World War I. Valentine is an expert on decadent 19th century literature, with a particular interest in writers such as Machen and Shiel. Available from seren, First Floor, 2 Wyndham Street, Bridgend, CF31 1EF. Add 75p P&P.

**Derek Littlewood & Peter Stockwell** (eds.) *Impossibility Fiction: Alternative – Extrapolation – Speculation* (Editions Rodopi BV, Jun '97; £20 pb (ISBN 90-420-0025-2); \$73 hb (ISBN 90-420-0032-5); 211pp) — Volume of critical essays including one from Victor's Andy Butler, colourfully entitled 'Science Fiction As Postmodernism: The Case of Philip K. Dick'. 'Impossibility fiction' is an 'intergenre' that has recently been the resort of many writers searching for new ways of understanding and expressing the real world of the imagination, making use of fantasy, alternative history and sf. The chapters of this book move towards establishing appropriate readings that allow contemporary readers to negotiate unreality, a skill that the end of the millennium is making inevitably necessary. [Where would we be without academics? — CJT] From Shelley to Dick, Banks to Ballard, taking in African-American sf, *Jurassic Park*, and Kurt Vonnegut, and exploring issues of alternative history and ideology, feminism, the Holocaust, characterisation, and impossible geography, this collection is an important source-book for all those interested in the literature, culture and philosophy of realistic impossible worlds. And never mind the ozymorin.

Available from Editions Rodopi BV, Keizersgracht 302-30, 1016 EX Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Fax +31 (0)20-638-09-48, email P.van.der.Zee@rodopi.nl

**Peter Plevein** *Omron Ra* (Faber, Jul: £7.99 pb; 160pp) — The UK publication of a novel by a new young Russian writer; the book was shortlisted for the Independent Foreign Fiction Award last year. "Trained as a cosmologist for the Soviet space program, the hero of Omron Ra finds that his mission to the moon develops unexpectedly, and builds to a bizarre conclusion."

**Robert Louis Stevenson** *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Everyman, Jul: £1.99 pb)

**A. Susan Williams & Richard Glyn Jones** (eds.) *The Penguin Book of Modern Fantasy By*

*Women* (Penguin: 29 Aug. £8.99 pb, 560pp) — 38 stories dating from 1941 to 1994, a companion volume to *The Penguin Book of Classic Fantasy By Women*. Contributors include Shirley Jackson, Zenna Henderson, Muriel Spark, Hilary Bailey, Lucy Sussex, Christine Brooke-Rose, Leonora Carrington (who also did the cover painting), P. D. James, James Tiptree Jr., Margaret Atwood, Fay Weldon, Lisa Tuttle, Angela Carter, Mary Gentle, Candace Jane Dorsey, Joanna Russ (who also provides an introduction), Ann Oakley, and Suzie McKee Charnas.

**Bram Stoker** *Dracula* (World's Classics: Sep: £2.50 pb, 448pp) — Cheap new edition edited by Maud Eklman, with introduction, bibliography and detailed notes on the text.

**Peter Conway & Roger Highfield** *Frontiers of Complexity* (Faber: Sep: £8.99 pb, 480pp il.) — Non-fiction, an overview of complexity theory. "A serious, scrupulous book that remains sober at intellectually intoxicating altitudes" — *New Scientist*. "Of all the [complexity] tomes squatting on my shelf, this is the one I'd recommend" — *Wired*.

**Manfred Eigen** *Steps Towards Life* (OUP: Sep: £9.99 pb, 192pp il.) — How evolution can be applied to molecules, and how life might have begun (particularly relevant with the recent news from Mars).

**David J. Chalmers** *The Conscious Mind* (OUP: Sep: £22.50 hb, 416pp il.) — (Another) new theory of consciousness from a philosopher. Haven't they got any proper philosophy to do?

★ **Josel & Karel Capek** *R.U.R. and The Insect Play* (Oxford: Oct: £7.99 pb, 188pp) — Two classic play scripts, the first of which gave us the word 'robot'.

**Peter Day** (ed.) *Unveiling the Microcosmos* (OUP: Oct: £10.99 pb, 144pp il.) — Selection of Royal Institution lectures on science and technology from such as Lewis Wolpert and Tony Benn.

**John Carey** (ed.) *The Faber Book of Science* (Faber: Oct: £9.99 pb, 544pp) — Anthology of writings on science.

**Michael Cox** (ed.) *The Oxford Book of 20th Century Ghost Stories* (OUP: Oct: £17.99 hb, 448pp) — Stories by John Wyndham and Angela Carter, among many others.

★ **K. C. Chesterton** *The Man Who Was Thursday* (World's Classics: Oct: £5.99 pb, 224pp) — A wonderfully unclassifiable story. Edited by Stephen Madock, this edition also includes 'A Picture of Tuesday', 'The Book of Job', and 'The Diabolist' as well as a map. Recommended.

**Stephen Braun** *Buzz: The Science and Lore of Alcohol and Caffeine* (OUP: Oct: £17.99 hb, 192pp il.) — Bluergh — a handy guide for con-goers. I would imagine (not that they need any help).

# a decade of clarke's

plau  
kincaid

IT WAS all supposed to be a magazine.

The International Science Fiction Foundation first approached Arthur C. Clarke with the idea of him sponsoring a science fiction magazine. What I can only assume were long negotiations can be summed up as: "No. How about an award?" Which is when the ISFF went to the Science Fiction Foundation, and the Science Fiction Foundation came to the BSFA.

The Foundation knew that there was already a long-established award for science fiction in this country: the BSFA Award. I was then BSFA Administrator so they asked me what I thought of the idea. There were several meetings attended variously by myself and Mike Moor, the BSFA Awards Administrator at the time, and we eventually decided that an award chosen by a panel of judges would complement rather than conflict with the popular-vote BSFA Award.

As for choosing the judges: the three bodies involved in the negotiations actually provided a natural constituency. The BSFA covered fans, critics and writers; the Foundation covered writers, critics and academics; and the ISFF covered academics and scientists. It seemed like the perfect constituency from which to draw a panel of judges who would be seen to have the credentials necessary to get the award off the ground, and yet who would also be seen to be impartial and wide-ranging in their interests in the genre. The Award fairly soon established itself as one of the premier awards in the genre. It may not be as widely known outside the genre as we might like, but it is well enough known that a variety of papers, magazines and local radio stations have increasingly picked up on it.

Of course there has been controversy. It has never been deliberately courted, but at the same time it has never been deliberately avoided. Whenever you get six people with very different backgrounds in and approaches to science fiction all arguing over the book that they think is best – however that word might be defined – you are bound to get disagreement. I don't think any panel of judges has ever been unanimous in its final decision (though equally I don't think any judge has ever failed to accept and support the final decision); so how much more disagreement are you going to get in the sf world at large? Nevertheless, when you look at the books chosen over the first decade of the Award, including the titles that made it on to the shortlists, you get an excellent representation of the most important sf works of the period.

TEN YEARS AGO the Arthur C. Clarke Award was born. Over the next three pages we present the reflections of winners, judges . . . and the current administrator, Paul Kincaid.

Thanks to: Colin Greenland, Paul Kincaid, Roger Robinson for the photographs, all the contributors, and, of course, Arthur C. Clarke for making it possible.

And if the judges have not played safe in their decisions, that is what being a judge is all about. After all, it was not safe to choose a first novel by an unknown author published by a small press no one had heard of: but that book was *Vurt* by Jeff Noon which went on from winning the Award to become one of the most highly-praised and significant debuts of the decade. The Clarke Award does have a very good record when it comes to recognising new talent. After all, first novels by Ken Grimwood, Ian McDonald, David Zindell, Misha, Stephen Baxter, Sue Thomas, Nicola Griffith and Ken MacLeod have all been shortlisted; not a bad way of supporting new talent.

There are small changes in the Clarke Award every year, mostly behind the scenes where you aren't likely to notice. But it's not perfect yet – nothing ever is – so I suspect that I and my successors as Clarke Award Administrator will go on making changes, constantly trying to improve the Award, to make it better known, everything that goes towards making it a true and valuable recognition of the best science fiction published in this country each year. However, there are some things which, I hope, will not change: I hope it will continue to pick books according to the judges' opinion of their quality, not according to fashion or sympathy; and I hope that it will continue to recognise and support the new writers who are capable of writing the most daring and innovative new fiction around.

I think the Award does that better than yet another magazine might have done. Long may it do so.

— Paul Kincaid

rachel  
pollack

IT'S HARD to believe the Arthur C. Clarke Award is ten years old. Winning it certainly had an effect on my reputation, if not necessarily sales. I would say that it helped my book receive more attention from those critics and fans who follow the field closely. It did not, however, seem to help the book find a publisher in this country. Even after winning the Award, *Unquenchable Fire* took some three years to find an American publisher. Such is publishing. And yet, I still would say that the Award is highly respected in this country, at least by critics.

— Rachel Pollack

## Margaret Atwood *The Handmaid's Tale*

— Greg Bear

Samuel R. Delany *Shogun: My Pocket Like Grains of Sand*  
Gayle Forman *Escape Plans*  
Kim Stanley Robinson *The Memory of Whiteness*  
Josephine Saxton *Queen of the States*  
Bob Shaw *The Ragged Astronauts* (runner up)  
Lucius Shepard *Green Eyes*

Judges:

BSFA: Paul Kincaid, Mike Moor  
SFF: John Clute, Edward James  
ISFF: George Hay, Maurice Goldsmith

## George Turner *The Sea and Summer*

— Michael Bishop

Michael Bishop *Ancient of Days*  
John Crowley *EGOT*  
Ken Grimwood *Playboy*  
Stanislaw Lem *Flaco*  
Keith Roberts *Goliath*  
H.F. Saint *Memoirs of an Invisible Man*

Judges:

BSFA: Paul Kincaid, Andy Sawyer  
SFF: Edward James, David Pringle  
ISFF: Maurice Goldsmith, George Hay

## Rachel Pollack *Unquenchable Fire*

— Michael Bishop

Michael Bishop *Philip K. Dick is Dead, Ales*  
Richard Grant *Rainbow of Spring*  
Gwyneth Jones *Waltz*  
Lucius Shepard *The Dying Machine*  
Brian Stablesford *Empire of Fear*  
Ian Watson *Whispers of Babylon*

Judges:

BSFA: Maurice Pocher, Andy Sawyer  
SFF: Mary Gentle, Mazzi Jakubowski  
ISFF: Maurice Goldsmith, George Hay

## THE

Arthur C Clarke

## AWARD

geoff  
ryman

**WINNING THE** Award simply made the work on *The Child Garden* worthwhile – it was a lot of work and I was not sure that it had been worth it until then. That is a heck of a lot of difference to make.

There was some debate if the right book had won. I think there always is. It was water off the proverbial back. Regrettably I couldn't even be there, I was on a job in the Ascension Islands of all the unlikely places. At least I was spared having to make a speech.

To be honest, I don't think awards affect sales all that much. I think they are acknowledgement from fans, critics, the great and the good and the in-between. That would in any case be their real worth.

Thanks again to Arthur C. Clarke for his wisdom in setting up the Award.

— Geoff Ryman



**Geoff Ryman** *The Child Garden*

Jonathan Carroll *A Child Across the Sky*  
Lisa Goldstein *A Map for the General*  
Ian McDonald *Dislocation Road*  
Paul Park *Soldiers of Paradise*  
Mike Resnick *Living*  
David Zindset *Nervousness*

**Judges:**

BSFA: David V. Barrett, Maureen Porter  
SFF: Mary Gentle, Maxim Jakubowski

ISPF: No judges

colin  
greenland

**WINNING THE** Clarke did change my life, in no uncertain terms, though I would have to say I don't think its effect would have been nearly as decisive without the BSFA Award on top, and then the Eastercon Award too. Awards can mean a great deal to an author, professionally and personally.

Of course people should beware of hype. We know that. We all know we shouldn't judge a book by its cover, nor even by the reviews; but there are so many books published now, more and more all the time, that most people are glad of some kind of guidance. The result is, the book most people pick up and take to the till will be: something by somebody they've read before; something by somebody they've seen on telly; something a friend has recommended; or something that's won an award. Bookshops know that, and many make their stock decisions accordingly, the smaller ones especially. And publishers know that, so it pleases them immensely to have an award confirm their judgement in selecting a book; and if they're smart, they start to pay their award-winning author more attention, if not more pennies . . . . . As one editor once explained it to me, most succinctly: "An award sells an author to a publisher."

When I set out to write *Take Back Plenty*, I didn't feel it was a particular departure from my previous books (in fact, *The Hour of the Thin Ox* and *Other Voices* could just as easily have been published as if I'd decided to name the world where they took place). My agent took the outline to every SF publisher in London, and they all turned it down, except Unwin Hyman, who had published the previous three. So I wrote the book in the expectation that the response to

it would be the same as before: respectful reviews, minimal sales. When the book started selling briskly, I began to think I might have broken out of that at last. When I heard it was shortlisted for the Clarke, I was very happy, but I didn't think it really stood much of a chance against *Mary Gentle*, let alone *Iain M. Banks*. When it won, I was truly amazed . . . and afterwards, the effect was to make me feel that I had touched down at last, in a new world, strange but familiar – that there was solid ground under my feet for the work I wanted to go on to do.

— Colin Greenland



**Colin Greenland** *Take Back Plenty*

Iain M. Banks *Use of Weapons*  
Mary Gentle *Rats and Gargoyles*  
K. W. Jeter *Forensic Horizons*  
Mischa Red *Spider, White Wolf*  
Pat Murphy *The City Not Long After*

**Judges:**

BSFA: David V. Barrett, Cecil Nurse  
SFF: Neil Gaiman, Bob Devers  
ISPF: Maureen Porter, Prof. George Teeling-Smith

Chair: Maxim Jakubowski

**Pat Cadigan** *Synners*

Stephen Baxter *Rift*  
Gwyneth Jones *White Cuckoo*  
Paul J. McAuley *Eternity Light*  
Richard Paul Russell *Subterranean Gallery*  
Dan Simmons *The Hyperion Cantos*

**Judges:**

BSFA: Kevin Wren, Cecil Nurse  
SFF: Neil Gaiman, Bob Devers

ISPF: 1

Chair: Maxim Jakubowski



# steve jeffery

IT'S GOOD TO SEE an author gobsacked occasionally. Especially when they've delighted you with a novel that sparks with invention and playful flow of ideas under such seemingly assured control. In the half dozen steps between the front row and the podium all that facility with language compresses into an amazed "Thanks".

And no, they don't have any warning. We are that cruel.

How is the Clarke Award decided? The answer, this year, has to be "with great difficulty". At one point any one of the authors of the shortlisted books could have won. The shortlist is initially drawn up from books nominated and submitted by the publishers - this year some 46 volumes - and a very strong shortlist emerged by a process of nomination, voting and impassioned wrangling during a meeting of the six judges in January. We should have been warned. A strong shortlist, as chairman and administrator Paul Kincaid observed, usually means storing up trouble for ourselves on the day.

Paul was right. From the moment we sat down (the final judging is actually carried out in the afternoon before the presentation, apart from the panel, no one knows what's in the envelope that John Clute will open later in the evening) it looked as if we had evenly split votes right across the shortlist. Maggie hands out copies of this week's *New Scientist*. "Ah, that's alright then," quips Ian Watson, "John Gribbin's already decided for us. We can go down the pub." We bow briefly to Gribbin's superior knowledge, and go back to wrangling for our favourites. What makes a science fiction novel? And what makes this a good science fiction novel? How well does the science work in the context of the story? How good is the story? The writing? Do the characters act... well, in character?

Six judges will have at least six different opinions. They will have their own preferences and those of the bodies they represent. I don't know how often an almost unanimous consensus forms, but this year we must have been as far from it as possible. We take a first vote. This is not a lot of help: the totalled votes split pretty much right across the board. Can we give it to everybody? Paul grins. I get the uncomfortable impression he's enjoying our dilemma.

OK, so a straight vote is out. We're going to have to negotiate some sort of settlement, and just hope nobody minds the blood on the carpet. Slowly, a decision is worked towards by the same process of hard bargaining and spirited defence as that for the shortlist. It is close; at one point we are seriously considering a joint award. Gradually we come to a consensus that pleases everybody; nobody is seriously disappointed. Paul seals the envelope. It is hard fought, but entirely amicable. We don't even leave any blood on the floor.

And if you asked me what the best sf novel of 1995 was, I would happily point to Paul McAuley's *Fairyland*. I would tell you to take a good look at Ken MacLeod's *The Star Fracture* (anybody who can invoke the shade of Gordiano Bruno in a near-future political sf noir thriller has to be somebody to watch for in the future). I'd strongly recommend Neal Stephenson's *The Diamond Age* for its wonderfully subversive incorporation of of fantasy and fairytale within an sf framework. And then I would ask you what you normally read, and recommend at least two other books on, or just off, that shortlist. A fine crop. Best of the year, in fact.

—Steve Jeffery, *SFFA Judge* 1996

## Marge Piercy *Body of Glass*

Jan McDonald, Hearts, Hands and Voices  
Kim Swinley Robinson, *Red Mists*  
Richard Paul Russo, *Destroying Angel*  
Michael Swannick, *Stations of the Tide*  
Sue Thomas, *Correspondence*  
Dale Tuttle, *Lost Futures*  
Conne Wolfe, *Dopemaster Book*

Judges:  
BSFA: Cate Cary, Kim McVeigh  
SFF: Mark Plummer, Maureen Speller  
ISPF: Maurice Goldsmith, Jeff Kipling  
Chair: David Barrett

# paul j mcauley

I'VE HAD THREE novels nominated for the Clarke Award (and several not nominated). *Fairyland* was the first to win, so I'm able to say that, yes, winning is nicer than being nominated, but being nominated is nice too. Awards are good things in so much as they provide a particular focus for the genre, although too often they are confused with career markers, and certain awards (not, I'm happy to say, the Clarke or the John W. Campbell Memorial Award, which are chosen by committee) seem to attract a certain amount of log-roll. I suppose that it's an indication of our genre's invisibility in the mainstream that the Clarke attracts little attention outside the field, but that's neither the fault of those who win it, or those who award it.

I still like *Fairyland* a lot, although it was one of the hardest novels to write simply because it was about the near future, and, therefore, mostly about the present. I don't have any plans for a sequel, although commercially that's what you should do, of course, if you win a prize. The next three novels I'm going to write are about the far future. I'm going to write about the next ten million years of human history from the perspective of creatures who see humans (or what humans have become) as gods. After two years of research on renaissance Florence for *Pasquale's Angel*, and three months just thinking about the near future before starting to write *Fairyland*, I'm going to make everything up. And you know what? It's harder.

—Paul J. McAuley

## Paul J. McAuley *Fairyland*

Patrick Anthony, *Happy Policeman*  
Stephen Baxter, *The Time Ships*  
Ken MacLeod, *The Star Fracture* (runner-up)  
Christopher Priest, *The Prestige*  
Neal Stephenson, *The Diamond Age*

Judges:

BSFA: Steve Jeffery, Dave Langford  
SFF: David Seed, Ian Watson  
ISPF: Maurice Goldsmith, Maggie McDonald  
Chair: Paul Kincaid



## Jeff Noon *Vurt*

John Barnes, *A Million Open Doors*  
Nigel Giffitt, *Ammonite*  
Neal Stephenson, *Snow Crash*  
Michael Sweetwick, *The Iron Dragon's Daughter*  
David Zindell, *The Broken God*

Judges:

BSFA: Cate Cary, Chris Amos  
SFF: Mark Plummer, Maureen Speller  
ISPF: John Gribbin, David Kipling  
Chair: David Barrett

# gwyneth jones

I'VE BEEN ON A judging panel for a science fiction award before, and on a mainstream literary judging panel for South East Arts. I've discovered it isn't as much of a grind as you might expect, so long as the award isn't a really big affair. This isn't like taking on the Booker Prize field. You do the reading, and see if anything really strikes you. You wait for the other judges to tell you their favourites, and you do the same for them. If someone tells you something's really, really, good, when you were not yourself smitten - you read it again, and then you either agree with your fellow judge and nominate the thing; or present an informed argument for why the novel in question belongs at the bottom of the deepest slush pile. If everyone trashes everyone else's choices, then things would be sticky... but this doesn't happen, not generally. A consensus emerges: for most titles the panel broadly agrees on what's good, what should go forward.

As a many-times nominee for different literary awards, I'm convinced it's getting on the shortlist that counts. Any one of the books on a shortlist is a potential winner. After that, it's a matter of happenstance and particular panel's personal preferences. In the year I judged the Tiptree, the frontrunner was very clear from an early stage. Different judges favoured different shortlist candidates, but one book stood out for everyone. I don't know how it will be for the Clarke Award this year, not yet. But I will say, so far the wordcount is dauntingly high, whereas the volume count is low. We have - so far - rather a light entry, but a large proportion of Big Fat Books. Writers should take account of the dangers of being really heavy. Am I going to be favourably impressed by something that broke my toe when I dropped it?

—Gwyneth Jones, *SFF Judge* 1997

# pat cadigan



## Pat Cadigan *Fools*

John Barnes, *Mother of Storms*  
Gwyneth Jones, *North Wind*  
Paul J. McAuley, *Pasquale's Angel*  
James Morrow, *Towing Jehovah*  
Kirstine Kathryn Rutch, *Alien Interiors*

Judges:

BSFA: Chris Amos, Dave Langford  
SFF: Mark Plummer, David Seed  
ISPF: John Gribbin, Maggie McDonald  
Chair: David Barrett

I'VE BEEN TRYING to imagine what my life would be like without the BSFA; it's a fascinating prospect. I mean, I could spend more time with the cats, or stitch needlepoint fanzines, campaign for equal rights for wombats, or start a John Eliot Gardiner fan club. Heavens, I could even spend more time reading books. There was life before the BSFA, but I don't really remember it anymore, it's so long ago. I was in my early twenties when I joined the association, a newly-minted fan who thought that one was supposed to belong to societies like the BSFA but who quickly learned that some things were socially unacceptable in fandom, and that admitting in public that one read and that one belonged to the BSFA were two of them. I thought the tacit prohibition on discussing books was a little odd: after all, wasn't that why we were all here in the first place? But hey, mine not to reason why when I was new on the block.

### Impenetrable

And here the story might have ended. I might have carried on being a member of the BSFA, receiving my mailings (eventually), writing letters occasionally, or I might have left the BSFA altogether. I was, after all, entirely capable of reading a book unaided, I was being busy as a fanzine writer, I didn't need the BSFA at all. I didn't know the people, found the magazines often impenetrable, could have easily saved myself the money and bought more books. But I didn't, because fate had something else in store for me.

That was Paul Kincaid, whom I first met in 1984. Paul was *Vector* Reviews Editor, and I think he was the first fan I knew who admitted to being actively involved with the BSFA. He was also the first fan I ever really talked to about books, and he was of course the person who set me writing literary criticism. Through him I met John and Eve Harvey, also David Barrett and Alan Dorey, and began to get some sense of the BSFA as being real people. I also began reviewing for *Vector* so I was involved in a small way, which I enjoyed. I got a tremendous buzz from seeing my name on reviews and articles.

### Incompetent

The story might have ended at this point, except that I made a mistake in February 1986 while waiting for a lift in the Royal Angus Hotel during *Mexicon 2*, which I was allegedly helping to organise. What I actually said, in response to something Paul had said about the current *Matrix* (which incidentally contained a con report by one Maureen Porter), whose then editor was left to be not exactly exerting himself to the fullest, was 'Good God, even I could do a better job than that.' Unfortunately, David Barrett was also listening and the next thing I knew, I had been asked to edit *Matrix*. Stupidly, I said 'Yes.'

Looking back, I don't think I was a terribly good editor. There was too much I didn't know about the twin crafts of editing and production, and the computer age had barely made its presence felt in Folkestone. It was a constant struggle to get news, to get articles, to get the magazine typed and pasted up. I had never edited a magazine in my life. I hadn't the faintest idea what I was supposed to be doing, and I simply hadn't realised how much work it would involve. Still, this was the BSFA, which had an excellent track record for surviving against all the odds, so one incompetent editor wasn't going to make much difference and somehow I got by. I spent most of my time as editor being deeply dissatisfied with what I'd done. I am a perfectionist by nature, and while people seemed happy with what I was doing, I knew *Matrix* was only a pale shadow of what I wanted it to be. Jenny Glover, and more recently Chris Terran, have taken the magazine much closer to my vision than I ever managed to.

# WHO THE HELL DOES MAUREEN —KINCAID— SPELLER THINK SHE IS?

*The big chief of the BSFA wants to tell you a story. And on the way she might even explain*

## THE MKS SYSTEM

### Symbiotic

I ought to have been editor for a suitable period of time, then stepped down, backed away from the lime-light and left others to get on with it. Unfortunately, I didn't. I mentioned being a perfectionist; I also had a fanish reputation for being efficient, and I liked things to run smoothly and simply, without problems. Working on *Matrix* I had seen that the BSFA had some tremendous organisational problems which needed to be solved, and if no one else was going to do it, I'd better get on with it. Actually, if I have one besetting



*Maureen washes the BSFA's dirty linen*

sin, it's that I can't bear to see things being left in a mess. The upshot was that for the next few years I sporadically tried to sort it out, but because I set myself impossible targets in unreasonable timescales, the whole thing became more than I could cope with, and eventually I decided the time had come to give up.

And there the story should have ended, with graceful retirement. Except that my successors kept coming to consult me, and I found myself sucked inexorably back into the BSFA, becoming its

Administrator again a year or two back. This suggests that either I am a bigger idiot than even I realised, or else that the BSFA and I have developed a curiously symbiotic relationship over the years. I favour the latter option; it's more flattering to me, after all.

### Pointy Ears

When I first got involved, it was just a case of doing what needed to be done, which was editing *Matrix*, or dealing with problems as they arose. During my break from running the BSFA I had had the chance to step back and think about what the BSFA could become. Reading had become more fashionable in fandom even as the interest in media sf had increased. Literary fans felt more beleaguered now as they no longer occupied centre stage in the fanish theatre and it seemed obvious that the BSFA should concentrate on being a literary society. At the same time, it had always been intended that the BSFA should introduce people to fandom, and maybe this rôle could be developed a little more, to show that an active interest in fandom didn't necessarily oblige one to wear pointy ears. Thinking about how difficult I had found it to make contact with like-minded people, I wanted BSFA members to have the chance I'd missed.

The trouble was, I now had two missions. One was to get the BSFA's organisation sorted out; it still had more holes than a dishcloth. The other was to convince people that the BSFA was worth joining, that we were the people to come to if you liked reading sf and wanted to find out more about fandom. Initially, I think I was more successful with the latter, by dint of turning up at conventions and running stalls in the dealers' rooms, trying to place adverts, get flyers distributed, by simply talking about the BSFA. (In the old days I never really talked about the BSFA because I was so acutely aware of its shortcomings, shortcomings that outsiders probably never noticed, and consequently must have seemed quite secretive about it all.) There is always more to do, obviously, but I am very pleased with what I've done so far. The 1996 Worldcon was a particular high point.

### Agony

But the internal organisation has always been a problem: there's too much fire-fighting even now, though these days there are other people helping to put out the flames, and I think we are much closer to sorting it all out. In practice, this means your mailings arrive on time. But it's too easy for what is essentially a small part of our activities, something the Committee takes care of, to dominate proceedings for everyone, and that's something I want to avoid this time around. When we were discussing this piece, Chris asked me why I put myself through all this agony when I could be doing something else. I suppose I could say I run the BSFA because I have a reputation for efficiency and some idea of how an organisation ought to run, but that's probably of no interest to 80% of you, and I am not sure I believe it myself. The reason I stick with the BSFA is quite simple: I like reading; I like reading sf and fantasy, and fantastic literature. I like writing about it, I like discussing it with other people. I want to share my enthusiasm with other people and I want to show people outside fandom that there is more to sf than pointy ears and *The X-Files*, and to give them a taste of what they're missing. And I want to show them that fandom can be fun. If the BSFA could have done that for me when I joined, I think my life would have been very different.

And oh, all right, I run the BSFA because I don't want to spend more time with my cats. I don't have the patience to cross-stitch a fanzine, who cares about equal rights for wombats, and John Eliot Gardiner is doing very nicely without my help, thank you.

—Maureen Kincaid Speller

# id4

john ashbrook and andy mills on

## INDEPENDENCE DAY

john ashbrook

**WHAT IS THERE LEFT** to say about *id4*? Firstly, in case you haven't got the gag, the nomenclature *id4* is actually an abbreviation of 'Independence Day, 4th of July'. As it was released on 9 August in this country, it should be *id9*. But who's counting?

The Accountants! Last time I checked, the film had made \$260 million in the US alone. It is earning money twice as fast as its nearest competitor (*Mission: Impossible*) and faster even than *Jurassic Park*, the biggest money-maker of 'em all.

Why has the film become such a phenomenon? Patriotism. Independence Day is a unique American holiday, symbolising their individualism and their perception of their own greatness. Any film which took that symbol as its title was guaranteed to get attention. But the patriotism on display in the film isn't as uncomplicated as many commentators would have you believe.

True, the makers' claims that the film is about the gathering together of the Brotherhood of Man is insupportable tosh; it's really about America continuing to tell the world what to do.

Despite the fact that we are told, early on, of thirty-six alien destroyers entering our atmosphere, we only follow the exploits of the three on the American mainland. These three take out at least two cities each, so what of the other sixty-six cities and hundreds of millions of casualties world-wide? They don't matter, they ain't American.

America alone takes action (however futile) against the invaders; the other airforces of the world are cowering in the deserts of the Middle East, waiting for someone to tell them what to do.

Obviously, then, *id4* is an unashamed love-letter to the United States.

But let us look at the other side of this argument:

Stand-up guy President Bill Pullman dithers for the film's first act, allowing Washington, LA, and New York to be levelled. His indecision has cost the country millions of lives, not least that of his wife. Society, needing no second bidding, promptly collapses. In this moment of greatest need, he has failed his people.

In a less than statesmanlike knee-jerk reaction, based on his revulsion of the aliens, he sanctions a nuclear strike on them, thereby rendering the smouldering remains of Houston uninhabitable for the next ten thousand years or so. In fact, until he gives up his Presidency and climbs back into a fighter cockpit, he hardly makes any productive decisions of his own. What a great leader of men.

His "We will not go quietly into the night" speech, which had Brits gagging, was, I urge you to recall, actually written by a German. Emmerich was parodying American patriotism, not promoting it. That scene would, I suspect, have every God-fearing Yank on his feet cheering, while we over here can feel entirely justified on our backs laughing at it.

America: land of the free, home to mom and apple pie and the White Anglo-Saxon President. How would the typical American redneck - Republican, red-meat eater - feel, knowing that America (and, less significantly, the whole wide world) could only be saved by a hippie Jew and a street-smart black guy who's married to a stripper? It is not saved by the President. The Destroyer is smegged by an alcoholic, paranoid drop-out. It is not smegged by the President.

America's conservative attitudes are shattered in *id4*. It makes no bones about the fact that The System, for all its sophistication, doesn't work. The old-boy network has defeated itself. The vibrancy in American culture is not provided by the establishment, by the white middle classes. The ideas, the energy, and the determination all come from wherever you least expect them... like Germany, for example.

Because the canvas is so big, *id4*'s messages have been slapped on with a yard-brush. Some of them are more conspicuous than others, some are more well-defined. For me, it is a film about multi-racial nations and the pressures of ignorance and hatred that build within them, but it takes a utopian view of them, insisting - with anti-90s optimism - that adversity brings out the best in people, if they let it. Maybe it nudges the oppressed people of the world into an understanding of oppression, into sympathising with the oppressed. Even if it is only for the duration of the film.

Hidden beneath the bright lights and fireworks you will find more than a series of extraordinarily beautiful special effects sequences. You will find more than a chimera of *War of the Worlds*, *Star Wars*, *Earthquake* and *V*, you will even find more than a hyperthyroid roller-coaster ride. You will find a film with a beating heart, worn on a smartly tailored sleeve.

Reduced to the small screen, *Independence Day* will, I have no doubt, look anachronistic, even foolish in its earnestness; but on the big screen, with booming stereo sound, 1,000 square feet of screen, and an appreciative audience, it is a sensual experience without parallel in recent cinema.

Between the first and second times I saw this film, nothing changed... except NASA reported evidence of life on Mars. Think about it....

—John Ashbrook

ALLEN ASHLEY

# THE PLANET SUITE

Each successive astronaut has gazed back and found our magic, marbled a little less blue. The Moon landings offered a promise which is never likely to be delivered. Maybe the only solar system we can explore is as a concept and collection of myths, ideas and images of Venus, Mars, Mercury and so forth: to wit, the planets in our heads...

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Cover artwork by Dave Mooring.

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## television

## American Gothic

IF YOU WERE TO BELIEVE the hype, this is the sf movie you have to see, the one with the greatest special effects ever, the one which has the world all but destroyed, the blockbuster to end all blockbusters. So does the hype match the reality of the viewing? Well – yes and no.

Let's get the plot out of the way first (not that this will take too long: straightforward is the operative word here). A huge unidentified object appears in the solar system. Whilst scientists are still scratching their heads as to what it is, smaller (relatively speaking, but still miles in diameter) parts break away to take up position above the Earth's major cities. So, there are aliens out there, and they've arrived. Are they friendly? Well, they haven't

## andy mills

answered any attempts at communication, and if their strategy thus far hasn't worried people they should get the message (as it were) when the alien craft over Washington destroys helicopters which are deploying flashing welcome beacons – in a nod to *Close Encounters* – at the hovering craft. Too late, Jeff Goldblum's warning to President Bill Pullman has been heard and heeded – the aliens have been using Earth's own satellite system to synchronise an attack on the planet.

Cue the city-busting special effects, which are indeed impressive: Washington is destroyed, and all attempts to strike back at the alien craft are thwarted when it is discovered that the ships are each protected by an impenetrable force-field. Things look grim.

But at least the President's escaped. He ends up in a secret installation where we discover that the USAF have indeed been harbouring a craft from Roswell – which is still operational. Goldblum figures that if he can use this craft to get inside the mothership he can implant a computer virus which will disrupt the force-fields long enough to allow the hovering ships to be attacked. It's do or die, with the fate of the Earth itself in the balance.

This is a film which has no ambiguity in it to confuse the audience. The aliens have absolutely no redeeming features. Their attack is unprovoked and without warning. A captured alien, interrupted from wiping out the scientists examining him, telepathically informs the President that there can be no negotiation, they intend to wipe out humanity. It's *Us versus Them* with only one winner allowed.

So on the whole we have an updated version of *The War of the Worlds*, even down to the 1900s version of the downfall of the invader – a virus. The ensemble cast provide excellent performances (particularly Jeff Goldblum) from a well-crafted script, and the entire film is edge-of-the-seat thrills, laced with no little humour (though with rather too much gung-ho and 'God Bless America' for my taste). And yes, the special effects are very good, most especially the attack on Washington. They are not perfect, however: the downed and burning spaceships at the end look dodgy, and consider how perfect is the formation flying of the US fighters! But the film does collapse if any reasoned analysis is applied to it. For instance, why was the alien mothership not discovered earlier? Why did the military fail to pick up the alien signalling? Why does no one consider using ballistic missiles on the aliens? Why (apart from allowing the Yanks a way into the mothership) do the aliens send their own fighters out to attack the USAF planes, when the latter are unable to hurt the alien craft? And, of course, what is all that gobbledook about introducing a virus into the alien system?

Yes, *Independence Day* is great fun and a must-see and will probably be judged to be one of the best sf films of the year. But... well, you do have to put your brain in neutral whilst watching it. Would you consider buying an sf book which carried the same caveat? Perhaps more than anything this exemplifies the difference between science fiction books and movies....

— Andy Mills

Since we are now slightly more than halfway through its run, it does appear to be an appropriate time to assess this late evening – cult? would-be cult? – offering from the States.

In a quiet\* Southern town called Trinity, the main man is Sheriff Lucas Buck (played with panache by Gary Cole). Lucas controls most of everything and everyone, by means mundane – acting as unofficial town bank to buy favours and loyalty – as well as supernatural. The person he really wants to control is young orphan Caleb Temple (Lucas Black), who is actually his bastard son. The Sheriff plays for Caleb's soul but is opposed by Merlyn (Caleb's dead sister, who appears as a ghost to Caleb and Lucas alone), the beautiful journalist Gail Emory (Paige Turco), who is Caleb's cousin and who believes Lucas is responsible for her parents' deaths, and the good young doctor Matt Crower (Jake Weber).

It's very clear that *American Gothic* wants to be the *Twin Peaks* of the Nineties; thus far it is failing, though the failure is interesting – sometimes exciting – to watch. The first episode over-emphasised the supernatural elements – something *Twin Peaks* was careful to avoid – and of course the ghost is a constant reminder of these. Along with occasionally sharp dialogue the strength of the series lies in the playing by the lead characters, especially that of Gary Cole and the young Lucas Black, who are both brilliant in their roles. Also worthy of mention is Brenda Bakke as sexy but lonely Selena, Caleb's schoolteacher and Lucas's part-time girlfriend. The programme itself hinges on Sheriff Buck and his means of manipulating people by leading them to their downfall. His evil is ambiguous: he may be the bad guy and want total authority over his town, but he can also act for it and its people's benefit. Moreover, the fate he leads his victims to is one created by themselves – for instance, by their greed. The fun of the programme often lies in seeing how he twists people's desires to his own interest.

The big problem thus far is that having created the base scenario the programme makers do not seem to know where it is heading. *Twin Peaks* had at its heart a mystery, the death of Laura Palmer, which needed solving. Here the mystery is Lucas Black himself, but we're no nearer learning about who or what he really is than we were on day one, nor is there any indication that Gail or Matt are doing any keen searching. Instead, too much reliance is placed upon the perceived need for each individual episode to stand alone, with the resulting loss of both continuity and consistency. Still, it's kept me watching each and every Wednesday evening, and doubtless I'll be following *American Gothic* to its conclusion.

— Andy Mills

\*We are supposed to consider Trinity to be a quiet backwater, but undoubtedly the town's undertakers are flourishing.

Hodder & Stoughton have kindly donated some Stephen King merchandise and copies of *Rose Madder*, and in an effort to get rid of it all here's a little sf trivia quiz. After rejecting "Name two decent films made from Stephen King books" as far too difficult, I came up with these:

- ① What's the connection between Stephen Baxter's *The Time Ships* and the Beatles' Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album?
- ② Which composer has a walk-on part in Robert Holdstock's *Lavondyss*?
- ③ Give the odd one out, and explain why: Robert Randall; Cyril Judd; Jack Yeovil; Eando Binder; Michael Barrington.
- ④ Who wrote a novella based on the hit computer game *Elite*?
- ⑤ What is Stephen King's most famous pseudonym?

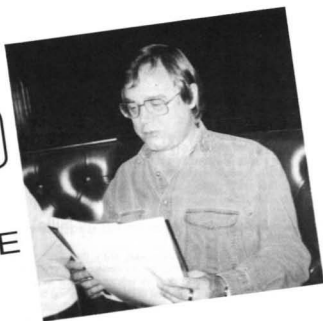
**Tie-breaker:** Get as many Stephen King titles – novels or stories or films – as you can into a meaningful sentence. The 'e', 'a' and 'an' can be omitted. Simple example: "It can't stand misery".

Send all entries to: Matrix, 9 Beechwood Court, Back Beechwood Grove, Leeds. LS4 2HS by 1 November 1996.

competition  
stephen king

# mining the InterZone

DAVID  
PRINGLE  
interviewed



LAST YEAR Intersection honoured InterZone. Britain's leading science fiction magazine, with a Hugo. The magazine also reached its hundredth issue. For most of that time the editor and publisher has been David Pringle, who has built on its small beginnings as a quarterly in 1982.

Born in 1950 in Selkirk, in the same house as the fantasist and critic Andrew Lang, Pringle combines a boyish enthusiasm for sf with a strong critical sense: he's variously edited game tie-in books and the recent *St James's Guide to Fantasy Writers*, and is particularly interested in J. G. Ballard. He also wrote the immensely useful and entertaining *Imaginary People: A Who's Who of Modern Fictional Characters*, of which a second edition has just been published. He's been with InterZone since its start, one of the original octet of collective editors. The collective shrank over the first few years, until by 1988 only Pringle remained.

Many of today's most successful British and Commonwealth authors started their publishing careers in InterZone: names such as Stephen Baxter, Eric Brown, Greg Egan, and Paul McAuley. There are many others. It's no exaggeration to claim, as *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* does, that InterZone 'has been largely (if not solely) responsible for catalysing a second new wave of UK sf.' It is difficult to imagine what British sf would be like without it.

But like all magazines, times are tight. When I met David in the Victoria pub in Leeds (home to the prestigious Leeds Pub Piano Competition), on a sunny Sunday evening in late August, he was accompanied by his wife Ann and InterZone Deputy Editor Lee Montgomerie. I started by asking him:

*How has winning the Hugo affected InterZone, particularly in the States?*

I'm afraid winning the Hugo doesn't seem to have altered the subscription position at all. It might have helped us lose fewer... we've certainly had some new American subs but they haven't been so numerous as to change the overall balance. I think we've been on a declining subscription base since we did our last big subscription campaign, funded by the Arts Council. The trouble with those campaigns is that although they may work at the time, the kind of new subscribers you get – not all of them, but some of them – are flaky ones who don't renew after the end of the first year. A higher proportion of them don't renew than is normal with our core subscribers. So I think because we haven't been able to renew those campaigns the magazine's gradually got a lower profile over the last three or four years, so it's been gradually declining – the subscription base has been going down. So I think winning the Hugo may have arrested that decline a bit, but it hasn't actually lifted us up.

*No noticeable effect on newsstand sales?*

No. Unfortunately not. Having 'Hugo Winner' on the cover may have helped sell a few more we

wouldn't have sold, but it's certainly not pushed it up... it may have just helped keep it steady. It's not widely seen – the magazine's not so widely distributed that people see it who are not looking for it, and so get a chance to buy it. Except in specialist shops: if you walk into Forbidden Planet or somewhere and see it then that may have some effect because the people who walk into Forbidden Planet are inclined to be interested in sf. But in general, newsagents... we don't get many sales.

*Smiths in Leeds does display it very prominently; it's in the first section you come to, with Fortean Times and things like that.*

Excellent... there has always been this tendency for Northern cities to sell it better than Southern ones. You can't see InterZone on sale very easily in London unless you go to a specialist shop.

## text and pictures:

chris terran

This being Leeds, various members of the Leeds Group started to drift in. First to arrive was D. West, and after a game of 'Whose Round Is It Anyway?' we continued, pints of Telleys before us.

*Do you detect any particular trends in current British sf?*  
There's always something, isn't there? Umm... just trying to think...

*Well, you're in a very good position to see it, even the stuff you reject, of course.*

Just the obvious ones, that everybody knows about by now... lots of virtual reality stories, but that's been going on for ten years. There's an increasing tendency for alternative worlds stories, alternate timelines. Again, that's not new. There's a little bit of feminist cyberpunk, not so much in InterZone – maybe we'd like to have some in InterZone... I've noticed it in some new books being published. People were saying two or three years back 'cyberpunk's dead, cyberpunk's a bad idea' –

*They were saying that in 1984...*

Ha! Well, 'cyberpunk's something for the boys', is one of the things that was said... and yet, there's so many women writing it. Not just Pat Cadigan, but a lot of other newer, younger American women.

*Any British ones?*

Well, there's Wilhelmina Baird. She's actually a middle-aged British writer, who started writing in her forties or whatever... fifties even, I think she's over

50. She's writing cyberpunk. And quite a few of the newer women writers in America – there's a woman called Sage Walker, and there are several others – and the fact that women are doing this says a lot, I think, for cyberpunk. It wasn't such a male-dominated thing as people said. Just because Bruce Sterling was male, and a bit macho with it, Texan and all that, everybody thought it was boys' games. But it wasn't. I think it was more important than that.

*It was a surprise to see Wilhelmina Baird in the Waterstones promotion. A totally new name, at least in this country, though she's had some things out in America. She's had three novels, I think, out in the States – maybe four now – and only the first two have appeared in Britain. Penguin are a bit slow in publishing her books over here, but I think they're doing them all.*

*Are there any taboos in current sf? Anything that people won't touch?*

Lee: I don't think there are any taboos that people won't touch.

Well, is there anything you'd like to see that isn't being written about?

I'll just give the ordinary boring answer, and that is science. I'd like to see more science fiction, with the stress on science, not mean necessarily Nivenesque hard sf à la *Analog*, so much as just more good, well-written... radical hard sf. More stuff of the sort that's written by the best people (in my opinion) – people like Paul McAuley and Greg Egan, who've got real science backgrounds. Brian Stableford, for that matter. People who know a thing or two about science, and who can also write imaginatively.

*Is there anybody new coming up?*

Well, a lot of these people have been new since InterZone's been going. McAuley and Egan were new writers a few years ago. And there are still new people coming along: the most recent new writer we've published, I suppose, is this guy called Dominic Green, whose second story is in the next issue of InterZone, number 112. His first story was in 109, I think. Now I don't know whether he's got a science background, but he's certainly got ideas, and he's lively. You remember his first story, Lee, the one about the Catholics? Very funny about Catholicism and religion in general. And it had a bit of biology in it, didn't it? About cloning Christ's foreskin...

What stories are you sick and tired of? Anything you definitely don't want to see anymore?

Ha... the trouble with these sort of questions is we've been going for fifteen years. When you start a magazine, after the first two or three or four years you start getting blasé about things you don't want to ever see again, and after fifteen years... you get thick-skinned. Do you not agree, Lee?

Lee: I agree. But I wish the people who send in stories issue after issue and don't get them published would just give up after about ten years.

[This drew some cynical laughter.]

That's a bit unkind....

Lee: It's a true thought, isn't it? Don't you feel that?

It's true in a few cases, but it's not true of that many. I've noticed there are some people who have been very persistent senders of manuscripts, who've been rejected unfortunately. But they don't tend to keep on for ten years... they tend to go in phases. You may get six or eight or ten manuscripts from them over a couple of years, and then they stop, and you don't hear from them.... Although in some cases, of course, we then end up publishing one. There are one or two writers we've published after ten or a dozen submissions in some cases.

But basically, after a long time you've seen it all. You've seen all the usual clichés, and so it's very hard to start trotting them out in any particular order. We're just looking for imagination, things that are new, or things are done afresh. Often the themes and ideas in stories we publish – or stories that anybody publishes – are not spanning new. It's very, very hard to come up with a whole new idea in sf nowadays. It's been very hard for a long time, it's been very hard for decades to come up with a new idea, although some occasionally do. But the main thing is, can people write? We're looking for good writing. Can they give us a good story on whatever theme or idea they have.

What about 'radical hard sf'?

Well, that slogan was coined over ten years ago; it was about the same time as cyberpunk was beginning to take off, and what we meant by it was fortunately the same thing. Or much the same thing, or something very similar. People like Bruce Sterling – he used the phrase 'radical hard sf' a few times – seemed to mean by that the same thing as he meant by cyberpunk. So I'll take his word for it. But basically when I coined the phrase what I meant was... we were trying to get away from the post-New Wave tendency in 70s sf....

Lee: It was very hard to stop getting very 'literary' submissions.

Yeah... we didn't particularly want over-literary submissions. We wanted well-written things, but what we were trying to get away from was... In the 70s and early 80s, the post-New Wave period, people were tending not to write science fiction. They were tending to write other things, imaginative fiction of various kinds, but not sf. And the idea that you could write a story about space travel, or any of the traditional hard-edged themes of sf, anything with high-tech in it, that idea was regarded as being only the province of *Analogue*, and a few writers like Larry Niven. So what I meant in the phrase 'radical hard sf' was, let's try and have sf that is radical, and New-Wavey – or post-New-Wavey – something that is literary, but... let's think of doing hard sf in those styles, in those fashions, with those attitudes. Hard sf with a radical, or literary, or New-Wavey attitude. Marrying the two, New Wave and hard sf, which seemed poles apart. Marry the two, then you've got something you can call radical hard sf.

But that phrase was overtaken by cyberpunk, which is, in effect, the same thing. Cyberpunk, you could

say, was – at its best, in Gibson – an ideal marriage of late 60s, early 70s New Wave, and hard sf. Like Heinlein wrote – you know, Gibson's actually in the Heinlein tradition, but with a New Wave sensibility.

[I raised an eyebrow at this, Gibson's knowing cynicism having life in common with Heinlein's rigid simplicities, I feel. But David demurred.]

I think... I think he is. Slightly.

Do you see *Interzone* as having any particular editorial philosophy these days?

Well, that's what we were calling for ten years ago, and it's still in a sense what we're calling for now. The phrase is out of date, but the attitude... let's get the best of sf, together with the best writing possible, is basically what we're still trying to do. And I think in some people, like Greg Egan, you get that. I think Greg Egan represents the ideal... but I don't want to overstate just him, because after all there are other good writers there, doing stuff for us and elsewhere. But he's a good example to point of somebody who does have quite a literary sensibility and an ability to write well, and stylishly, and even poetically at times; and yet he knows his science, and he's using it. His stories are science-based. They are hard sf. They might not be hard sf as some *Analog* fans would recognise it, but they're certainly hard sf as far as *Interzone*'s concerned, and, I hope, a lot of the sf readership.

[After some discussion of Greg Egan – who not only lives on the wrong side of the world, he lives on the wrong side of Australia, in Perth – we turned to ancient history.]

The manner of *Interzone*'s founding caused some controversy in certain quarters – is any of that hostility still around? How do you feel about it all these years on?

Every year or two it seems to rear its ugly head. I'm told, by Dave Langford most recently, that there are one or two people in fandom who are still going around grumbling that *Interzone* was founded by fanish funds. Well, it was in part... he knows. [Pointing at D. West] You were actually on the bloody committee that decided to do it [laughter]. D. was on the Yorcon 2 Committee which decided to devote its funds to starting a magazine, fifteen years ago. Now it's possible somebody like Alan Dorey did know of complaints at the time. Because Alan was one of our number at the time, and he was the Chairman of the BSFA at the time, so he might have known more than I did. But to tell the honest truth, I have no personal awareness of any complaints or bad feeling at the time, in 1981 or 82. Nothing. And then years later, I hear these stories from people like Dave Langford that one or two people in fandom are going around saying... well.

Lee: Simon [Ounsley] might know about it. Ask him when he turns up.

Simon might know more than me. Alan almost certainly would have known, if anybody knew, at the time... I was blissfully ignorant of the fact that anybody was complaining. So it surprises me all these years later to hear that there are still one or two

people who are unhappy. If it grumbles on and on for years and years I think the reason is because the few people who are concerned about it – and presumably were concerned back in the early 80s, although they didn't tell me – are the kind of people who run conventions. They are a fairly influential part of fandom; there may be only half a dozen of them, I don't know how many people there are, but they're people who have a certain influence. What you might call 'hard fandom'. Therefore, that's what keeps it alive. Do you know any more than I do?

Lee: No... what I know I know from Simon, so Simon's probably the person to ask.

Yeah, Simon's more involved with fandom than the rest of us. D. here knows everything but he's not saying....

[D. sips his beer enigmatically.]

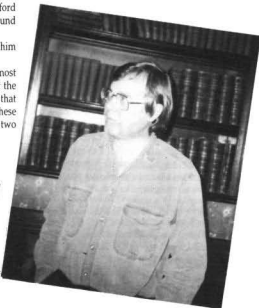
How do you see *IZ* in relation to fandom at large? Do you carry *Interzone*, though in a slightly de-fanned way....

Well, people who are hard-core fans can get *Ansible*. So obviously, the whole point of doing a version in *Interzone* is for other people, for the wider and more general audience. People who read *Interzone* but don't happen to read any fanzines or know how to get hold of Dave Langford or *Ansible*.

Dave Langford de-fans it, not me. He bases it on his own *Ansible*, he shapes it each month for how he wants to see it in *Interzone*. So it's his own judgement, his own good taste – or bad taste! – that results in what you see. And people seem to like it: the readers of *Interzone* vote for it as the best non-fiction item every year, and they have done since it started.

As for our relationship to fandom... I'm just trying to run a science fiction magazine. Fandom doesn't have to have anything to do with it. I would like to think that fandom would like to have something to do with it. I'd like to think that every person who thinks of himself as an sf fan in Britain would read *Interzone*. But we're not there for fandom in particular; we're there for science fiction, for British science fiction readers and writers. We're there to provide a market for people like Eric Brown, Keith Brooke, and anybody else who comes along and wants to write sf, whether or not they come from a fanish background. All that matters is, can they write? Have they got ideas? Some of our writers come from fanish backgrounds, many don't.

It's very, very hard to come up with a whole new idea in sf nowadays.



I've got nothing against fans, but on the other hand I resent slightly the implication that fandom's against us for some reason. I can't see why we're in any way harming fandom, or why fandom should feel resentful against us. We're just producing a magazine! It's the only one going... we're just trying to keep going, to be a centre for sf short story publishing in Britain. Which I think we have succeeded in being for the last fifteen years. And we just want to carry on doing that. If somebody else wants to come along and start a magazine which will rival *Interzone*, good luck to them. They have tried, umpteenth times. I'm not trying to say that anybody shouldn't, I think the fact that nobody else has succeeded beyond a handful of issues is probably because there just isn't a big enough market. It's not that we're somehow excluding others... it's just that I don't think the potential is there in this country. If you can sell to the whole world, then maybe another magazine could thrive... maybe *Interzone* could thrive more than it has been doing if it could sell more abroad. But in this country, in Britain, I think we're knocking our head against the ceiling already. We are, *Interzone* is, and anybody else who comes along will find the same problem. Beyond produced three issues, and is complaining that W. H. Smiths returned most of the copies; therefore he [editor David Pile] has not produced his fourth issue, although he says it's still coming out. If he'd spoken to me about W. H. Smiths I'd have warned him beforehand. They don't sell most of the copies because - well, partly because maybe they are doing bad things like not putting them on the shelves prominently enough - but apart from that, there just is a limit to the number you can sell through newsagents in Britain. People don't want a fiction magazine, outside of the relatively small number of sf readers.

Well, you've got a reputation now; if people want good British of they know where to come to. Yeah, any magazine that wants to establish itself has got to build up confidence over a number of years, a number of issues. If you're not seen to be producing more than three or four or five issues, you'll never build confidence. You've just got to keep going, you've got to grit your teeth and keep going. Basically what we did was what something like *Beyond* needs to do: to get fantasies about selling 10,000 or 20,000 of your first two issues from Smiths... you'll never do it. No fiction magazine - I'm not saying a non-fiction magazine couldn't do it, with The X-Files all over the cover or something; some of them have to have done that - but, a fiction magazine with short stories in is never going to sell 10,000 through Smiths. It just isn't going to happen. Not unless it's maybe backed up by a hugely expensive advertising campaign on television or something. Even then it'd be doubtful. Was there a critical period near the start, after about three or four issues?

Lee: It's constantly a critical period....

The first two or three years were difficult. But then it was small, it was only quarterly; it's monthly now; it's got a momentum going. We almost died between our third and fourth issues. Issue four was very badly delayed: six months went by, I think, between issues three and four, and it was meant to be quarterly. And that's about the time Malcolm Edwards was in; he dropped out just after issue four.

D. West asks, mischievously: Did he fall or was he pushed....

He, er, jumped. He went on to better things. [St editor at Gollancz and now HarperCollins.] The irony is he had a story in issue four, which went on to win the BSFA Award [After-images]; his one published short story, and it was quite good. And I thought, issue four's bound to be out Real Soon Now because it's got Malcolm's own story in it. Weeks went by, months went by and he wasn't publishing it; it was all in his hands in London. I said, what's going on? And then he said, well, I'm not going to do any more after this next issue. Fair enough - he was busy doing work for Gollancz and things - and I felt, but you've still got to get that issue out, Malcolm; it's got your story in it, you want to see it published, don't you? So anyway, that was late, for various reasons. And then there was a bit of a crisis because I had to take over handling everything to do with the subs and so on, because Malcolm had been doing that. It was just all kind of dumped on me in issue five. But from then on it's been a slow build-up, from issue five to the present.

Do you think the collective idea was unworkable?

It was unwieldy. In an ideal world it'd be workable, but in practice, with people with other interests and trying to make livings and so on, obviously it's unwieldy. Especially if they live far apart - some of us in Leeds, some in London, some in Brighton as I am. Since issue five, we've never actually missed an issue or been seriously late.

Although some claimed that the 'swap' issue - the Million issue - was....

We swapped twice. We did the Million issue and the Aboriginal issue. We got some complaints - I only actually got a small handful of letters of complaint, three or four people as I recall. The only problem with that was that Million didn't publish fiction, so it was mainly a non-fiction issue. That's what they were complaining about. But my feeling was that with twelve issues a year, you can play with one of them. The redesign a few years back got off to a controversial start - you had a bit of flak about that, but it seems to have settled down now.

That was the third swap issue, wasn't it - we did an issue with Paul Brazier's *Nexus*. Issue 88, I think... yeah, that turned out badly. But I think it's settled down since then. The typeface that Paul was using with issue 88 and a few issues afterwards was not popular, and I didn't like it either. But I think we've solved that.

How important do you think artwork is in the zine? Do covers make a difference to sales?

I think the covers are important. But it's hard to tell if they make a difference in sales; probably marginally. I think artwork's important, and I often feel a bit guilty about it - I think I ought to make more effort.

Would you like to be able to carry some colour internal artwork, like you did with the Aboriginal issue?

Oh sure, everybody would love to have internal colour, it's just that it's hideously expensive. If you get lots of advertising for sports cars and things then it's easy to afford it. But given that the only advertising we get is from book publishers and even then it's very hard to get, there's very little of it... we can't afford it to have colour. We'd have to sell a lot more copies, we'd have to either get a lot more advertising or sell twice as many copies as we're currently selling to make it viable. But then most of the people - certainly our regular readers, our core readers - say they don't particularly want colour. They want words, they want print on the page, they want text. We're giving it to them, and that's what they want.

Is there any reason you didn't go for a digest size?

A digest size might help with the traditional sf fans, but it certainly wouldn't help with selling it in Smiths in Britain. How many digest magazines do you see around on sale in Britain? But when it first started out I was in favour of the idea, but we found printing it - on a small print run, anyway - was actually more expensive. When you come to compare the costs of *Asimov's* as against the costs of *Omnibus*, then *Asimov's* is cheaper than *Omnibus*, but in both cases we're talking about something which is, in the case of *Asimov's*, up to 100,000 copies; and in the case of *Omnibus* it was producing up to a million copies. But on a small scale, anything with a spine, anything book-shaped is actually more expensive to produce. Digests on the whole are an old-fashioned form dating back to the 1940s and 50s, they're just not what magazines look like nowadays. That's why when new magazines like *SF Age* start up in the States, they tend to be large format. The only digests around are the old traditional ones like *F&SF*, *Analog*, *Asimov's*. *Asimov's* is probably the last successful digest launch I've ever heard of, and that was 1977.

Any future plans?

We just want to carry on publishing lots of *Interzone*s, stories and things. We're currently actively looking in to the possibility of having a Web page for *Interzone*, to draw in new readers from around the world. We hope! But it depends on getting it right. Tasters, come-ons, whatever we need to do. As I say, it's a matter of getting it right, finding how to do it well so it's not just another Web page with a few boring addresses on for people to contact us.

Thank you very much.

— Chris Terran

[Thanks to Lee Montgomery]

## mailbox extra

From Ian Brooks

76 Barn Gate, Trowbridge, Wilts, BA14 7JZ  
Just a quick note of appreciation for the new look *Matrix* - by far the most professional looking layout for years. ☺  
Many thanks! Though design is important, it's only a carrier - it's the contents that matter, after all, and some feedback on that aspect from the great silent majority of BSFA members would be very welcome indeed. If only to reassure a worried editor that the postman still knows where he lives... — Chris

From Colin Greenland

98 Sharnon Street, Cambridge, CB1 2QA  
*Matrix* is getting better and better. John Ashbrook is a definite asset, and seems to strike the right tone, while the design (including the clever headings - Scribble, Scribble, Scribble! I particu-

larly like) distinguishes clearly amongst the 13,000 separate pieces of fascinating information you somehow get onto each page.

I see I've missed the deadline again, [Not quiet! — Chris] largely because I was sitting on various Cornish beaches and in various Cornish pubs when the mailing arrived. In any case, they haven't given us much notice, but I thought you should see the enclosed. [A flyer on October's *Fabula* 96 in *Cybermagick*; see the Events page what a mess!] — Chris] Brian, Harry & Fred and Bruce - what a historical meeting that should be.

Thanks for printing news of *The Plenty Principle*. I see I should have mentioned that 'The Secret Origin of the Zodiac Twins' is in fact my story 'In the Garden', as all members of Novacon 21 will remember from the 1991 *GoH* special edition. The new

Tabitha Jute story, 'The Well Wishers', is an adventure from her early days with her antiquated space-barge, the *Alice Liddell*, and takes place in a dead-end artists' colony on a moon of Uranus.

On the way back from Cornwall we dropped in on Jim Burns, who proudly showed me a piece of white hardboard which will very soon, he assured me, be my cover painting. It's a fascinating project. As anyone knows who looked in the convention artshows and compared the original painting for *Seasons of Plenty* with the actual printed cover, Jim is as addicted to repainting as I am to rewriting, so what we've dreamed up is a painting across time: a single image that will begin on *The Plenty Principle* and conclude on *Mother of Plenty*. ☺

We Also Heard From: er... no one. Come on, surely there's something to annoy you in this issue? — Chris

## Johnny Mnemonic

FoxGuild Video

Director Robert Longo

Duration 105 mins. Cert. 15.

Rental.

So, HOW DOES William Gibson's Hollywood debut fare in a market already cluttered with cyberthrillers from *The Net* to *Hackers*? As you might expect, he digs further into the ramifications of future-tech than any of his competitors – even *Strange Days*. He explores how an entire society – and a global society at that – can be affected by technological development. He shows how scientific progress can become evolution. More than any other writer in Hollywood, he is accustomed to working in the future, it isn't a foreign country to him.

As the story begins Johnny is about to upload 320 gigabytes of information into his wetware. This is a shockingly visceral experience, like taking a stationary roller-coaster and pulling twenty virtual Gs. Unfortunately 320 gigs are way too much for him and he begins to suffer the first shaky symptoms of NAS.

Earlier, a slow crawl of text had patiently explained that the world of multinational power corps is falling apart because of the cerebral disease Nerve Attenuation Syndrome. The Holy Grail of the Man / Machine Interface is now a global reality, replacing hardware and software with wetware. The NAS disease is the organism's rejection of the artificial implants.

It is a world of new flesh, where no one has to be how nature made them, where rôles are constantly being renegotiated. This is the future, and it doesn't work. Welcome to 2021, some eighteen months after the setting of *Blade Runner*, the original science fiction noir-mare and spiritual father of cyberpunk culture. This slow crawl of information is deliberately designed to evoke *Blade Runner*, the swooping flight over a virtual landscape that follows consciously reminds you of the apocalyptic LA skyline of 2019.

There are several reasons for Gibson and director Robert Longo to evoke *Blade Runner*, partially, I suspect, because Gibson has never hidden the fact that his seminal creations of the *Sprawl* and cyberspace came out of his perceptions of the early 80s, a time when popular culture was swamped with *Blade Runner* references.

This film is crammed almost to choking with allusory and literal quotes, either from his own earlier works, or from the omnipresent *Blade Runner*. As Johnny is about to beat one of his assailants over the head he quips: "Time to die!" Ralphie Face, Johnny's agent, holds court in a bar that is half tech-noir, half Taffy's. But on a more fundamental level, the very story of one man with a finite amount of time to download his data before it pollutes his nervous system and kills him is taken as much from the computer game *Burn Cycle* as it is from Rudolph Maté's 1950 noir film *D.O.A.*. It may well be that Gibson isn't afraid to quote his peers, but there comes a point when doing so leaves room for little else.

Dina Meyer as Jane in *Johnny Mnemonic*

When *Johnny Mnemonic* falls down, it does so because of the self-confessed lack of experience Gibson and Longo have in movies. Gibson's script, although messy, is simply in need of tightening up; but that needs a good strong director, which unfortunately Robert Longo is not.

This film pulsates with great ideas and convincing futurology, but the flaccid pace and frankly bizarre casting betray the potential shown. *Johnny Mnemonic* is a disappointment, not just because I, along with many Gibson fans, have been waiting a long time for him to put his vision on screen, but because the lost potential bleeds out of nearly every scene. They came so frustratingly close, yet missed by light years.

— John Ashbrook

## Judge Dredd

FoxGuild Video

Director Danny Cannon

Duration 96 mins. Cert. 15.

RRP £14.99 widescreen, £12.99 fullscreen.

THE MOVIE ADAPTATION of the 2000AD character Dredd was always going to be a problematic proposition – especially regarding the involvement of young British director Danny Cannon. Nothing in his only other movie, *The Young Americans*, gave any indication that he was capable of taking a \$70 million budget in his stride whilst juggling the heaviest special-effects shopping list ever assembled in Britain.

Surprisingly, I am glad to report that his efforts were an almost total success. Anyone who grew up reading the early adventures of Dredd will be overwhelmed by a nostalgic familiarity. Writers William Wisher (*Terminator 2*) and Steven E. De Souza (*Die Hard*) have immersed themselves in these early adventures, and reproduced the feel and black humour of those late 70s British fantasies. The cynicism and nihilism which originally formed the judge's 'personality' (only to be leached out as he became more popular) are there, if toned down for the American market. The fear of the police state, the suspicion of any law enforcer who hides his identity, and the commentary on the insanity of living like caged rats in big cities, are all present here.

The detail which has been lavished on the look of the film is awe-inspiring, and the opening fly-by through the towering blocks of Mega City One is jaw-droppingly impressive, even reduced to small-screen dimensions. It has taken them thirteen years to surpass *Blade Runner's* vision of the future city, but surpass it they have. The buildings have that hunched-up armadillo look which artist Mike McMahon introduced, and the loving attention to minutiae – which would be missed by all but the saddest of Dredd anoraks – is a positive delight.

And now the but . . .

But all this sterling preparatory work and the startling designs, all the beautiful effects, marvellous sets and witty one-liners are for naught. Betrayed. Shafted. Left languishing by a plot which pulls out all the stops to create as many clichés as it can. Armand Assante chews the furniture with misplaced passion as the evil Rico, Max von Sydow is stately but obviously doomed as the Chief Judge, Joan Chen is only there so Diane Lane has got someone to kickbox with, and the promised invasion of homicidal clones . . . just sort of . . . fizzles out.

Ruined by an ending which has obviously been so brutally hacked in order to obtain a teen-friendly certificate that it is rendered nonsensical. At 96 minutes it feels very light for a big-budget buster of blocks: about half an hour light. I had hoped that they would see sense when it came to the video release and present the full movie. Unfortunately, 'twas not to be. Maybe they'll try to milk a 'special edition' out of it further down the pike. Until then, this is really only for sad fan-boys like myself.

— John Ashbrook

[Joseph Nicholas reviewed the movie release of Judge Dredd in Matrix 116.]

# events

## ! IMPORTANT !

- Please enclose an SAE when contacting conventions, or you may not receive a reply.
- If you run, or know of, any unlisted conventions or events please let me know at the editorial address.
- Please mention Matrix when enquiring.
- Special thanks to: Dave Langford, Bridget Wilkinson

### 29 Sep: *Scotforce*

The flyer is mysteriously unclear, but it seems that Babylon 5's Jeff Conaway is appearing at a convention in the Glasgow Central Hotel from 10am to 10pm. Cost £20.  
 ☞ SAE to Scotforce 1, PO Box 3870, Glasgow, G44 3PZ  
 ☞ sforce1@glod.demon.co.uk  
 ☞ http://users.colloquium.co.uk/~fraser\_gi/Scotforce/Scotforce.htm (possibly html at the end)

### 3 Oct: *London SF meeting*

Wellington pub opposite the Old Vic exit from Waterloo Station. 'London Circle' meetings are held on the first Thursday in each month, and usually start about 5pm. No special events but very popular and crowded.  
 ☞ Just turn up!

### 4-5 Oct: *Panopticon*

Dr Who convention at the Hotel Leatrice in Coventry. Membership £42.  
 ☞ PO Box 7831, London, SW15 6YD

### 4-6 Oct: *Fantasycon XX*

Guests include Tom Holt and Chris Fowler: venue is the International Hotel, Marsh Wall, in Docklands. Membership £40.  
 ☞ 137 Priory Rd., Hall Green, Birmingham, B26 0TB

### 4-6 Oct: *Midcon*

Star Trek convention at the Holiday Inn, Leicester.  
 ☞ 8 Ennerdale Close, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 4TN

### 4-6 Oct: *Hispacon*

The Spanish national convention in Burjassot, Spain.  
 ☞ Hispacon, C/O PO Box 2061, Principado de Andorra

### 11-13 Oct: *Octocon '96*

Ireland's national sci convention, Royal Marine Hotel, Lou Doire, nr Dublin. Guests include Brian Stables. £16 or £20 on the door.  
 ☞ Octocon '96, 30 South Circular Road, Dublin 8, Ireland

### 12-13 Oct: *Fabula 96*

Copenhagen is the 1996 Cultural Capital of Europe, and this festival is part of the celebrations. Guests are Bruce Sterling, Brian Aldiss, Harry Harrison, Frederick Pohl, New Zealand writer Sherryl Jordan, and many Danish writers including Svend Åge Madsen and Inge Eriksen. The theme is 'time': registration costs Dkr 75 (Dkr 250 includes Banquet and floor show), and it all happens the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University in Copenhagen.

☞ Fabula 96 Sekretariatet, Sagasvej 18 st.dk. DK-1861 Frediksberg, Denmark  
 ☞ vriedt\_lars@tandem.com  
 ☞ http://www.tandem.se/dk/sponsor/sfc/sfc.html

### 18-20 Oct: *Masque 4*

The fourth British Costume Convention. Fantasy, sci, historical costuming. Venue is the Most House Hotel, West Bromwich. Membership £30, day attendance £15, payable to 'Masque Four'.  
 ☞ Alan Cash, 130 Hampstead Hall Rd., Handsworth Wood, Birmingham, B20 1JB

### 23 Oct: *BSFA London Meeting*

Jubilee Tavern, York Road (near Waterloo Station). These meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday in each month, and start at 7pm in the upstairs room of the pub. Admission is free and both members and non-members are welcome.  
 This month's guest is Michael Marshall Smith.

☞ Paul Hood (note change) on 01621 816440 for further information.

### 25-28 Oct: *Cult TV Appreciation Week-end*

Loads of cult TV programmes and guests at the Haven All-Action Centre, Caister, Great Yarmouth. £44 registration: children half-price under 5s free.  
 ☞ Cult TV 1996, PO Box 1701, Peterborough, PE1 1EX

### 26-27 Oct: *Who's 7*

Combination Dr Who / Blake's 7 event at the Ashford International Hotel, Ashford, Kent.  
 ☞ Who's 7, 10 Fillebrook Road, Leytonstone, London, E11 1AG

### 7 Nov: *London SF meeting*

### 8-10 Nov: *Novacon 26*

The Birmingham SF Group's annual convention. Venue is the Hotel Box, Ladywell Walk (off Hurst St.), Birmingham. Guests include David Gemmell. Attending membership is £27 attending until 30 Sep. £30 thereafter and on the door: supporting £10.50.  
 ☞ Novacon 26, Tony Morton, 14 Park St., Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS

### 17-19 Nov: *Armadacon*

General sci con at the Astor Hotel, The Hoe in Plymouth. Guests include Colin Baker, Jack Cohen, Dave Langford. Membership £22.  
 ☞ Armadacon, 4 Gleneagle Avenue, Mannamead, Plymouth, Devon, PL3 5HL

### 27 Nov: *BSFA London Meeting*

### 5 Dec: *London SF meeting*

### 13 Dec: *End of World*

But look what's happening in the afterlife....

### 24 - 26 Dec: *YuleCon*

Fanish Christmas fun at the Plough and Harrow Hotel in Edgobaston, Birmingham. Membership £20 and 3 SAEs.  
 ☞ YuleCon, 56 York Road, Torpoint, Cornwall, PL11 2LG  
 ☞ 01752 812698

### 25 Dec: *BSFA London Meeting ... Not*

Happy Christmas!

### 2 Jan 1997: *London SF meeting*

### 3-5 Jan 1997: *European Anime Convention*

Called 'Shinnikai' (gathering for the new year), this is the National Anime Convention of old, taking place at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow. Six screening rooms, a 24-hour cybercafe, and for the first time Japanese creators will be at a British con. As 5 Jan is the birthday of Hayao Miyazaki - the godfather of quality anime - there will be cinema screenings of his movies.  
 ☞ Shinnikai, PO Box 3038, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 3JT  
 ☞ shinnikai@psound.demon.co.uk

### 22 Jan 1997: *BSFA London Meeting*

### 31 Jan - 2 Feb 1997: *Pegasus 97*

Star Trek / general convention at the Hilton National Hotel, Coventry. Guests include Dennis Ashton. Full membership is £30, child £15, or £15 per day: cheques payable to 'Pegasus Conventions' (please include 2 large SAEs). Room rates £46.50 pppn single, £31.50 pppn double / twin / triple.  
 ☞ Pegasus 97, 16 Bramwell St., Eastwood, Rotherham, S65 1RX  
 ☞ Veskshire, S65 1RX

### 6 Feb 1997: *London SF meeting*

### 14-17 Feb 1997: *Attitude: The Convention*

Convention organised by the Attitude team of Michael Abbott, John Dallman and Pam Wells. Venue is the Abbey Hotel, Great Malvern. Worcs., rates are £33 pppn single, £29 pppn double, twin, triple or quad. Membership is currently £23 attending.  
 ☞ David T. Cooper, 51 Meersbrook Avenue, Sheffield, S8 9EB  
 ☞ 0114 281 0697  
 ☞ Attitude@btch.demon.co.uk

### 26 Feb 1997: *BSFA London Meeting*

### 2 Mar 1997: *Picocon 14*

Imperial College's annual con-day convention, held on a Sunday, 10am-8pm. An ideal and cheap introduction to conventions. Guest is Simon Igles and membership is £8 (students only £3).  
 ☞ ICSF co-IT in Union, Beit Quad, Prince Consort Road, London, SW7 2BB

### 6 Mar 1997: *London SF meeting*

### 26 Mar 1997: *BSFA London Meeting*

### 28-31 Mar 1997: *Intervention*

The 1997 Eastercon, themed around 'Communication'. Venue is the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool. Guests are Brian Aldiss, Octavia Butler, Dave Langford and Jon Berg. Membership is £25 attending, £15 supporting.  
 ☞ Intervention, 12 Crossbury Close, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 7TS  
 ☞ intervention@pomsy.demon.co.uk

### 3 Apr 1997: *London SF meeting*

### 1 May 1997: *London SF meeting*

### 24-26 May 1997: *Fantasticon UK*

General convention at the Harrogate International Conference Centre. Guests include Harry Harrison, David Gemmell, Lisa Tuttle, Ramsey Campbell, Jack Cohen and Reg Poynt, proprietor of the Andromeda Bookshop in Birmingham. Events include items on cult radio and a comprehensive video programme. Rates until 1 Sep 1996 are £40.50 attending, £13.50 supporting, with reductions for individual days. Children aged 5 and below are free, children under 14 half price.  
 ☞ SAE to Fantasticon UK, 38 Planetree Ave., Fenham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE4 9TH  
 ☞ mir95@aber.ac.uk

### 3 - 5 Sep 1997: *LoneStarCon*

The 55th World sci convention in San Antonio, Texas.  
 ☞ PO Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755-2277, USA

### 23 Oct - 2 Nov 1997: *Coachcon*

Coach trip starting in London, via Portmeor, to Euro-Octocon in Ireland, and back to London for the World Fantasy Convention.  
 ☞ SAE or 2xIRCs to 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX

### 24-27 Oct 1997: *Euro-Octocon '97*

The 1997 Eurocon and Ireland's national sci con combined.  
 ☞ Euro-Octocon '97, 211 Blackhorse Avenue, Dublin 11, Ireland.  
 ☞ smmchugh@tdc.ie  
 ☞ http://arrogant.ltc.ici.ie/OctoCon.html

### 31 Oct - 2 Nov 1997: *World Fantasy Convention*

1997 sees the centenary of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and the WFC will be celebrating this (which doubtless explains the con address). Venue is the Britannia International Hotel in London's Docklands, now restored after being blown up by the IRA. Membership is now £75.  
 ☞ PO Box 31, Whitby, North Yorks., YO22 4YL

### 21-24 Aug 1998: *The Wrap Party*

Convention to celebrate the conclusion of *Babylon 5* to be held at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, London. Confirmed guests are J. Michael Straczynski (creator of the series), Harlan Ellison (series consultant), Jack Cohen (xenobiologist), John Ridgeway (comics artist), Bryan Talbot (artist), Adam 'Mojo' Lebowitz (computer animator on the series), John Matthews (expert on Arthurian mythology). Membership until the 1997 Eastercon is £60 (instalment scheme available, under 17s half price, under 12s free. Room rates: £40ppn single, £42ppn double or twin, £47ppn triple).  
 ☞ The Wrap Party, PO Box 505, Reading, RG1 7QZ  
 ☞ TheWrapParty@bipin.co.uk  
 ☞ http://www.bipin.co.uk/TheWrapParty

### 2-6 Sep 1999: *Aussiecon 3*

The Workdon goes down under. Guests are George Turner, Gregory Benford and Bruce Gillespie. Membership is \$140 (US).  
 ☞ The UK Agent is Martin Hoare, 45 Tliehurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT

### 27 Dec 1999 - 2 Jan 2000: *Millennium*

See in the new millennium (a year early if you're a pedant) at this con, to be held somewhere in northern Europe, probably the UK or a Benelux country. £300 per year, to be deducted from the eventual membership cost.  
 ☞ Malcolm Reid, 186 Casewick Rd., West Norwood, London, SE27 0SZ

## back issues

## small



— maureen's sure she had a cellar somewhere.  
— help her rediscover it  
— and fill those gaps in your VECTOR collection

Here are some of the major articles in the available back issues. Included are interviews with major authors (marked as A), and articles by them and about them (marked by A). Note that this is not an index: interviews and articles in issues now sold out do not appear.

PRICES: 75p each, any 3 for £1.50, any 5 for £2. All prices include postage and packing. Make cheques payable to BSFA Ltd and send your order to:

**Vector Back Issues**, 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ.  
As some issues are in very short supply please give alternatives.

**Brian Aldiss:** 'Sturgeon Remembered', 127; IV, Paul Kincaid, 129; 'Chung Kuo: An Alternative Perspective', 151.  
**Isaac Asimov:** A. Norman Beswick, 167. A. Leslie J. Hurst, 167.

**Stephen Baxter:** IV, Keith Brooke, 162; 'Future Histories in SF', 179; 'Lighting the Future', 181; 'Apollo 13', 184.

**Cherith Baldry:** 'Magic in Namia', 176.

**Iain M. Banks:** IV, Andy Sawyer, 158.

**Greg Bear:** IV, Charles Stross, 153.

**Gregory Benford:** 'The Maverick Astronomer: Fred Hoyle and The Black Cloud', 136; 'Beyond the Fall of Nobynsky', 157.

**James Bligh:** A. K. V. Bailey, 147.

**David Brit:** IV, Andy Sawyer, 157.

**Keith Brooke:** IV, Stephen Baxter, 162.

**John Brunner:** Goh speech from Fiction 89, 156.

**Lois McMaster Bujold:** IV, Ken Lake, 171.

**Octavia Butler:** A. Carol Ann Green, 176.

**Ramsey Campbell:** IV, Andy Sawyer, 151.

**Orson Scott Card:** A. Ben Jeapes, 169.

**Angela Carter:** A. Sally-Ann Mela, 166.

**G. K. Chesterton:** A. Cherith Baldry, 177.

**John Clute:** 'Sturgeon Remembered', 127.

**Philip K. Dick:** A. Paul Kincaid, 153.

**Edzard A. Andy Sawyer,** 149.

**Suzette Hayden Elgin:** A. Mike Christie, 139.

**Neil Gaiman:** IV, Alex Stewart, 150.

**Kathy Gale (editor):** IV, Stan Nicholls, 148.

**Mary Gentle:** 'The Power of the Pagan', 126; 'Heads I Win, Tails You Lose' (John Norman's Gor novels), 139.

**William Gibson:** IV, Maureen Kincaid Speller, 179.

**Colin Greenland:** 'Yes, But You Don't Like It' - Reviewing as an Artform', 129; 'Off With Their Heads', 154; Michael Moorcock interview, 155; IV, Kev McVeigh, 161.

**John Gribbin:** A. Cecil Nurse, 151.

**Nicola Griffith:** IV, Carol Ann Green, 173.

**Robert van Gulik:** A. L. J. Hurst, 141.

**Joe Haldeman:** IV, Ken Lake & Geoff Rippeington, 126 & 127.

**Harry Harrison:** 'Sturgeon Remembered', 127.

**Brian Herbert:** A. Andy Sawyer, 162.

**James Herbert:** IV, Martin R. Webb, 165.

**Russell Hoban:** IV, Paul Kincaid, 124/25.

**Robert Holdstock:** IV, Cate Cary, 175. A. Paul Kincaid, 175. A. Sally-Ann Mela, 175.

**Fred Hoyle:** A. Andy Sawyer, 136.

**Peter James:** IV, Martin R. Webb, 162.

**Mike Jeffries:** IV, Kev McVeigh, 167.

**Gwyneth Jones:** 'Futuristic Gloveletter Blousson: SF and the New Man', 139; 'The Mind of the Maker', 154.

**Graham Joyce:** IV, Cate Cary, 180;

'Science, Superstition & Strange Things Like Yeast', 152.

**Katherine Kerr:** IV, Cate Cary, 168.

**Garry Kilworth:** 'Short Stories Are People Too', 136; 'A Stone From Oberon's Castle', 154.

**Dave Langford:** 'Highballs', 152; 'Fun With Senseless Violence', 170; 'Foodies of the Gods', 176.

**Ursula K. Le Guin:** A. Sue Thomason, 139.

**A. Cherith Baldry,** 168.

**C. S. Lewis:** A. Cherith Baldry, 176.

**David Lindsay:** A. Tim Westmacott, 147.

**Paul J. McAuley:** IV, Paul Kincaid, 156.

**Anne McCaffrey:** IV, David Barrett, 123.

**Carol Ann Green,** 172.

**Michael Moorcock:** IV, Colin Greenland, 155.

**Patrick Moore:** A. P. Symes, 151.

**Kim Newman:** 'SF Cinema in the 80s', 157.

**John Norman:** A. Mary Gentle, 139.

**Cecil Nurse:** A. L. J. Hurst, 141.

**Steve Palmer:** 'Bethelheim', 157; 'Religious Implications of Gene Wolfe's Classic Novels', 162; 'Head Over Walls - Love in SF', 165; 'Award for Ravery', 181.

**Christopher Priest:** 'Leave the Forgotten to the Night - Writing and SF', 127.

**David Pringle:** 'Interzone: How It All Began', 152.

**Arthur Ransome:** A. Andy Sawyer, 149.

**Keith Roberts:** A. L. J. Hurst, 124/25.

**Kim Stanley Robinson:** IV, Kev McVeigh, 176.

**Geoff Ryman:** IV, Kev McVeigh, 174.

**Josephine Saxton:** IV, Kev McVeigh, 158.

**Lewis Shiner:** IV, Charles Stross, 153.

**Clifford Smith:** A. Ken Lake, 129.

**Steve Sneyd:** 'Hearing From the Ion Engineers', 180.

**Brian Stableford:** 'Rediscovering the Future', 163; IV, Cate Cary, 172.

**Bruce Sterling:** IV, Paul Kincaid, 138.

**'Holding the Invisible Hand',** 164.

**Charles Stross:** 'Myths, Computers and Cyberpunk', 158.

**Ted Sturgeon:** A. Brian Aldiss, 127.

**Harry Harrison,** 127; A. John Clute, 127.

**Lawrence Sutin:** IV, Paul Kincaid, 168.

**Lucy Sussex:** IV, Colin Steele, 177.

**Sue Thomas:** IV, Andy Sawyer, 167.

**Sue Thomas:** 'Women Wizards? Yes - Now!', (Le Guin's Earthsea books), 139.

**Lisa Tuttle:** IV, Cate Cary, 169.

**John Verne:** A. Ben Jeapes, 164.

**David Wingrove:** A. Brian Aldiss, 151.

**'Letter to Cate',** 165.

**Gene Wolfe:** A. Steve Palmer, 162.

**'Jonathan Wylie':** IV, Andy Sawyer, 164.

**Roger Zelazny:** A. Tanya Brown, 184.

## Members' Noticeboard

Advertisements and announcements are FREE to BSFA members. Send your ad to the editorial address.

## LOCAL GROUPS

**LEICESTER SF GROUP:** If you live in the Leicester area then the Leicester Science Fiction Group would like to hear from you. We meet on the first Friday of the month, with the venue to be arranged. Contact: Tim Greeno on 0116 279 290, or email cgreeno@nbt.net, or cgreeno@bt.com. **COLCHESTER SF/HORROR/FANTASY GROUP:** We meet on the third Saturday of each month at 12.30pm in The Playhouse pub in St John's Street. We are mainly a discussion over a few beers kind of group. If you fancy coming along either give Des Lewis a ring on 01255 812119 or you can just turn up.

**CAMBRIDGE MEETINGS:** If you live in the Cambridge area and would be interested in getting together for regular Sunday meetings, John Oram would like to hear from you. Contact: John Oram, 3 Oulands Avenue, Bar Hill, Cambs., CB3 8EQ or phone 01954 781797, after 6pm.

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY SOCIETY** would like to hear from other student SF societies, and also to receive feedback, particularly student feedback. If you can help, please contact the USWFS at: Arts Federation Pigeonholes, Students' Union, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL.

## WANTED

**HELP A DESPERATE EDITOR:** Wanted, a copy in any condition of Brian Stableford's novel *The Paradox of the Set*, published by Ace Books in the 70s. Chris Terran, 9 Beechwood Court, Back Beechwood Grove, Leeds LS4 2HS.

**WANTED:** Complete set of BBC TV Video Survivors. Will also pay postage and collect if local. Contact: Geoff Hunt, 71 Poplar Grove, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 3DN.

**BOOKS REQUIRED** - Ace Doubles, Barnes, Conely, Delany, Niven, Sabermans, Stableford, Sterling, New Writings series, and many more. Send SAE for want list to Ian Forsythe, 12 Winston Way, Parkland, Cambs., PE7 3AL. Tel: 01733 241356.

**BOOKS WANTED:** Original Ace paperback editions of the following books by Megan Lindholm: *Harry's Flight*, *The Windrangers*, *The Labyrinth Gate*, and *Wizard of the Pigeons*.

Any copies in any condition of *The Unicorn Treasury* edited by Bruce Colville, published by Doubleday in 1988, and *Strategies of Fantasy* by Brian Attebery, published by Indiana University Press in 1992.

Please contact: Michael Brathwaite, 27 Marsh Drive, West Hendon, London, NW9 7QE or phone 0181 202 9018.

**SILENT GNASHING OF TEETH** over my inability to find various books. If you have a copy of any of the following which you don't mind parting with, I'll happily press (reasonable amounts of) money into your hot and sticky hand: *Society and Cereals* Patricia Wrede / Caroline Stevenson; *Marengo* the Magician Patricia Wrede; *The Proseman David Sherman*, *The White Pillars* Nancy Kress; *Remembered* Tim Widdings; *War for the Oaks* Emma Bull.

Please contact: Jill Reed at Hill House, Moats Tyne, Suffolk, IP14 2EA. Tel: (01449) 612722.

**BOOKS WANTED:** must be hardback first editions in fine condition with dust-wrappers.  
David Eddings: *Magician's Gambit*; and *Castle of Wizardry*.

Raymond R. Feist: *Magician*; *Silverthorn*; *Darkest at the Bottom*; and *Prince of the Blood*.  
John Brunner: *Telepathic: The Stone That Never Came Down*; and *The Jagged Orbit*.  
Contact: John Oram, 3 Oulands Avenue, Bar Hill, Cambs., CB3 8EQ.

**WANTED:** Brian Aldiss' *'Horror Stub'* 'nigger', *A Soldier Eater*, *The Hand-Rendered Boy*, and *A Rude Awakening*.  
Contact: Alan Fitch, 21 Kesteven Way, Bittum, Southampton, SO18 5RJ or email alanfitch@compuserve.com.

**CAN ANYONE PLEASE HELP** me get my hands on paperback copies of the following books by Sheri S. Tepper, in any readable condition, at not unreasonable prices?  
David Eddings: *Magician's Gambit*; and *Castle of Wizardry*.  
Raymond R. Feist: *Magician*; *Silverthorn*; *Darkest at the Bottom*; and *Prince of the Blood*.  
John Brunner: *Telepathic: The Stone That Never Came Down*; and *The Jagged Orbit*.  
Contact: John Oram, 3 Oulands Avenue, Bar Hill, Cambs., CB3 8EQ.

Marvin Maryshaped, *Janin Star-Eye*, *The Enigma Score*, *The Bones*, *Dervish Daughter*, *Blood Heritage*. Write to me first with details and price, and I promise a quick reply. I'm not a collector, I just want to write an article. Contact: Norman W. Beswick, 21 Church Road, Church Street, Shropshire, SY1 6EP.

## FOR SALE

**DANCER FOR THE WORLD'S DEATH**, an illustrated and numbered limited-edition booklet by Storm Constantine with cover art by David Moorning. Due October from Inception at £3.50 inc. p&p. Cheques payable to 'Inception'. Also available by Constellation from Inception. *An Elemental Tale* (a fantasy) and *Colours* (a poem). We also have stocks of new/out-of-print books: *Aleph*, *Shadows*, *Portrait*, *Sign for the Second*, *Burying the Shroud* plus a few copies of the original *Weymouth* books. Please send SAE for details / booklet. Contact: Inception, Steve Jeffery & Vikki Lee Francis, 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 2XA.

**HARMS WAY** by Colin Greenland - 'What if Charles Dickens had written a space opera?' (L) - large paperback, the one with the pretty cover, £3.50. Also the two linked fantasy paperbacks, *The Hour of the Thin Veil* and *Other Voices* (great covers by Roger Dean and Ian Miller), £1.50 each. Prices include postage. Colin Greenland, 98 Sturton Street, Cambridge, CB1 2PA.

**THE WAY TO WRITE SCIENCE FICTION** by Brian Stableford. Signed pb copies available at £5. Also available: *The Empire of Fear*, 110 hardcover, £5. Contact: pb: *Sexual Chameleon*, Sandor's *Notes of the Genetic Revolution* £4. *The Agard Theory*, £10. (boxed set (limited to 500 copies) of 3 pts. All prices post-free. Order from Brian Stableford, 113 St Peter's Road, Reading RG6 1PG.

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**CRUCIFORM VARIATIONS**, a collection of 12 scientific occultic essays (including annotated solutions) by Martin's very own John English is now available! Price: £2.00 from Beacon Publications, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harlow Wood, Essex, CM3 9RG.

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Contact: Andy Sawyer on 0151 794 2966 / 2733 or email a.sawyer@bt.com, or, at his further details.

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## MISC

**INFORMATION SOUGHT.** After nearly 70 years of involvement in it, I was intrigued to have my first trace of the 30's writer John Oram, described as a hero of the pulp, in the latest *Encyclopedia of SF*. I would be very grateful for whatever information any members might be able to let me have on this pre-war namesake of mine. Contact: Robert J. Hogan, 30A Geneva Avenue, Street, Somers, BA16 9PF.

**M. P. SHIEL**, author of *The Purple Cloud*, *The Lord of the Sea* etc. The Redondan Cultural Foundation promotes discussion of his work and his remarkable sailing kingdom. Free newsletter from: Mark Valentine, 40 Ash Grove, Witley, West Yorkshire, LS29 8EP.

**GADZOOKS!** Studies in mispelling fiction, Orcy, Sabatini, Farnel, Thordike et al. New fantasy series, contributors and reviews. Details: Mark Valentine, 40 Ash Grove, Witley, West Yorkshire, LS29 8EP. Enter the last great unexplored genre.



## Rollover Time!

Yet again the last mailing was delayed, so we've decided to have a final rollover of the previous two competitions. This is your last chance to enter these; the prizes are mounting up and we're running short of space here, so get your entries in now! But first, this issue's main competition:

### COMPETITION 121: "INDEPENDENCE DAY BLUES"

We have a bumper bundle of *Independence Day* prizes to give away:

- two soundtrack CDs, donated by RCA Victor;
- two copies of *The Making of Independence Day* and two *ID4* commemorative magazines, courtesy of Titan Books;
- two *ID4* baseball caps and two *ID4* frisbees, donated by 20th Century Fox.

All you have to do is:

- ① Suggest the best name for the inevitable sequel (needless to say, *ID5* doesn't count!).
- ② Send in your favourite naff moment or line of dialogue from an sf film. Marks awarded for such things as duff science, continuity errors, rampant stupidity, anachronisms, transparent plagiarisms... and, of course, inadvertent humour.

The prizes will be divided up amongst the best entries.

And now, the previous two competitions; entries previously sent in are still valid, but you're welcome to enter again.

### COMPETITION 120: "IT'S VERSE, JIM, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT"

Compose a poem of up to eight lines extolling the virtues – or lack of them – of *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *Doctor Who* or any other well-known TV or film series.

### COMPETITION 119: α and ω

A Jane Chord is defined as:

"The outcome obtained by juxtaposing the first and last words of a given book or other written work to create a two-word phrase or sentence."

All you have to do is send in Jane Chords. Dig out those yellowing paperbacks, flip open the first and last pages, and see what you find! The hope is to get some humorous or appropriate comment on the work or the author, or perhaps a perfect plot summary, thus obviating the need to actually read all those pesky words in between.

Here are some examples from the entries so far. These aren't prizewinners – yet! – but are definitely in the running:

Kim Stanley Robinson's *Red Mars* promises Mars again.

Paul J. McAuley's *Fairyland* bears The children.

Philip José Farmer's *The Fabulous Riverboat* foretells Resurrection day.

Yevgeny Zamyatin's classic *We* defiantly states I prevail.

— Roger Robinson

Please send all entries, together with any competition correspondence, to the usual address:

Roger Robinson  
75 Rosslyn Avenue  
Harold Wood, Essex  
RM3 0RG

by

Friday 1 November 1996.

ticky tacky tech talk

matrix is managed on a creaking acorn a5000, trained by various bits of software, notably zap (an editor which never lets over, unlike me), dirty-tackled by an hp laserjet 5l, passed niftily down the wing by pdc copyprint, fouled by the mailing house (ahem), and scored by the royal mail

— the results were read by you

—matrix 121— soundtracked by lush, beck, june tabor, leos janacek, stereolab, the allstars olympics, new order, keith jarrett, electronic, mucho primo dance / trance (n/y pe up / y/pe up), juliana haidich, —ims— @ headingley, elvis costello, salad, kraffwerk, the albion band (various incarnations), aaron copland, and deadzone — the rest is silence

## Big Butt Aleph

squats on the news

• **DON'T SAY WE DIDN'T WARN YOU**, but the world will end on 13 December this year (a Friday, of course). That's according to the few remaining members of the late unlamented **David Koresh's** Branch Davidian cult. Will they celebrate with a barbecue?

• **CANAL DREAMS** Astronomer **Dr Paul Murtin** knows what it's really like Out There: "Look, Mars is something like South Yorkshire, right? There are signs that there used to be water there once..."

• **LIFE? DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT LIFE** On Saturday 3 August **Brian Aldiss** has a full-page feature in *The Daily Telegraph* on *Independence Day* and its debt to things Martian: "As yet, at least, we have no evidence that life, never mind intelligent life, exists anywhere else in the Galaxy." So what happens on Monday?

• **AREOCIDE** Re-reading *The War of the Worlds*, Aleph was amused by the sentence "But there are no bacteria in [sic] Mars." Wells has apparently been proved wrong, but considering the end of the seminal work any Mars expedition had better take a supply of antibiotics with it.

• **THE MEMORY OF WHITENESS** Discoveries in Antarctica will presumably provide grist to **Kim Stanley Robinson's** mill as he contemplates his novel set in the region. Rumour control suggests it will in fact be a trilogy: *White Antarctica*, *Winter Antarctica*, and *Cream-Magnolia-With-a-Hint-of-Peach Antarctica*. • Speaking of trilogies, Aleph was disappointed to find that the omnibus edition of *Helliconia* was not repackaged, and did not include the long-awaited *Helliconia Autumn* or *Helliconia Wednesday Morning*.

• **PRS ON MARS** The one sure winner in all this Martian kerfuffle was **David Bowie**, whose "Life on Mars" was used, with colossal imagination, to illustrate every single news report on the Great Martian Bug Hunt. It's a law, apparently.

• **BY GUM** Hard to believe, but Aleph was young once and remembers bubblegum. Or the cards, anyway – recall those bloody American Civil War ones? The dummy issue of the sf – sorry, so-f, which loses editor **Allan Bryce** 10,000 cred points – zine *Infinity* carried an article on the notorious and quickly-withdrawn 'Mars Attacks' series of bubble-gum cards from 1963, soon to be chewed up and made into a major film by Tim Burton (is anything ever made into a minor film?). The blood-drinking and bare-brained Martians look like they have much more fun than the real ones, often accidentally blundering into showers and changing rooms full of naked gels. A lot of mastication must have gone on over these cards, as young American boys chewed their gum.

• **SPACE BALLS** NASA is being very coy about the sleeping arrangements on the international space station, after plans for a 'togetherness suite' for married couples were condemned by Moral Majority and Christian Coalition activists. Quite right too, though Aleph regrets the lost opportunity for research into novel forms of rocket propulsion. NASA cancelled the idea, citing 'budgetary restraints' (which sounds like one of the more sophisticated mental aids). Meanwhile, it seems that vibration sensors on the station will be able to detect any unauthorised hanky-panky – whether in pairs or solo – and research teams on Earth are enthusiastically calibrating the equipment.

• **TAFF TIMES** TAFF winner **Martin Tudor** broke precedent and produced the first part of his trip report to LACON III while in transit, and it's a hoot. Enduring a series of financial disasters worthy of Uncle Bob, Martin spent the traditional eight pages getting to the airport and a mere paragraph on the journey itself. Will he make it back without crashing Wall Street?

• **PHOOEY** Vector features editor **Andrew Middleton Butler's** email collapsed recently due to air-conditioning problems. Aleph refuses to make any comment about hot air.

• **INGLORIOUS SEASON** Vile and unsubstantiated rumours accuse **David Brin** of "verbally but violently" attacking **Pat Murphy** because his novel *Glory Season* didn't win the Tiptree Award. We don't believe a word of it.

• **AS EASY AS...** The alphabet has been reordered by Waterstones, who now like Jeter under Dick. Aleph awaits with pleasure the forthcoming shared-world anthology *Eurodicks*, expansion of his short stories into novels, and the emergence of *The New Philip K. Dick™*.

• **HARD NEWS** Staff at Cantor Towers were struck by one critic's reaction to Cronenberg's film of *Ballard's Crash*: "I didn't know it was possible to have an erection and be bored at the same." Aleph hears rumours that this service is available in certain public toilets, but has no intention of conducting further research.

• **EVEN HARDER NEWS** October's tenth anniversary issue of *Q* magazine carried a list of ten musicians with "ten-inch reputations" (yes, they do mean that). And who should occupy the shameful ninth position but guitarist **Jon Langford**, sometime *Three John* and brother of triskaidekahugotrophic Dave? At least he beat famous axeman *Jimi Hendrix* (who's, er, as stiff as they come). Delicacy and fear forbid further comment. ○

— N < < N