

# matrix

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The News Magazine of the  
British Science Fiction Association

Issue 124

March / April 1997



claire briailey on

## STAR WARS

gary dalkin on

## MARS ATTACKS!

brian stableford  
on chimeras

butler on butler

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# matrix

the news magazine of the

# BSFA

British Science Fiction Association

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Friday 25 April 1997

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May the first be with you . . .

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# Clarke, Nebula, Dick Shortlists

The shortlist for the Arthur C. Clarke Award for the best science fiction novel published in the UK in 1996 is as follows:

**Stephen Baxter** *Voyager* (Voyager, £15.99 hb)

Baxter's alternative history of the US space program, in which a voyage to Mars takes place in 1986. His *The Time Ships* was also a nominee last year.

**Amitav Ghosh** *The Calcutta Chromosome* (Picador, £16.99 hb)

Subtitled "A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery". Ghosh was born in India in 1956, and now lives in New York. His previous novels include *The Circle of Reason*, *The Shadow Lines* and *In an Antique Land*.

**Jack McDevitt** *The Engines of God* (Voyager, £5.99 pb)

A thoughtful interstellar whatdunit from the author of *The Hercules Text* and *A Talent For War*.

**Kim Stanley Robinson** *Blue Mars* (Voyager, £15.99 hb)

L.J. Hurst reviewed *Blue Mars* in *Vector* 189, which also featured an interview with Robinson and various articles on his work. *Red Mars* was a 1993 nominee.

**Sheri S. Tepper** *Gibbon's Decline and Fall* (Voyager, £15.99 hb)

**N. Lee Wood** *Looking for the Mahdi* (Gollancz Vista, £5.99 pb)

Wood's first novel, an sf thriller set in a fictional Middle East country. She is married to Norman Spinrad and lives in Paris.

The winner will be announced at the Science Museum in London on 28 May, and will receive a cheque for £1,000 and an engraved bookend. There are six judges for the award, two each from the BSFA, the Science Fiction Foundation and the International Science Fiction Foundation. This year's were: Dr Andrew M. Butler and Steve Jeffery (representing the BSFA); Gwyneth Jones and Ian Watson (representing the SFF); and Lord Mark Birwood (sole representative of the ISFF, following the death of his colleague Dr Maurice Goldsmith).

## NEBULA SHORTLISTS

**Novels:** Nicola Griffith *Slow River* (Del Rey, Aug 95); Nina Kiriki Hoffman *The Silent Strength of Stones* (Avon/Nova, Sep 95); Patricia McKillip *Winter Rose* (Ace, Jul 96); Tim Powers *Expiration Date* (Tor, Jan 96); HarperCollins, 95); Robert J. Sawyer *Starplex* (Analog, Jul 96 - Oct 96; Ace, Oct 96); Neal Stephenson *The Diamond Age* (Bantam, Feb 95).

**Novellas:** Jack Dann "Da Vinci Rising" (*Asimov's*, May 95); Ursula K. Le Guin "A Woman's Liberation" (*Asimov's*, Jul 95); George R. R. Martin "Blood of the Dragon" (*Asimov's*, Jul 96); Jack McDevitt "Time Travellers Never Die" (*Asimov's*, May 96); Maureen F. McHugh "The Cost to be Wise" (*Starlight* 1, Sep 96); Allen Steele "The Death of Captain Future" (*Asimov's*, Oct 95).

**Novellets:** John M. Ford "Erase/Record/Play" (*Starlight* 1, Sep 96); George Guthridge "Mirror of Lop Nor" (*Immortal Union*, Beagle & Berliner eds., HarperPrism, Oct 95); Paul Levinson "The Chronology Protection Case" (Analog, Sep 95); Bruce Holland Rogers "Lifeboat on a Burning Sea" (*F&SF*, Oct/Nov 95); Harry Turtledove "Must and Shall" (*Asimov's*, Nov 95); Robert Charles Wilson "The Persids" (*Rainbows of Fantasy*, Dec 95); Dave Wolverton "After a Lean Winter" (*F&SF*, Mar 96; *War of the Worlds: Global Dispatches*, Bantam May 96).

**Short Story:** Kent Brewster "In the Pound, Near Breaktime" (*Tomorrow SF*, Oct 95); Esther M. Friesner "A Birthday" (*F&SF*, Aug 95); Kathleen Ann Goonan "The String" (*F&SF*, Jun 95); Jonathan Lethem "Five Fucks" (*The Wall of the Sky, The Wall of the Eye*, Oct 96); Bruce Holland Rogers "These Shoes Strangers Have Died Of" (*Enchanted Forests*, DAW, Dec 95); Dean Wesley Smith "In the Shade of the Slowboat Man" (*F&SF*, Jan 96).

• The winners will be announced on 19 April.

## PHILIP K. DICK AWARD SHORTLIST

The Dick Award is presented annually for "distinguished science fiction published in paperback original form in the United States", in memory of Philip K. Dick, much of whose work appeared in this way. It is sponsored by the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society and the award ceremony - which will be held on 28 March at Norwescot 20 in Washington - is sponsored by the North West Science Fiction Society. The judges this year are T. Jackson King (chair), Kathleen Ann Goonan, Daniel Marcus, Joseph Milicia, and Andrew Weiner.

The nominees are:

**William Barton** *The Transmigration of Souls* (Warner Aspect)

**Stephen Baxter** *The Time Ships* (HarperPrism)

**Michael Bishop** *At the City Limits of Fate* (Edgewood Press)

**George Foy** *The Shift* (Bantam Spectra)

**Sarah Zettel Reclamation (Warner Aspect)**

# Clarke Award Founder Dies

Dr Maurice Goldsmith died on Saturday 1 March after a long illness. Dr Goldsmith had a long career in science, publishing a number of books on the subject and founding and running the International Science Policy Foundation, a body which lobbied for a more serious awareness of science in public affairs. In 1984, Dr Goldsmith approached Arthur C. Clarke with the idea of founding a science fiction magazine in his name, but when Clarke turned this notion down the idea for the Arthur C. Clarke Award was born. Working with the Science Fiction Foundation and the BSFA, Dr Goldsmith was instrumental in establishing the Award. However, the ISPF was rarely able to provide the requisite two judges every year, so Dr Goldsmith almost invariably found himself on the panel of judges and has served in that capacity seven times, more than anyone else in the history of the Award. His wife suffered a stroke during 1996, and his final year was spent in looking after her.

— Paul Kincaid

# Tun Goes To Jub?

Ten years after their last move the monthly London Circle meetings are looking for a new location. Following growing dissatisfaction with the Wellington pub because of crowding and noise (and the number of non-fans), various regular attendees have been scouting out other possible locations. In January about fifteen people, including BSFA stalwarts Paul Kincaid, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Mark Plummer, Tanya Brown, Tony Cullen, Roger Robinson and Claire Brailey, issued a circular suggesting the nearby Jubilee as an alternative, which also hosts the monthly BSFA meetings. On 6 February many duly turned up there, and initial reactions were positive. The landlord, Kevin, was welcoming and is prepared to hire extra staff and open the upstairs room should demand warrant it. As the London meetings are not organised in any formal sense, the final decision rests with London's fanish community: vote early, and vote often!

• **When and Where:** Meetings happen on the first Thursday of the month. Take the northwest exit from Waterloo Station (marked 'Exit 6 to South Bank', by POLICE sign, far right as you face the destination boards) which leads to a walkway over York Rd.; don't cross but descend to pavement level and turn left.

STOP PRESS: On 12 March it was announced that Terry Nation, creator of the Daleks and *Blake's Seven*, had died. Full obituary next issue.

# The 1996 BSFA Membership Survey

## Interim Report And Token Winners

We've had an excellent response to the Membership Survey sent out with the December mailing, though unfortunately it's somewhat smaller than last time. Altogether we received 175 completed forms, for which many thanks to all who replied. The three £15 book token winners, drawn by Paul Kincaid, were:

Mike Taylor • Paul Gorland • Meredith Macardie

Congratulations!

I'd also like to thank those who offered to contribute something to the magazines; details of potential contributors have been passed on to the editors, and potential reviewers to Paul Kincaid and John Ashbrook as relevant.

We're now working to get all the data analysed and are aiming to report back in detail soon in *Matrix*. Watch for a space a bit larger than this one....

— Claire Brailey, Publicity & Promotions

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

**CRASH LANDING?** David Cronenberg's film of J. G. Ballard's *Crash* - reviewed in *Matrix* 123 - has had its UK release delayed again. It was originally scheduled to be shown on 30 January, but vocal criticism from Westminster Council - who refused to allow the film to be shown without substantial cuts - and calls from Parliament for film censor chief James Ferman to either resign or ban the film entirely, have put back any possible release until at least April. What has happened in Britain, says Cronenberg, is that "the film has suddenly become a pawn in many people's political chessboards".

After two critics had alleged that the film breached the Obscene Publications Act - a serious charge - Ferman said on 9 March that consultations with legal specialists were underway, and he was expecting reports from a solicitor, a barrister, and a forensic psychologist very soon. He also noted that the UK was now one of the few countries in the world which had not shown the film, and only minor cuts had been made elsewhere. **STOP PRESS** *Crash* granted 18 certificate, uncut, on 19 March.

**MONSTER STAMPS** Later this year the Royal Mail will be issuing a set of stamps depicting famous monsters, to be drawn by artist Ian Pollock. Featured will be the Hound of the Baskervilles, Dracula, and Frankenstein's creation - the nearest they're getting to commemorating Mary Shelley's bicentenary this year.

**SF FAMILY FORTUNES** Tad Williams and Deborah Beale have a new addition to the family: Connor Beale Williams was born on 27 Jan. Fans **Gullia de Cesare** and **Steve Davis** were married in Tasmania on 18 Jan. Ploka co-editor **Alan Scott** and **Steven Cain** announced the arrival of Marianne Susan Cain on 14 Jan. Focus co-editor **Carol Ann Green** and **Steve Kerry** are getting hitched on 24 May. **TAFF** winner **Martin Tudor** and wife **Helen** expect the pitter of alien feet around 10 May.

**WRING 'EM DRY** A new sf artwork is being test-marketed in the Exeter and Scots Borders areas by Fabrin Publishing / Brown Partworks. Each weekly instalment comes with an sf novel; the first has *The War of the Worlds* (and optionally) a tape of the Orson Welles broadcast for £2.99 or £4.99, but more modern titles are being considered. Contributors include **John Clute**, **Dave Langford** and **Brian Stableford**.

**WIRED AND EMOTIONAL** The British edition of the technoculture magazine *Wired* has folded, and the March issue will be the last. Disappointed contributors include **John M. Banks**, **William Gibson**, **Neal Stephenson**, **Bruce Sterling**, **Steve Thomas** and **Chris Priest**.

**ON THE ROAD AGAIN** Signings and appearances... At Forbiden Planet, 71 New Oxford Street, London: Sat 12 Apr 1-2pm **John Clute** & **John Grant** sign *The Fantasy Encyclopedia*, and **Michael Scott** *Rohan* signs *Maxie's Demons*; Sat 26 Apr 1-2pm **Stephen Baxter** signs copies of *Vacuum Diagrams*.

At Andromeda, 2-5 Suffolk St., Birmingham (0121 643 1999): Sat 12 Apr 12-1pm **David Gemmell** signs *Winter Warriors*, *Dark Moon*; Sat 19 Apr **Stephen Baxter** (*Vacuum Diagrams*), **Michael Scott** (*Rohan*), **Maxie's Demons and **Freda Warrington** (*Pagan Moon*).**

**Clive Barker** will be on a brief promotional tour in May, signing copies of the tenth anniversary edition of *Weaveworld*, *Sacrament*, *Millennium*, and *Forms of Heaven*. He'll be at **Liverpool** (Thu 15 May 7pm at the Everyman Theatre, in association with Dillons, tel: 0151 708 6861), **Manchester** (Fri 16 May 7pm at Waterstone's, tel: 0161 832 1992), and **London** (Sat 17 May 7pm at Dillons, 19-23 Oxford St., tel: 0171 434 9759).

**SKIFFY SHOW** Satellite TV's Sci Fi Channel will launch a new sf/fantasy/horror magazine program at the end of May, called *ExtraTerrestrial*. It was spawned from a reviews Web site that **Simon Ings** was putting together, and one of the presenters may be **Michael Marshall Smith**.

**LORIST AND GORN** The 'Sci-Fi' zine *Infinity* has reportedly folded, and its sister publication *The Dark Side* appears to be in trouble, with a number of contributors reporting non-payment.

**COMIC MARTS** regularly occur across the country, selling comics, trading cards, TV/film zines, posters, books, games and all kinds of sf material. Upcoming events: **Birmingham** Sat 10 May, Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham. **Hull** Sun 20 Apr, Comfort Friendly Inn, Anlaby Rd., Hull. **Leeds** Sat 5 Apr and 24 May, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds. **Leicester** Sun 27 Apr, YMCA, Granby St., Leicester. **Manchester** Sat 3 May, Sacha's Hotel, Tibb St., Piccadilly, Manchester. **Newcastle** Sat 26 Apr, University of Northumbria SU Ballroom, Sandford Rd., Newcastle-upon-Tyne. **Nottingham** Sat 29 Mar and 17 May, Victoria Leisure Centre, Geding St., Nottingham. **Sheffield** Sat 19 Apr, Main Hall, Sheffield Hallam University, Howard St., Sheffield. Contact: Golden Orbit, 18 Oak Tree Way, Stremsl, York, YO3 5TF

# BSFA Awards Presented Paul Kincaid reports

The February BSFA London Meeting at the Jubilee Tavern near Waterloo provided a suitable venue for the presentation of the 1995 BSFA Awards.

The Awards had been announced at Novacon last November (see *Matrix* 122), but since none of the recipients had been present it was decided to stage a separate awards ceremony at a later date. The awards this year consisted of colourful slices of rock mounted upon a solid wooden base. Paul Kincaid, who had stepped in as Awards Administrator at the last minute, rose from his sickbed to make the presentations to **Stephen Baxter**, for his novel *The Time Ships* and **Brian Stableford**, for his novella "The Hunger and Ecstasy of Vampires". **Jim Burns**, who won the Best Artwork Award for the cover of Colin Greenland's *Seasons of Plenty*, had fallen victim to the same lurch that had afflicted Paul Kincaid and was unable to attend, but his presentation will be made during the 1996 BSFA Awards ceremony at Eastercon.

Following the presentation, Stephen and Brian conducted a lively discussion about awards and the state of science fiction today, in front of a large and enthusiastic audience that included Christopher Priest, Dave Langford and Molly Brown among others. Prompted by chairman (and London Meeting organiser) Paul Hood, for instance, Brian Stableford revealed that this was the first award he had ever received for his fiction. Stephen Baxter, on the other hand, has already won the John W. Campbell Memorial Award and the Kurt Lasswitz Award for *The Time Ships*, but said how pleased he was to receive this recognition for the book from a British audience. This led to a discussion of the differing responses towards Stephen's work in Britain and America. Later Brian brought the discussion round

to the state of the genre today, declaring lugubriously that science fiction was as good as dead. Naturally this provoked a sharp response from the audience, but despite the debate going back and forth for some time no one could really amass any solid evidence to refute his argument.

The discussion ranged far and wide and went on considerably longer than is usual for these evenings, so that your reporter, seeking his sickbed once more, had to leave long before the evening wound to a close. That meant I missed not only the famous BSFA raffle but also the announcement of forthcoming attractions. Nevertheless, on the evidence of February's crowded and entertaining event, future speakers are sure to have a very good time.

— Paul Kincaid

## BSFA London Meetings

The BSFA's London Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month in the upstairs room of the Jubilee Tavern, Waterloo, on the south bank of the Thames between Waterloo and Westminster Bridges. The nearest stations are Waterloo (mainline or Underground) or Westminster (Underground) - see "Tun Goes To Jub" on page 3 for precise details of how to find it. Events are usually timed to start around 7.30 in the evening, but BSFA members will have been gathering in the bar downstairs from 6pm onwards at least; if in doubt, the landlord will be able to point us out to you. There is no charge and meetings are open to members and non-members.

Future guests include: 23 April **Colin Greenland**; 24 June **Dianna Wynne Jones**. Note there is no meeting in May as it coincides with the Arthur C. Clarke Award.

Contacts: **Paul Hood** on 01621 816440

**Mark Plummer** on 0181 656 0137

## BSFA Awards Reshuffle

Due to continued ill-health, **Kev McVeigh** has decided that he has to reduce his commitments and so has stepped down as Administrator of the BSFA Awards, a post he took on last May. For many years Kev has been a strong supporter of the BSFA, notably serving as Vector editor for some years, and I'm sure you'll join me in thanking him for all his work and wishing him a speedy recovery.

**Paul Kincaid** has stepped in as pro tem Awards Administrator, and will organise this year's voting and ceremony - for books published in 1996 - at Eastercon in Liverpool.

Nominations for the 1997 Awards are now open, for books published this year. The nomination process is continuous, and we need your suggestions! So if you've read a novel or short story, or seen a piece of artwork which has appeared since January and is deserving of nomination, let us know! More specifically, let Paul know; you can nominate as many different items as you like, and as soon as some votes come in we'll print the details in *Matrix*.

Send your nominations to:

Paul Kincaid, 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ

Tel: 01303 252939

Email: mks\_pk@cix.compulink.co.uk

## BSFA Mailings

As you will have seen from the mailshot in February, the last mailing had a few problems. What appears to have happened is that a proportion of the labels sent to our mailing company went missing after they arrived, and from your responses to our letter we deduced that those who didn't get mailings had names beginning with the late Gs to the early Ms. Steps have been taken to ensure this doesn't happen again.

If you were affected, please accept our humble apologies. If you still haven't received the last mailing, please contact **Paul Billinger** (by letter, fax, phone or email - see page 2 for the addresses) and we'll get one off to you.

## New SF Course At Reading University

Reading University has announced the UK's second of postgraduate course, entitled "MA in Science Fiction: Histories, Texts, Media". The first students will start in October 1997, and applications are welcome. You will normally need a good first degree in a relevant subject (e.g. Cultural Studies, English, Film and Drama, History, Media Studies, or other Humanities subject), though applicants with science or social science backgrounds will be considered, as will those with "non-traditional qualifications at an appropriate level".

The course is full-time for a year or part-time over two years. It's multi-disciplinary, and areas covered include critical and genre theory, sf and Utopian thought, feminist theory, film theory, sf in popular culture, counter-factuals and alternative history, sf and fantasy for young people, and sf on British television. Tutors include Professor Edward James, the Director of the course (and editor of *Foundation*) and Professor Patrick Parrinder, author of a number of critical works on sf, notably on H. G. Wells.

The net is seen as a central resource for the course: "All students will be expected to be, or to become, familiar with the use of email and the World Wide Web. Through email, they will be able to observe and take part in the debates that happen on mailing lists such as 'sf-lit' and 'uk-sf-books', and to communicate with other sf scholars around the world. Through the Web they will have access

to a vast array of research resources in the field of written and media sf."

**Contact:** Professor Edward James, Department of History,  
University of Reading, Whiteknights, Reading, RG6 6AA  
Tel: 01734 263047

Email: E.F.Janes@reading.ac.uk

Web: <http://www.rdg.ac.uk/~lhsiamse/sfma.htm>

- **ALSO OF INTEREST** is the MA in Writing offered by Nottingham Trent University, where the course leader is sf writer **Sue Thomas** (who last appeared here reviewing Stephen Baxter's net novel *Irina*, in *Matrix* 122). Though not wholly devoted to sf, Sue's involvement means that the course contains significant genre interest; recent guest lecturers have included Gwyneth Jones, Graham Joyce and Sarah LeFanu. Again, there's considerable emphasis on the net, in the form of the 'Race' Writing and technology research project, in which Sue has substantial involvement. You'll need to provide a sample of your writing and an account of your approach to writing.

**Contact:** Postgraduate Administrator, Postgraduate School Office, Faculty of Humanities, Nottingham Trent University, Clifton Campus, Clifton Lane, Nottingham, NG11 8NS

Email: [ems3thomas1@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:ems3thomas1@ntu.ac.uk)

Web: <http://human.ntu.ac.uk/foh/pg/mawrit.html>

## Pratchett Marooned

Terry Pratchett received the ultimate honour on 9 February when he appeared on Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs*.

His eight records were:

- **Berlioz, *Symphonie Fantastique*:** LSO, Goossens  
"I have to say that I listen to all music as if it was pop music. I've always known what I liked, but never known much about it. But the first time I heard *Symphonie Fantastique* I got that icy shiver which tells me that I'm listening to good music."
- **Steeleye Span, "Thomas the Rhymer"** (from *Now We Are Six*)

"I've always been a bit of a folkie. The first folk album I ever bought was a Steeleye Span one, and I've collected everything of theirs ever since. And I was particularly thrilled when I heard their version of "Thomas the Rhymer", where Thomas the Bard is taken away by the Queen of the Elves."

• Bernard Miles, "The Race for the Rhinegold Stakes" (Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" with horse-racing commentary.) "I heard this record when I was about 11 or 12, and it is probably one of the ancestors of Discworld. It's a beautifully drawn-out joke."

• Mozart, "Voi Que Sapete" from *The Marriage of Figaro*: Petra Lang, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Harnoncourt

"... you get that white-hot line searing across your brain.

and you know you are listening to genius."

- Meatloaf, "Bat Out of Hell"

"I was driving along the motorway, this came on, and by the time it was over I was considerably further along the motorway and wasn't quite certain how I'd got there."

- Catarro, "Silk Road"

(Theme from TV series *The Silk Road*.) "I remember sitting down one day, putting the CD on, and just sitting back and for three quarters of an hour I simply *untravelled*"

- Icehouse "Great Southern Land"

"It took me a long time to discover this, but I love deserts. Three or four years ago I went on holiday to Australia, and [this is] the piece of music which says 'Australia' to me."

- Vivaldi, "Summer" from *The Four Seasons*: Itzhak Perlman, Israel Philharmonic

"There's a point in 'Summer' where [Perلمان] makes the violin sing like an angel and then curse like a demon. I got into Vivaldi just because of a few notes of music."

If he could only take one record it would be the first, Steeleye Span's "Thomas the Rhymer". The book he chose to accompany the traditional Bible and Shakespeare would be a title like *Edible Plants of the South Seas*: "I know you disapprove, but I'm a fairly practical person and I realise that behind every plant that we now eat there are all the unsung cavenmen that proved that the other ones were poisonous."

His luxury was New York's Chrysler Building, built in 1930: "Cheating, I know . . . a marvellous piece of Gothic art deco, with eagle's heads and gargoyles . . . just this marvellous silver creation, it's the ultimate skyscraper."

• Thanks to Elizabeth Billinger

## Clive Barker TV Deal

Horror/fantasy novelist **Clive Barker's** Seraphim Films production company has signed a deal with Twentieth Century Fox to develop and produce major series, TV films and children's programmes. The first project, in collaboration with Fox TV, who produce *The X-Files*, will be a series called *Clive Barker's Spints and Shadows*. It's scheduled for transmission later this year or early in 1998, and the first three – written by Barker in collaboration with other screenwriters – will be "Silo", "Shock Cinema" and "Hoop Cinema".

- Twentieth Century Fox is owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, which also owns HarperCollins. Barker's publisher.

## Harry Essex Dies

**Harry Essex**, scriptwriter of a number of Universal Studios' influential and fondly-remembered 1950s sf B-movies, died in Los Angeles on 6 February 1997. He was 87, and leaves a son and a daughter.

In 1953 he adapted Ray Bradbury's story 'The Meteor' for the film *It Came From Outer Space* though Bradbury's own screen treatment was the major source – which subversively (for the times) depicted its shapeshifting aliens in a largely sympathetic way. It was the first wide-screen film shot in 3D. The following year he co-wrote *The Creature From The Black Lagoon*, also made in 3D, which became archetypal of the 'creature features' that were so prevalent in the subsequent decade. Again the treatment of the 'Gill Man' has some ambiguity and richness.

Born in New York, Essex wrote for the theatre before moving to Hollywood in the early 1940s. The War interrupted his career, but it resumed in 1947 with screenplays for the thriller *Desperate* and, in 1950, *Frightened City*, a 'Typhoid Mary' story in which smallpox is unwittingly spread in New York by a smuggler; release was delayed for a year due to a clash with 20th Century Fox's similarly-plotted *Panic in the Streets*. He also directed occasionally (including *10*, the *Jury*, a notable thriller made from Mickey Spillane's novel), wrote a number of Western scripts, and in the late 50s and 60s turned to television, including episodes of *The Untouchables*. — *Chris Tarrant*

## James Junket

**Professor Edward James** reports that he and **Farah Mendlesohn** recently returned from a visit to the Modern Language Association's conference in Washington DC, held antiscio's conference between 27 and 31 Dec 1996. This is one of the biggest academic conferences, with over 12,000 delegates. They were there primarily as Editor and Chair of the *Science Fiction Studies* section, as representatives of the Science Fiction Foundation, to meet with the editors and organisers of similar journals, namely *Extrapolation*, *Science-Fiction Studies*, the *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, *Utopian Studies*, and the *Science Fiction Research Association* (For details of these, see Andy Sawyer's 'Taking SF Seriously' in *Matrix* 122). Socially it was a good meeting, and may perhaps achieve an academic 'revival' of *Science Fiction Studies*. *Fantasy* as a recognised category within the MLA's immense and influential and vast organisation

Many thanks to

Ron Bennett, Elizabeth Billinger, Birmingham SF Group, Claire Briailey, Andrew M. Butler, Andy Cox, Tony Cullen, Gary Dalkin, Mike Don, Jo Fletcher, Penny Hill, Edward James, John Jarrold, Steve Jeffery, Paul Kincaid, Dave Langford, Peterborough SF Club, Mark Plummer, Sue Thomas, and Mark Ziesing

## Scribble, Scribble, Scribble

**Ken MacLeod's** third novel will be called *The Cassini Division*. Legend hope to get it out in November. It's set in the same future history as the Clarke-nominated *The Star Colonel* and its follow-up *The Stone Carver*, though like them it's a fully independent novel. London is in ruins, and a woman set to deal with a nanotech spill there gets involved in the spiralling conspiracies around her own anarchist society, the enigmatically hostile post-human civilisation around Jupiter, and the Cassini Division. Earth's defence against it. I. K. Malley – a physicist mentioned in the previous books and responsible for both working out the Theory of Everything and disproving it – comes onstage in this book, and suspects the fast folk's virtual worlds may not be as threatening to humanity as they appear. But Earth is now overpopulated and something has to give.

- **Greg Bear's** next novel – previously titled *Country of the Mind* and originally scheduled for last year – has been both delayed and retitled. It's now called *Slant* and will be out from Legend in June.

# recent & forthcoming books

## Orbit



Including Warner, Little Brown

- ★ **Jack Deighton** *A Son of the Rock* (6 Feb; £5.99 pb, 374pp) — Debut novel from a Scottish writer whose short fiction has appeared in *Interzone* and *New Worlds*. Ian McDonald says the novel is "tween from lived, living stuff. It makes you take a long, cool look at our cool cool world. It's a rare avis, a truly Scottish novel, that makes subtle but profound statements about colonialism, political and cultural. But it's the characters that give this book its inner strength. Real people, real dilemmas, real emotions." On a desolate mining planet, Sony lives on a hill, an old man when all others use the youth drug Euthal. A mining engineer and his girlfriend encounter him, and a strange ménage develops. Bleak but sexy, and recommended.
- L. E. Modesitt, Jr.** *Far of Angels* (6 Feb; £5.99 pb, 560pp; £16.99 hb) — Fantasy. Prequel to the 'Recluse' series.
- ★ **John Clute & John Grant** (eds.) *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (3 Apr; £45.00 hb, 992pp) — The sibling volume to the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. This needs no recommendation from me: it is, quite simply, essential. The book will be launched shortly before the publication date at Eastercon in Liverpool, and copies will be available there.
- Jonathan Wylie** *Across the Flame* (3 Apr; £5.99 pb, 376pp) — Fantasy. "A young artist is haunted by a strange figure from an old painting. She realises that he is a powerful magician,

trapped inside the portrait for centuries."

**Michael Scott Rohan** *Maxie's Demon* (3 Apr; £5.99 pb, 365pp + appx) — Humorous alchemical fantasy in which a small-time crook crashes a stolen Ferrari and stumbles into the Spiral, a time-space whirlpool which whips him to 16th century Prague.

★ **Gregory Benford** *Foundation's Fear* (1 May; £16.99 hb) — First of three new novels from various authors based on Isaac Asimov's 'Foundation' series. This one 'is set at the time when Hari Seldon is developing his theory of psychotechnology into a science which will make it possible to predict future events on a galactic scale. It's a brilliant thriller of political intrigue, adding some fascinating new elements to Asimov's grand vision', including, perhaps, resolving the inconsistencies with current thinking on complex and chaotic systems, including social and political ones.

**David Brin & Gregory Benford** *Heart of the Comet* (May 1986; £5.99 pb) — Nicely timed for Hale-Bopp, here's a reissue of the agreeably silly and enjoyable space adventure set on Halley's Comet during its next return in 2061. Beautiful scientist stranded on comet! Slime monsters! Ray guns!!! All done with the poise of faces.

★ **Garry Kilworth** *The Princely Flower* (1 May; £16.99 hb) — Book 2 of 'The Navigator Kings', a fantasy series based on Polynesian life and myths. This "follows Kiato and his friends as they embark on an incredible voyage of discovery. Pursued by sea-fairies, vengeful gods, power-hungry priests and a murderously angry sun, confronting their worst fears and supernatural horrors, they finally face the wrath of the mighty Maori."

**Garry Kilworth** *The Root of Voyaging* (May; £5.99 pb) — Precursor to the above.

★ **Iain M. Banks** *Ecstasy* (May; £5.99 pb) — Paperback of Banks's splendid new Culture novel. Recommended.

## Orion



Including Millennium, Phoenix, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Dent

- ★ **Greg Egan** *Diapsora* (Millennium; 1 Feb; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp) — No further information about this at press-time, but a new novel by Egan is now a major event, and is not to be missed.
- Mickey Zucker Reichert** *Prince of Demons* (1 Feb; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 576pp) — Fantasy, the fifth 'Renshai' novel.
- ★ **Paul M. Sammon** *Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner* (1 Feb; £17.99 hb, 464pp) — Non-fiction. Hundreds of hours of interviews with all the key players involved in making the key film of the last twenty years.
- Michael Moorcock** *The New Nature of the Catastrophe* (Feb; £5.99 pb)
- Richard White** (ed.) *King Arthur in Legend and History* (Dent; 1 Feb; £20.00 hb, 400pp) — Anth. of Arthurian texts, many translated into English for the first time.
- Keith Thomas** *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson; Mar; £22.00 hb, 736pp) — Non-fiction. Classic 1971 account of 'why astrology, witchcraft, magical healing, divination, ancient prophecies, ghosts and haunts have all taken seriously by Englishmen of the 16th and 17th centuries, and how and why this changed.'
- ★ **Harry Harrison** *The Stainless Steel Rat Goes to Hell* (17 Mar; £16.99 hb, 244pp) — The Rat tackles a religious cult which has kidnapped Angelina. Starts off at Harrison's usual pei-mell rate: cheerfully trampling defenceless comas into submission, but gets bogged down in a lot of long and froing signifying nothing much at all for the central portion of the book. And Jim's going corporate! He actually calls for the Marines for help; he must be getting old. Promising early digs at Scientologists and cults fizzle out into a standard Harrison loony-villain chase, though there's some entertainment along the way. In May Orion are re-issuing the first two Rat titles, *The Stainless Steel Rat* and *The SSR's Revenge* — see below.
- Mercedes Lackey & Larry Dixon** *The Silver Gryphon* (Mar; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.
- ★ **James Buxton** *The Wishing Tree* (Mar; £4.99 pb) — First-rate horror novel. Something nasty in Epping Forest... Recommended.
- ★ **Lucius Shepard** *Barnacle Bill the Spacer and Other Stories* (17 Mar; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 292pp) — Coll. of Shepard's recent short fiction, all first published in Asimov's *Playboy* and *Omni*. As well as the Nebula-winning title story, it also includes "A Little Night Music", "The Beast of the Heartland", "All the Perfume in Araby", "Human History", "The Sun Spider" and "Sports in America". Shepard's biographical note is... well, he "had his education beaten into him by his father, and by the age of five he was reading Shakespeare. He flew helicopters in Vietnam, an experience he will not talk about; has experienced the dark descent of running

cocaine over various north and south American borders; then settled down into years of extensive travel. He is currently fitfully resident in Seattle." Tales both subtle and lurid, sad and buoyant, and your editor's choice this time. It's only marred by being printed sans serif (yes, like this, but I'm not alone in preferring serifed text in books).

**Kristine Kathryn Rusch** *The Fey: Rival* (1 Apr; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 576pp) — Fantasy, third volume of the 'Fey' sequence.

**Stephani Parfitt** *Aliens: The Labyrinth* (7 Apr; £4.99 pb, 216pp)

★ **Bruce Sterling** (ed.) *The Murder Network* (1 Apr; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 512pp) — Anth. of stories (some original) about cyberculture, computers and robots from Stephen King, Philip K. Dick, Greg Bear, William Gibson and others. Introduction by Sterling.

**Michael Moorcock** *The Prince with the Silver Hand* (7 Apr; £5.99 pb, 440pp)

**James Bibby** *Roman's Rescue* (7 Apr; £4.99 pb, 252pp) — Humorous fantasy.

★ **K. W. Jeter** *Bade Runner 3: Replant Night* (May; £5.99 pb) — Sequel to *Edge of Human*. Here Jeter engages in a typically Dickensian reality slip, in which Decard sets his story to a movie director and watches his life relate to the film he shot.

**Lee Smolin** *The Life of the Cosmos* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson; 1 May; £20.00 hb, 320pp) — Speculative cosmology from a US physicist, in which he suggests that the universe may be evolving like a living creature. Cosmologist Paul Davies says: "this provocative book merges key elements of Einstein and Darwin in a breathtaking synthesis. The result is nothing less than a radically new view of the cosmos and our place within it."

**Harry Harrison** *The Stainless Steel Rat* (May 1961; £4.99 pb) — Over 35 years old, and still hugely enjoyable.

**Harry Harrison** *The Stainless Steel Rat's Revenge* (May 1970; £4.99 pb) — Second adventure of Slippery Jim diGriz.

**Tricia Sullivan** *Someone to Watch Over Me* (Millennium; 1 May; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 320pp) — From the author of *Lethe* comes a story which sounds reminiscent of D. G. Compton's wonderful *The Continuous Katherine Mortenhoe*: a woman takes a beaten man outside Zagreb station, and he turns out to be a trans, implanted with equipment which enables someone else to experience everything he does.

**Yvonne Navarro** *Music of the Spheres* (Millennium; 1 May; £16.99 hb, 288pp) — Latest Aliens books taken from the Dark Horse comics.

**Sarah Ash** *Songspinnners* (May; £4.99 pb)

**James Bibby** *Ronan's Revenge* (Millennium; 1 May; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 320pp) — Latest instalment in the humorous fantasy series.

**Michael Moorcock** *Legends From the End of Time* (Jun; £5.99 pb)

★ **James Buxton** *Play Millennium* (1 Jun; £16.99 hb, 352pp) — Follow-up to the extremely effective dark fantasy *The Wishing Tree*. A haunted-house story set in Bermuda.

**Thomas Richards** *The Myths and Legends of Star Trek* (1 Jun; £12.99 hb, 176pp) — Apparently reveals the secret origins of Trek storylines in ancient epics, traditional romances and folk tales, from which Gene Roddenberry nicked his ideas. "Easily the most cerebral of show on television" says the PR. Well — my hat, I never knew that.

**Kristine Kathryn Rusch** *The Fey: Changing* (Jun; £5.99 pb)

★ **John Barnes** *Apocalypses and Apostrophes* (Millennium; 1 Jul; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 256pp) — Coll. from one of the best US writers, including some new material. "Some of the stories depict the end of the world, some are speeches addressed to a non-existent being or something which cannot understand human speech."

**Nathan Archer** *Cold War* (Millennium; 1 Jul; £16.99 hb, 304pp) — Latest Predator tie-in.

**May Corran** *Darkfall* (Jul; £4.99 pb)

★ **Stephen Baxter** *Guliverzone* (1 Jul; £16.99 hb, £2.99 pb, 112pp) — Baxter's first young adult book concerns three children in a virtual reality theme park based on *Gulliver's Travels*, and their struggle with the Lilliputians. This is the first of six linked novels using the World Wide Web as a starting point; the second is:

**Stephen Boddick** *Dreamcastle* (1 Jul; £9.99 hb, £2.99 pb, 112pp) — A VR-based D&D game on the WWW goes wrong...

## Key

pb = paperback; hb = hardback; tp = trade paperback; pp = extent  
ill. = illustrated; ed. = edited; R(x) = reissue / reprint (first publication date)  
coll. = story collection (same author); anth. = anthology (different authors)

★ = Highlight ☆ = Editor's choice ☆ = First UK edition

Treat future dates with caution. All unquoted remarks by Chris Terran.  
Quoted comments are from publishers' material — caveat emptor

## Voyager



Including HarperCollins, Flamingo, Fontana

**James Van Hise** *The Unauthorized Trekkers' Guide to The Next Generation and Deep Space Nine* (3 Feb; £5.99 pb) — Follow-up to *Trek: The Unauthorized A-Z* and I'm not saying a word.

**Easton Royce** *The X-Files: Voltage* (3 Feb; £3.99 pb) — A man appears to have mental control over electrical activity.

**Les Martin** *The X-Files: E.B.E.* (3 Mar; £3.99 pb) — An Extraterrestrial Biological Entity lands in a UFO in the Middle East.

**Robin Hobb** *Royal Assassin* (3 Mar; £5.99 pb) — Paperback of volume 2 of the 'Farseer Trilogy'; the next is:

**Robin Hobb** *Assassin's Quest* (3 Mar; £16.99 hb, c90pp) — Final volume of the 'Farseer Trilogy', though Hobb is now working on a new series set in the same world.

★ **Colin Greenland** *The Principle* (10 Mar; £5.99 pb) — Coll. including a long, new Tobin Jude story, Greenland's takes on Sandman, Eric, and Luther Arkwright, and other shorts in various genres.

★ **Philip K. Dick** *We Can Build You* (17 Mar (R 1972); £5.99 pb) — Originally published as *A. Lincoln: Simulacrum*. Two typically Dickian entrepreneurs build recreations of Lincoln and Edwin M. Stanton, his Secretary of War. There's also a classic Dick female in *Pris*. Extremely funny and immensely sad, this underrated book is terrific. Recommended.

★ **Neil Gaiman & Ed Kramer** (eds) *The Sandman Book of Dreams* (17 Mar; £5.99 pb) — Anth. of stories based on Gaiman's *Sandman* comic; contributors include Colin Greenland, Stephen King, Gene Barker, Tad Williams, Gene Wolfe, Tom Amos (I), Barbara Hambly and others.

★ **Arthur C. Clarke** 2001: *The Last Odyssey* (20 Mar; £16.99 hb, c40pp) — The final 'Odyssey' book, allegedly, in which Frank Poole — killed by HAL en route to Jupiter — is resurrected, and the light of Lucifer [the name by which the giant Jupiter is known] is extinguished, and for the second time in four million years, the Moonlight awakes. The limitless power of an alien technology has decided what part humanity must play in the evolution of the galaxy, whether it wants to or not. The paperback will be published in Dec '97, along with reissues of 2010 and 2061 though not 2001, presumably HarperCollins don't have the rights).

★ **Susan Sheets-Pyenson & Lewis Pyenson** *The Fontana History of Science in Society* (Fontana: 1 Mar; £12.99 pb, 512pp ill.) — Non-fiction. Examines the interplay of science with society, religion, and democracy.

★ **Steve Jones** *In the Blood* (Flamingo: Mar; £9.99 pb, 320pp ill.) — Non-fiction from the line populariser of science, subtitled 'God, Genes and Destiny'.

★ **Humphrey Carpenter** *The Inklings* (Mar; £7.99 pb, 304pp) — Paperback reissue of Carpenter's biography of the group of Oxford writers which included Tolkien and C. S. Lewis.

★ **Michael Shea** *Unholy* (HarperCollins: Mar; £15.99 hb, 272pp) — Near-future political thriller from the former diplomat and Press Secretary to the Queen. 'It is four years since Scotland became independent, and it is struggling. A worldwide recession has brought mass unemployment and led to growing civil unrest — the Scottish economy is collapsing. [No change there.] But not by accident — the discontent is being deliberately orchestrated as part of a covert and vicious international intrigue.' A US-based multinational offers a solution, but at a price. ....

★ **Anonymous** *Tom Clancy's Op-Centre: Acts of War* (HarperCollins: Mar; £5.99 pb, 400pp) — Techno-thriller. 'Created by' Clancy and Steve Pieczenik, the actual writer is uncredited.

★ **Lawrence M. Krauss** *The Physics of Star Trek* (Flamingo: Mar; £6.99 pb, 206pp) — Non-fiction (sort of) from a physics professor. Foreword by Stephen Hawking.

★ **Les Martin** *The X-Files: Die Bug* (Die! 7 Apr; £3.99 pb) — Killer cockroaches infest a small town.

★ **Clive Barker** *Waveworld* (7 Apr (R 1987); £5.99 pb) — Special 10th anniversary edition of the world-in-a-carpel dark fantasy, with a new introduction from Barker.

★ **Raymond E. Feist** *Rage of a Demon King* (7 Apr; £16.99 hb, c40pp) — Fantasy, volume 3 in *The Serpentwar Saga*.

★ **Kim Stanley Robinson** *Blue Mars* (7 Apr; £5.99 pb) — Third volume of Robinson's 'Mars' trilogy.

★ **Alison Spedding** *The Road and the Hills* (21 Apr; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, Vol. 1 of 'A Walk in the Dark'. The Fantasist Formerly Known As Spedding was born in the UK but now lives in Bolivia.

★ **John Pritchard** *The Witching Hour* (21 Apr; £5.99 pb) — Third horror novel from a manager of a medical unit in a large NHS hospital. Plenty of material, then.

★ **Umberto Eco** *The Search for the Perfect Language* (Apr; £7.99 pb, c40pp) — Non-fiction, well described by its title.

★ **Douglas E. Winter** (ed.) *Millennium* (24 Apr; £16.99 hb, c40pp) — A 'wraparound' novella by Clive Barker frames a series of stories set in the decades of the twentieth century. Contributors include Joe R. Lansdale, F. Paul Wilson, Poppy Z. Brite, Whitney Streiber, Ramsey Campbell, and others.

★ **Stephen Baxter** *Vacuum Diagrams* (HarperCollins: 24 Apr; £16.99 hb, c40pp) — Coll. of Baxter's 'Xeelee' short stories, mostly published in *Interzone*.

★ **Brian Lumley** *Brian Lumley's Mythos Omnibus*, Vol. 1 (HarperCollins: Apr; £5.99 pb, 688pp) — The first volume of Lumley's additions to the Cthulhu Mythos; contains *The Burrowers Beneath*, *The Transient of Tibes Crow*, and *The Clock of Dreams*. The second volume will be issued in June.

★ **Melanie McGrath** *Hard, Soft and Wet* (HarperCollins: Apr; £16.99 hb, 320pp) — Non-fiction. Investigation into worldwide cyberculture and its associated lifestyles: road protesters, virus writers, technomages (nice phrase!), neo-Luddites, ambient DJs, email junkies and so forth. McGrath is British, and in the course of writing this travelled widely: London, San Francisco, Wales, New York, Singapore, Moscow, Prague, Berlin, Reykjavik, Worth investigating.

★ **Brian Lumley** *Brian Lumley's Mythos Omnibus*, Vol. 2 (HarperCollins: Apr; £5.99 pb, 656pp) — The second volume of Lumley's additions to the Cthulhu Mythos; contains *Spawns of the Winds*, *In the Moons of Borea*, and *Elysia*.

★ **Philip K. Dick** *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (6 May (R 1968); £5.99 pb) — The basis of *Blade Runner*, of course. Francis Ford Coppola is scheduled to produce (and might direct) a movie version of *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*.

★ **Jane Welch** *The Runes of Sorcery* (6 May; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, book 3 of the 'Runespell Trilogy'. 'Youthful heroes and bloodthirsty action to satisfy the most ardent Edgings fan.'

★ **Stephen Donaldson** *This Day All Gods Die* (19 May; £5.99 pb) — St. fifth and final volume in the 'Gap' series.

★ **Isaac Asimov** *Magi* (19 May; £5.99 pb) — Coll. of Asimov's fantasy stories.

★ **Christie Dickson** *Quicksilver* (HarperCollins: 1 May; £16.99 hb, 320pp) — 'Werewolf Gothic' fantasy set in 17th century England and Holland, with the background of the emerging Age of Reason. Dickson is an American choreographer (at Ronnie Scott's and the RSC) now resident in London.

★ **Richard Fortley** *Life: An Unauthorized Biography* (HarperCollins: 1 May; £20.00 hb, 416pp ill.) — The history of the first 4 billion years of the Earth.

★ **Barbara Hambly** *The Mother of Winter* (2 Jun; £5.99 pb) — Fourth (sic) volume in the 'Darwin' trilogy.

★ **Stephen Lawhead** *Beyond Lion* (2 Jun; £5.99 pb) — Fantastical Lawhead has moved from Christian publishing house Zylant, to this stand-alone volume tells of a novice in Ireland chosen to accompany a small band of monks delivering the Book of Kells to the Pope.

★ **Kevin J. Anderson** *Climbing Olympus* (16 Jun; £5.99 pb) — A slightly late Mars book, in which Man Plussed humans have to terraform the planet — but this is suicide for them.

★ **Eric Lustbader** *Dragons on the Sea of Night* (16 Jun; £16.99 hb) — Erotic fantasy.

★ **Kate Wilhelm** *Melanie Prehense* (HarperCollins: 1 Jun; £5.99 pb, 352pp) — Associational. Non-sf courtroom thriller.

## Gollancz



Including Vista, Indigo

★ **Isaac Asimov** *Robot Dreams* (Vista: 20 Feb (R 1966); £5.99 pb)

★ **Isaac Asimov** *Robot Visions* (Vista: 20 Feb (R 1990); £5.99 pb)

★ **Stephen King** *Dan Simmons & George R. R. Martin Dark Visions* (Vista: 20 Feb; £5.99 pb)

★ **Arthur C. Clarke** *Imperial Earth* (Vista: 20 Feb (R 1975); £4.99 pb)

★ **Simon R. Green** *Deathstalker* (Vista: 20 Mar (R 1995); £5.99 pb) — Reissue.

★ **Simon R. Green** *Deathstalker War* (Vista: 20 Mar; £5.99 pb, 576pp) — Third in the 'Deathstalker' series.

★ **Arthur C. Clarke** *The Fountains of Paradise* (Vista: 20 Mar (R 1979); £4.99 pb) — Reissue of Clarke's 'space elevator' book, set mostly in Taborene, a lightly disguised (and moved south a bit) Sri Lanka.

★ **Gregory Benford** *In the Ocean of Night* (Vista: 20 Mar (R 1977); £5.99 pb) — Reissue of the first 'Walmesley' book.

★ **Peter James** *Getting Wired* (Mar; £3.99 pb, 128pp ill.) — A 'TechnoTerrors' story, the first children's book from Brighton resident James, better known for near-future thrillers such as *The Alchemist*. A group of children decide to get Big Bertha, their school's ancient computer, on to the Internet. Illustrated by Derek Brazell.

★ **M. John Harrison** *Signs of Life* (Apr; £16.99 hb, 256pp) — 'An up-to-the-minute romantic thriller' set in London and Budapest about a courier for the genetics industry and his relationship with Isabel, who wants to fly. She takes a new DNA-based genetic treatment, and Mick learns

what he's been carrying. 'Fashion and fast cars, computers, biotechnology and the Eastern European Mafia' and more.

★ **Duane Frankel** *Bad Memory* (Apr; £15.99 hb, 384pp) — Techno-thriller by a Houston-based systems analyst about a large computer company subject to extortion from a hacker who's infiltrated their network.

★ **Thomas Tessier** *Fog Heart* (24 Apr; £16.99 hb, 256pp) — Supernatural thriller.

★ **Peter Dickinson** *The Lion Tamer's Daughter* and *Other Supernatural Stories* (Apr; £11.99 hb, 192pp) — Four tales from the highly-regarded children's writer.

★ **Peter Dickinson** *The Blue Hawk* (Apr; £4.50 pb, 240pp ill.) — Reissued young adult fantasy.

★ **Terry Pratchett & Stephen Briggs** *The Discworld Companion* (Vista: May; £4.99 pb) — New updated edition of the anorak guide.

★ **Steve Harris** *The Devil on My Street* (4 Jul; £16.99 hb) — Haunted house horror.

★ **Ursula K. Le Guin** *Four Ways to Forgiveness* (Vista: May; £5.99 pb) — Four novellas.

★ **Gregory Benford** *Matter's End* (Vista: May; £5.99 pb) — Collection of shorts.

★ **Stephen Jones** (ed.) *Dancing With the Dark* (Jun; £5.99 pb) — 'True supernatural experiences from Stephen King, Vincent Price, James Herbert, Ramsey Campbell and other masters of horror.' The writers reveal how their encounters with the supernatural are reflected in their fiction.

★ **Susanna Kearsley** *The Shadow Horses* (Jun; £15.99 hb) — Timeslip fantasy about an archaeological dig in Scotland searching for the Ninth Legion. This is the Canadian writer's third book, the first, *Manana*, won the Catherine Cookson Fiction Prize.

★ **Tim Earman** *Heilum* (Jun; £9.99 pb) — A 'comedy of weightlessness' in which a rock musician's sudden lightness of step becomes a matter of great interest to NASA. Earman's first novel.

★ **Margaret Weis & Don Perrin** *Hung Out* (Jul; £15.99 hb) — Third in the 'Knights of the Black Earth' series.

# The Rest



Macmillan / Pan  
Paper Tiger  
Bantam  
Titan

**Gerrit L. Verschuur** *Impact! The Threat of Comets and Asteroids* (OUP: 1 Jan: £16.99 hb, 224pp ill.) — Timely (given the number of upcoming films on the subject) non-fiction look at past impacts and the possibilities and consequences of future ones.

**L. Frank Baum** *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (World's Classics: Jan: £4.99 pb, 160pp ill.) — New edition edited by Susan Wolstenholme, with the original illustrations and critical essays on the book and the film.

**Carol Zaleski** *The Life of the World to Come* (OUP: 1 Jan: £14.99 hb, 112pp ill.) — "Are we rationally and morally entitled to believe in life after death?"

★ **Tad Williams** *Otherland* (Legend: 2 Jan: £16.99 pb) — Near-future sf from the noted fantasist, set largely in virtual reality. First in a series of four books. Tad says: "So far my only real unhappiness about the book is that, since it's going to be four volumes, there are going to be TWO middle books. Gack. No one sensible likes to write middle books."

**Gordon Graham** *The Shape of the Past* (OUP: Feb: £9.99 pb, 240pp) — A philosophical look at the larger issues of history — does history repeat itself? Can it be interpreted in any meaningful way? Has there been any real 'progress'? Is there evidence of divine intervention? All issues examined — more or less explicitly — in much st. particularly alternative history stories.

**Henry Fielding** *A Journey From This World to the Next* (World's Classics: Feb: £5.99 pb, 304pp) — Only edition of Fielding's satirical journey through the underworld (see also Dante, below).

**Ian Watson** *Miracle Visitors* (Biblos: Feb (R 1978): £3.99 pb) — Reissue of this uniquely Watsonian take on UFOs, seeing them as Jungian archetypes. Or perhaps not. Bizarre and joyously inventive.

**Jonathan Gems** *Mars Attacks!* (Signet: 1 Feb: £5.99 pb) — Novelisation of the film by the screenwriter, according to John Ashbrook "even funnier than the film!"

**Thomas Nagel** *The Last Word* (OUP: 1 Feb: £16.99 hb, 160pp) — A defence of reason against subjectivism from a leading philosopher, "delivering systematic rebuttals of relativistic claims with respect to language, logic, science, and ethics". Has Einstein heard?

★ **Sir Fred Hoyle** *Home is Where the Wind Blows* (OUP: Feb: £12.99 pb, 448pp) — Autobiography of the controversial astrophysicist (and sf writer, of course). A challenge: write a capsule review of this without using the words "bluff Yorkshireman" or a cricket metaphor.

**Andrew Harman** *A Midsummer Night's Gene* (Legend: 1 Feb: £4.99 pb) — Humorous fantasy.

**Maggie Furey** *The Sword of Flame* (Legend: 6 Feb: £16.99 hb R) — Fantasy, finale to the well-received 'Artefacts of Power' series. Furey will be touring to promote this.

**Robert Jordan** *Conan the Magnificent* (Legend: 6 Feb: £4.99 pb) — Heroic fantasy.

**Ayn Rand** *Atlas Shrugged* (Signet: Feb (R 1957): £6.99 pb) — Reissue of an enormous sf novel from the founder of 'Objectivist' philosophy (read 'selfishness'). Rand is regaining some pernicious influence in the US in the form of the right-wing militia movement. She has said "My personal life is a postscript to my novels: it consists of the sentence: 'And I mean it.'"

**Charlotte Dacre** *Zofloya or The Moor* (World's Classics: Mar: £5.99 pb, 304pp) — First edition for nearly 200 years of Dacre's obscure Gothic tale set in 15th century Venice. Scandalous when first published, it "challenges the received idea of the Gothic genre's representation of passive, victimised women."

**Deborah Blum & Mary Knudson** (eds) *A Field Guide for Science Writers* (OUP: 1 Mar: £16.99 hb, 288pp) — Guide for aspiring science journalists in all media.

**Allen Ashley** *The Planet Suite* (TFA Press: 1 Mar: £4.99 pb, 98pp) — Flatteringly blurbled by Brian Aldiss, this short novel — Ashley's first, though he's had short fiction in *Interzone* and elsewhere — sits between mainstream and genre sf, and aims to explore the Solar System of myth and image; Holst's *The Planets* is an inspiration. The cover is by Dave Mooring. (See page 21 for availability, and a special offer on the book.)

**Paul Barnett Strider's Galaxy (Legend: 6 Mar: £5.99 pb) — St.**

**Terry Brooks** *First King of Shannara* (Legend: 6 Mar: £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.

**Robert Jordan** *Conan Chronicles* (1 Legend: 1 Mar: £5.99 hb) — Heroic fantasy.

★ **Peter F. Hamilton** *The Reality Dysfunction* (Pan: 7 Mar: £7.99 pb) — Hamilton's gnomous and hugely-cast space opera, the first volume in a series. This and the two books following are part of a special promotion, to be launched at Intervention, in which you can get any two for £10. Do not miss the fact that this disguises a hefty price rise. Admittedly the Hamilton and the Rawn are big books, but £8 for a standard paperback is new territory.

**Julian May** *Magnificat* (Pan: 7 Mar: £5.99 pb) — Final volume of the 'Galactic Milieu' trilogy.

**Melanie Rawn** *The Ruins of Ambar* (Pan: 7 Mar: £7.99 pb) — Fantasy epic, Book 1 of the new 'Exiles' series, where the planet Lenfel, "once devastated by a war that let loose wild magic and hideous species known as Wraithbeasts, is again threatened with a new war which would release those same horrors." Cynics call this "recycling your material".

★ **Robert Silverberg** *Sorcerers of Majipoor* (Macmillan: 1 Mar: £16.99 hb) — The fifth 'Majipoor' book "tells of a dramatic and violent struggle for the throne of the planet that took place 1,000 years before the previous books."

**Melanie Rawn, Jennifer Roberson & Kate Elliott** *The Golden Key* (Macmillan: 1 Mar: £15.99 hb) — Fantasy about a family with the ability to manipulate space, time and reality for their artworks, and a woman trapped inside a painting.

**George Lucas & Chris Claremont** *Shadow Dawn* (Bantam: 13 Mar: £15.99 hb, 415pp) — Sequel to *Shadow Moon* — Lucas had no part in the writing, but he's credited with the story. Fantasy full of names like 'Thorn Drumheller' and 'Eloa Darnan', etc. creatures called brownies, dragons, demons, elves, sorcerers and quests. Any resemblance, etc.

**Chuck Dixon** (et al) *Batman: Legacy* (Titan: 14 Mar: £8.99 pb) — Graphic novel, sequel to — and conclusion of — *Batman: Contagion*. The Ebola plague which devastated Gotham City has mutated into something even more deadly, and Robin is a carrier. The villain Bane, who defeated Batman in *Knightrider*, returns for the showdown.

**Peter Dickinson & Wayne Anderson** *The Flight of Dragons* (Paper Tiger: 17 Mar: £13.99 pb) — Fantastist and detective writer Peter Dickinson was an assistant editor of *Punch* for 17 years, and here he sets out to prove that dragons really did exist, by extrapolating from myths and folk-tales to a thesis on how they could have flown, why they hoarded gold, and speculations on their mating habits. Anti-Wayne Anderson provides more than 100 colour illustrations.

**Jürgen Ziewe** *New Territories of the Imagination* (Paper Tiger: 17 Mar: £14.99 pb) — Computer art from the German illustrator, now resident in England where he's Art Director for — of all things — the Woolwich Building Society. He also produces greetings cards for Athena. Here you'll find fractals, dolphins in space and landscapes, all created on computer. Text by Nigel Suckling.

**Mark Twain** *A Connecticut Yankee in the Court of King Arthur* (World's Classics: Apr: £5.99 pb, 410pp ill.) — Classic time-slip story; use the text of the first US edition.

Oxford are also issuing their complete edition of Twain, reprints of the first editions including the original illustrations, and with introductions from such as Kurt Vonnegut, Malcolm Bradbury, Gore Vidal, Arthur Miller and Erica Jong. Complete set: OUP: Apr: £240 (£320 after 1 Oct 97) hbs, 13,904pp in 29 volumes, ill.

**N. E. Genge** *The Lexicon: Anti-Waltons to Zuni* (Pan: 4 Apr: £7.99 pb, 177pp) — "An unofficial X-Files guide to people, places and proprietary phrases". Now, I've never seen *The X-Files* (get up, please), so this is completely incomprehensible to me. It's an alphabetical list of things referenced in the show, and is possibly meant to be amusing: "Trenchcoat: useful for hiding pregnancies". There are a number of stock photos, an episode guide, and a diary. Genge (a woman) is the author of the *Unofficial X-Files Companions*, has written for *Asimov's* and lives in Newfoundland.

**Maggie Furey** *Diamant* (Legend: 3 Apr: £16.99 hb, £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, first publication. Delayed from November.

**Terri Windling** *The Wood Wife* (Legend: 3 Apr: £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.

**Robert Jordan** *Conan the Triumphant* (Legend: 3 Apr: £4.99 pb) — Heroic fantasy.

**Martin Gardner** (ed.) *Great Essays in Science* (Oxford: Apr: £8.99 pb, 448pp) — Anthology of the world's best science writers, including Einstein, R. L. Stevenson, Darwin, Chesterton, Asimov, Sagan and Gould.

★ **George Tomkyns Chesney** and **Saki** *The Battle of Dorking* and *When William Came* (World's Classics: May: £4.99 pb, 160pp) — Two classic future-war stories from 1871 and 1913 respectively, both about German invasions of the UK. Introduced by L. F. Clarke, author of the seminal *Voices Prophecy War*.

**Dante Alighieri** *Inferno* (Oxford: Jun: £10.99 pb, 672 pp ill.) — First volume of Robert M. Durling's new prose translation (the first in 25 years) of one of the great works of proto-sf, Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It inspired, among much other sf and fantasy, Niven & Pournelle's *Inferno*, in which an sf writer goes to hell. Stick to the original, I'd advise: it's surprisingly readable, even the Dorothy L. Sayers translation which I first came across. Includes the full Italian text, notes and 16 essays on special subjects.





# the view from the shop floor

chris terran on the Waterstone's books of the century

IN SEPTEMBER last year Waterstone's and Channel 4 together asked their customers and viewers to cast their votes – slightly prematurely – for “the greatest books of the twentieth century”. The results were announced on 20 January, and sf and fantasy made a surprisingly strong showing, including the top three titles.

Here's the top 10, and other books of genre interest in the complete chart; my comments are totally biased and can safely be ignored.

## 1. J. R. R. Tolkien *The Lord of the Rings*

If you disregard the accusations of vote-rigging which followed the announcement of the top-placed book, it seems possible that voters – largely middle-class and middle-aged, and hence young in the 1960s and 70s – are remembering the impact this book had at an impressionable age rather than its literary quality. There was a time when you couldn't get on a train without seeing someone reading it, usually wearing loon pants.

## 2. George Orwell *Nineteen Eighty-four*

This doesn't appear to have suffered from being an O-Level text for many years.

## 3. George Orwell *Animal Farm*

In *Billion Year Spree*, Brian Aldiss said that *Animal Farm* was, “of all the books mentioned in this volume, possibly the one most likely to get first to Pluto, tucked in [...] some visiting astronaut's pocket: a book with survival value.”

## 4. James Joyce *Ulysses*

One wonders how many readers of the other top ten books have actually read this.

## 5. Joseph Heller *Catch-22*

## 6. J. D. Salinger *The Catcher in the Rye*

## 7. Harper Lee *To Kill a Mockingbird*

## 8. Gabriel Garcia Marquez *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

It's pleasing to see this so high up the list. Paul Kincaid discussed the strong links between magic realism – of which this is perhaps paradigmatic – and sf/fantasy in *Vector* 191.

## 9. John Steinbeck *The Grapes of Wrath*

## 10. Irvine Welsh *Trainspotting*

The highest-placed “contemporary” book: all the above are at least 30 years old.

## 13. William Golding *Lord of the Flies*

My O-Level book. And I've never read it since. I'm ashamed to admit.

## 15. Aldous Huxley *Brave New World*

I confess to finding this a rather unlikely book, in contrast to Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four*.

## 16. Kenneth Grahame *The Wind in the Willows*

Here's a clump of children's books, all with fantastic elements. Again, perhaps nostalgia guided some voters' crosses.

## 17. A. A. Milne *Winnie the Pooh*

## 19. J. R. R. Tolkien *The Hobbit*

## 21. C. S. Lewis *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

## 22. Franz Kafka *The Trial*

The great 20th century novel of paranoia.

## 24. Douglas Adams *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

I prefer the radio version, meself.

## 25. Salman Rushdie *Midnight's Children*

Rushdie's first novel *Grimus* was entered in the Gollancz SF Novel competition. *Midnight's Children* won the Booker Prize in 1981.

## 27. Anthony Burgess *A Clockwork Orange*

Unlike many mainstream dilettantes in the field, Burgess knew his sf – as he showed in his *Ninety-Nine Novels: The Best in English Since 1939*.

## 30. Primo Levi *If This is a Man*

## 32. Iain Banks *The Wasp Factory*

Banks' first novel; thirteen other Banks titles were voted for. Kev McVeigh discusses aspects of this novel – horror not sf, if you want to pigeonhole it – in *Vector* 191.

## 38. Joseph Conrad *Heart of Darkness*

Included here more for its metaphorical power and the influence it has had on sf writers.

## 40. Richard Adams *Watership Down*

Responsible for resurrecting the “talking animal” strand of fantasy. Incidentally, why does everyone ignore *Maia*?

## 42. Umberto Eco *The Name of the Rose*

Sherlock Holmes finds the *finis Atriae*.

## 51. Frank Herbert *Dune*

Probably the highest-placed example of bona fide genre sf.

## 53. Patrick Süskind *Perfume*

A personal favourite of mine, this. Is it fantasy? Certainly its central conceit has the right smell: a man obsessed with and ruled by odours.

## 55. Mervyn Peake *The Gormenghast Trilogy*

I read this just after *Lord of the Rings* when I was about 18, and there was (and is) no doubt in my mind which is the better book, in all respects. This has stayed with me in a way *LoTR* never has.

## 58. Margaret Atwood *The Handmaid's Tale*

Winner of the first Arthur C. Clarke Award in 1986, and filmed – rather unsuccessfully – in 1990, with a Harold Pinter screenplay.

## 60. John Fowles *The Magus*

63. Mikhail Bulgakov *The Master and Margarita*  
A lovely tale, wherein the devil visits Moscow and wreaks creative havoc. Read this if you haven't come across it before.

## 65. John Fowles *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

Interesting for its ‘time-slip’ narration. Fowles's *A Maggot* is genre sf.

## 67. Kurt Vonnegut *Slaughterhouse 5*

Vonnegut's powerful retelling of the Dresden fire-bombing, with sf trimmings.

## 71. Stephen King *It*

A glutinous book, but more-ish in a soapy kind of way. 37 of King's books received votes.

## 73. Stephen King *The Stand*

An uneasy and extremely long combination of end-of-the-world sf and pure fantasy.

## 79. Stephen Hawking *A Brief History of Time*

Often referred to as the most unread bestseller ever. No, I haven't read it either.

## 87. Arthur C. Clarke *2001: A Space Odyssey*

14 of Clarke's books received votes. The power of films: while this is fine Clarke, most readers would probably regard *Childhood's End* as his best book.

## 91. Richard Dawkins *The Selfish Gene*

Non-fiction. A fine (and very influential) book, but seeing it here certainly surprised me. Dawkins's meme of ‘memes’ spread like wildfire.

## 92. Michael Crichton *Jurassic Park*

Heaven knows how this got in. Was there a movie?

## 93. Lawrence Durrell *The Alexandria Quartet*

Not sf, but *Tunc* and *Nunquam* certainly are.

## 98. Anthony Burgess *Earthly Powers*

## 13. Samuel Beckett *Waiting for Godot*

If this isn't fantasy ... It's extremely funny, too.

## 108. Arthur Koestler *Darkness at Noon*

## 112. Martin Amis *London Fields*

One of Amis's ghastly heroes sneers at the millennium. Amis wrote the screenplay for the silly *Saturn 3*.

## 116. Margaret Atwood *Cat's Eye*

## 118. Anne Rice *Interview with the Vampire*

I find Rice doubly unreadable, unfortunately.

## 123. Virginia Woolf *Orlando*

Time- and gender-slip fantasy.

## 133. Iain Banks *Complacency*

## 134. Umberto Eco *Foucault's Pendulum*

Conspiracy theories and secret societies ...

## 138. Iain Banks *The Crow Road*

## 143. Franz Kafka *The Castle*

145. Terry Pratchett *The Colour of Magic*  
Pratchett certainly suffered from split voting – no fewer than 34 of his titles received votes, which is just about everything he's ever written.

## 147. Thomas Pynchon *Gravity's Rainbow*

## 148. J. G. Ballard *Empire of the Sun*

## 150. Stephen Fry *The Liar*

Certain authors didn't make it into the top 150 but nevertheless had a number of their titles nominated: Philip K. Dick had 12; Isaac Asimov 13; Doris Lessing 12; Christopher Pike 13 (the YA vote?); and Dean Koontz had 13. Incredibly, 44 of Enid Blyton's books were considered to be among the best of the century, as were 15 of Agatha Christie's.

Given the amount of sf in the list, it's slightly surprising that William Gibson's *Neuromancer* isn't there, like the other sf titles it's achieved a large crossover audience. But you may have also noticed that there is only one genre title with no sort of media tie-in: Terry Pratchett's *The Colour of Magic* (but there's the CD-ROM game, and the graphic novel ...).

It's notable how little humour there is: no 1066 and All That, no Tom Sharpe, Leslie Thomas, David Nobbs. Note also how many children's books appear – ten certainly in the top 100, with another half-dozen arguably.

The whole list is an interesting – if uneasy – mix of the popular and the worthy, bestsellers and the Great Unread. Delia Smith's *Complete Cookery Course* just pips Brian Keenan's *An Evil Cradling*. Vladimir Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading* just pips Iain Banks's *The Wasp Factory*. A *Brief History of Time* sits next to *James and the Giant Peach*. Perhaps Waterstone's and C4 should have asked Bob Worcester about the pitfalls of self-selecting poll samples ...

The full list is available in all branches of Waterstone's.

## THOROUGHLY MODERN MAGIC

The last decade has seen nanotechnology – molecular-scale engineering – thoroughly absorbed into the toolbox of science fiction. So much so that any novel set in the near- to medium-term future has to either acknowledge it or posit some reason for its absence.

A big problem – or, conversely, a big appeal – for sci-fi writers is its 'magical' nature. You can do damn near anything with nanotech. It provides an easy rationalisation for feats previously seen as the preserve of fantasy: shape-shifting (*Terminator 2*), scrap into a gun in *Queen of Angels*, virtual invulnerability, instant healing (*Looking for the Mahdi*), eternal youth (*The Diamond Age*), instant destruction (*Blood Music*), resurrection of the dead (*Necropolis*), loyalty 'spells' (*Kalidoscope Century*), rings giving their wearers superhuman powers – it's almost too easy. When there are no limits there are no challenges, and some writers sense this. The challenge for sci-fi authors is to impose some boundaries on its use, as it's necessary for fantasy writers to limit the use of magic; the usual cop-out here is to limit those who can use it, often to bearded old men. Science (fiction) is basically egalitarian, and won't hold with the hierarchical and semi-fascist nature of most fantasy worlds. SF seeks to change the world (and examine the consequences), while fantasy seeks the power that preserves.

It's worth remembering that nanotech is conceivable using today's ordinary technology – it requires no fundamental breakthroughs. After all, it's a technology, not a science. And we already have an example of a working nanotech system, of course, so we know it can be done.

It's called biology.

—Chris Terran

## Ten Years Ago...

*Matrix* 68, Feb / Mar 87... Paul J. McAuley weighed in on the eternal BSFA Awards debate – the suggestion that they should only go to British writers was 'invidious', and in answer to the question 'what are they for?' he said: 'Certainly not to provide a benchmark of literary standard, or to add another brick in a ghetto wall. Then what? Perhaps to provide a chance for every member to give an opinion on current sf, once every year. Perhaps to give the BSFA a chance at a little publicity, as the awards announced anywhere other than *Matrix*?' [...] After three years in the BSFA I'm still not sure what the awards physically are. A trophy? A certificate? A pint of beer and a kiss on the cheek from the chairman? From this I conclude that the actuality of the awards isn't important, but the ritual is; and ritual, as long as it isn't taken seriously, is not a bad thing. It can provide a focus, a little social glue. We in the BSFA need ceremonies. I suppose, the point of it all.' The shortlist for the first Arthur C. Clarke Award was announced. The fanzine *Cheap Truth*, briefly the influential spearhead of cyberpunk ideology, shut down. It was produced by 'Vincent Omniaventis', a.k.a. Bruce Sterling. Terry Pratchett's *Equal Rites* was serialised on *Woman's Hour*, which opened up a whole new fan base. London Circle meetings moved from the One Tun to the Wellington, partly in response to the banning of a gay fan. 'Gollancz entered the paperback market for the first time, rather belatedly.' Preparations were well under way for *Conspiracy* in Brighton, the 1987 Worldcon. Maureen Potter (Kincaid Speller) announced she'd be doing the daily newsletter. Sylvester McCoy was announced as the new Dr. Who, replacing Colin Baker. In March Patrick Troughton died at a US Dr. Who con. Andrei Tarkovsky, director of *Solaris*, died. 'The universally passed musical *Time* was showing, wherein Cliff Richard was transported to the Andromeda Galaxy as humanity's representative in a court of our Galactic superiors. Laurence Olivier's head appeared in hologrammatic form: he died shortly after.'

## mailbox

### Write To Matrix and win a T-shirt!

Send letters to

Matrix

9 Beechwood Court, Back Beechwood Grove  
Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS4 2HS, UK

or email mks\_pk@ix.compulink.co.uk  
or fax 01303 252939

(marking emails and faxes clearly 'For Matrix')

Letters may be edited. If you don't want your full address printed please indicate this clearly. Anonymous letters will be printed at the editor's discretion.

Dear Reader,

By the time the next *Matrix* reaches you the UK will have a new government, one which will see us into the new millennium. In the campaign we can expect that science, both as a human endeavour and the underpinning of the economy, will have a profile somewhat smaller than a teacher's pay packet (but perhaps larger than Tony Blair's left-wing credibility). Support for science and research is increasingly dominated by profit-motivated short-termism, and the emphasis on education is increasingly, relentlessly, depressingly 'practical'; both the present government and the opposition appear to see it purely in terms of training, as a rough tool for carrying out ill-fitting goals.

The manifestos will of course briefly mention science, and pay lip-service to its importance. But how many MPs have science backgrounds? The level of ignorance is startling. If you meet any candidates on the hustings, try asking them about their commitment to scientific research – if you get anything other than a meaningless platitude I'll be surprised. Let us know if it happens. —Chris

I'm very pleased to say that this time there was hot competition for that coveted BSFA T-shirt, with a splendid selection of letters. It was a genuinely difficult decision, but after some agonising, it goes to:

### T-Shirt Winner

From David Curi

Flat 8, 19 Hilldrop Crescent, Holloway, London, N7 0JF

In *Matrix* 123 you asked us to suggest some sf / fantasy texts that politicians should read and learn from. Given that the kings and counsellors of the present age are as continually surrounded by a cloud of spin as the Most High is wreathed in light inaccessible, books seem rather, well, pedestrian and beside the point.

Still, hoping against hope, I would recommend the short story 'The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas' by Ursula K. Le Guin, in which the citizens of a certain town are faced with a dilemma, in that their relative prosperity is in some unexplained way absolutely conditional upon the suffering and the torment of one child in a cellar. Naturally, this causes a certain amount of back-of-the-mind unease. The answer which the story recommends is simply to walk away, choosing loneliness and isolation rather than accepting a situation in which the means (torment) justify the ends (prosperity). Any politician who sanctions or excuses the British government's current policy on refugees, which has resulted in those fleeing from persecution and torture ending up homeless on the streets of London, should read this story, likewise anyone who sanctions or excuses the export to oppressive regimes of British-made torture equipment. I could give many other examples of government corruption and / or depravity perpetrated in and through this doctrine of the means (other people's suffering) justifying the ends (more comfort for the already comfortable); however, time is short.

If I was asked to recommend something a little more lighthearted, then from more distant personal memory I would suggest Kurt Vonnegut Jr's *Slapstick*, or *Lonesome No More!*, in which the political infrastructure, the power principle, and high seriousness all decay together, with engagingly silly results. I guess you'd call it a kind of end-of-history pastoral – but remember, this is from distant memory, so it may have been a dystopia which I read perversely, against the grain! ☹

From Doreen Norman

9 Sadrap Lane, Hartwell, Aylesbury, Bucks., HP17 8QW

Here goes on suggested reading for political leaders: **John Major** – How about reading Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*? You could glance through this before the General Election and award it further study when you are sitting on the opposition benches. Try to equate Victor Frankenstein's man-created monster with what has happened to the UK in 18 years of Conservative government. Of course, Margaret Thatcher was the original creator, but you have taken over the rôle. I think maybe you don't see the UK as we do: the homeless, the unemployed, the dirty streets of London, the 'fat cat' directors' payments... A monster indeed made out of a pleasant country!

**Tony Blair** – You could benefit from reading Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, consider how Shevek is at first amazed, and even delighted, when he goes from his own (socialist-type) planet to the mirror image (capitalist) planet. Study his disillusionment and how he is used by the capitalists.

**Paddy Ashdown** – I think you would appreciate Philip K. Dick's short story 'The Builder' (in the collection *Beyond Lies the Web*). It might encourage you to keep on being a third (minor) political party; it does rain a fair bit in the UK. If PKD's character can build a boat, maybe the Lib-Dems can sway some of the 'floating voters' in their direction. ☹

Steve Palmer has a solution to the puzzle of the Missing Letters:

From Steve Palmer

4 Park Road, Toddington, Beds., LU5 6AB

What we need is a bit of controversy, for example the Wingrove Debate of a few years back. Thus I have decided to write to you with Ten Controversial Things, in the hope that these will stimulate *Matrix* readers into sending you some letters. However I must point out that, for reasons of personal safety, a proportion of the Ten Controversial Things below are flippant, and Not To Be Taken Seriously. The others I believe implicitly.

Here, then, is my list of Ten Controversial Things:

1. The *Star Wars* trilogy was the worst thing that could have happened to the science fiction cinema.
2. Mainstream science fiction is inimical to women and non-whites.
3. Gillian Anderson REALLY ISN'T THAT ATTRACTIVE.
4. Johnny Mnemonic is a great film. The effects were terrific, the music good, and the performances not at all bad.
5. The *X-Files* is so bland, pointless and badly acted as to be unworthy of British television.
6. The science fiction and horror sections in bookshops should be at opposite ends of the floor, since they are falsely lumped together by uncaring shop managers.
7. A cliché a day keeps the sales team at bay.
8. Shepperton can be quite a exciting place.
9. David Lynch's *Dune* is the best science fiction film ever made.
10. Terry Pratchett books should be limited to one per family.

I do hope this list of Ten Controversial Things will help the letters column of your esteemed magazine. Perhaps other readers could supply their lists of Controversial Things. ☹

• A Puzzled Editor Replies: What's so controversial about those?

**Allan Blake**, *sf critic of Scotland on Sunday, turns out to have been the originator of last issue's 'core stock list' for sf and fantasy. I expressed some surprise that nearly 10% of the list – two books, an honour given to no other writer – was devoted to Patrick Tilley, and Allan explains:*

*From Allan Blake*

16 Montrose Way, Dunblane, FK15 9JL

I read with interest your recent "View From the High Street" (issue 123) as sourced from *The Bookseller* and as author of the original article, I wonder if I can make clear my notional core stock.

It's perhaps misleading to suggest that twenty-two titles could in any way be regarded as the definitive (or even basic) core stock list of a creditable science fiction department. However, having been asked to create exactly that in twenty titles or less (I bargained an increase), I felt my best course of action was to highlight a selection of interesting titles that perform well, some of which might otherwise be overlooked by the store buyer or science fiction reader. The two are not necessarily mutual. It was, you can imagine, a frustrating task, omitted titles far outweighing the inclusions.

I felt reasonably confident that even the unschooled sf buyer would appreciate the need to stock Asimov, whose work remains as popular as ever, and therefore gambled with his noninclusion. Robert A. Heinlein, I'm afraid, has not aged quite so well, with much of his work currently unavailable. And while *Starship Troopers* may receive some attention courtesy of its cinematic counterpart, I doubt it will warrant inclusion in a core stock list.

As regards Gibson's *Neuromancer*, similar thinking applied, although his more impressive *Virtual Light*, I did include. And I agree, there would be no better way to impress the sf literati and enhance the gravity of a science fiction section, than to stock Alfred Bester. But difficult alas, given that all but one of his novels are out of print. *Tiger!* (J. Goodchild, 0863910254, £8.95) is available, albeit in hardback – not a realistic option for a bookstore when compared to sales of mass market paperbacks upon which they rely, best exemplified by Terry Pratchett's *Guards! Guards!*, you correctly surmised, is admitted as the best of a reasonable bunch, *Feersum Endymion* as the best of a notable bunch, although I found it no more or less difficult than any Banks novel, sf or otherwise.

What did "baffle" was your surprise at my inclusion of two Patrick Tilley titles. You style *Fade-Out* as a "minor techno-thriller with UFO overtones" and I have to wonder if your description is based on sales, the intent, after all, of a stock list. Well, a little research

reveals a lot. Since 1992 *Fade-Out* has sold over 10,000 copies, the distribution of sales more or less equal over the five years, Mission selling over 5,000 copies during the same period. Comfortably preceding *The X-Files*. In itself, a comparison I fail to see. You seemingly suggest that the presence of alien life in Tilley's novels makes them in some way analogous to Chris Carter's constant creation and on that basis, what proportion of sf could you similarly correlate?

That both novels (published in 1975 and 1981, respectively) continue to enjoy valuable turnover, delineates them classic stock by publisher and bookseller alike. Of course, sales alone don't (or at least shouldn't) engender classic status. It is, I believe, a myopia peculiar to science fiction, that respect is afforded writers working on the border of the genre, whilst overlooking more genuine, equally talented contenders within. Could your own dismissal of *Fade-Out* and *Mission* be a symptom of same? I've long considered *Fade-Out* a salient angle on man's reaction to things inexplicable and the paranoia intrinsic to such encounters. Clearly, opinions are subjective, but your claim that you have read the book is one I'm slightly suspicious of. (You may be interested to learn that production for a film adaptation was well advanced until Spielberg released his similar, but rather ordinary, *Close Encounters*.)

*Mission* is a little harder to class and, indeed, rests more comfortably in the genre outpost that so frustrated me a moment ago. Such is life. At heart it posits that our religious mythology is the bare memory of extra-terrestrial interference and can, cleverly, be reread as its own sequel. A sleight of hand pulled by Christopher Priest's *The Affirmation* in the same year.

They are, both of them, essential reading and despite your reservations, good writing even yet sells books. What more can I add? ☐

• *My apologies for not crediting you originally. The Bookseller did not make it clear who drew up the list.*

*It does seem clear that it was misnamed. "A selection of interesting titles that perform well, some of which might otherwise be overlooked by the store buyer or sf reader" – itself a laudable endeavour – is not the same as a core stock list, upon which premise my comments were based.*

*I have indeed read both *Fade-Out* and *Mission* – why ever would I lie? – but it must have been over a dozen years ago; perhaps a reread is in order. I classified them then as books in the Whitley Streiber / W. A. Harbinson mould, though superior to both: bestseller-style techno-thrillers. In *The Ultimate Guide to SF* David Pringle says of *Fade-Out*, "the basic idea is hackneyed beyond belief, but neverthe-*

*less works well enough in its carefully detailed, realistic, "bestseller" way"; and John Clute in the EoSF says it "concentrates long-windedly on the workings of government and military in a techno-thriller context". Neither book seems to me to be central to sf in either style or content, unlike your other selections; hence "minor", hence my surprise.*

*I didn't compare them with the X-Files in thematic terms (though your comment on *Fade-Out* – "a salient angle on man's reaction to things inexplicable and the paranoia intrinsic to such encounters" – suggests not a little similarity), but noted a possible overlap in marketing and target audience.*

*I agree that many 'mainstream' genre sf writers are underacknowledged (D. G. Compton, Michael Coney, Richard Cowper, Brian Stablerford and John Varley spring to mind), so I don't think I'm particularly guilty there. However, the most interesting things – or at least the most creative – often happen at the borders, the edges of genre, as has been particularly noticeable in the past decade or so. As in other fields, those who extend the map and mark out new territory inevitably attract more attention than those who work conscientiously and quietly in more familiar terrain, no matter how able. – Chris*

*From Chris Hill*

Rank's Cottage, 3 Lynch Hill, Whitchurch, Hants., RG28 7ND

As you were complaining about getting no letters other than from committee members, I thought I'd pass a few comments on *Matrix* 123.

Firstly, the list of 4 & 6 core stock titles. A strange mixture indeed. I've read 14 of them, missing being the fantasies, the Patrick Tilley, *Feersum Endymion* and *Vurt*. Still, many of them would be among those I would recommend to someone to get a good sample of modern sf, though I would have chosen *Childhood's End* instead of *Rendezvous With Rama*. Still, tastes vary.

I read John Costello's article on *Crash* with interest, but I'm afraid it doesn't change my views on the subject. The film may be daring and interesting and all that, but it's still pretty unpleasant and I have no desire to see it. Just to cover my bases, I'm not saying that there is anything wrong with it, or it shouldn't have been made, or that anybody should be prevented from seeing it, but it's just not my sort of thing.

As an aside, I've noticed that there are certain authors whom it is not acceptable to dislike. For example, last year I commented on an sf mailing list that I couldn't get excited about Fritz Leiber and got shot down in flames. (Not in the sense of 'how dare

☐

• My apologies for the poor reproduction of John Costello's article on *Crash* in *Matrix* 123 which wreathed it in unintended obscurity. The affected passage – on the left of page 12 – reads as follows:

This brought it to the attention of our moral guardians, who without having seen a frame of the film itself, began to denounce it from every available soapbox. This in turn led to a mention in the House of Commons and the very real possibility of a ban in this country. At the time of writing, it has been screened four times by the British Board of Film Censors and once under special licence at the London Film Festival, but as yet there has been no decision made to award the film an 18 certificate necessary for its release. Westminster Council has banned the film from West End cinemas unless substantial cuts are made. Daily Mail columnist Chris Tooley has carved a niche for himself by not only demanding that the film is banned, but that concerned readers boycott Sony products in case

Columbia TriStar – a Sony subsidiary – goes ahead and distributes the film, and that James Ferman (head of the BBFC) resigns because of the amount of violence on cinema screens. Hysteria continues to grow and the media circus around this 'Sex & Wrecks' movie gains impetus.

*Crash* is not a 'normal' film. It cannot be judged using the usual popcorn criteria. It is a highly stylised exercise in existential film-making which is designed to challenge our comfortable assumptions of what a film is supposed to be. Its market is limited to art-house / cult devotees and genuine film buffs. The extensive tabloid publicity will only serve to draw titillation-seekers who will be utterly disappointed by the film. It's like asking a Tarkenton fan to appreciate *musique concrète* or Karlheinz Stockhausen.

In fact the entire magazine was printed up considerably darker than usual, which also affected the Geoff Ryman news item on p5 and various grey tones throughout. We'll try to fix this in future.

• A couple of non-musical people have asked about the fragment of music on page 2 of *Matrix* 123. It was, of course, the first few bars of "Daisy, Daisy" (rather clumsily harmonised, I'm afraid).

• The obscure note about Aleph's inability to speak Welsh referred to his innocent translation of *Red Mars* and *Green Mars* into Glas Mawrth. Both titles in fact translate into *Mawrth Glas*, as pointed out by Real Welshman Dave Langford. Never apologise, never explain is Aleph's creed: he should be a politician.

• On page 10 of *Matrix* 123, "Jenny Woolmark" should be "Jenny Woolmark". Thanks to Andrew M. Butler for pointing this out, and apologies to both.

• Finally, I grovel to you all, whether contributors or readers, in apology for the appalling number of typos in *Matrix* 123. It won't happen again....

— Chris Tarrant

## points arising

you not like Fritz Leiber as much as 'you obviously have not read the Right Books'). I have a feeling that anyone who does not like Ballard (and probably Aldiss) cannot be considered a True Fan. On the other hand, I could just be paranoid. Who can tell? Why are you looking at me like that? The Martians are coming, the Martians are coming! Hmm, sorry, where was I?

Claire Brialley and Mark Plummer's fanzine reviews were great fun, but then I've greatly enjoyed their fanzine as well, so who am I to judge. . . .

Nice to read the profile on Gary Dalkin. I hope the person who wrote in to *Vector* doubting his existence feels very guilty!

The slip back to loss-making for the BSFA is a great shame. Unfortunately, the only people I know who would be interested in joining are already members. Ho, hum. . . .

• Taking my Matrix hat off, I have some sympathy with your view of Crash (which I keep wanting to spell Crash!). for some reason.

Your aside on the unacceptability of disliking certain authors intrigued. There are class distinctions in sf as in everything, one manifestation of which is the appropriation of certain writers as markers of a reader's commitment to the genre, his seriousness about it. Ballard is certainly one; Gibson another, at least in academic circles. But I must confess that - with the possible exception of Conjure Wife - Leiber's never grabbed me much, either. You are not alone! Ballard and Aldiss are perhaps authors whom it is easy to admire, hard to like. And maybe Philip K. Dick's the other way round.

Here's John Ollis, back with a dose of his inimitable double-edged wit:

From John Ollis

51 Belmont Road, Luton, LU1 1LL  
Whilst realising that Maureen Kincaid Speller's views may have changed between the statement quoted by Chris in his note at the start of the letter column in issue no. 123, and the present day, let me reassure Our Leader that I'm by no means too busy to write to our esteemed editor, not that there's much point in doing so. Not because, having already received a T-shirt (carefully and safely packed in old fanzines), I no longer crave to see my name in print. The prime reason is that the magazines are arriving with such amazing frequency, I can't keep up with them, and what's the use of an out-of-date letter? *Matrix* 122 came on 13 December; I had hardly opened it when number 123 appeared a mere 49 days later. By that standard, 124 should befall us on 21 March; no wonder I have a mountain of unread books - my spare time is fully occupied with the BSFA mags.

To whom do we humble members owe this extraordinary output? Why, the current, dynamic committee, so ably led by Ms Kincaid Speller. Tell you to piss off, Maureen? Nothing could be further from my thoughts. Anyway, you're bigger than me. Keep up the good work. I eagerly anticipate the time when a new *Matrix* drops through my letter-box each week.

Chris, you compare the letter column of today unfavourably with that of *Matrix* 65. I don't have the zines that far back, but from memory the column would have had a letter each time from each of Peter Tennant, John Madracki and Ken Lake. [Spot on. — Chris] Are Madracki and Tennant still members? If so, why do they no longer write? I know the dreaded Lake isn't. Each of these held controversial opinions and so generated a good many other letters. One solution might be to offer Ken Lake a letter presidency (if that's important enough for him) in exchange for a letter for

each edition. Terminal diseases require drastic remedies. Incidentally, the 25 letters for Maureen's first edition would have been responding to the last effort of the previous editor; how much feedback was there for number 65? It seems to me there's been a gradual diminution over the years; in the Glovers' reign there were more than now but fewer than before. Another point - there's only one way to communicate with you; no email, no fax, not even a telephone - just boring old letter-box. This may have some bearing on members' apathy. [Sorry, times are hard. Faxes and emails can however be sent via Maureen Kincaid Speller, but be sure to mark them 'For Matrix'. — Chris]

On the subject of our editor: we've seen the rest of the *scullis* committee slumped on the Folkestone seafloor - how about a photo of yourself, Chris? Naturally you'll have to get it enlarged, otherwise we still shan't be able to see you. [x]

• After picking myself up off the floor - a Matrix every WEEK? - I begin to perceive that I'm being gently clobbered by various correspondents for a heinous editorial sin: not being contentless. Or blandness, to put it bluntly.

*Matrix* 66 had 7 pages of mail (in a monthly typeface) from no fewer than 40 different writers. But issue 67 showed a huge drop: 3 pages of letters from 9 correspondents (Maureen wrote "I was surprised by the minuscule postage I received this time"). Things improved with issue 68 (4pp, 15 writers) but dropped away again in *Matrix* 69 (2pp, 9 writers).

John added a PS noting that no one in the committee photographs I've published has been wearing a BSFA T-shirt. Not so! Carol Ann Green has an "I'm a BSFA Volunteer" T-shirt on (why haven't I got one? he asked peevishly) and Elizabeth Billinger is wearing one of the splendid D. West designs.

I have this terrible effect on cameras: they show me as I really am.

Here's Philip Muldowney with a fine selection of views, including an alert to the dangers of losing sf's heritage:

From Philip Muldowney

Golden Harvest, Tamerton Foliot Road, Looseleigh Cross, Plymouth, PL6 5ES  
I have been meaning to write for some time to congratulate you on the great job that you have done with *Matrix*. Trouble is though, with the delayed mailings and the Xmas Schmooze, I never seemed to get round to it. Never mind, 'tis never too late to correct. . . .

I must admit a list of sf dealers would be very useful. Most of them have been going so long that they seem to survive - and prosper? - by word of mouth. Very few of them advertise, and it is quite a performance in finding their whereabouts. Dealers and second-hand bookshops seem to have been my main source of sf for a long time. Most dealers' catalogues have a large selection of hardbacks at cheaper prices than your average Waterstone's paperback. Their paperback selection is also very much cheaper.

The most interesting pickings, though, must be found in second-hand bookshops. *Driff's* guide is an indispensable tool when visiting strange towns. One of the drawbacks of second-hand bookshops is not being able to find them strange towns! Hay-on-Wye is overpriced and overhyped; I have never really heard anyone have a good word to say about it. £30 for a 1932 *Astounding's*? So what is the going price then? I have certainly seen some old pulps at more expensive prices than that, but then of course it all depends on how much your average second-hand-bookshop

dealer knows about sf. My heart races when I come across that perfect combination, the dealer who has a plentiful supply of sf in his shop but has a personal contempt or ill-knowledge of the genre. Firsts at a couple of quid, and masses of paperbacks at 50p or so. . . . heaven. An article on collecting would be interesting, though. I have this dream of standing there on *Antiques Roadshow* with the 11 copies of *Air Wonder Stories* in front of me and being told my fortune, and trying to hide my cupidry. On the other hand, a dealer was advertising a mint run of the British reprint editions of *Unknown* £750. . . . *Lyle's Guide to Printed Collectables* lists first editions of *Planet Stories* at £100, *Amazing Stories* no. 1 at £75, and an August 1934 *Astounding* at £25. Though whether you could get that price for them. . . .

On the other hand, dealers and second-hand bookshops seem to be the only hope there is of getting any decent selection of older sf. Your average display in Smith's or Waterstone's is dominated by TV / film tie-ins, military game-playing divisions within the genre, or the latest five-minute wonder. Our history is being lost to us! Robert Heinlein! The only copy of any book by him that the Waterstone's in Plymouth had was *To Sail Beyond the Sunset*. . . . well, I ask you. The ultimate irony on the sad death of John Brunner is that there were literally no copies of his books to be bought new. *Stand on Zanzibar*, *The Sheep Look Up*, *Jagged Orbit*. . . his novels still stand up there with the best of the canon of British sf authors. Yet as far as ordinary bookshops are concerned it is though he had never existed. Name your favourite sf author and 10:1 you will only be able to find him in specialist or second-hand bookshops. This is so terribly sad. We are losing touch with our cultural heritage. The same is true in the States. It comes to something when Michael Swanwick is writing a column in *FGSF* to remind us of glories past.

Is that a review or an advert blurb for *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*? More like a paean really. In all honesty though, I can hardly wait to buy it. I suppose £45 does seem quite a lot, but it is only £5 more than the *Encyclopedia of SF*. We should be grateful that Orbit are aiming it at a populist market. If it were aimed at the academic market then presumably it would be three times the price. [At the very least. — Chris] Am I the only one in being wistful for the format of the original 1979 edition? The illustrations and three-column format made it so much easier to read.

The profile pieces on individual officials are a very good idea. It is nice to see a face and personality to fit the written piece. Are there any guidelines given in writing them? [Just my ceremonial editorial shilldingle, har har. — Chris] I found Gary Dalkin fascinating until I came to the 'Why I Like SF' bit. . . . oh please, not again! We have heard it all so many times before, the ultimate sf cliché, WHY I LIKE SF AN ESSAY IN 500 WORDS. . . . aaargh!

Are we actually catching up with the USA in academic courses on sf? Of course, this is something that the States started about 35 years ago, and now - gee - we have two (COUNT THEM!). It really pisses me off that the chattering literary classes have that peculiarly British snobbish attitude to sf that has changed little since Kingsley Amis tried for a little respectability in *New Maps of Hell*, nearly forty years ago. The "If it's sf it's CRAP", and if it has any redeeming feature it is not sf but Magic Realism, Fabulation, Slipstream or what you will. Is there any mainstream publication that reviews sf now?

One of the more enduring belly laughs in recent weeks was the reaction among the toffee-nosed literati to *Lord of the Rings* heading the Waterstone's '100 Best Books of the Century'. From questioning the validity of the exercise to casting aspersions on the sanity of the reading public, the whole reaction was intensely amusing. The point being that the choice was just not believed.

Interesting survey, though. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm* coming very high, *Brave New World* in the top twenty, and 'Gormenghast' scoring high. For hard sf only *Dune* and *2001* managed to get in.

Anyway, thanks again for *Matrix*, the hard work is appreciated. ☺

• The piece on The Encyclopedia of Fantasy was neither a review nor an advert; it was intended to be informative, and its placing in the news pages reflected the importance of what I feel is the publishing event of the year in our field. Vector is the place for considered literary criticism, and although the books columns of *Matrix* do contain an admixture of opinion my judgement is that they'd be pretty dull without it! Their main function is to inform.

From **John Oram**

3 *Outlands Ave., Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8EQ*

After reading the latest edition of *Matrix*, I thought I'd drop you a line. I've already done the survey, but there are a few points I think need raising.

1) How about some weekend meets? Not all of us live near London or can attend those meetings, much as we would like.

2) I enjoy the articles in *Focus*, but as it is only issued twice a year it is often difficult to follow through a common thread. So why not make *Focus* a part of one of the magazines? This would invite more contributions, and it would not matter if a deadline was missed, because it could be held back for the next issue.

3) The BSFA, in its present form, was conceived in Kettering in 1958. We are coming up to the 40th Anniversary. How about a mini-convention in Kettering?

4) Instead of an occasional look at what US publishers are producing, how about a complete list every six months? A lot of what I read is only available in US editions, and this is one area in which the BSFA could do more.

Lastly, you wanted suggestions as to what sf novels politicians should read. Well, I've got two suggestions:

a) *The Star Fraction* by Ken MacLeod. As this is about a factionalised Britain, I think it is highly relevant.

b) *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. ☺

• While there are no plans to merge *Focus* with any of the other magazines, from the next issue we hope that *Matrix* will carry a column from the *Focus* team, "Out Of *Focus*".

We've been thinking for some time about ways of celebrating the BSFA's 40th anniversary - other than by contributing to its mid-life crisis, that is. Running a convention... what do you all think? Would you be interested in a BSFA-run con?

A complete list of US-published sf and fantasy would be a huge undertaking, and we simply don't have the room. But I'll do my best to improve the coverage. — Chris

**WE ALSO HEARD FROM:** Andrew M. Butler, Steve Jeffery, Dominic Ryder, Alison Scott (I think - the signature is unclear), Sue Thomas, Julie Venner, Howard Watts, and Roger Wilson. Thanks to everybody, and keep those letters coming! ☺

## competition extra

### Intervention Prize Crossword

Chris Terran

Send your solutions to:  
**Roger Robinson**  
75 Rosslyn Avenue  
Harold Wood, Essex  
RM3 0RG  
by Friday 25 April 1997

#### Across

11. 31d 62d's wordprocessor bugs? (7,2,3,6)
12. The Irishman's church, finally, is a curate's egg (6)
13. Stop this awful star roundabout. (6)
15. Eight birds at Eastercon. (7)
16. 37a again? Take it back! (6)
19. English religious instruction makes good servants. (9)
24. Englishman acted badly and collapsed. (4)
26. Hero's just a sort of mhwit, to begin with. (5)
27. Where 31d 62d grows his tomatoes. (8)
28. Quiet girl leaves de Chardin's realm wearing choker. (5)
29. Type of church. (4)
32. Dissolve friary? (6)
34. Broadcasts songs. (4)
35. See 14d.
36. Go down hill in endless southern sleep. (3)
37. Man in church with ring. (5)
39. Confuse? Negative. (7)
41. Claims luggage. (4)
42. Beer in banger has the knack. (6)
45. See 26d.
49. Accuse heartless right-winger. (3)
51. Sign of bad corrosion round gold. (6)
53. She woke the moon. (4)
55. Last word on pit heap collapse. (7)
58. Rat is going up and down. (5)
59. King is no novice. I hear. (3)
59. Where and why you take off the top of the wine. (7)
61. Bare all, partly, around this place. (4)
62. Get off for a match. (6)

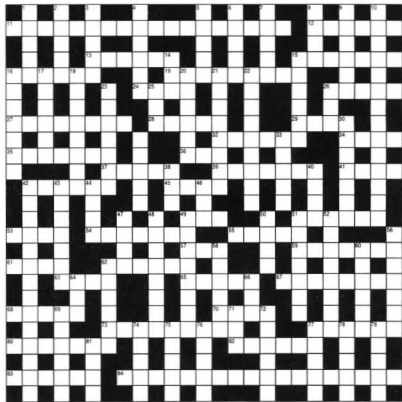
63. Bird meets happy end with a screech. (4)
65. See 14d.
67. See 14d. 50d
68. Steal a pound from the crocodile god... and return it? (5)
70. Bring up the back. (4)
73. My heart sins terribly at night. (9)
77. Stares around, say. (6)
90. Road movie heroes working in the arms business? (7)
92. 49d. Hey, it's old Mongolian! (4,2,3,5)
93. Puts away holy minerals. (6)
94. See 14d.

#### Down

1. Supporter of an overcoat deer. (5)
2. Sour limes? Not at all. (5)
3. Handout about - roughly - a sticker (5)
4. Upset at double kill. (6)
5. Telepath in desperate straits. (5)
6. It's normal for fanzines. (5)
- 7... cardinal speaking. (5)
8. The picture reveals the story. (4)
9. Pratchett's multi-layered saga. (6)
10. 48d. Swanwick's paean to Carol Thatcher? (3,4,7,8)
14. 35a, 65a, 67a. It's hell going the fast scene of 50d 67a. (3,7,2,3,8)
14. 84a. Sounds like 50d 67a's anthropological institute. (3,5,13)
15. Convert to 80s or an 'orse, we hear. (6)
16. Church tries out the most opulent. (7)
17. Fired because plot is appalling. (6)
18. Reveal girl's weight. (8)
20. Characteristics of African dictator's honours. (6)
21. Poor gent going into Ireland? (8)
22. Sun in care business? (9)
23. Admire ectopic spectre. (7)
25. It's charged for partial demolition. (3)
26. 45a. There's a bin on J. G. wandering around Easterncon. (3,4)
30. A doctor takes a walk round a drum. (7)
31. 62d. Author of 11a, 27a, 42d. (5,6)
33. Impression of oil painting. (5)
38. Recession in rubber pants. (3)
40. South African has too much to drink! (4)
42. 31d 62d's dirty descendants, we hear. (3,4,2,5)
43. Jenny, perhaps, goes to Arcurus, he said. (7)
44. Royal Court of 74d. (4)
46. Enter an ornamental gate. (3)
47. Harrison's heroic account. (4)
48. See 10d.
49. See 82a.
50. 67a. Author of 14d 35a 65a 67a and 14d 84a. (4,8)

51. Submit bad art before there's trouble. (7)
52. Supporters of higher entitlements? (8)
56. Beginner at imaginary tree-breeding? (7)
58. Profit from Turner exhibition. (6)
60. Gold alloy returned to eastern designer with love. (6)
62. See 31d.
64. Glide off south in boat. (3)
66. Hubbard's novel period. (3)
69. Chinese politician gets mad at state's holdings. (6)
71. Fish returns to shelter. (3)
72. Passes quickly on Boycott's

- scorecard. (4,2)
74. Zelazny's cautionary tale? (5)
75. Uncertain, like an Arab bull. (5)
76. Bad king gets 44d. It's not bull. (5)
77. Article is noted for flavour. (5)
78. Mark, for example, electricity. (5)
79. Loose description of Steve Cram? (5)
81. Gone back in silent solitude. (4)



film

# MARS ATTACKS!



Photo: Saunders & Mays

The Martian Ambassador delivers fraternal greetings to the US Congress

WENT TO SEE *Mars Attacks!* with two preconceived notions. That when Tim Burton grows up he will probably make a great film, and that the film I was about to see demonstrated something which is currently very wrong with Hollywood: the willingness to repeatedly invest the biggest budgets in the most trivial projects. *Mars Attacks!* reputedly cost \$70 million and is based on a series of bubblegum trading cards. There has to be something seriously amiss when filmdom's finest talent, creative and technical, is to be found engaged in bringing such material to the screen. The Saturday Matinee has taken over the world.

Happily, if Tim Burton hasn't exactly grown up, his new film does show how a genuinely inspired and uniquely talented director can, from the most unlikely and unpromising materials, create an entertainment which has at the very least a distaff, through-the-looking-glass kind of greatness. I will state here that I haven't seen all of Burton's films, that I've never been among his fans, that I've long thought he hasn't a clue as to how to sustain a narrative, or, excepting *Edward Scissorhands*, create characters an audience can care about. Given all that, *Mars Attacks!* is by far the best Tim Burton film I have seen to date.

Opening with an homage to *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, in which rather than a spacecraft appearing over the road leading to the crest of a hill, a herd of burning cows acts as a suitably surreal and bad-taste alternative – perhaps the government could learn something *vis-à-vis* BSE? – Burton establishes that this is going to be a no-holds-barred spectacle. This is reinforced by a virtuoso main-title sequence which features increasing numbers of very



The original set of 55 cards was issued in 1963 by Topps, the US bubblegum company. Distribution was limited to a few East Coast cities, but there was such a furore about the bloody and violent scenes that they were withdrawn and never sold elsewhere. With the predictable result that they swiftly became the most expensive and collectable non-sports cards ever issued by the company. Len Brown was the writer of the series, then a young man recently hired by Woody Gelman, Topps's publisher: he had previously worked on the equally controversial 'Civil War' cards. Bob Powell drew the scenes, and Norm Saunders did the colouring.

## GARY DALKIN

gets out his hula-hoop and X-Ray Specs and looks backwards in time at Tim Burton's latest feature, based on a controversial set of trading cards briefly issued in 1963.

Popcorn and Kia-Ora? Bubblegum and blood, if you please.

1950s silver saucers leaving the canals (*sic*) of Mars and heading for Earth in triangular formations. The sequence is one of ever increasing scale, as ship becomes squadron becomes fleet. Accompanying this is a stridently martial theme by Danny Elfman, complete with (synthesised) theremin. It is music Bernard Herrmann might have written, and with the silver ships on screen takes us right back to the first Hollywood sf classic of the 50s, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

After this breathtaking start the film settles down for half an hour to introduce the all-star cast. This slow – by modern commercial standards – section has met with much criticism, but it works to the film's advantage. By the time the action starts we know enough about who all the people are to follow their increasingly unlikely actions, if not with concern, then at least with considerable interest. Though this is not an actors' film, it is here that Burton scores with his star-studded cast. There might be burning cows in *Mars Attacks!* but there are no sacred ones, and much perverse delight is to be had from figuring out which of the major names will make it to the end titles. Burton decimates his characters, star status being no safe haven.

## A Wizard of Earthsea

BBC Radio 4, 26 December 1996, 120 mins. Directed by Janet Whitaker.

Dramatised by Bert Coules from the novel by Ursula K. Le Guin.

Music by David Shilton &amp; Nick Russell Pavier.

Cast: Dame Judi Dench (Narrator), Michael Maloney (Ged), Mark Burroughs (young Ged), Richard Johnson (Dragon of Pendor), Emma Fielding (Lady Serat), Owen Meredith (Ogion), Robert Harper (Vetch), Chris Pavlov (Jasper).

Reviewed by Ellen Cheshire

You'd think it would be the perfect play. What a combination: international bestselling novel – *A Wizard of Earthsea*, written by top fantasy author Ursula K. Le Guin, dramatised for radio by Bert Coules, who has successfully dramatised all of the Sherlock Holmes stories; starring Judi Dench as the Narrator and Michael Maloney as Ged. But unfortunately, although it was good, it lacked spark.

As a quick recap for anyone who's been living in the dark ages, *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1969) is the first of four novels in the 'Earthsea' series. The second, *The Tombs of Atuan*, was published in 1971, and the third, *The Farthest Shore*, in 1972. This was followed by a break of eighteen years before *Tehanu* was published in 1990.

The 'Earthsea' series can be seen as a cycle of life. *Wizard* deals with male coming-of-age (in the person of Ged), growing up, and Ged's initiation into wizardry. *Tombs* draws on themes of love and sex and female coming-of-age (Tenuar), and *Shore* was to be the hero's last and greatest adventure as Ged, now an old and wise wizard, takes on a young apprentice and thus fulfils the cycle of life. But eighteen years later he appeared again in *Tehanu* – now having lost all his powers he is back in his town of Gont – who is the novel's actual hero(ine), having first appeared in *Tombs*.

As with many of Le Guin's novels, she has played with opposites to create a complex structure of metaphors and symbols. The most prominent contrasts in *Wizard* are light / dark, life / death, and most importantly good / evil, which is symbolised through the hero Ged and "a shapeless mass of darkness", the shadow.

Ged is a "mage" (an artist), and everything you could want from the hero of a fantasy. He is active rather than passive, he initiates rather than observes, and is always honest and courageous. He has human frailties too: he's brash, vain and headstrong, but it is this combination that helps *A Wizard of Earthsea* be a tale full of lessons to be learned, though without preaching, and helps convey a realistic depiction of a fantasy world.

(It's strange considering Le Guin's large feminist following that there are few women's roles in *Wizard* (and indeed many of her novels), and none with any real power. It is not necessarily a requirement of a female author to introduce a strong female rôle, and I am certainly not advocating that there should be one category for writers and another for women writers. But it is interesting, none the less.)

The novel's focus is the struggle between Ged and a 'Shadow', which relentlessly pursues him. However, as in this dramatisation both Ged and the Shadow are played by Michael Maloney, a link is made between the two. Ged had to wait an hour and 20 minutes to realise that the shadow was the evil within him, but the listener had worked that out from the cast list in *Radio Times*.

Ged first discovers the spell which can "summon up the spirit of the dead" when he is looking for a spell to imprison the Lord's Daughter. A dark shadow appears and only his master, Ogion, can get rid of it. Ogion warns that the spell can only be used in peril of your power and your life, but when Ged casts the spell again it is in order to impress his fellow trainee wizards. On both occasions Ged unleashes the darkness in a foolishly vain attempt to impress others, and is only saved once he understands the shadow's true nature. For once you know something's true name you have power over it.

Inevitably with abridging and dramatising a novel there is much that is left out. What is emphasised here is not the adventure of Ged "searching for an enemy he did not know, and a place he could not name", but a slower journey, a journey of discovery, focusing on the lessons he has to learn along the way: the need for individual responsibility, recognising and avoiding folly, the search for self and obedience. Therefore this dramatisation came across more as a cautionary tale than one of the fantastic. This was heightened through Judi Dench's calming and authoritative Narrator.

The 'Earthsea' novels have remained popular through their simplicity and passion. They contain all the elements one requires in a fantasy – wizards, sword fights, sorcerers, enchantresses, demons, fights for lives, heroes and dragons – without getting bogged down in tiresome debates on gender and sexuality. It goes back to reassuring battles between good and evil and the ever-present need to maintain the status quo. But I think that those who are passionate about the series may have found this dramatisation too slow and passionless. — Ellen Cheshire 1997

Those among the audience who have noticed the near-supernatural survival skill of family canines in recent blockbusters – *Independence Day*, *Twister*, *A Time To Kill* and *Daylight* being just four examples in the last nine months of pictures in which sentiment and fear of giving offence has saved the doggy over considerations of plot and plausibility – will take a certain wry satisfaction in the scene in which a Martian turns his ray gun on President Jack Nicholson's beautiful golden retriever.

Plot? Well, Burton still can't do plot. But here it doesn't matter. What happens plays out like *Monty Python Meets the Martians*, with just as much invention as that mythical picture, if not as much laugh-out-loud merriment. There is even a subtle reference to Python when the President's cynical teenage daughter echoes Eric Idle's "Universe Song" (from *Monty Python's Meaning of Life*), suggesting it's a good job there's intelligent life in space because there sure ain't none down here.

An alternative description of Burton's film would have it as the bad-taste remake of *Independence Day*. The best answer to that is that the films would make a perfect double-bill. *Mars Attacks!* hasn't quite the vastness of scale or the thrilling exhilaration of the earlier film, but it is gleefully inventive, witty and tremendously well-crafted, with both eyes on the full Cinemascope screen (it's Burton's first venture into this format). Always a visually intense director, much of his previous work has looked 'cramped' in mere widescreen – particularly the claustrophobically grey studio set of *Batman Returns* – while here he has the chance to literally stretch out his visual imagination. In doing so he offers many treats, including several images which dazzle even the FX-jaded millennial filmgoer. An absolutely enormous crowd gathered to greet a landing spaceship, seen from directly above, a dozen or more helicopters flying far below, and from above that the saucercraft descending. Splendidly animated 50s-style Martians turning ray guns on upon the assembled US Congress. The disembodied heads of Pierce Brosnan and Sarah-Jessica Parker declaring eternal love for each other. There are many others. *Mars Attacks!* is a chobox of visual delights, packed with centres which either ignore or invert all the expected conventions.

Given all the agreeably comic-book ickiness, Burton gets surprisingly decent performances from his cast. Nicholson plays it straight as the rational President way out of his depth. Brosnan is fine as a very English scientist. Steiger deliberately evokes memories of Dr Strangelove as a general with a particular enthusiasm for nuking everything. And Tom Jones as Tom Jones perfectly captures the psychedelic strangeness of it all with a Disneyesque rendition of "It's Not Unusual", which won't be believed even when it has been seen.

On top of all this are the CGI Martians themselves. They are splendid creations, malevolent mischief-makers with their brains outside their skulls and an attitude like interplanetary gremlins. The implication is that advanced technology doesn't for a minute equate with moral advancement. These aliens act like tourists in other species' misery, destroying for the sheer hell of it, because they can, and because it's fun. We've seen the world destroyed many times before on screen, but perhaps never with such wild enthusiasm. *Independence Day* allowed us to revel in the destruction, safe in the knowledge that the President would save the day. Here the forces of the mightiest nations are as nothing, and the Earth is saved by a wheelchair-bound lady in her nineties!

*Mars Attacks!* flopped in America, and by the time you read this will probably have done the same here. Certainly no one I have told about it has shown the slightest interest in the picture, for which the poor trailers are, I suggest, at least partly to blame. Given the commercial failure of so expensive a feature the studios can hardly be blamed for reverting to formula. If this summer the public begins to tire of endless imagination-free sequels they have no one to blame but themselves. Meanwhile, catch *Mars Attacks!* while you can. The small screen will kill it dead.

— © Gary Dalkin 1997

**Mars Attacks!** directed by Tim Burton. Screenplay Jonathon Gems. Director of Photographyuschitzky. Music Danny Elfman.

Cast: Jack Nicholson, Glenn Close, Annette Bening, Pierce Brosnan, Danny DeVito, Martin Short, Sarah-Jessica Parker, Michael J. Fox, Rod Steiger, Tom Jones. Cinemascope (anamorphic 2.35:1), 105 minutes. Cert PG.

## dealers

# Home Shopping

AS Philip Muldowney notes in his letter on page 12, *sf* is in danger of losing its heritage, with an enormous number of books – many regarded as classics of the genre – out of print. If you're lucky you'll live somewhere with a good number of second-hand bookshops (I'm pretty well-served in Leeds, for example), but this is probably exceptional. Which is where your friendly mail-order dealer comes in. . . .

Here is a selection of mail-order suppliers, most of whom deal primarily with *sf* / fantasy / horror and carry substantial second-hand stocks. Please note that **no endorsement of their services or reliability is implied**, though the fact that all of them are well-established counts in their favour. Indeed, if you've dealt with any of them in the past and have comments to make, either positive or negative – or know of other similar dealers – I'd be very interested to hear from you.

If you're after specific books, it's also worth remembering the free small-ads in this very magazine, which – occasionally to the advertiser's surprise, shame on them – really can work. Thanks to **Christine Kovach** and **Chris Hill** I now have a copy of **Brian Stableford's** *Paradox of the Sets*, and thanks to **John A. Spencer** I also have *Ghastly Beyond Belief*. Just send your ad to me at the editorial address.

Good hunting!

—Chris

### • AK Distribution (A4, 96pp; free)

PO Box 12766, Edinburgh, EH8 9YE

Web: <http://www.obsolete.com/ak/>

This workers' co-operative encompasses a distribution arm (AKA Books Co-Operative Ltd) and a publishing house (AK Press), and is a sort of British version of the American Loompanics. Their immense catalogue covers alternative and off-the-wall material of every imaginable kind, and there's much to interest the *sf* fan. There are books (fiction and non-fiction – Acker, Burroughs, Machen, Lovecraft, Sue Thomas, Ian Banks, Sterling, Rucker, Moorcock, Greenleaf's book on same, and many more), RE/Search material, poetry, songs, graphic novels and comics (including Meng & Ecker and Lord Horror), journals (*Rapid Eye* – "exploration of the margins of apocalypse culture" with Acker, Burroughs, Jarman, Crowley, Genesis P. Orridge, Colin Wilson, UFOs and Hitler, tattoos and piercing (yawn), Timothy Leary, Death Art, etc. etc.; *Vague* – the first glossy fanzine; *Galunet*; *Index on Censorship*), magazines (*Alien Underground* – "techno theatre for juvenile delinquents", including a piece on the weird London Psychogeographical Association; *Hoax!* – pranks, scams and conspiracies including the cult significance of the dollar bill, barcodes, Canary Wharf, and an interview with Ken Campbell; 2600 – the prehearer / hacker zine), music tapes, spoken word, speeches, videos, T-shirts (completely unwearable in public, most of 'em). You get the idea. Each item (there are thousands) has a small review or commentary, though these seem to be a little uncritical – a levelling of this is crap would make it easier to trust the positive remarks.

### • Cold Tonnage Books (A5, 40pp; free)

22 Kings Lane, Windesham, Surrey, GU20 6JQ

Tel: 01276 475388 Fax: 01276 451367

The knowledgeable and friendly Andy Richards runs Cold Tonnage, which specialises in mail-order but has a large second-hand stock in the Murder One bookstore, 71-73 Chancery Cross Road in London. The catalogues are well-produced and annotated, and cover *sf* and fantasy (there's much *Akham House* material), collectables and rarities, fiction and non-fiction, new and used. On the dear side, but quality is assured.

### • Ken Cowley (A5, 64pp; free)

Trinity Cottage, 153 Old Church Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 7TU  
 Tel: 01275 872247

Ken retired from his career in advertising and journalism ten years ago, and started "messing about with books" as a hobby – which it remains. He started dealing as a way of thinning down his personal collection of about 15,000 titles, and the habit stuck. He's been a member of the British Fantasy Society for over 20

years, and speaks at their conventions and those of the Ghost Story Society. He writes too, with some 30 published stories, articles and reviews in various magazines; he says his finest achievement was to achieve professional publication with a short story in Richard Dalby's hardback anthology *Vampire Stories*.

As well as an abiding passion for *sf*, fantasy and horror he's also interested in films and detective stories, all reflected in his very well-produced catalogues, issued at least twice a year. He concentrates on second-hand material, apart from some US imprints such as *Akham House*. There's editorial matter ("Why the hell can't I go and see [Crash] if I want to? I read the book twenty years ago and haven't had sex in a car wreck since"), and a varied and copiously annotated stock list from loads of *sf* paperbacks at £1.50 to collectors' items, sex 'n' sleaze paperbacks to a fine selection of pulp magazines. Prices low to medium.

Postage: at cost. Minimum order £5. North American customers can pay via Ken's US agent, dealer Nick Certo.

### • Dreamberry Wine Books (A5, 20pp; free)

233 Maine Road, Manchester, M14 7WG

Tel: 0161 226 2980

Mike Don – "53 years old, Scottish, and an anarchist" – runs this Manchester-based mail-order enterprise, and issues a catalogue (though it's more of a fanzine, really) every couple of months. Mike says he "started DW about 1980 as a service to users of Manchester's Grass Roots Bookshop where I then worked. Took it with me when I was turfed out two years later, and it's been going ever since. (The name is derived from the *Elquest* comic strip, with which I was infatuated at the time – can't stand it now, but I'm stuck with it!)" Dreamberry Wine deals mostly in books – Mike has no interest in comics (now!) and doesn't carry much media tie-in material. As well as listing a large number of new and second-hand books and magazines, the catalogue has a regular letter column where customers discuss it, carries publishing news and book reviews (these are independent and unbiased, and not an aid to sales – the reviewers are not afraid to say if a book stinks), and also runs occasional interviews: last November Andy Darlington talked to Savoy Books' David Britton, author of *Lord Horror* and jailed for his trouble.

Used paperbacks are cheap, with many under £2 (it's worth noting that even with postage this is still cheaper than many non-specialist second-hand bookshops). Hardbacks are reasonable. A few collectables, but DW deals mostly with readers, not collectors. If you buy from Mike you'll get the catalogue free, but a sub costs £7 p/a.

Postage: pp 55p first one, 40p each thereafter; hb £1.75 each; all to a max of £3.30 with orders over £30 post-free in the UK.

### • Fantast (Medway) (A5, 24pp; free)

PO Box 23, Upwell, Wisbech, Cambs., PE14 9BU

Tel: 01945 773576

Ken Slater discovered a copy of *Amazing Stories* in Woolworth's in 1927 and has been a highly active fan ever since, even during his time as an army captain in WWII. His influential fanzine *Operation Fantast* (1947-1955) was at the heart of 1950s British fandom, and the book dealership evolved out of it. He's also been involved in running conventions – Peterborough in 1963, Reptoncon in 1964, Yarncon in 1966 – and was a Guest of Honour at the 1987 Brighton Worldcon; he's won the Doc West award and, at the Glasgow Worldcon in 1995, the Big Heart Award. He's twice been responsible for rescuing the BSFA from itself (his membership number is 6) and putting it back on its feet – the second time he turned it into a company – but we won't hold that against him. Like Arthur C. Clarke, another mainstay of early British fandom, he's 80 this year. Happy birthday!

Fantast is primarily for readers rather than collectors, with few expensive items. It carries both new and old stock, UK and US, hardback and paperback, books and magazines, and seems to be a one-stop solution (as the jargon has it) if you don't have easy access to a good bookshop. The catalogues are friendly and very informative: all books have their condition carefully noted and most entries are annotated (collections have their contents listed, for example), and not uncritically. There's editorial material which puts a human face on the business, and gives a definite feeling that Ken cares about his customers. Prices on used items are perhaps a little higher than some, but there are discounts available for multiple purchases and various special offers.

Postage: at cost. Overseas orders welcome. Credit cards accepted.



• **Fantastic Literature** (A5, 24pp; free)  
35 The Ramparts, Rayleigh, Essex, SS8 8PY  
Tel/Fax: 01268 747564

Run by Simon Godden, this is "a small company that has been operating for about 15 years. It operates from private premises but viewing of stock can be arranged. It's run by a fanatical reader of sf, fantasy and horror fiction, who also likes thrillers, heroic and dark fantasy, and crime novels. We run a comprehensive search service and aim to produce 5-6 lists per year, each containing about 1,500 titles."

The catalogue is perhaps a little cramped and hard to read, and would benefit from a redesign. It's sparsely annotated, though books' conditions are always noted (and here it badly needs a key: 'sl' sp w/o fr copy' is typical, and defeats me). There's a friendly editorial showing that Simon has a healthy involvement with his customers, answering and posing questions, and chatting about books. Prices medium, but many secondhand paperbacks at under £2 and as-new ones at £2.50 or so. Some collectables (a first edition of *Tiger! Tiger!* for £49.95), no pulps, some hardbacks but mostly paperbacks.

Postage: at cost to a maximum of £3 UK, £9 overseas. Credit cards accepted.

• **Fantasy Centre** (A5, 24pp; free)  
157 Holloway Road, London, N7 8LX  
Tel/Fax: 0171 607 9433

I have two catalogues from this company, but although there's some friendly introductory chit-chat there is no indication of the person(s) behind the desk. Fantasy Centre has a retail outlet (157 Holloway Road, London) but also issues these very elegant and professional catalogues – sometimes with colour covers – for mail-order customers. They're aiming largely at collectors, and the prices reflect this: £60 for a 1930 Astounding, £25 for the Ace paperback for a *Flucker's The Sex Sphere*, £350 for a first edition of Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*, £240 for a first of Pratchett's *The Light Fantastic*. I can't spot anything under a fiver. Genre coverage is sf / fantasy / horror, hardbacks and paperbacks, pulps and magazines. The mail-order side is definitely for collectors only, but give their shop a visit – it carries more everyday stock too.

Postage: at cost. Packing extra (naturally enough, given the value of their material). Credit cards accepted.

• **Sanctum Books** (A5, 20pp; free)  
60 Marlford Road, Northampton, NN1 4NN  
Terry Bull runs Sanctum, whose mail-order catalogues feature some of the old and hard-to-get sf / fantasy hardbacks, with a nice list of Ace Doubles, some juvenilia, film and TV novelisations and sundries. Prices are average, and he's not shy of selling reading copies: ex-library books, Science Fiction Book Club editions, old paperbacks and so forth. Books which have clearly been read and loved, and what's wrong with that?

Postage: at cost to a maximum of £3.50. Book searches undertaken.

• **Skyrack Book Service** (A6, 44pp; free)  
36 Harlow Park Crescent, Harrogate, North Yorks., HG2 0AW  
Until a year ago the venerable Ron Bennett had a shop in the Meriton Centre in Leeds, but sadly had to move out because of eyesight problems. He's a long-standing fan – though no longer very active apart from his dealership – who was a founder member of the BSFA. He attended his first con in 1954, was Secretary / Treasurer of the 1962 Eastercon, published the fanzines *Pulp* and *Skyrack Newsletter*, wrote over 200 articles for various fanzines in the 50s and 60s, had a couple of sf stories published (one in *New Worlds*), won the 1958 TAFF race to attend the Los Angeles Worldcon, was a founder member and editor of the OMA APA, and ran Skyrack from 1965 to date (including stints in Singapore and Belgium). A busy man. Though

the Leeds shop is now closed he still runs Skyrack as a mail-order supplier, and the friendly little catalogue lists loads of extremely cheap sf books as well as many magazines and comics. There are occasional collectors' items – the Gnome edition of Asimov's *Foundation and Empire* for £30, a signed first edition of E. E. Smith's *TripTangle* for £105 – but mostly hardbacks go for £1-£3, and paperbacks for 25p-£2. Ron is scrupulous about noting the condition of every item, and will give cash refunds if any item has been sold.

Postage: send £3.50 and Ron will refund any difference or bear any additional cost himself.

• **The Talking Dead** (A5, 16pp; free)  
12 Rosamund Avenue, Merley, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 1TE  
Tel: 01202 849212

Bob Wardzinski has "been involved in sf for over 20 years and since leaving the illustrious post of treasurer of the Exeter University SF Society has built up a very large stock of sf paperbacks and magazines. I have worked hard to establish contacts in Europe, the USA and Australia and regularly attend specialist paperback and pulp book fairs," amongst which was

Stocks cover most genres of sf, horror, crime, film/TV etc. with 10,000 paperbacks in the sf/horror genre plus a selection of hardback firsts, plus 1,000+ pulp magazines. Most sf/horror authors are covered with the largest UK holdings of E. R. Burroughs, Robert E. Howard, pulp hero (Doc Savage, Shadow etc.) with many US/UK and foreign editions." Maurice also organises the annual Paperback & Hardcover Adventure Book Fair (this year at Westminster Central Hall on Sat 12 April) and the UK Paperback & Pulp Book Fair (late October at the Grosvenor Hotel, Victoria), and publishes *Paperbacks, Pulp and Comics*, a magazine devoted to book collecting. There's a retail outlet called Global City in the Guildhall Market, Bath.

Given such a large stock, it's not surprising that the catalogues – there are separate ones for each genre – are largely unannotated. The information given is geared towards collectors (condition, publisher's issuing number, date, sometimes cover details), as are the prices. But there's much of interest: many *Badger Books* (averaging about £5 each these days), and a complete set of PKD Society newsletters for £100, for example.

Postage: First book £1, subsequent books 50p each to a maximum of £5. Credit cards accepted but add 5%.

• **Mark V. Ziesing Books** (A4, 40pp; free)  
P.O. Box 76, Shingletown, CA 96088, USA

Tel/Fax: (+US code) 916 474-1580  
Email: ziesing@bigchair.com  
Web: www.bigchair.com/ziesing

Mark is perhaps best known in the UK for the small press he runs, which has a fine reputation for quality both in his choice of books and their design. He's also an anglophile, at least as far as sf is concerned – the only way to get hold of Brian Stableford's novel version of *The Hunger and Ecstasy of Vampires* is from Ziesing Press. He's also published *The Book of Ian Watson* (a collection of fiction and non-fiction). Dick's non-fiction collection *The Dark-haired Girl*, Connie Willis's *Remake*, and many other first-rate books.

But he's also a dealer (new books only), and issues regular, well-produced catalogues which are wonderfully eclectic. The criterion for inclusion seems to be

... well, mainly that he likes the book, or it looks interesting. Fortunately he loves sf. The annotations are often amusing or whimsical, but always useful: as seen on Ben Bova's *Orion Among the Stars*, "Military sf. Rarely does it do anything approaching 'gore'", on Stableford's *Carnival of Destruction*, "Brian Stableford is a great writer and a wonderful human being"; on Shaun Hutson's *Erebus*, "Sick horror novel, Hutson is sick. Anybody that reads him is sick. How many you need?"

There's much of sf and fantasy of course, but a lot more too. Eclectic? Some random titles: *English As A Second Fucking Language* (how to swear for non-natives), *Incense Musicians and Cricket Champions* (subtitled "A Cultural History of Sipping Insects in Japan and China"), *The Sea: A Celebration of Pungs, Sandals, Slippers and More* (500 pages on ... shoes), *Thirteen: A Journey into the Future, Buddhism For Sheep, Hiss and Tuff* (how to psychanalyse your cat), *The Gullible: Its Legend and Lore*, *A Field Guide to Hot Sauces*, *The Sexuality of Jesus*, *Labyrinths: Ancient Myths and Modern Uses*, and so on. There's music, erotica, beer, radical culture, art, dope, and the just plain unclassifiable. All in all, an invaluable source for obscure Americana as well as US sf.

Postage: surface rate to UK approx. £1.60 per lb. Credit cards accepted. Air mail: only if paying by credit card.

—Chris Terran

• Thanks to all the dealers.

## ≡ the face of the future? ≡

THE BIG BOYS are moving into second-hand books, and independent specialist dealers may soon be threatened, just as independent bookshops were by the scrapping of the Net Book Agreement and the rise of the chain bookstores. **Paperback Exchange** is small at present, with five shops (in Hereford, Taunton, Coventry, Rugby and Worcester), and a sixth opening in April in Bedford), but has recently announced plans to open another sixteen stores by the end of 1998, half of them being franchises. Financial plans are in place: Barclays Bank has agreed to advance up to £30,000 to franchisees, with stock as collateral.

*"We are looking at it as a business rather than as a labour of love,"*

said PE director Anne Brown, who claims that the company has applied the efficiency of a modern retailer to the second-hand book market. Launched in 1992, it has a central warehouse currently containing 65,000 titles, and all its shops will soon be electronically linked; they aim to deliver orders within 24 hours. All books are barcoded and can be exchanged for credit, typically for 33% of the price paid. The extensive use of new technology means that PE hopes to offer services such as book searches and specialist / genre stock lists. Franchisees can also get discounted new books through special deals struck with the big publishers, but this is seen as an 'added value' service, not a core attraction.

Contact: Anne Brown on 01285 750587

Futurecime 96 on the south coast, which he organised. TTD also offers a free booksearch service (even for low-priced items) and, uniquely, "competitive, specialist book insurance organised through an established Lloyds broker". Bob says this has "proven to be a solution to the headache of convincing general insurance companies of the value of significant sf collections".

The quarterly catalogues are neat though unannotated, and mostly aimed at paperback collectors. Prices are medium. There are some interesting Ace Doubles, a lot of early Philip K. Dick paperbacks, and a good selection of magazines. There is a separate hardback list, which reveals the interesting fact that *Hamer!* (non-sf) by Donald MacKenzie is "known to be by Chris Priest".

Postage: 50p per book to a maximum of £3.60. Wants lists welcome.

• **Zardoz Books** (A5, 40pp; SAE+50p in stamps)  
20 Whitcroft, Dilton Marsh, Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 4DJ  
Tel/Fax: 01373 865371

Email: 100124.262@compuserve.com  
Web: http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/NE1\_01a2zardoz

Owner Maurice Flanagan – until recently a senior lecturer in polymer technology – claims that Zardoz is the UK's largest second-hand paperback dealer, with stocks of over 100,000 books. It's "been established for over ten years providing a mail order service to primarily paperback fiction collectors and readers.

# CHIMERAS and their CRADLES

brian stableford  
on the genesis of *Genesys*

CHALLENGED TO IMAGINE MONSTERS, the human imagination has always resorted to chimeras. The griffins, sphinxes and manticores of ancient mythology – many of which were scrupulously recorded in the *Historia Naturalis* of Plinius Secundus (better known nowadays as Pliny the Elder) – have been regularly supplemented by the inventions of later writers, such as Ariosto's hippogriff. When H. G. Wells required monstrous Martians his instinct led him to combine the repulsive features of the most-loathed insects, reptiles and molluscs with huge, accusative eyes – an example followed by hundreds of 20th-century sf writers and movie-makers.

The compilation of such chimeras had no need to observe the limitations of biological possibility because no one knew where those limits might lie. Even now, when the mysterious workings of DNA are in the process of gradual elucidation, we know very little about the processes by which one tiny egg-cell turns itself into an ostrich, another into a whale and a third into a human being. We speak vaguely of 'genetic blueprints', but we do not know how the analogical blueprint might be encoded into our genes (if it is), nor how it might be 'read' (if it is) by the enveloping embryo. This ignorance has not, of course, prevented us from producing actual chimeras by mingling the genes of sheep and goats, or mice and rats. The possibilities are probably endless, and it is a near-certainty that the processes of species-production employed in nature will soon be supplemented by human designs of which nature knows nothing.

It might, of course, be different elsewhere. All we know of 'nature' is a single evolutionary sequence; we have no other ecospheres, as yet, with which to compare our own. On other worlds orbiting other stars, nature might have stumbled on all kinds of tricks unrepresented here. We have already learned the lesson that most of the tricks technology can do were turned long since *somewhere* in the natural world; it therefore seems probable that anything genetic engineers can do on Earth will already have been done *somewhere* in the universe, without intelligent aid. We are, at least, free to speculate about such matters.

For various reasons, part commercial and part idiosyncratic, I decided in 1993 that I wanted to produce a science fiction novel heavily camouflaged as a fantasy trilogy. I wanted to write a planetary romance featuring vagabond princes, adventurous princesses, valiant swordsmen, clever merchants, giants, mercurial Serpents, wise Salamanders, marvellous forests, Spangled Deserts, Crystal Cities and – above all – monsters galore. I needed chimeras, and I needed some kind of biologic – however slight and unobtrusive – which might account for the existence of chimeras and afford them a particular significance within the evolution of life, not merely on their own world but within a greater Universal Scheme of Things. I took what inspiration I could from Plinius Secundus, and set out on an odyssey of exploration and explanation concealed within the odyssey undertaken by my



Dürer: detail from *Triumphal Arch*

vagabond princes, ambitious princesses, etc. etc. That quest reaches its climax in *Chimera's Cradle*, the concluding volume of the three-decker novel *Genesys*, which Legend will publish in May 1997.

Such quests, alas, always tend to resemble the pursuit of wild geese more than they resemble the search for the Holy Grail. No matter how heavily camouflaged science fiction may be, it cannot retain any substantial measure of rational responsibility and still achieve the neatness and moral purity of which fantasy is capable. All science-fictional quests have an element of futility, but that does not make them pointless or uninteresting; they might be regarded as chimerical entities themselves, fusing incompatible aims and methods into a remarkable but ill-fitting whole.

It is only in fantasy that a climax really can settle all matters outstanding and put everything to rights; it is only in fantasy that hippogriffs can actually fly. Because it is only camouflaged as fantasy, it is possible that some readers will be disappointed by the outcome of *Chimera's Cradle*, which settles very little and features only lightweight flyers. I hope there will be at least as many others who will find it intriguingly satisfactory in offering a glimpse of a Universal Scheme which requires no tidy settlements at all, nor any ultimate righting of all perceived wrongs. I would like to believe, at any rate, that Plinius Secundus would have found it fascinating.

— © Brian Stableford 1997

*Chimera's Cradle* is due from Legend in May, price £15.99; the first two volumes, *Serpent's Blood* and *Salamander's Fire*, are available in paperback. Brian's novella 'The Hunger and Ecstasy of Vampires' won the 1996 BSFA Award, and the sequel appeared in Interzone in January and February.

IT IS NOW TEN YEARS since Frank Miller single-handedly created the modern Batman industry. It is an incontrovertible fact that if it were not for the huge international success of *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* in 1986, both as limited series and graphic novel, there would be no Batman movies, no Batman animated TV series, no successful toy line, and the current range of Batman comics would have a completely different complexion.

I briefly met Miller, at the time, at the UK Comic Art Convention in London. What he said is a distant memory (I don't read comics much these days) but the conversation I had with another American that day has stuck in my mind ever since.

I was talking to Gary Groth, the head of the Fantagraphics line, and part way through the chat someone asked him about Frank Miller, and he said: "Ask him why *Dark Knight* is so fascistic." Here's the news – all superhero comics are fascistic. Anyone who exerts control over another human being by means of superior strength or power is fascistic. Most crime fiction has an element of the fascist about it – the wish to 'deal out justice' without the tedious recourse to due process is deeply rooted in our culture. Witness the 'Dirty Harry' movies. *Dirty Harry* and *Magnum Force* are actually a discourse on this point, but the movies that followed them are demonstrations of a societal wish-fulfilment revenge fantasy.

What Miller did was make the nature of the Batman explicit rather than implicit. *Dark Knight* is simply the Batman mythos stripped down to basics and hot-rodded, and probably the best superhero comic ever. The Batman of *Dark Knight* is in his fifties, Robin is dead and Bruce Wayne has not been Batman for ten years. Miller transplants Batman to a near future where society has broken down, gangs rule Gotham, and the presence of a 'fascistic' Batman is almost justified. But what actually causes Wayne to take up cape and cowl is the re-emergence of one of his gallery of arch-enemies, Two-Face. Batman's reappearance causes another enemy to awake from catatonia – The Joker.

Miller realises that there is nothing realistic about Batman or his world – we are dealing with archetypes here, exploded elements of a single psyche. If Two-Face is a reminder and reflection of the schizophrenic nature of the Batman, then The Joker is malign fate incarnate, as the Batman is retaliation incarnate. In dealing with the murder of Bruce Wayne's parents, and his incarnation as the Batman, Miller adds a mystical note – perhaps the Batman is a host for some force beyond him, as later Batman says of the (dying) Joker, "Something in him rustles as it leaves." The identification between hero and villain is explicit. Two-Face, although cured, sees himself as permanently scarred. At their confrontation, The Batman sees "a reflection, Harvey. A reflection."

Talk of the future implies science fiction, but *Dark Knight* is as much of its time as 1984 was of its. Around the central psychodrama of The Batman a darkly satirical world unfolds. A presidential figure who is obviously Reagan directs the actions of the "last boy scout", Superman, interfering in other countries' business (Grenada, anyone?), unwittingly precipitating an electromagnetic pulse which disrupts all electrical power on Earth. Gotham descends into anarchy and Batman must save it.

Throughout, the art complements and sometimes exceeds the story's ambition. Miller has designed a monumental Batman, logically enough after forty years of weight training. His Alfred is a rake of a man, sarcasm etched into his posture. Gotham is the urban city of nightmares. Miller's control of storytelling and multiple narrative, honed in the successful *Daredevil* series for Marvel Comics, comes to fruition here, in a hammerlock of words and art that has rarely been equalled. Lynn Varley virtually invented the palette used in colouring modern comic books in this series, and Klaus Janson's harsh, honed-down inks describe the shadows of Gotham in dark, eerie, detail.

Ultimately *The Dark Knight Returns* cannot be summed up in terms of its story, its themes or its art. It is an unusual beast, a graphic novel with longevity, capable of being read and reread, because of the intertwining of all these elements, the sheer density of plot and narrative and the leavening touch of black humour.

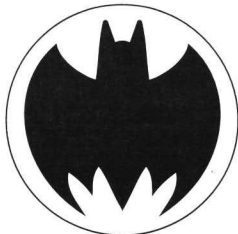
If you have room in your heart for one, and only one, graphic novel, you should make it this one.

— © Peter Dillon-Parker 1997

A special hardback anniversary edition of Frank Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* was published by Titan Books in December at £29.99, with 28 pages of new sketches, a new introduction by Miller, and a new cover by Miller and Janson.

This article originally appeared in *CrimeTime* magazine.

# darkness visible



peter dillon-parker

marks the tenth anniversary of frank miller's seminal graphic novel,  
*batman: the dark knight returns*

## FOUNDATION

the international review  
of science fiction

### BACK ISSUES FOR SALE!

*Foundation* is having a one-off sale of back issues. Do you want to benefit from our storage problems? The following issues are available: 21, 23, 24, 25, 27 to 45 and 47 to 62. Brief details of the contents of these are to be found at <http://www.rdg.ac.uk/~lhsjamse/fnd.htm>, or write a cheque to "Foundation Journal" and send it straight to Andy Sawyer, Science Fiction Foundation Collection, University of Liverpool Library, PO Box 123, Liverpool L69 3DA, UK. Single issues are £2 each: ten issues for £15. Postage is extra: in the UK 60p for the first copy, and 40p for each subsequent copy; overseas £1 for the first copy, and 70p for each subsequent copy. If you wish to pay in US dollars, multiply by 1.6 (70p is 0.7 of a £1). *Foundation* is published in the UK by the Science Fiction Foundation with the support of the Friends of Foundation (Registered Charity no. 1041052).

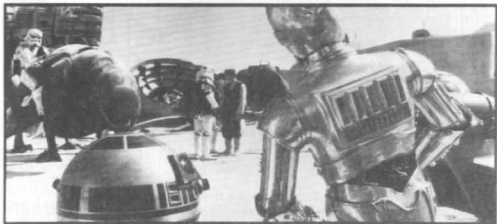
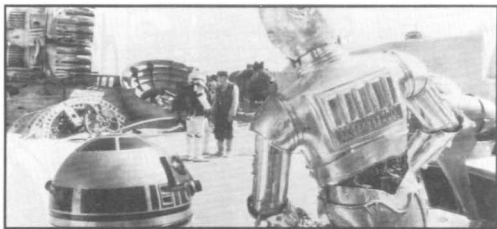
**SPECIAL  
EDITION**

**CLAIRE  
BRIALEY**

looks at the first part of the new version of the *Star Wars* trilogy, and wonders if it was worth it.

BEFORE AND AFTER

*A Stormtrooper dismounts from one of the new digitally-created creatures*



HAVE GREAT NOSTALGIA for *Star Wars*, and have seen all three films a number of times on video, but I hadn't seen it in a cinema for eighteen and a half years. I seem to recall I didn't appreciate it much back then anyway. I was a bit concerned about what they might have done to it in the course of the restoration (taping up) process, if they were trying to make it compete with, say, *Independence Day* in order to attract the Yool of Today I wasn't entirely sure I'd recognise it.

Well, it's not that different. There's still lots of swashbuckling, some good laughs (although not quite as many as the under-tens in the audience appeared to think there were), nice space shots. Luke Skywalker's still too short to be a hero, Han Solo's still gorgeous, Princess Leia still has the silliest hairstyle in the galaxy. Darth Vader seems a bit less scary now that I'm not eight, but still has a cool cloak. What they have actually changed falls into three categories:

1) **Restored bits:** the main example of which must be the scene with Han Solo and Jabba the Hutt before the Millennium Falcon leaves Mos Eisley (see cover). This isn't terribly impressive, there were inconsistencies with Jabba's appearance and behaviour in *Return of the Jedi*, the meeting doesn't add anything to the flow of the plot, and it may make Solo's motivation in *The Empire Strikes Back* a bit harder to understand. But it does make the cuts between otherwise very quick scenes seem a bit less awkward, and it was nice to have an extra minute of Harrison Ford. I'm also told that Luke's reunion with his Dear Old Chum Biggs just before they set off for the big fight with the Death Star isn't actually the take which was in the original print of the film, which seems like a bizarre thing to change in restoration.

2) **New bits:** not good at all. There seemed to be bits of CGI which look amateurish now and will look terrible in a couple of years' time, and mostly involved little creatures hopping or flitting about in restored long-shots where someone obviously thought there was too much sky or building in the frame. Whatever it was the Stormtroopers were riding (hey, everyone loves dinosaurs now, don't they?) were very awkward, and so was the Stormtrooper trying to get off one (see stills above).

3) **Enhanced / changed bits:** the print has evidently been touched up and space looks better, but a lot of the exterior shots look even more crackly by comparison. Darth Vader's spaceship-chases along the Death Star trench actually look *less* impressive, and I can't work out if it's because something in those scenes has been changed, or because nothing has been changed but other films which ripped it off have since done it better. The explosions have been enhanced quite significantly and look very good, but are basically *Star Trek* explosions because that's the way they do things now.

Because I knew there were some changes I started looking for them where they may not have existed. I had this vague feeling, for example, that Luke took two runs at exploding the Death Star, using the targeting computer the first time [*That's how I remember it too.* — Chris]. Our video version also only has the one attempt, though, so maybe I'm confusing him with someone else — or maybe, several edits ago, someone decided that there's a difference between suspense and slowing down the denouement. The best genuine change, in my opinion, which could fall into any of the three categories above, is a glorious shot of Mos Eisley as the Falcon takes off, panning out over the spaceport as they zoom up into the sky. If that's an example of what they could achieve with all the stops pulled out, it makes some of the other twiddles even more disappointing. I hope they don't repeat some of the unfortunate changes with *Empire*, which of the trilogy I think is the closest to being a really good film already.

There are also some bits which they could have changed but didn't: good bits like the Imperial Stormtrooper banging his head on the rising door, and bad bits like an appalling piece of continuity with the R2 units when Luke and his uncle are buying the droids. I didn't notice it on the video before but it's definitely there, and on the big screen it's really obvious (or is, possibly, a longer shot). I can't work out, what with all the editing and enhancing that was going on anyway and has already been done a couple of times in the past five years, why no one has ever digitally removed the erroneous R2 unit.

*Star Wars* still plays to the strengths of the cinema; even in the wide-screen version on a large TV, there are bits you can't see properly which do look a lot better on the big screen. I was particularly surprised by the shortness of the credits – these days everyone who sneezed in the vicinity of the studio seems to get mentioned, but *Star Wars* evidently went for the minimalist approach and it makes me wonder how many people are actually uncredited.

The consensus afterwards seemed to be: it's good, but it could and should have been a lot better. If you want to see *Star Wars* in the cinema again, it's obviously worth it since the film *hasn't* been changed beyond all recognition. If you've never seen it, now would be a good time – it's still a lot better than many of the pseudo-*sf* effect-fests that turn up these days. If you know it so well that you just want to look out for what they've changed, you're possibly very sad and may get bored.

— © Claire Brialey 1997

Thanks to Simo (or Mike Simpson from SFX as he was in this context) for letting us know about the press premiere and getting us in to see it.

## Zinery

Chris Terran  
on small-press magazines

**Zene 10** (Andy Cox; A5, 36pp; subscription £8 for four issues, but see box)

TTA Press, 5 Martins Lane, Witcham, Ely, Cambs., CB6 2LB  
Tel: 01353 777931

✱ The many and various small press magazines around the country have a good track record in nurturing new writers, many of whom have gone on to professional publication. The editors and producers rarely make money – neither do the writers – and naturally standards vary, but the best of them are very good indeed. Subtitled 'The Guide to the Independent Press', Andy Cox's smart and glossy *Zene* is pretty much essential if you have writing – or publishing – ambitions.

It attempts to provide a full and critical overview of the small press scene, but very definitely from the point of view of the contributor. Coverage is worldwide, but concentrates on the UK; all types of markets are catered for, but there's a predominance of sf, fantasy and horror publications. There's market news, regularly updated contributors' guidelines (these are essential), details of writing competitions, notes on how publications deal with submissions (and warnings of unreliable / late paying ones), essays and articles, and copious and very thorough reviews. The BSFA's own *Focus* concentrates on the writing process itself, and while *Zene* does occasionally cover this aspect of authorship its main thrust is towards the mechanics of getting published; as such, the two are complementary, and if you like one you'll need the other.

The magazine itself is clear and attractive, if a little undifferentiated; every page looks the same. Editorially, it has a difficult line to tread. *Zene* clearly wishes to support a small press (it's part of it itself), but its remit of providing a service to writers will inevitably lead to some conflicts of interest. From the issues I've seen, editor Andy Cox handles such problems with tact and discretion, and appears to have the trust of both parties. The quality of his own contributors – who include K. V. Bailey, D. F. Lewis and Peter Tennant – certainly helps.

If you have any interest at all in writing, you really should take a look at *Zene*.

**Reality & Beyond 1** (M. C. Wagstaff; A5, 64pp unpaginated; £1.95+30p P&P, cheques / POs payable to 'MCW Publications')

MCW Publications, 82 Intake Road, Norton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST6 8JY

✱ Is enthusiasm by itself enough? Well, sometimes it is, but when coupled with a manifesto which baldly states that the prime reason – indeed, three of the five reasons given – for publishing this zine is 'To hopefully make money', you expect something a little better. A nodding acquaintance with English grammar and the basic use of the comma, for a start. I'm afraid Wagstaff – first name unknown – has some way to go.

What does it look like? Wagstaff's got a colour dot-matrix printer and he's not afraid to use it. The graphics are uniformly awful – amateurish (in the worst sense), crude, overbearing. You wonder who they're aiming at: children? It doesn't seem so – the execrable Femdom and Condom cartoons preclude that – but parts of this mess would cause the average seven-year-old to throw up. There are dismal cracker-jokes, not even bad enough to be funny ('Did you here [sic] about the eminent archaeologist? His career was in ruins!'). There is inaccurate science. There is fiction to make Lionel Fanthorpe blush. There is... no, back up. Here's the start of 'its Burning Desire To Live' by David McGuire:

It was cold. So very cold. Too cold for life to exist? It had been so cold, so icy-cold for such a long time. So very long.

Now It began to warm. It got warmer. It got very warm. It was warm for a short time. So very short.

Then It began to cool once more. It was cool. Not cold like before. But not warm either. It was cool for a long time. So very long. So very, very long.

Then It got warm. It got warmer. It got very warm. It got very, very warm. It was hot. So very hot.

And so on. This is not improved by each occurrence of 'IT' being printed in bright red. Someone buy him a thesaurus, please.

There's an ad for Wagstaff's material aimed at writers ('Earn money in your spare time, and maybe if your [sic] proficient enough make it your profession') which includes an unblinking 'Guide to Creating Reader's Letters'. Apparently these guides 'are being snapped up by many professional / semi-professional writers alike'. Pass the salt.

If Wagstaff wants to improve her/his zine and 'make money', a few tips are in order. Get a sub to *Zene* and see how it should be done. Scrap most of the colour. Scrap most of the artwork. Delete all but three of your your fonts. Scrap the dreadful fiction (you're an editor – edit!). Work out who your audience is: children? Teenagers? Adults? It's all over the place at the moment.

What *Reality & Beyond* does have, undeniably, is enthusiasm and a will to put in the hard work necessary to create a zine (I know whereof I speak). But until you've got something to say, that just ain't enough.

**Albedo One 12** (A4, 36pp; sample copy £3 inc. p&p, £10 for four)

albedo one, 2 Post Road, Lusk, Co. Dublin, Ireland  
Email: bhrye101.ie

✱ *Albedo One* is a rather elegant-looking – though wholly set sans serif, too hissy – Irish zine devoted to sf, fantasy and horror, and is edited by Brendan Ryder. It has a mix much like *Interzone*, with stories, articles, reviews and interviews. The last being particularly impressive: the twelve issues have had Julian May, J. G. Ballard, Clive Barker, Terry Pratchett, Pat Cadigan, Lois McMaster Bujold, Kim Newman, Jonathan Carroll, Colin Greenland, Anne McCaffrey, Harry Harrison and, in this issue, William Gibson. There are six stories (two from Irish writers), some reviews which could perhaps do with a touch more bite 'n' bite, and a plaintive tale of rejection slips and the blindness of publishers. Personally, I'd welcome a bit more Irishness in the zine (a news column, for instance, a few more Irish writers, an interview with Ian McDonald) – but since when did sf give a damn about nationalism? Try this: I don't think you'll be disappointed.

**The Third Alternative 11** (Andy Cox; A4, 60pp; £2.75)

TTA Press, 5 Martins Lane, Witcham, Ely, Cambs., CB6 2LB  
Tel: 01353 777931

✱ *The Third Alternative* straddles the small press / professional gap, and won a British Fantasy Award last year. Following this the magazine was relaunched; it looks extremely professional, is printed on heavy, glossy paper, and though there's no colour it actually looks rather smarter than *Interzone*. With one exception, unfortunately: the cover of issue 11 is extremely murky, with black masthead and text printed over predominantly dark grey artwork (by Jason Hurst). The picture itself is fine, but the text – and definitely the title – really should have been given more prominence.

Inside, there are eight stories (no serials), a look at Geoff Ryman's work by Gary Couzens, an interview with rising author Chris Kenworthy (a dead ringer for William Gibson, to judge by his photo), a portrait of Jason Hurst artwork, and some editorial matter and comment. There are no reviews; TTA's editorial says its 'main area of interest is in fiction which

is neither strictly generic nor strictly non-generic. Crossgenre as opposed to mixed genre, it contains elements of fantasy, horror or science fiction, and in varying degrees, but uses them in a relatively 'mainstream' manner... it is our belief that this slipstream continues to provide us with the most exciting, challenging, cutting edge work'.

The first story, 'Dancing About Architecture' by Marlin Simpson, is a beautifully understated and affecting tale about the music in all things, and is worth the price of the magazine alone. Rick Cadger's 'Of Weather Signs and Absolution' can't keep up the standard, though – it's a horror vignette that reads like an extract from a larger work, in which context perhaps its meaning would unfold, here, it just seems like a random dream. Or perhaps I'm just stupid. Other stories – from Justina Robson, Allen Ashley, James Miller, Simon Avery, Neil Williamson and Conrad Williams – vary between the first two in quality, though there's a little too much small-press preciousness about some of the writing. But they're all readable, and one smasheroo per zine is more than we can expect. Recommended.

**ALSO RECEIVED** (mention does not preclude a future review):

**Psychotrope 4** (Mark Beech; A5, 56pp; £2.00 each, four for £7.50)

Flat 6, 17 Drolivich Road, Barbourne, Worcester, WR3 7LG  
✱ 'Stories of psychological horror (as opposed to Gothic, supernatural, occult etc.), mad love and surrealism'.

**The Zine 4** (A4, 60pp; £2.75, £10 for four)

Pigaspus Press, 13 Hazely Combe, Arretton, Isle of Wight, PO30 3AJ

✱ General sf zine. Articles on M. John Harrison; the nuclear apocalypse in sf; part 3 of Steve Snyder's history of sf poetry; Edward James and Algis Budrys on their top ten sf novels; fiction from Neal Asher, Chris Bell, Bruce Storton, Rhys H. Hughes, Dominic McDonagh, Pat Walsh; reviews of books, films etc. Loads to read, and a real bargain despite below-par presentation.

**Touchpaper 3** (A4, 2pp; free for SAE/IRC, or £1.50 for 5 issues)

Pigaspus Press, 13 Hazely Combe, Arretton, Isle of Wight, PO30 3AJ

✱ SF polemics and opinion.

**Dragon's Breath 37** (A4, 2pp; free for SAE/IRC)

Pigaspus Press, 13 Hazely Combe, Arretton, Isle of Wight, PO30 3AJ

✱ Monthly small-press news and capsule reviews, full of 'Zine Kat's' idiosyncrasies – his reviews read like Variety headlines. Information-dense, essential, and free.

— Chris Terran

## Special Offers From TTA to BSFA Members

- ☐ Dual subscription to *Zene* (normally £8) and *The Third Alternative* (E10), plus *The Planet Suite* (E4.99) PLUS FREE COPY of the British Fantasy Award winning anthology *Last Rites and Resurrections* (worth E5.99) ... all for £18.99, a saving of E9.99
- ☐ *The Planet Suite* by Allan Ashley at E4.99
- ☐ *The Third Alternative* plus *The Planet Suite* at E2.75+E3.99 = E6.74 (save E1)
- ☐ Four issue subscription to *The Third Alternative* plus *The Planet Suite* at E10+E2.99 = E12.99 (save E2)

All prices inclusive of postage and packing.

Please tick one and send to with your payment to:

TTA Press, 5 Martins Lane, Witcham, Ely, Cambs., CB6 2LB  
Cheques / POs payable to 'TTA Press'

M124/3-97



# events

## IMPORTANT

- Please enclose an SAE when contacting conventions.
- Efforts are made to ensure the accuracy of all the information here, but check with the convention before booking.
- If you run, or know of, any unlisted conventions or events please let me know at the editorial address.
- Please mention Matrix when enquiring.
- Guests at media conventions appear 'subject to work commitments'.
- Special thanks to: Dave Langford, Chris O'Shea, Bridget Wilkinson; errors are mine.

### 26 Mar 1997: BSFA London Meeting

The BSFA's free monthly meetings are held in the upstairs room of the Jubilee Tavern on York Road, London SE1, between Waterloo and Westminster Bridges. Nearest stations Waterloo (mainline or Underground) or Westminster (Underground). Things start at about 7.00pm; if you get there early and the upstairs room is closed we'll be in the main bar and, if in doubt, the landlord will be able to point us out to you. Meetings are open to all.

Paul Hood on 01621 816440 for further information.

### 28-31 Mar 1997: Intervention

The 1997 Easterncon, themed around 'Communication' Venue is the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool. Guests are Brian Aldiss, Octavia Butler, David Langford and Jon Bingham. There are no on-the-door memberships.

Intervention, 12 Crowsbury Close, Emsworth, Hants. PO10 7TS

01234 376596

intervention@ponsey.demon.co.uk

http://ds.dial.pipex.com/minerva.tech/interven.htm

### 3 Apr 1997: London SF meeting

Venue changing - see page 4. Jubilee Tavern on York Road, London SE1, between Waterloo and Westminster Bridges. '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!

### 19 Apr 1997: UnConvention 97

The annual Fortean Times convention at the Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London. Last year's was reviewed in Matrix 120.

UnConvention 97, PO Box 146, Glasgow, G1 5RN

### 23 Apr 1997: BSFA London Meeting

The guest is Colin Greenland.

### 1 May 1997: London SF meeting

### 2-5 May 1997: The Mission

Star Trek convention at the Norfolk Castle Hotel in Blackpool.

Wolf 359, 141 Warden Road, Canvey Island, Essex, SS8 9BE

01753 771078

### 11 May 1997: Fantasy Fair 7

One-day event sponsored by Peterborough SF Club, at the Crescent Exhibition Centre, Bretton, Peterborough, 10.30am-4.00pm. Guests, games, dealers, all for £1.50 or so.

Bruce King, 1 The Hallards, Eaton Socon, St. Neots, PE19 3CW

01480 216372

### 23-26 May 1997: Year of the Wombat

Humour convention at the Bestwood Lodge Hotel, Nottingham, centred on hangers. Registration £25 until Eastercon.

Year of the Wombat, 22 The City, Beeston, Nottingham, NG9 2ED

### 24-26 May 1997: Fantasticcon UK

General convention at the Harrogate International Conference Centre. Guests include Harry Harrison, David Gemmell, Lisa Tuttle, Ramsey Campbell, Jack Cohen and Roy Payton, proprietor of the Andromeda Bookshop in Birmingham. Events include items on cut radio sf and a comprehensive video programme. Enquire for current prices. Children aged 5 and below are free, children under 14 half price.

SAE to Fantasticcon UK, 38 Planetree Ave. Fenham,

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE4 9TH

01955 468100

### 28 May 1997: Arthur C. Clarke Award

Science Museum. Invitation only.

### 28 May 1997: BSFA London Meeting

This month's meeting is cancelled due to the clash with the Clarke Award.

### 5 Jun 1997: London SF meeting

### 24 Jun 1997: BSFA London Meeting

The guest is Diana Wynne Jones.

### 4-6 Jul 1997: Nexus 97

Media convention at the Forte Posthouse Hotel, Bristol. Guests are Jennifer Hetrick (Trek, X-Files), Jason Carter (Babylon 5), Richard Arnold (Trek consultant), John Freeman (Titan magazines). £42 membership, £15 supporting, instalment scheme available. Non-profit, fan-run.

Nexus 97, 26 Milner Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 9PQ

nexus@nexus.demon.co.uk

### 11-14 Jul 1997: The Alliance

Major Babylon 5 con at the Norfolk Castle Hotel, Blackpool. The enormous guest list includes J. Michael Straczynski and membership is £70.

The Alliance, 141 Warden Road, Canvey Island, Essex, SS8 9BE

### 18-20 Jul 1997: Convocation

The 16th Uncon combined with the British role-playing game convention. Venue is New Hall in Cambridge and the guest is Stephen Brust. £20 registration, and numbers is limited to 180.

Convocation, 19 Uphall Road, Cambridge, CB1 3HX

### 25-27 Jul 1997: Voyage 97

The second Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea convention, held at the Novotel, Arundel Gate, Sheffield. 'Wonderful friendly atmosphere, episodes, discussions, costume party, writers' workshop, zine library.' But no details of rates, unfortunately.

Voyage 97, 15 Fullers Court, Exeter, Devon, EX2 4DZ

### 3-5 Sep 1997: LoneStarCon

The 55th World sci-fi convention in San Antonio, Texas. Guests include Algis Budrys, Michael Moorcock.

PO Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755-2277, USA

lsc2@aio.com

http://www.io.com/~lsc2/

UK agent: Mike Mor, 27 Hampton Road, Worcester Park, Surrey, KT4 8EU

### 5-7 Sep 1997: Festival of Fantastic Films

Three days of spitting sticky flicks at Sacha's Hotel in Manchester. Registration is £45 (£35 from 1 April).

5 South Mesnesfield Road, Salford, Manchester, M7 3QP

### 25-28 Sep 1997: Masque 5

Costuming con at the Sheringham Youth Hotel, Sheringham, Norfolk. Registration £20 (£25 from 1 May, £30 from 1 Aug). Hotel accommodation £225 pppn.

35 Verley Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 3EP

### 23 Oct-2 Nov 1997: Coachcon

Coach trip starting in London, via Portsmouth, to Euro-Occocon 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-Occocon '97

The 1997 Eurocon and Ireland's national sf con combined. The Guest of Honour is Robert Jordan. Registration (reduced from last time) is £20 (£25 from 24 Apr, £30 on the door). Accommodation must be booked well in advance.

(Note change) Euro-Occocon '97, 6 Drom-na-nane Park, Beaumont, Dublin 9, Ireland.

mmchugh@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 contact 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

### 14-16 Nov 1997: Novacon 27

The 1997 Novacon moves out of Birmingham to the de Vere Abbey Hotel in Great Malvern. Guest is Peter F. Hamilton and registration is £25 until April.

14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS

### 6-8 Feb 1998: Decadence

The tenth British Ff (sf music) convention at the Forte Posthouse Hotel, Gatwick. Registration is essential £24.

20 Flat 11, 11 Evesham Road, Cheltenham, GL52 2AA

### 10-13 April 1998: Intuition

The 1998 Easterncon at the Piccadilly Jarvis Hotel in Manchester. Guests: Connie Willis, Ian McDonald and Martin Tudor. Membership is £28, £15 supporting. Note new address.

Intuition, 1 Waverley Way, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey, SM5 3LQ

INTUITION@smof.demon.co.uk

http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/~acp/intuition/intuit\_index.html

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

Celebrate the conclusion of Babylon 5 at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, London. Confirmed guests are J. Michael Straczynski, Harlan Ellison, Jack Cohen, John Ridgeway, Bryan Talbot, Adam 'Mojo' Lebowitz, John Matthews.

Membership until the 1997 Easterncon is £50 (instalment scheme available), under 17s half price, under 12s free. Room rates: £40ppn triple, £42ppn double or twin, £47ppn single.

The Wrap Party, PO Box 505, Reading, RG1 7DZ

theWrapParty@bipin.co.uk

http://www.bipin.co.uk/TheWrapParty

### 18-21 Sep 1998: Discworld Convention II

(All information provisional: check first!) The second convention devoted to all things Pratchett takes place at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool, with guests including you-know-who and Dave Langford.

PO Box 3086, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8TY

### 2-6 Sep 1999: Aussiecon 3

The Worldcon goes down under. Guests George Turner, Greg Benford, Bruce Gillespie. Membership is \$140 (US).

UK Agent: Martin Hoare, 45 Tielhurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT

### 26 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 BenLux country. £300 per year, to be deducted from the eventual membership cost.

Malcolm Reid, 186 Casewick Rd., West Norwood, London, SE20 0LZ

0202 70521

### BIDS BIDS BIDS BIDS BIDS

### 14-15 Mar 1998: Corflu

Various fans including Ian Sorensen and Lillian Edwards are bidding to hold the 1998 Corflu (the annual fanzine convention) in the UK, rather than its normal American home. Location is the Griffin Hotel in Leeds. Registration is £25 (£40), and rooms are £25 pppn.

7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton, ML3 7HY

### 2000: Worldcon

Chicago Presupposing \$10.

PO Box 642057, Chicago, Illinois 60664, USA

http://lacon3.worldcon.org/Wbids/bids.html

### 2001: Worldcon

Boston Presupposing \$8.

PO Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701-0205, USA

http://world.std.com/~sbarsky/b2001.html

### Philadelphia Presupposing \$10.

Suite 2001, 402 Huntington Pike, Rockledge, PA 19046

2001@cyber.com

### 2003: Worldcon

UK [Scotland?] Tentative at present.

KIM Campbell, 69 Lincoln St., Leeman Rd., York, YO2 4YF

toronto@jircop.co.uk

Toronto Presupposing \$9.

Dave Langford, 84 London Road, Reading, RG1 5AU

Cancun, Mexico Presupposing \$7.

PO Box 905, Euless, TX 76039-0905, USA

# power and possession

octavia e. butler  
guest of honour at  
this year's eastcon  
profiled by  
andrew m. butler

HERE'S AN IMAGE of the notional sf reader: white, male, twenty-something going on thirteen and straight (honest, guv). As the writers are often fans made good, there is a corresponding predominance of writers who are white, male, thirty-something going on thirteen and straight (honest, guv). Whilst in the 1960s and 70s women writers became noticeable (refusing to hide behind initials on some cases), the genre is overwhelmingly white. One of the exceptions is Octavia Estelle Butler.

As a woman and an African-American, Butler can be considered as alien twice over, at the bottom of the social heap. Born on 22 June 1947 in Pasadena, California, she was educated at Pasadena College and then California State University. It was in the 1970s that she came to prominence, as a product first of a workshop taught by Harlan Ellison at the Screen Writers' Guild of America and then a Clarion Workshop. A series of novels followed – the 'Patternist' sequence, starting with *Patternmaster* (1976) and ending with *Clay's Ark*. This is an impressive history and future history of power, psychic powers, possession, slavery and oppression. This fear of possession was to obsess her before her visit to the Peruvian jungles to research the 'Xenogenes' books. In particular she was afraid of blood-sucking insects. To exorcise the fear, she wrote "Bloodchild", published in *Asimov's* in 1984.

1984 and 1985 should have been breakthrough years. She was attracting mainstream attention with *Kindred* (1979), and was written about in the summer 84 issue of *Black American Literature Forum*, alongside Samuel R. Delany. "Bloodchild" won both Nebula and Hugo awards, and "Speech Sounds" also won a 1984 Hugo. But her double win was eclipsed by a certain white, male author called William Gibson and *Neuromancer*. Whilst Butler's works have been read as representing the differences – both racial and gender – at the heart of America, Gibson's novels became caught up in a zeitgeist which erased differences and posited a global culture.

Of course this global culture is a Californicated (in Zoline's choice phrase – and ironic given Butler's birthplace), silicon-valleyed, microserfed, MacDollared one, which sweeps all others before it. Cyberpunk, with its huddled Asian masses and Rastafarian zombie clichés, stands implicated in a peculiar type of racism.

I have already noted, in *Matrix*, the words of a delegate at 'Speaking Science Fiction', who suggested that Butler was only of interest to southern Californian, politically correct hippies, and that we should go away and research *Jurassic Park* and its ilk instead. Yes, one is at the margins and one is the central, dominant culture; but the white, male critic spoke from a position of his own power. Butler has things to say to African-Americans, females, and even white, male, twenty-somethings. As she herself says: "I began writing about power, because I had so little."

It remains to be seen whether she can continue to claim this. In 1995 she was awarded a "Genius Grant" by the MacArthur Foundation: \$295,000 over five years. It might well free her to take more risks. Certainly she will work as hard as ever. The work ethic is at the heart of her philosophy of writing: "There are three things to forget about. First, talent. I used to worry that I had no talent, and it compelled me to work harder. Second, inspiration. Habit will serve you a lot better. And third, imagination. Don't worry, you have it."

A widespread and appreciative audience – and the praise heaped upon *The Parable of the Sower* – can testify to Butler's abundance of the latter.

—© Andrew M. Butler 1997

## small

## Members' Noticeboard

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

### LOCAL GROUPS

**PETERBOROUGH SF CLUB** is celebrating its 21st anniversary this year. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at the Bluebell Inn, Doghouse, and on the third Wednesday of the month in the bar of the Great Northern Hotel, opposite the BR station. Guests invited for later this year include artist **Russell Morgan** on 2 April and **Simon Ings** on 4 June. Contact: SAE to 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5BB.

**HULL SF GROUP** meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, 8pm to 10.30pm at 14 Old Blue Bell Market Place, Hull. Activities include informal members' talks, guest speakers (who have included Pat Cadogan, Graham Joyce and Colin Greenland), debates and readings. Not forgetting drinking and merry chat. Contact: Ian & Julie at 0474953 or Dave & Estelle on Hull 444291.

**CARDIFF SF GROUP** meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in The Golden Cross, 283 Hayes Bridge Road, Cardiff.

**CAMBRIDGE SF GROUP** meets on the second Monday of the month in The Westlens, New Market Road, Cambridge.

**READING SF GROUP** meets weekly on Mondays at 8.00pm in The Sun Castle Street, Reading.

**BIRMINGHAM SF GROUP** is one of the most active groups in the country. Meetings are held on the third Friday of the month at a pub in Birmingham; it seems to be moving around at the moment so contact them for details. There's usually a guest speaker. Membership is £10 per year, which includes a monthly newsletter. Contact: Martin Tisdler, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarks Lane, Willemsham, West Midlands, WV13 1HX. Email: bsfgrp@btinternet.com

**FONT, the Manchester SF group** meets on the second and fourth Thursdays in the city, at the Crown and Anchor Beer Engine (piston St., Port St) corner in Manchester city centre. Usually from about 8pm till last orders. The group's not formal enough to have a secretary, but anyone who wants to find out how to get to the pub is welcome to phone **Mike Don** on 0161 226 7380.

**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 Groome on 0116 279 2280, or email cbeant@btinternet.com, uk.

**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 01273 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 Oatlands Avenue, Bar Hill, Cambs., CB3 8EG or phone 01954 781797 after 6pm.

### WANTED

**WANTED:** a copy in any condition of *The Rabbie Rabbits* by Eric Frank Russell. Contact: **John Ellis**, 51 Belmont Road, Luton LU1 1UL.

**"MINSTER CLASSICS" WANTED:** – not for me, for a friend, honest guv. Market value is around a quid, will pay up to £2 dependent on condition or will swap for duplicates. Titles wanted include: *Alexis's Fables*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Hansel & Gretel*, *St. George's Legend*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *Macbeth*, *Mail Fairies*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Turn of the Screw*, *Daisy Miller*, *Prince and the Pauper*, *Wind in the Willows*, *Wuthering Heights*.

**Andy Butler**, Flat 3, 28 Louis Street, Hull, HU3 1JL. Tel: 0482 229168

**HELP A DESPERATE EDITOR:** Wanted a copy in any condition of *Temps*, the Neil Gaiman and Alan Stewart anthology. **Chris Terran**, 8 Beechwood Court, Back Beechwood Grove, Leeds LS4 2HS

**WANTED:** Complete set of BBC TV Video *Survivors*. Will also pay cash for a complete set. Contact: **Geoff Hunt**, 71 Poplar Grove, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 3DN.

**BOOKS REQUIRED:** – AC Doolittle, Banks, Cornea, Delany, Niven, Sabermonger, Stabelford, Sterling, New Writings series, and many more. Send SAE for wants list to **Ian Forsshaw**, 12 Winston Way, Farnham, Cambs., PE7

3BU Tel 01733 241836

**BOOKS WANTED:** Original Ace paperback editions of the following books by Megan Lindholm: *Harpy's Flight*, *The Windmiller*, *The Labyrinth Gate*, and *Wizard of the Pigeons*. Any copies in any condition of *The Unicorn Treasury* edited by Bruce Coville, published by Doubleday in 1988, and *Strategies of Fantasy* by Brian Atwell, published by Indiana University Press in 1992. Please contact **Michael Brailwell**, 27 Marsh Drive, West Hendon, London, NW9 7OE or phone 0181 202 9018.

### FOR SALE

**PRODUCE A MAGAZINE LIKE YOU'RE HOLDING.** For sale: Acorn A5000 computer; 4 meg RAM; 44 meg hard drive; 14 inch colour monitor; Cannon i Computer Concepts LPB4 Lite Laser Printer. Plus all the top DTP software – Impression II, 1st Word Plus, Acorn DTP. All manuals, discs etc. Immaculate. Arrive of new baby PC into the family forces reduced sale. £500. CHD. Court £3,000. net. Contact: **Howard Watts** on Brighton 01273 689055. Buyer collects.

**ABOUT 230 FANTASY & SF MAGAZINES FOR SALE:** *F&SF*, *Galaxy*, *J. Worlds of Tomorrow*, *Science Fantasy*, *Venue*, *New Worlds*, *Imagines*, *Future*, *SF Adventures*, *SF Horizons*, *Famous*, *Phantasia*, *ASFA* mainly from the 60s with some 70s and a few late 50s. For last contact **Tom J. Jones**, 92 Manor Road, Kyrnham, Bristol, BS18 1HR, or tel 0470839133.

**COLLECTION CLEARANCE:** I have lists for "Papersback", *Handbooks*, *Antropology* and *Magazines* including sets and runs and *ASF / Analog* for 1934 to 1995. Send SAE for lists, please say which. Contact **Terry Davies**, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, N. Yorks. YO12 5PD.

**DANCER FOR THE WORLD'S DEATH:** an illustrated signed and numbered limited-edition book by **Storm Constantine** with cover art by **Dave Moorings**. Due October from Inception at £3.50 inc. 4p. Cheques payable to Inception. Please send SAE for details / booklet. Contact **Inception**, Steve Jeffery & Vikki Lane, 44 White Way, Kildington, Oxford, OX5 2XA.

**HARM'S WAY** by Colin Greenland – "What if Charles Dickens had written a space opera?" (Locus) – large paperback, the one with the pretty cover, £3.50. Also the

two linked fantasy novels, *The Hour of the Thin Ox* and *Other Voices* (great covers by Roger Dean and Ian Miller). £1.50 each. Prices include postage. Collin Greenland, 40 Station Street, Cambridge, CB1 2QA.

**THE WAY TO WRITE SCIENCE FICTION** by Brian Stabelford. Signed copy available at £5. Also available *The Empire of Fear*, £10 hardcover, £5 C-format; *Sexual Chemistry* Sardonian Tales, *The Genetic Revolution* £8 inc. *The Asgard Trilogy*, £10 boxed set (limited to 500 copies) of 3 pbs, 48 pages post-free. Order from **Brian Stabelford**, 113 St Peter's Road, Reading RG6 1PG.

**COLLECTION FOR SALE** New review copies of SF and Fantasy fiction, and related nonfiction (criticism, books about film / TV, author studies etc.), plus my personal collection of fiction, related nonfiction, American magazines about fantastic literature. Handovers and paperbacks, most in excellent condition. Some collectables. All very reasonably priced from £1 up. US \$1 brings complete lots. Please contact **Neil Barron**, 1149 Line Place, Vista, CA 92083-7428, USA.

**CRUCIFORM VARIATIONS:** a collection of 12 science-fictional cryptic crosswords (including annuals) by **John English** is now available (Price £2.00 from Beacon Publications, 75 Roslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0PG).

**SF BOOKS / MAGAZINES FOR SALE:** The Science Fiction Foundation Collection has a large number of science fiction / fantasy books and magazines for sale at bargain prices. Proceeds to the SFF. Contact **Andy Sawyer** on 0151 784 2686 / 2733 or email asawyer@btinternet.com or for further details.

### MISC

**HELP FILM THIS COLUMN!** Been looking for a book for years but can't find it? Got a fanzine you want to distribute or solid articles for? Books, tapes, videos for sale? Want to make contacts? Publicise your local group? Find penfriends? Use this FREE service and reach every BSFA member! Send your ad to the editorial address.

**SOME LOVELY MAN** sent me – that's *Jeffrey Ray* – a copy of *Ernest Bull's War for the Oaks* a couple of months ago in response to my ad here and I **LOST HIS NAME AND ADDRESS**. If you are, please write or ring so I can pay what I owe and not expire of mortification.

Please contact **JEFF REY** at: HR House, Moats Ty, Suffolk, IP14 2JX Tel: (01449) 612272.



# Skull C

Roger Robinson's  
crackers

## COMPETITION 124: "AUSTRIAN ARMIES"

Back in my dim and distant youth I (half-) remember learning a poem in which the words of each line started with a different letter:

An Austrian army awfully arrayed  
Boldy, by battery, besieged Belgrade ...

All (!) you have to do is give the plot synopsis of a well-known sf or fantasy book in a series of six or more lines, in which each line's words start with a different letter. The letters don't need to be consecutive; the choice is up to you. The usual Fiver to the best entry. If you want you can submit as many entries as you like but only one per author, please.

## RESULTS OF COMPETITION 122: "HE(A)RD OF ELEPHANTS"

A slightly disappointing number of entries, but of a fairly high standard throughout. To give a flavour of the entries I give you the following small tale:

In the hypermaze of con venues a frustration of BSFA Administrators tried to organise a discussion between a motorola of cyberpunk authors and a clearing of Scientologists, but were foiled by a smear of honor fans and a discord of titers who preferred to watch a battle between a posy of triflids and a jaunt of tigers.

In spite of a brave try by John Ollis to influence the judges with "a shining of BSFA committee members", the prize goes to **Theo Ross** with (among others) a balance of turtlesdoves; a gentle of gargoyles and a snuggle of Nizgal. Close behind (sorry, but no cigar) were Wayne Stamford and Peter Redfarn.

## RESULTS OF "THE ULTIMATE" COMPETITION

A select few "ultimate Christmas presents" were suggested including The Ultimate Pot Plant for John Wyndham and A Lifetime Achievement Award for Lionel Fanthorpe (for services to entertainment), but the winner was **Steve Palmer** with the following:

I would give Gene Wolfe his very own personal labyrinth. It would be large, made of granite, and would be on several levels and he would be allowed to keep it at the bottom of his garden or on common land. I would give him this because the labyrinth would be so cunningly designed that he would become lost inside, possibly forever - and thus he would come to know the frustration that he has visited upon his legions of admirers over the last couple of decades.

Runners-up were **Marie & Peter Rodgers** with:

A Pack of Three Mars Bars for Kim Stanley Robinson (for a pack of Marathon Bars, if we can find some not called Snickers) or Your First Weather Kit from the Early Learning Centre.

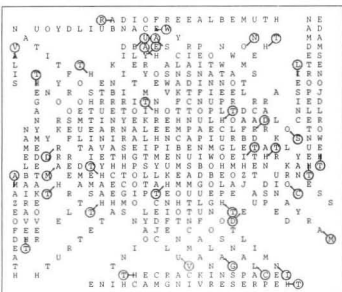
Each receives a copy of David Pringle's *Ultimate Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, courtesy of **Carlton Books**.

## RESULTS OF COMPETITION 123: "DICK IN A HAYSTACK"

As I expected there were a large number of entries, but only five of you got all 38 titles. Videos of *Screamers* - courtesy of **Columbia Tri-Star Video** - go to **Barbara Davies**, **John A. Spencer** and **A. Thomas**, with £5 book tokens for **Nigel Parsons** and **Paul Billinger**. There were also five who each missed one title, so if **Dave R** had spotted *Deus Irae*, **Paddy C** a *Scanner Darkly*, **Sue J** and **Joseph N** *Solar Lottery* and **Jim S** *Vulcan's Hammer* we'd have had to use a bigger hat for the draw.

Here's the solution:

In Milton Lumpy Territory	The Preserving Machine	New Wave For Last Year	Galactic Pot Healer
Class Of The Alphane Moon	The Gensymatic Takeover	A Handful Of Darkness	The Divine Invasion
The Primevalite Truth	The Permutative Truth	Counter-clock World	The World Jones Made
The Game Players Of Titan	The Uneloped Man	Radio Free Alchemuth	The Cosmic Pappets



Designed by Matthew S. 10.10.1997 © Chris Tatham 1997

Martian Time Slip  
The Crack In Space  
Mary And The Giant  
The Broken Bubble  
The Man Who Japed  
Time Out Of Joint  
The Variable Man  
A Scanner Darkly  
Vulcan's Hammer  
We Can Build You  
Dr Blossomby  
The Golden Man  
Solar Lottery  
A Maze Of Death  
The Simulacrum  
Exp In The Sky  
Dr Futurity  
The Zap Gun  
Deus Irae  
Lies Inc  
Valis  
Libik

PRIZE  
CROSSWORD  
See page 13

# Big Butt Aleph

dribbles on the news

• **GOOD MORNING VIETNAM!** Who said accountants were boring? BSFA Treasurer **Elizabeth Billinger** and Membership (sic) Secretary and full-time husband **Paul Billinger** recently took a relaxing winter break from their ledgers and databases by swanning up the Mekong and getting held up at gunpoint in Cambodia. Several irate BSFA members (whose names, curiously enough, all begin with the letters G to M) are helping the Khmer Rouge with their enquiries.

• **THE SHEEP FROM BRAZIL, SCOTLAND** The doing of a Scottish sheep - how could they be? - caused much media discussion back in February, but Aleph was less than amused when he heard why the animal was called "Dolph". It was cloned from mammary tissue, and therefore the elite geneticists named it ... yes, Ms Parton, the well-known top-heavy country singer.

This is what scientists have instead of humour, apparently.

• **BLOODY STUDENTS** An exchange during the 5th March edition of University Challenge ran as follows:

Paxo: "Published in 1996, The Unseen University ..."

Smart-arse (Girton, interrupting too early): "The city of Ankh-Morpork?"

Paxo, sneeringly: "The Unseen University Challenge quiz book is based on the works of which author?"

Unwisely student (Queen's, Belfast): "Er ... the Marquis de Sade?"

Ahem: surely that's The Obscene University Challenge? An understandable confusion, though we suspect there's some exaggeration in the reports that for his next book - rumoured to be the fabled 130 Days of Polydipsitis - Mr Pratchett will be holding branding sessions in Waterstone's bookshops around the country.

Quizbook author **Dave Langford** swooned and commented: "Fulfilled at last."

• **MY SECRET LIFE** By day, she was just another fantasy writer churning out the trilogies. But at night, she shrugged off this humdrum occupation and became ... a fantasy writer! Unattributable rumour suggests that **Robin Hobb** and **Megan Lindholm** may not be unconnected ...

• **HUBBLE TROUBLE** As well as bugging up *Crash* last issue and consigning a large number of mailings to a black hole not too far from Guildford, BSFA gremlins mangled Aleph's punctuation about Hubble's figure being a "source of constant controversy". See, the figure is a constant and thus has to be the source of controversy about constants. Oh, please yourself. In a similar vein we recall obituaries of the quantum physicist whose contribution to the field was unmeasurable, the seismologist with a shaky reputation, and a geneticist whose results no one could reproduce.

• **SHATNER STINKS** - **OFFICIAL** Alleged actor and author **William Shatner** was sprayed by a skunk recently after running it over. Or was it a critic? Anyway, after rining 999 (sic) and being told to go away - it's for emergencies, Cap'n - he recalled that one way to reduce the smell was tomato juice. He proceeded to lather himself with 'gallons of the stuff' (which we must assume he carries in his car, just in case). Paramedics turned up, and ran over screaming "You're bleeding, lie down!" Shatner said, "Then they smelted me, so I must be true."

This was in the *Daily Mirror* of 11 March, so it must be true.

• **FORREST DUMP** Aleph was overcome with excitement and gratitude on learning of the plans to exhume the "Perry Rhodan" series in America. Rather than here, that is. First inflicted on the US by **Forrest Ackerman** (along with "So-Fi"), the monthly German skiffy series - now 35 years old - will relaunch with issue 1,800. But rumour suggests they're having trouble finding translators who can cope.

• **STRAW ALIENS** Aleph enjoyed **Steve Palmer's** list of controversial things (see page 10), but thinks he missed the obvious:

11. Vector doesn't have enough editors.

12. Matrix has too many.

[You're fired. - Chris]

the well-padded matrix is sent in to bat on an acorn #5000, hit for six by various bits of software (notably that great all-around zap), sledged outwards by an hp laserjet 5l, beautifully cover-driven by sdc copyright, dropped in the pits (oops!) by bramley mailing services, sent to the pavilion by the royal mail, and jeered at on the replay by you

-matrix 124- soundtracked by stina nordestran, nick cave, michael spottel, bert otto, england impinged in new zealand, eels, john cale (c-pairs 1919-), kiss germano, mouth music, beck, werral football, the velvet underground, xavier alvarez, joe jackson, the beach boys, and fins raddiffe r-p-p

— "I don't believe in an interventionist god"