

matrix

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The News Magazine of the
British Science Fiction Association

Issue 127

September / October 1997

politics and sf

po'itics *n. pl. (also treated as **sing.**).* Science and art of government; political **affairs** or life (*politics is a **dirty business***); political **principles** (*what are his politics?; the politics of the decision is **not clear***); **not practical** ~, (1) **not likely** enough to be worth discussing, (2) liable to meet **practical difficulties**.

ken macleod

libertarianism, the loony left and the secrets of the illuminati

ian watson

from the mouth of the oracle

stephen palmer

didn't vote. why?

david curl

science fiction after socialism

— PLUS —

eric brown

how the web was spun

john jarrold

gives the clarke award judges a good kicking

paul kincaid

kicks back

Hugo Results . . Shakespeare's Fantasy Films . . Collecting Books . . Butler & Cox on Burroughs . . Letters

matrix

the news magazine of the



British Science Fiction Association

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Friday 10 October 1997

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all uncredited text,
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to me weekly

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Media

Artwork (page 16)

Logo

Photography

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Sue Thomas Wins The Lottery

... well, nearly. **Sue Thomas**, author of the Clarke-Award nominated *Correspondence* and Creative Writing course leader at Nottingham Trent University, has received a National Lottery grant of £356,621 towards developing an international Internet writing project. The money, awarded over a three-year period under the Arts Council of England's 'Arts For Everyone' scheme, will set up and run the 'Race' International Online Writing Community in association with the Broadway Media Centre in Nottingham and East Midlands Arts Board. Sue and her colleagues hope to "make this one of the most significant UK-based Internet communities yet devised". *Sf* will feature, and she hopes that BSFA members will be actively involved.

Involvement of young people will be encouraged by liaisons with schools, colleges and libraries, and they aim to ensure that every area of the reading and writing community in the East Midlands has some input into the project. Features will include: a custom-built real-time collaborative virtual community; • international writers' groups; • international readers' groups; • three email writers-in-residence; • one email reader-in-residence; • online events, performances, readings and open days; • competitions for innovative net-based writing.

Individual projects will include 'Many Lives', an "ever-growing archive of diaries and reflections",

and 'Kids on the Net', selected writings by East Midlands schoolchildren.

IF YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED

... contact sue.thomas@ntu.ac.uk

• After *Correspondence* and *Water*, Sue has just finished her third novel, *THE [+NET+]* OF *DESIRE*, and it's now in the clutches of her agent Sara Fisher at A. M. Heath. Sue says it "takes place in the unbodied realm of text-based virtuality", and you can preview it by telnetting to lambda.moo.mud.mud.org8888 and visiting its virtual location #87887.

• See also 'Scribble, Scribble, Scribble' on page 5.

SFF Bids For Wyndham Archive

THE ARCHIVE OF John Wyndham is up for sale, and the Science Fiction Foundation Collection, based at Liverpool University, is trying to raise money to purchase it. The archive, currently contained in two large and one smaller trunks, includes items such as:

- two unpublished *sf* novels, including an uncompleted sequel to *The Midwich Cuckoos*, and four unpublished mystery novels;
- holograph manuscripts of *The Day of the Triffids* and *The Broken Wakes*;
- corrected typescripts and proofs of *The Chrysalids*, *The Midwich Cuckoos* and other novels;
- playscripts and radio / tv scripts;
- correspondence with publishers from 1931 onwards, taped communications with his brother, Vivian Beynon Harris, and over 350 letters from Wyndham to his wife written between 1939-1945;

An application has been made for Heritage Lottery funding, but since the scheme requires a matching commitment from the applicant the SFF is asking for support from the *sf* and fantasy community. To this end SFF Patron Arthur C.

Clarke has given his backing to the appeal, and says: "The Wyndham archive is one of the most important records in British *sf* and it is vital that it is acquired by the library to which it really ought to belong."

Support has also been given by Brian Aldiss and this year's World Fantasy Convention, being held in London, which is donating a proportion of the proceeds from the WFC Raffle to the Wyndham Appeal. Donations to the raffle are welcome, including signed books, proofs, T-shirts, posters, memorabilia and other collectable items. Cash donations and pledges are also welcome. In the event of the bid being successful any excess money raised will first go towards preservation and cataloguing of the Wyndham Archive, and thence towards conservation, cataloguing and purchase of further material for the SFF Collection. □

• If you would like to support the Wyndham Appeal or can donate raffle prizes please contact Jo Fletcher, 24 Pearl Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 4QZ, or Andy Sawyer, SF Foundation Collection, University of Liverpool Library, PO Box 123, Liverpool, L69 3DA.

1997 Hugo Awards



— Best Novel —

Kim Stanley Robinson *Blue Mars*

— Best Novella —

George R. R. Martin "Blood of the Dragon"

— Best Novelette —

Bruce Sterling "Bicycle Repairman"

— Best Short Story —

Connie Willis

"The Soul Selects Her Own Society ..."

— Best Non-Fiction Book —

L. Sprague de Camp *Time & Chance*

— Best Dramatic Presentation —

Babylon 5: "Severed Dreams"

— Best Professional Editor —

Gardner Dozois

— Best Professional Artist —

Bob Eggleton

— Best Semiprozine —

Locus

— Best Fanzine —

Mimosa

— Best Fan Writer —

Dave Langford

— Best Fan Artist —

William Rotsler

The Hugos were presented in a crowded ceremony at this year's Worldcon in Texas on the evening of Saturday 30 August; the awards themselves were the traditional rocketship on a base in the shape of Texas. The host was local *sf* writer Neal Barrett Jr, and presenters included Pat Cadigan and Robert Silverberg.

The John W. Campbell Award, sponsored by Dell Books and given for the best new writer of 1995/96, went to Michael A. Burstein. The Japanese Seiun Awards – the 'Japanese Hugos' – went to Robert J. Sawyer for *End of an Era* and Greg Bear's 'Heads'. The First Fandom Award was won by Hal Clement, and the Big Heart Award went to John L. Coker III.

• See *Matrix* 125 for the full Hugo shortlists.

IMPORTANT NOTICE • SUBSCRIPTIONS

Sadly, for the first time in over three years – since April 1994, in fact – we've had to increase the subscription rates. In that time postal rates and printing costs have risen considerably, and while we've made great – and successful – efforts to reduce costs, a small increase is now essential. From September the annual subscription will rise by £1 to £19, with other rates rising commensurately as below.

With this mailing you should find a new standing order mandate. A standing order saves you money and hassle, so if you wish to use this facility fill in the form as instructed. If you already have a standing order arrangement please fill in the form too!

— The New Rates —

Standard membership: £19 per year

Unwaged (proof required): £13

Life membership: £190

Europe: £24.50

US: \$37 surface, \$45 airmail

Elsewhere: £24.50 surface, £30 airmail

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

NORMAN BESWICK, one of the BSFA's longest-serving and finest reviewers, is suffering from terminal prostate cancer. Letters and fanzines would enliven his last months: send to 21 Churchill Road, Church Stretton, Shropshire, SY6 6AE.

STAR WOLF WHISTLES FOR DEAL For the last four years David Gerrold has been trying to get his *Star Wolf* tv series off the ground. Four distributors are currently showing interest but no deals have been finalised. At the Texas Worldcon he said that it definitely won't be on the Sci-Fi channel, however: he had been in prolonged talks with them but had broken off negotiations when it emerged that the channel would only buy *Star Wolf* if it couldn't sign up a different show, and was deliberately prolonging negotiations. Meanwhile, Gerrold has finished a third *Star Wolf* novel, *Blood and Fire*, but it won't be out for some time. He's also a third of the way through the fifth novel in his 'Chtor' series; he expects the sequence to eventually comprise seven books.

SF HAKU COMPETITION Present haku magazine is running a 'SoFaku' contest for small-but-perfectly-formed sf poems. The winner gets £50 with £10 each for up to 20 runners-up, and there's an entry fee of £1 per haku (payable to 'Haku Presence'). Judges are **Steve Sneyd** and **Stuart Quince** and the closing date is 30 November 1997.

• Form: no titles, maximum of four lines [Sf: Haku should have three lines and 17 syllables. — Chris]. • Content: some reference or context, however obscure. (Quasi-) present tense. • Entry format: Two copies typed on A4 paper, as many haku as you like per page, including name and address of author on one copy only. • Send to: Haku Presence, 12 Grovehall Avenue, Leeds, LS11 7EX.

RHODAN RIDES AGAIN As teased by Aleph back in March, 'Perry Rhodan', the long-running German space opera, is set for a comeback in the US. At the recent Texas Worldcon, Vector Enterprises (no relation) unveiled its first issue: it's in magazine format and costs \$1.95. Initially monthly, Vector hopes to move to a weekly schedule, and has plans for extensive tie-ins and merchandise, including T-shirts, posters, music CDs, and computer games.

TERRY WILDER has been resident in Germany for some years, but she's announced that she's returning to her native New Zealand in October rather than next year as planned; her arthritis is exacerbated by German winters, so she's decided to give this one a miss. She was particularly pleased to find that her new New Zealand passport is bilingual in English and Maori, Cheryl is one-quarter Maori herself.

KEN BULMER is now out of hospital following his stroke, and is recovering in a nursing home. "His right side was affected and his speech is slurred," says Vieve Clarke, "but mentally he seems OK." Ian Gunn, Australian cartoonist and co-writer with his wife Karen of the 1995 GUFF race to visit Interfection, is suffering from 'Metastatic Undifferentiated Carcinoma', but is responding well to treatment.

HEAD IN THE CLOUDS is a German fan-run non-commercial organisation printing and distributing colour and B&W postcards, many sf-related. They welcome submissions and — if it's suitable — will print up your artwork at their expense, sending you 50 cards for your own use. Most postcards cost 1DM and they'll also swap cards for fanzines. Send an IRC for the nicely-produced newsletter to: Uwe Janssen, Neusiedlerweg 30, 26125 Oldenburg, Germany.

ALAN BUDRYS is now a consulting editor at US sf imprint Baen Books. **COLIN GREENLAND** will be appearing at the Taylor Room, Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool on Friday 7 November at 12pm, to make the presentation of his papers to the SF Foundation Collection. **CARLIN KIERMAN**, a contributor to the Sandman: Book of Dreams anthology, has joined *Visionary Tongue* magazine as a consultant editor.

ALL CHANGE AT BABYLON 5 Tracy Scoggins will replace **Claudia Christian** in the fifth series of *Babylon 5*, according to series creator **J. Michael Straczynski** at a press conference held at the Texas Worldcon. Christian's character Susan Ivanova was written out of the series after a 'minor controversy' involving the actress, and Scoggins will play the new character Captain Elizabeth Lochley. JMS also revealed that the Turner Network has commissioned a third *Babylon 5* tv movie, and that Warner Bros. is interested in a possible spin-off series, *Babylon 5: Crusade*. The fifth and final *Babylon 5* series is set to start transmission in the US in January 1998.

JOHN ELLIOT, deviser and writer with **Fred Hoyle** of the BBC tv series *A For Andromeda* (1961) and its sequel *The Andromeda Breakthrough* (1962), died on 14 August, aged 79. Elliot also co-wrote with Hoyle the later novelisations. The series, now regarded as classics, introduced a young Julie Christie to the tv audience. Elliot, who had a stronger influence on the second series (he also directed it) than the first, was a lifelong BBC producer who had previously created the BBC's first war documentary series *War in the Air* in 1955, and went on produce series like *The Moguls* and *The Troubadours* which also dealt with interactions of politics, business and science.

Web SF Zine Launched

INFINITY PLUS, launched on 1 September, is a web magazine intended to 'showcase the talents of a range of professional sf and fantasy authors'. Edited and managed by **Keith Brooke**, author of the 'Expatriate' series of sf novels, the first few editions promise contributions from Ian McDonald, Stephen Baxter, 'Jonathan Wylie', Ian R. MacLeod, Eric Brown, Dave Langford, Christopher Evans, Nicholas Royle, David Wingrove and many others. Brooke says that although *Infinity Plus* has a UK bias at present, as it grows he hopes it will become more international.

"During the day I develop multimedia teaching materials for a local higher education college," says Brooke. "Earlier this year I decided to make my technical skills available to one or two fellow writers — why create just another home page when we could do it collectively and so find a wider audience? So I contacted a few people. Their response encouraged me to cast the net wider... the most satisfying aspect to date has been the contributors' enthusiasm and the amount of new material they have written — features you will only find in *Infinity Plus*." □

• <http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/iplus>

Compuserve and sf

Internet provider Compuserve has launched 'SF Community', a web-based sf magazine featuring interviews with Arthur C. Clarke and William Gibson, tips for writers, and a feature called (embarrassingly) 'Blast Off' with live on-line debates with authors and 'personalities'. □

• <http://www.compuserve.co.uk/communities>

Orbit Merges With Legend

FOLLOWING the decision of Random House UK to pull out of genre sf publishing, their Legend imprint has been bought by Little, Brown for merging with Orbit. Legend authors will not be consulted before the deal. Stan Nicholls told *Ansible*, "I have three books with them myself and I never heard nothing about it.... Argument may well centre on whether the sale breaks the 'assignment' clause in contracts."

Publishing schedules are being revised, one victim of which is Ken MacLeod, whose *The Cassini Division* has been put back from September 97 to March 98. Earlier this year Legend's editor, John Jarrold, left to start up Simon & Schuster's new sf imprint Earthlight. □

Wheels Within Wheels...

GABRIEL KING was known to be a pseudonym of HarperCollins sf editor **Jane Johnson**, but it has now emerged that the name covers a collaboration between Johnson and former partner **M. John Harrison**. Their novel *The Wild Road* (Arrow: Nov) is a fantasy about cats.

"Initially the respective agents and Random House UK wanted to treat the book as a single-author work, and Mike was happy to step into the shadows because of his literary fiction career," said Johnson. However, they finally decided to reveal all, "partly because it makes a much better story that two people who lived together for ten years should break up and only then be able to write the novel they'd always intended." □

John Clute, Storyteller To The Gentry

JOHN CLUTE, co-editor of the *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* and the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, will soon be courting his fellow critics and readers with his first sf novel, *Applesed*. Tim Holman at Orbit has bought the book for 1998 publication.

It has had a fairly long gestation. Clute told *Matrix*: "A portion and outline of *Applesed* was put together a few years ago, pretty casually, as part of a pitch Paul Barnett and I had constructed for a proposed series. Nothing came of this series. Late last year I looked at the portion again, and thought it could stand alone, after jiggling." Barnett, under his nom de plume 'John Grant', was Clute's co-editor on the *Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, and has himself recently returned to sf with his 'Strider' series of space operas for Legend.

Clute continued: "It will be the kind of sf I myself have a particular sweet-tooth for — meta-physical space opera. I don't claim that what I do

will trump (say) Iain (Mmm) Banks or Dan Simmons or Vernor Vinge, but *Applesed* will have some of the same concerns: like how to remember the universe.

"The first novel I ever published — *The Disinheriting Party* in 1977 — had a lot of Fantasy of History in it, though duly framed as delusional. The first chapter of the next novel I wrote, or began to write, *The Widow Gloss*, appeared as "Sounding Eden" in *Other Edens* 11 in 1988. Some of the backstory which did not get into print then, except for a couple of incomprehensible sentences about genome surfers and the like, will slither into the new book."

Clute has also sold the non-fiction *The Book of End Times* to HarperPrism in the US. It's about the millennium, and the tv series of the same name. But of his return to tale-telling he says: "I turn back to fiction for love and money." □

Awards Miscellany

• **STURGEON AWARD** The 1997 Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award went to Nancy Kress's *The Flowers of Auli Prison* (Asimov's, Oct-Nov 1996).

• **SIDEWIDE AWARDS** Presented for alternative history at: LONG WORK: **Stephen Baxter** *Voyage*; SHORT WORK: **Walter Jon Williams** 'Foreign Devils'.

• **CHESELY AWARDS** The Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists presented the twelfth annual Chesley Awards — named after astronomical artist Chesley Bonestell — at the Texas Worldcon on Friday 29 August. ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT: **Don Maitz**, COVER (PAPERBACK) **Donato Giancola** for *Edgeheads* (Poi); COVER (HARDBACK) **Michael Whelan** for *The Golden Key* (DAW); COVER (MAGAZINE) **Bob Eggleton** for *F&SF*, May 1996; INTERIOR ILLUSTRATION **Todd Lockwood** for *Death Loves Me* by Tanya Lee; COLOUR WORK: **Rob Alexander** for *Sin's*

World; MONOCHROME WORK (UNPUBLISHED) **Davette Shands** for *Waiting For Anthony*; ART DIRECTOR **Jamie Warren** Yout, for *Bantam Spectra*; 3-DIMENSIONAL ART **Clayburn Moore** & **Frank Frazetta** for 'Princess' (a bronze).

• **LOCUS AWARDS** Locus magazine's annual awards went to: SF NOVEL **Kim Stanley Robinson** *Bleed Mars*; FANTASY NOVEL **George R. R. Martin** *A Game of Thrones*; DARK FANTASY NOVEL **Stephen King** *Desperation*; FIRST NOVEL (tie) **Sage Walker** *Whiteout* (Tor) and **Sarah Zerral** *Reclamation* (Warner Spectra); NOVELLE **Conia Willis** 'Believer' (Bantam Spectra); NOVELLETTE **Ursula K. Le Guin** 'Mountain Ways' (Asimov's Aug 1996); SHORT STORY 'Stone' (F&SF Sep 1996); NONFICTION **John Clute** *Look at the Evidence* (Serenity / Liverpool University Press); COLLECTION **Joe Haldeman** *None So Blind* (Morrow/Avalon); ANTHOLOGY **Gardner Dozois** *Year's Best SF 13* (Sn Martin's); EDITOR **Gardner Dozois**; ARTIST **MICHAEL**; MAGAZINE **Asimov's**.

Heinlein Scholar

7 JULY would have been **Robert A. Heinlein's** 90th birthday, and was marked by the appearance of the debut issue of *The Heinlein Journal*, a semi-scholarly magazine devoted to 'Heinlein studies'. Editor Bill Patterson told *Matrix*, "I am trying to stake out a territory for *The Heinlein Journal* that will make it acceptable to academics for publication credit and yet of general interest to the more intellectual levels of Heinlein fans".

Heinlein studies "can loosely be defined as popular and scholarly writings that see RAH as an American (or 20th century) writer primarily, rather than as a science fiction

or genre writer primarily — meaning that his ideas are seen as having a wider impact than on the field of sf."

The first 48-page issue contains articles "revising the myth of how Heinlein got into sf writing; tracing the influence of a turn-of-the-century new age philosopher on Heinlein; and establishing the importance of occult ideas in Heinlein's fiction". There are also research notes, a bibliography of recent contributions to RAH studies, and a round-table look at the writer's predictions up to 2000. □

• *The Heinlein Journal*, \$6.50 in US funds inc. P&P, available from Bill Patterson, 112 North Croft Avenue, No. 3, Los Angeles, CA 90048, USA.
Email: BPPAL22169@aol.com

Scribble, Scribble, Scribble

• **Ian McDonald's** next book is *Kirinya*, due from Gollancz in January 1998. It's a sequel — the first time he's done one — to *Chaga*, and continues the story of Dr Shepard (on board the Big Drum Object), Gaby McAsian (living within the Chaga zone in Africa in an experimental artistic community), and their daughter Serena.

• **Brian Aldiss** is now with Little, Brown, who will publish the speculative science book *White Mars*, co-written with mathematician **Roger Penrose** (and which includes a Martin Constitution), his autobiography *The Twinkling of an Eye*, and various re-issues.

• **Nigel Gaiman** — pictured right, and now resident in Minnesota — is working on his follow-up novel to *Neverwhere*, tentatively entitled *Time In The Smoke*. He says it "will not be a sequel to *Neverwhere* but will share one of the main characters: the city of London". He's also busy writing a film for Warner Bros, based on the 'Sandman' graphic novel *Death: The High Cost of Living*, and there's a possibility he'll also direct it. He makes his acting debut in Roger Avary's forthcoming biopic of Salvador Dali, and his first children's book, *The Day I Swapped My Dad For Two Goldfish*, was published by White Wolf in May.

• **Patricia Anthony**, author of the very fine Clarke-nominated *Happy Policeman*, has finished *Mercy's Children*, due next year from Ace.

• **Ian Watson** is about 70,000 words into his next novel, *Mokymen*, set now and in 215. Connected to it are the stories 'Secrets', a prequel novella just bought by Interzone, and 'Scars', scheduled for publication in Greg Egan's anthology *Synergy*, due later this year from White Wolf in the US. Keep your eye on Asimov's for the novella "The Shortest Night", set in Watson's Finnish-legend 'Mama' universe, and *F&SF* has "The Boy Who Lost an Hour, The Girl Who Lost Her Life", a short story about autism. And in Poland, Proszynski are publishing a customised story collection. Meanwhile, Ian writes about his new novel *Oracle* on page 18, and has a web site devoted to him, maintained by his biographer Douglas A. Mackey, at <http://www.kdsi.net/~dnackey/watson.htm>

• **Marion Zimmer Bradley & Diana Paxson's** *The Priestess of Avalon* has been bought by Viking for \$750,000. British and translation rights bring the total advance to more than \$3million.

• **Jon Courtenay Grimwood's** follow-up to the well-received *neoAddix is Lucifer's Dragon*, due in January from NEL/Hodder. Jon says "It's set in a Pacific-based, mafia-magic built replica of Venice and features a kidnapped Duke and a tribe of vampires...". There's also a *neoAddix* web site at <http://www.cisat35.demon.co.uk>.

• **Frank M. Robinson** is writing a 'thematic' sequel to his 1956 novel *The Paper*, called *Waiting... Meanwhile*, Francis Ford Coppola has bought the film rights to Robinson's Lambda-winning *The Dark Beyond the Stars*, and February 1998 sees Robinson and Lawrence Davidson's *Pulp Culture: The Art of Fiction Magazines*, a pictorial history of pulp magazines.

• **Freda Warrington's** *Dracula the Undead* is due from Penguin later this year, her contribution to the *Dracula* centenary.

• **Pat Cadigan** is working on *The Making of Lost in Space* for Titan, for which she's been interviewing the production team at Shepperton Studios, and has finished *Bureau*, her first novel since 1994's *Clarke Winner* for its due from Voyager in 1998.

• **Storm Constantine** has delivered the final volume of the 'Griogir' trilogy, *Stealing Sacred Fire*, to Penguin. Meanwhile, she's working with **Debbie Binsted** on *The Inward Revolution*: "A manual on personality management for the desperately unhinged".

• **Graham Joyce** is working on *Stormwatcher* — "Nothing to do with Ms Constantine's legs", he says. It should be released next year, while Graham is hoping for legend of good behavior sometime around 2024.

• **William Barton & Michael Capobianco** have finished *White Light* for Avon.

• **Eric Brown** has been busy, on top of his work for the 'Web' series of children's sf books (see page 20). He's currently working on his next novel, working title *Mercy of Silence*, and has about a dozen original tales appearing in various anthologies and magazines in the next few months, including *Interzone*, *Aboriginal SF*, Mike Ashley's *Sherlock Holmes* anthology for Raven, stories in the Orion 'Quids For Kids' series... not to mention a number of reprints and translations. A small collection of four stories is due out in France in September, and his novel *Engineman* is out in Germany later this year.

• **Philip G. Williamson's** final volume of his 'Enchantment's Edge' fantasy trilogy, *The Soul of the Orb*, is due from Hodder in January 1998: extracts are on his web site at <http://www.bseuk.com/POW/>. After that? He says, "After nine novels of the medieval fantastic I feel a reality shift coming on. I love the freedom of the medieval milieu, and expect to return at some point, but current plans are for some contemporary or near-contemporary fantasies set in our own world. Our own world? Yes, but warped. Not exactly as we think we know it". He's also working on the first in a series of children's novels, about some avocado pears who are actually beings from another dimension: "It's a very serious work".

• **Sheri S. Tepper** has delivered the first draft of *The Summer Snake* to Avon in the US.

• **Sue Thomas** has finished her third novel *THE [H]ETTER OF DESIRE*, now in the clutches of her agent Sara Fisher at A. M. Heath. You can preview it by telephoning to Lambda... no, mod... mod... csg8888 and visiting its virtual location #87887. She says it "cannot strictly be called science fiction, since everything in the novel can happen here and now on the Internet. It tells the story of several people who meet in cyberspace and get to know each other through a series of different virtual personas, and through them it explores the potential of a society inhabited by people who exist together without the trappings of real-life bodies. It looks at the deceptions which are inevitable in virtual society, and also at the erotic passions and warm friendships which arise so easily". You will talk about the novel at the 8th International Symposium of Electronic Arts in Chicago in September, and you can find more of her writing at <http://www.1notts.co.uk/~thomas>

• **Gollancz** have bought **Paul Kearney's** final two volumes in his *Monarchies of God* series, *The Second Empire* and *Ships From the West*.

• **Brian Stableford** is working on a "television (but subtle) erotic fantasy" called "O For a Fiery Gloom and Thee" for the forthcoming *Elbow and Tent Winding* anthology Sirens.

• **Robin Hobbs** (Megan Lindholm) has finished *Ship of Magister* HarperCollins, the first volume of a new trilogy set in her 'Assassin' world.

William Burroughs Dies

The American writer **William Burroughs** died in Kansas on 3 August following a heart attack. He was 83. Notorious during his life for a number of things — his drug addiction, his homosexuality in an intolerant time, his involvement in the CIA and the shooting of his wife during a William Tell-style party trick, the semi-pornographic nature of some of his writings — Burroughs exerted a considerable influence on sf during and after the 1960s, particularly on New Wave writers such as J. G. Ballard and Michael Moorcock. SF elements play a large part in many of his novels, which include *Nova Express* and *The Naked Lunch*.

• Full obituary and tribute: page 19

Earthlight Signs Bradbury

Ray Bradbury joins Lois McMaster Bujold at Simon & Schuster's new 'Earthlight' imprint, due for launch in April 1998. Quicker Than the Eye is Bradbury's first short-story collection for ten years, and will be issued as a paperback original. Imprint editor John Jarrold is very pleased with the signing: "Ray Bradbury was one of the first genre authors I ever read, back in the 60s, and I can't say how knocked out I am to be publishing him. His name is rightly known around the world". Jarrold has support from S&S's Managing Director, Nick Webb, who published Bradbury for Panther Books in the 60s: "It's thrilling to be associated with Ray Bradbury again. Like John I was turned on to sf by his strange and beautifully-written stories which I first read as a teenager. To find that he is writing as magically as ever is one of those happy discoveries that makes one feel that this is what publishing ought to be about."

• **Jane Welch** is in the second wave of Earthlight releases next summer with *The Lament of Abalone*, the first volume of a new fantasy trilogy. Jarrold says: "I had read Jane's earlier books, *The Runes of War* and its sequel, and got the same feeling as when I first read Robert Jordan for Orbit or Maggie Furey for Legend — Jane is a terrific writer, whose characters leap off the page. She's going to be one of the genre's biggest stars."

McAuley Wins Campbell

Interzone-associated writers continue to dominate the John W. Campbell Memorial Award, which this year went to Paul J. McAuley's *Fairland* — also the winner of last year's Clarke Award. The 1995 Campbell was won by Greg Egan's *Permutation City* and in 1996 it went to Stephen Baxter's *The Time Ships*. McAuley collected the award at a drug camp in Kansas, and told *Interzone*: "There was also a cheerleading summer course going on at the same time, a weird mix of an aerobics class and a Nuremberg rally. America continues to be one of the strangest places on Earth while professing total normality."

ISPF Pull Out Of Clarke

Following the death on 1 March of Dr Maurice Goldsmith, the International Science Fiction Foundation has decided to withdraw from the Arthur C. Clarke Award. The organisation was one of the founders of the Award and has usually supplied two of the six judges, alongside each two from the BSFA and the SF Foundation. Dr Goldsmith himself was one of the most frequent judges.

Negotiations are under way to find a replacement for the ISPF, organised by the Award Administrator, Paul Kincaid. In the meantime, the judges for this year's award, to be given early in 1998, are:

Representing the BSFA: **Tanya Brown**, formerly the Paperback Reviews Editor on *Vector* and currently developing the BSFA web site; and **Dr Andrew M. Butler**, Joint Features Editor of *Interzone* and now in his second year as a judge.

Representing the SF Foundation: **John Clute**, *Pilgrim Award* winner and co-editor of the *SF* and *Fantasy Encyclopedias*; and **Farah Mendlesohn**, Assistant Features Editor of *Foundation*.

• SF editor calls time on the Clarke Award: p24.

recent & forthcoming books

Gollancz

Including *Vista*, *Indigo*

- N. Lee Wood** *Faraday's Orphan's* (Vista: Jul; £5.99 pb) — Second novel from the Clarke-nominated author.
- Diana Wynne Jones** *A Sudden Wild Magic* (Vista: Jul; £5.99 pb) — > 191
- Rebecca Bradley** *Scorn's Lady* (Indigo: 28 Aug; £16.99 hb, £20pp) — Fantasy; sequel to: *Rebecca Bradley* *Lady in Gilt* (28 Aug; £5.99 pb, 288pp) — Fantasy; > 191
- Stephen Jones** (ed.) *Shadows Over Innsmouth* (Vista: 28 Aug (R 1994 US); £9.99 tp, 340pp ill.) — Anth. of horror stories inspired by H. P. Lovecraft. Contributors include Ramsey Campbell, Neil Gaiman, Lovecraft himself, D. F. Lewis, Kim Newman (first, once as by 'Jack Yeovil'), Dave Langford, Nicholas Royle, Michael Marshall Smith and others. Art by Dave Carson, Martin McKenna, and Jim Pitts.
- S. P. Somtow** *The Pavilion of Frozen Women* (Vista: 28 Aug; £5.99 pb, 271pp) — Coll. of horror/fantasy stories. > Nov 96
- Nicholas Royle** (ed.) *A Book of Two Halves* (Indigo: Aug; £5.99 pb) — Associational anth. of football stories.
- ★ **Paul J. McAuley** *Secret Harmonies* (Vista: Aug (R 1989); £5.99 pb) — Reissue of McAuley's second novel, published in the US as *Of the Fall* and co-winner of the Philip K. Dick Award. > Jun 90
- ★ **Joe R. Lansdale** *Bad Chili* (Oct; £9.99 tp, c256pp) — New *HP Collins* crime novel, with fantasy trimmings.
- Christopher Lee** *Tail, Dark and Gruesome* (Oct; £15.99 hb, c320pp) — Coinciding with the centenary of *Dracula*, the autobiography of the actor most associated with the Count.
- ★ **Paul J. McAuley** *The Invisible Country* (Vista: Sep; £5.99 pb) — Coll. of McAuley's shorts.
- Neil Ferguson** *English Weather* (Indigo: Sep; £5.99 pb) — Associational. 'Offers a moving and subtle view of late 20th century English life.' — *The Times*
- ★ **Paul J. McAuley** *Child of the River* (Oct; £16.99 hb, c320pp) — 'The First Book of Confluence.' McAuley's first novel since the Clarke Award-winning *Fairlyland* is a far-future tale set on Confluence, an artificial world on the edge of the galaxy.
- Christopher Whyte** *The Warlock of Strathmore* (Oct; £3.99 tp) — Historical fantasy about the discovery of a manuscript describing the life of a warlock born in the 1640s. Whyte lectures in

Scottish poetry at Glasgow University.

- ★ **Ian Watson** *Oracle* (Oct; Sep; £16.99 hb, 287pp) — Following *Hard Questions*, another fast-moving thriller. A Roman centurion is pitched forward in time by Oracle, a device to probe the past. He's picked up by Tom Ryan and his sister Mary who shelter the man, only to attract the attention of a journalist and an ex-IRA terrorist who used to be Mary's lover. Then the British security forces get involved, seemingly intent on killing them all.
- ★ **Tom Arden** *The Harlequin's Dance* (Oct; Sep; £16.99 hb, c448pp) — Fantasy. 'The First Book of the Orkney', a debut novel. It's set in an 18th century world of muskets and high society, and is described as being 'in the tradition of David Eddings'. Arden was born and grew up in Australia but now lives in Brighton and lectures in 18th century literature.
- Gregory Benford** *Across the Sea of Suns* (Vista: Sep (R 1985); £5.99 pb)
- Gillian Kemp** *The Romano God Spell Book* (Oct; £6.99 pb, c192pp) — Cast genuine gypsy spells with fruit, candles, plasticine, and string. And herbs — Kemp reads the tarot for Prunella Scales, so get the basil out.
- ★ **Stephen Jones & David Sutton** (eds.) *Dark Terrors 2* (Vista: Oct; £5.99 pb) — Horror anth.
- LeVar Burton** *Aftermath* (Vista: Oct; £5.99 pb) — Apocalyptic horror. 'along the lines of *The Stand*' according to Whoopi Goldberg, from the actor who plays La Forge in *Star Trek: Set* in the early years of the next century when the first black president is assassinated, there's a massive earthquake in the Midwest, and the US collapses into its second civil war. And... you guessed it — only one man can save the world, in this case a doctor who has produced a device which cures all diseases.
- Alan Moore** *Voices of the Fire* (Indigo: Oct; £5.99 pb) — Horror.
- ★ **Terry Pratchett & Stephen Briggs** *The Unseen Universe Day 1998* (Oct; £9.99 pb, c128pp, ill.) — It had to come. Illustrated by Paul Kidby, this features an exclusive eighth day in every week (Octeday), a useful map of Ankh-Morpork, and a guide to places of interest.
- ★ **Diana Wynne Jones** *Deep Secret* (Oct; £16.99 hb, c352pp) — Adult fantasy.
- Paul Kearney** *The Heretic Kings* (Vista: Oct; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.
- ★ **Terry Pratchett** *Jingo* (Nov; £16.99 pb, c280pp) — Pratchett's last book for Gollancz, the 21st Discworld novel. 'A new land has surfaced, and so have old leuds. And as two armies march, Commander Vimes has just a few hours to deal with a crime so big there's no law against it. It's called war. Discworld goes to war, with armies of sardines, warriors, fishermen, squid, and at least one very camp follower.'

Arrow

Including *Century*, *Hutchinson*, *Heinemann*

- Paul Strathern** *The Big Idea* (Arrow: Aug; £3.99 each, 96pp) — Series of pop-science books looking at major scientific turning points. Titles are *Einstein & Relativity*; *Newton & Gravity*; *Crick, Watson & DNA*; *Pythagoras & His Theorem*; *Turing & the Computer*; *Hawking & Black Holes*.
- N. E. George** *The Unlithic Millennium Companion* (Century: Sep; £9.99 tp, 288pp ill.)
- Charles Handy** *The Hungry Spirit* (Hutchinson: Oct; £12.99 hb, 288pp) — Non-fiction examining science and spirituality.
- John Evans** *God's Gift* (Arrow: Oct; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy thriller about an ancient book which involves two contemporary characters in its story. Likened to *Clive Barker*.
- Stephen Fry** *Autobiography* (Hutchinson: Oct; £16.99 hb, 320pp) — Fry's story, from 'a welter of expulsions, arrests and prison terms' to 'the humiliation and degradation of his notorious downward spiral into a career in comedy and acting.' And writing of novels.
- Stephen Fry** *Making History* (Arrow: Oct; £5.99 pb, 320pp) — Alternative history. A physicist waves quantum and causes the premature death of Hitler.
- ★ **Jan Hegland** *Into the Forest* (Century: Nov; £8.99 tp, 320pp) — Catastrophe story in which a pair of orphaned female teenagers attempt to construct new lives in a post-holocaust world, 'but they are forced to realise that "civilisation" is perhaps nothing more than a temporary condition, a fugue state the world has allowed us.' Hegland lives in a forest in California and teaches English and Creative Writing.
- ★ **Gabriel King** *The Wild Road* (Arrow: Nov; £5.99 pb, 608pp) — Animal fantasy about Tag, a young cat called on to participate in the greatest adventure in cat history: to save the Queen of the Cats from the Alchemist, who seeks to breed a Golden Cat. Also features an urban fox called Loves A Dustbin, the magpie One For Sorrow, and an escaped laboratory cat with an implant in her head. King's, in fact, a collaboration between M. John Harrison and his former partner Jane Harrison, the editorial director of the *Voyager* sci imprint, the publisher was unaware of this when they bought the book.

Orbit/Legend

Including *Little, Brown*

- Warning:** Due to the Legend/Orbit merger some of the information below may be unreliable.
- ★ **Ken MacLeod** *The Stone Canal* (Legend: 7 Aug; £5.99 tp, 322pp+20pp trailer) — MacLeod's second novel, a frame story for his first, *The Star Fraction*. Superb st. *Matrini's* book of the year in 1996, and unreservedly recommended. The trailer is an extract from his next novel, *The Cassini Division*, now put back to next Easter.
- ★ **Stephen Palmer** *Galax* (Orbit: Oct; £5.99 pb) — St. Palmer's second novel.
- L. E. Modesitt Jr.** *Fall of Angels* (Orbit: 4 Sep; £6.99 pb, 560pp) — Science fantasy, a new 'Redoux' novel. This was originally issued in simultaneous hb and pb last February, and it's now getting a second pb release.
- Haydn Middleton** *The Knight's Vengeance* (Little, Brown: Oct; 4 Sep; £16.99 hb, 281pp) — Third in the 'Mordred Cycle' of erotic Arthurian fantasies.
- ★ **Walter M. Miller Jr.** *St. Saint Leibowitz and the Horse Woman* (Orbit: 4 Sep; £16.99 hb, 403pp) — On his death in early 1996, Miller had only completed one novel: *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1959), perhaps the post-holocaust story. This is the long-planned (and log-awaited) sequel, and though it was unfinished on his death Miller authorised Terry Bisson to complete it, according to the acknowledgements Bisson's work was limited to an 'editorial contribution', so we can presumably assume that the text is nearly all Miller's.
- ★ **Walter M. Miller Jr.** *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (Orbit: 4 Sep (R 1959); £5.99 pb, 355pp) — The original novel gets a timely reissue. Recommended.
- Kate Elliott** *King's Dragon* (Oct; Sep; £15.99 hb, 544pp) — Epic fantasy, vol. 1 of 'Crown of Stars'.
- Nancy McKenzie** *The High Queen* (Legend: Oct; £5.99 pb, 448pp) — Arthurian fantasy continuing the story of *Guinevere* begun in *The Child Queen*.
- ★ **Terry Brooks** *Running With the Demon* (Legend: Oct; Sep; £16.99 hb, 608pp) — Fantasy creatures invade the small town of Hopewell, Illinois, culminating in a battle between light and darkness which must be resolved by the Fourth of July.
- ★ **John Brosnan** *Lights! Camera! Magic!* (Legend: Oct; £4.99 pb, 216pp) — Another volume in the humorous fantasy sequence begun in *Damned and Fancy*. Travis and the demon Jack are down on their luck, and decide to make a movie on the cheap by transporting a film crew to the fantasyland of Samella, where magic wands and barbarians are covered in more baby oil than Arnold Schwarzenegger. Harry Harrison tackled a similar theme in the splendidly daff *The Time Machine* (1968).
- Michael White** *Out There* (Legend: Oct; £15.99 hb, 304pp) — Rational non-fiction account of SETI, interstellar flight, and the possibilities of alien life.
- Paul Barnett** *Kaantalech* (Legend: Oct; Nov; £5.99 pb, 384pp) — Tasty space opera, second volume of the 'Strider Chronicles'.
- Elizabeth Moon** *Divided Allegiance* (Legend: Dec; £5.99 pb, 528pp) — Heroic fantasy, book two of 'The Deed of Paksenarron', in which Paks, former sheep-farmer's daughter and now a seasoned fighter, trains to be a magic-using paladin.

Key

pb = paperback; hb = hardback; tp = trade (large format) paperback; pp = extent ill.; illustrated; ed = edited; R (x) = reissue / reprint (first publication date)
 > x = review in *Vector* #x/date; GN = Graphic Novel; ab = AudioBook; YA = Young Adult
 col. = story collection (same author); anth. = anthology (different authors)
 ★ = Highlight (x) = Editor's choice; 1st = First UK edition
 Treat future dates with caution. All unquoted remarks by Chris Tarrant.
 Quoted comments are from publishers' material — caveat emptor.
 — Thanks to Michael J. Cross for his index: <http://www.ajckel.decon.co.uk/topofa.htm> —

Voyager

Including HarperCollins, Flamingo, Fontana



Janny Wurts *Fugitive Prince* (● 24 Jul; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp) — Fantasy, first volume of 'Alliance of Light'. [Inconcretely listed in Matrix 126]

Christopher Tolkien *The Peoples of Middle Earth* (Tolkien: Aug; £9.99 tp, 500pp) — Twelfth and final volume of 'The History of Middle Earth'

Sasha Miller *Ladylore* (● 4 Aug; £5.99 pb, 382pp) — Fantasy. Colorado-resident Miller has written shared-world fantasies (in Andre Norton's *Witch World*) but here creates her own, in which a monarch's daughter is named heir and son in a male-dominated realm. She is given an impossible quest to fetch a dragon's egg... and must also remain a virgin despite much temptation. 'Not for the prudish,' says Raymond E. Feist.

Stephen Molstad *Independence Day: Silent Zone* (● 18 Aug; £16.99 hb) — 'The authorised [sic] novel of the cover-up.'

Stephen Baxter *Voyage* (18 Aug; £5.99 pb) — Paperback of the Clarke Award-nominated alternative history of NASA.

● **Stephen Baxter** *Titan* (● 21 Aug; £16.99 hb, 580pp) — The NASA/ESA probe Cassini is scheduled to reach Saturn's moon Titan in 2004, and here Baxter postulates that it discovers evidence for ammonia-based life. NASA is moribund, and following a Challenger-type disaster grandmothers and astronaut Paula Benacerual are appointed to dismantle the Shuttle fleet. But she and a maverick JPL scientist instead retool the ageing Saturn, Apollo and Shuttle spacecraft with state-of-the-art technology, and, despite opposition from the military, a last-gasp manned mission to Titan is launched.

There's always been a dark and pessimistic undertow to Baxter's work, most visible perhaps in *The Time Ships*, but here it emerges fully. And it gives the book an astonishing power, both to move and to grip. The story is horrifically bleak, its view of humanity unrelentingly grim. But don't be put off: if you've ever been moved by pointless bravery and doomed, glorious, magnificent enterprises, ever lamented for what might have been, read this heartfelt, foolish novel. Despite some cavils about the final section, it's the editor's choice this issue.

Les Martin *The X-Files: Fresh Bones* (● Sep; £3.99 pb) — Novelisation.

Matt Groening *The Simpsons Companion* (HarperCollins: ● Sep; £14.99 hb, 160pp) — At July's BSFA committee meeting, there was much discussion of *The Simpsons* in Maureen's back garden; it's a fantasy. OK? This book, by one of the series' creators, gives an episode-by-episode account of the story, and points out a few jokes that even aficionados may have missed.

Elizabeth Hand *Millennium #1: The Frenchman*

(● 15 Sep; £5.99 pb, 213pp+35pp trailer) — Tie-in

to the Chris Carter series, retitled from 2000. Look

at the spine: *Millennium — The Frenchman* —

Created by Chris Carter. No mention of the poor

author. In recompense, here's a picture of her.

The trailer is an extract from *Gehenna*, by Lewis

Gannett.

Heien Saul *Phobias* (HarperCollins: ● Sep; £5.99

pb, 320pp) — Non-fiction account of the latest

scientific thinking.

J. G. Ballard *Cocaine Nights* (Flamingo: Sep; £5.99

pb, 335pp) — Detective novel.

Kate Wilhelm *For the Defence* (HarperCollins: ●

Sep; £5.99 pb, 352pp) — Associational courtroom

thriller.

Dale Brown *Fatal Terrain* (HarperCollins: ● Sep; £16.99

hb, 480pp) — Technothriller about a

US-China conflict.

J. R. R. Tolkien *The Hobbit* (Tolkien: Sep; £20.00 hb, 304pp ill.) — New edition, illustrated by

Alan Lee, to mark the book's 60th anniversary. The price rises to £25.00 on 1 Jan 98. Also

available in November is a collection of six posters from the book, at £12.99.

Julian May *Sky Trillium* (1 Sep; £5.99 pb) — Conclusion of the 'Trillium' saga.

Kathryn S. Starbuck *The House on the Hill* (● 1 Sep; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy. A woman returns

to her childhood home, a little-bit house which contains entrances to fantasy lands. Starbuck is

married to Raymond E. Feist and lives in San Diego.



Elizabeth Hand

Corgi

Including Bantam, Doubleday



David Gemmell *Winter Warriors* (9 Oct; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, a 'Drenai' novel.

David Gemmell *Echoes of the Great Song* (Doubleday: ● 9 Oct; £15.99 hb) — Fantasy. Prophecies of the end of the world come true: 'tidal waves washed the planet, and a new ice age dawned. The few survivors of a once great empire struggled to rebuild against the rising barbarian tide. Then two moons appear in the skies, unleashing a terrible evil...'.

● **Jeff Noon** *Nymphomaniac* (Doubleday: ● 9 Oct; £15.99 hb) — A new novel, set in the surreal near-future Manchester of Pollen and the Clarke-winning Vurt. The city here is totally dominated by the lottery game 'Domino Bones' and the company behind it, which has the 'nymphomaniac', the secret knowledge of the game's mechanics, which allows information to make love to itself and produce 'baby data'. A group of maths students study the odds and begin a search for the hidden mysteries behind the mania.

● **Jeff Noon** *Automated Alice* (9 Oct; £5.99 pb) — A sequel — sort of — to Carroll's 'Alice' books, concerning her adventures in the fabulous future. > 193

Kristine Kathryn Rusch *Star Wars: The New Rebellion* (Bantam: 9 Oct; £4.99 pb)

Philip K. Dick *Our Friends From Frolix 8* (15 Sep (R 1970); £5.99 pb) — Fine (though our Dick expert Andy Butler disagrees) late-period Dick, one of the last 'normal' sci-fi novels he wrote. > Feb 76

● **Kim Stanley Robinson** *Icehenge* (15 Sep (R 1984); £5.99 pb) — An enigmatic artifact is found on Pluto. One of KSR's earliest explorations of the unreliability of history, and recommended.

● **Kim Stanley Robinson** *Antarctica* (● 18 Sep; £16.99 hb) — Near-future eco-thriller. A radical environmentalist group defends Antarctica's claim to be the last wilderness. Robinson's first novel since his acclaimed 'Mars' trilogy.

● **John Baxter** *Stanley Kubrick: A Biography* (HarperCollins: ● Oct; £20.00 hb, 352pp ill.) — First biography (unauthorised, of course) of the reclusive maker of 2001, A Clockwork Orange, Dr Strangelove and the possibly forthcoming — though much delayed — *A.I.* and *Superfests Last All Summer Long*. Baxter, an Australian resident in London, is steeped in sci-fi — his novels include *The Hermes Fall* (1978), an asteroid hits Earth late — and also wrote an unauthorised biography of Stephen Spielberg.

Various *Realms of Tolkien* (Tolkien: ● Oct; £12.99 tp, 144pp ill.) — 'Images of Middle Earth' from artists including Alan Lee, John Howe, Ted Nasmith, Inger Edelfeldt, plus amateur illustrators.

Muriel Gray *Furnace* (HarperCollins: ● Oct; £16.99 hb, 400pp) — Alchemical horror from the author of *The Trickster*.

● **Daniel Easterman** *K* (HarperCollins: ● Oct; £16.99 hb, 336pp) — Alternative-history from a well-known thriller writer: 'It is 1940 and British secret agent John Ridgeford has been smuggled, his mission deadly secret, into the US, a country he thought he knew. It's a country where Charles Lindbergh is President, where public lynchings are condoned, where Jews, Blacks, Communists are branded with the letter K. A country where K stands for Kike, and for Ku Klux Klan.' Irish-born Easterman lectured at Newcastle University for several years before becoming a full-time writer.

● **Tom Baker** *Who on Earth is Tom Baker?* (HarperCollins: ● Oct; £18.00 hb, 288pp ill.) — Autobiography of the best *Dr Who* actor, 'tumbulous and gloriously indiscreet'

● **Doris Lessing** *Walking in the Shade* (HarperCollins: ● Oct; £20.00 hb, 416pp) — Second volume of Lessing's autobiography, covering her life in London in the 50s.

● **George R. R. Martin** *A Game of Thrones* (6 Oct; £5.99 pb) — First volume of the 'Song of Ice and Fire' fantasy series. > 192 The second is:

● **George R. R. Martin** *A Clash of Kings* (● 6 Oct; £16.99 hb, 672pp) — A comet over the Sunset Lands feeds of murder, but Robb Stark, a crown on his young head, will be lucky to survive.

● **Peter Atkins** *Big Thunder* (HarperCollins: ● 13 Oct; £16.99 hb, 273pp) — Delayed from Apr 96, then Feb 97, then Jul 97. And it's finally here. A Kim Newman-esque sounding tale concerning Valentine Dyson, vicious doctored avenger of the 1930's pulp magazine *Strange Thrills*, who materialises in present-day Manhattan when his creator falls into a coma after a car crash. He saves a girl from a mugger who he then tortures to death, 'the while delivering a lecture on the nature of the Universe, of reality before the Fall, the true significance of the Alchemists' Great Work — and the approaching reconciliation of the living with the dead.' Dyson goes on to make a film, 'Big Thunder', and extract vengeance on its viewers. Liverpool-born (now Los Angeles resident) Atkins wrote the screenplays for three of the four *Heilraiser* films, and this is his second novel: the first was *Mommstar*.

● **Sharon Shinn** *Jovah's Angel* (20 Oct; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy about religion and faith from a rising star of American romantic fantasy, much praised for her style.

● **Graham Edwards** *Dragonframe* (● 21 Oct; £5.99 pb) — Dragon fantasy, third in the series; the first, *Dragonchorn*, is now being made into an animated feature film by Dandelion Films.

Edwards was born in Somerset and now lives in Nottingham.

[Unknown] *Millennium #2: Gehenna* (● Oct; £5.99 pb)

● **Everett Owens** *The X-Files #7: Control* (● Oct; £3.99 pb) — Novelisation.

● **Elizabeth Hand** *Glimmering* (● 3 Nov; £5.99 pb) — Erotic millennial sf from the much-praised author of *Waking the Moon*. 'It is 1999. The Last Days, say some. The First, claim others. The climate is clearly warming, and underground cults are preparing for the frenzy of all frenzies. Jack Finnegan, the world's last literary publisher, is dying of AIDS. Trip Marlowe, VR star, is dying from too many drugs. Marz Candery is waiting to bear Trip's child, and Leonard Thorne is coming to town with his life-restoring elixir. Trippy sex, new age revivals and the hottest hallucinogens the imagination can buy — it must be the time of the Glimmering.' Hand lives in Maine, which she 'swears is getting hotter'.

● **Douglas E. Winter** (ed.) *Millennium* (17 Nov; £5.99 pb) — Linked stories set in various decades of the 20th century, with a framing novella by Clive Barker.

● **Stan Nicholls** *Dark Skies: The Awakening* (Bantam: ● 9 Oct; £4.99 pb) — Tie-in to the paranoiac tv series. '1961. Young and idealistic, John Loengard and Kimberley Sayers come to Washington DC to share in Kennedy's vision of a New Frontier. Their dream is shattered when they learn what lies behind the glamour — a dark, chilling mystery, a conspiracy with the Roswell incident at its heart.'

● **Anne McCaffrey** *Freedom's Choice* (9 Oct; £5.99 pb) — Second in the 'Cattani' sequence.

● **Terry Pratchett** *Soul Music* (8 Nov; £5.99 tp) — An illustrated edition. > Aug 94, Sum 95

● **Terry Pratchett** *Hogfather* (8 Nov; £5.99 pb) — The Discworld's Santa goes missing. Guess who's called in to replace him? HO HO HO... Also in ab at £8.50. > 192

● **Rand & Robin Miller** *Myth II: The Book of Ti'An* (9 Nov; £5.99 pb) — Second novelisation of the computer game, written by its creators. The confusingly-numbered prequel to the game is: *Rand & Robin Miller* *Myth I: The Book of D'NI* (Bantam: ● 8 Nov; £17.99 hb)

● **Anne McCaffrey** *The Master Harper of Pern* (Bantam: ● 8 Nov; £15.99 hb)

● **Terry Pratchett** *Wyrd Sisters* (11 Dec; £3.99 tp) — An illustrated edition. > Feb 89

● **Timothy Zahn** *Star Wars: The Specter of the Past* (Bantam: ● 11 Dec; £12.99 hb)

● **George Lucas** & **Chris Claremont** *Shadow Dawn* (Bantam: 11 Dec; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, sequel to *Shadow Moon*.

● **Robert Rankin** *The Brentford Chainsaw Massacre* (Doubleday: ● 11 Dec; £16.99 hb) — Sci-fi comedy, in which Jesus is cloned from blood on the Turin Shroud.

Orion



Including Millennium, Phoenix, Weidenfeld, Dent, Everyman, Dolphin

- Timothy Ferris** *The Whole Shebang: A State-of-the-Universe(s) Report* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: 1 Sep; £20.00 hb, 416pp) — Upsum of current astronomical thinking.
- ★ **Egan Evan** *Diagnosis* (15 Sep; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 283pp+10pp appx) — At last, a new Egan novel. By the end of the 30th century humanity has spread out into the universe and split into three: flesh and blood humans, 'gleisner' robots embodying individual humans, and 'poisses', supercomputers containing billions of human minds. And that's all I can tell you. . . .
- Peter James** *The Truth* (10 Sep; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 576pp) — Horror novel from the author of *The Alchemist*, in which Aleister Crowley's mentor Emil Sarotini appears to have returned from the dead and is paying a woman to have his surrogate child.
- Kenneth F. Kiple** (ed.) *Plague, Pox and Pestilence* (Weidenfeld: 1 Sep; £25.00 hb, 176pp ill.) — Pictorial history of diseases (sounds yummy) and how they are spread.
- Roger MacBride** *Allen Isaac Asimov's Utopia* (Sep; £4.99 pb) — > Nov 96
- Ellen Datlow** (ed.) *Lethal Kisses* (Sep; £5.99 pb) — Anth. of stories on jealousy and revenge.
- Paul M. Sammon** *Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner* (Sep; £9.99 pb, 442pp ill.) > 194
- Various Science Masters** (Sep; £9.99 ab, 2x30m+book) — Audio plus full text versions of a rather fine pop science series, and very good value. Titles are *Richard Dawkins River Out of Eden*, *Richard Leakey The Origin of Humankind*, *John D. Barrow The Origin of the Universe*, *Paul Davis The Last Three Minutes*, *Ian Stewart Nature's Numbers* and *Daniel C. Dennett Kinds of Minds*.
- Mary Norton** *The Borrowers Omnibus* (Sep; £14.99 hb, 640pp ill.) — Contains all four 'Borrowers' books; Orion are also issuing them singly at £3.99 each, all illustrated by Diane Stanley. The *Fantasy Encyclopedia* describes *The Borrowers* as 'one of the modern classics of children's fantasy', and this is being reissued to tie in with a new feature film version due in Oct; there's previously been a 1992 BBC tv series and a 1973 tv movie. Norton, who died in 1992, also wrote *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*.
- Lawrence Wright** *Twins, Genes and Human Nature* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: 1 Sep; £12.99 hb, 176pp) — Non-fiction about recent research into twins.
- Philip Paton** *Travels in Dreamland* (1 Sep; £16.99 hb, 320pp ill.) — Subtitled 'The Secret History of Area 51', a sceptical examination of the location's real life as a test site for advanced aircraft and its attraction to the Fox Mulders of the world, who believe it harbours alien remains and spacecraft. [Apologies for omitting the author last time.]
- ★ **James Buxton** *Pity* (1 Oct; £16.99 hb, 352pp) — Follow-up to the extremely effective dark fantasy *The Wishing Tree*. A haunted-house story set in Bermondsey. Delayed from June.
- Jostein Gaarder** *Vita Brevis* (Phoenix: 1 Oct; £9.99 hb, 128pp) — Gaarder is a Norwegian philosopher and the author of the impressive fantasy *Sophie's World*, and this short novel concerns a manuscript purporting to be a letter to St Augustine from Florida Amelia, the woman he renounced for chastity ("But not yet," as he famously said).
- ★ **Eric Brown** *Untouchable* (Dolphin: 1 Oct; £9.99 hb, £3.50 pb, 112pp) — Third in a series of six linked YA novels using the World Wide Web as a theme. In 2027 the life of an Untouchable in New Delhi is not much different from today. But when Ana's brother is kidnapped, it's the Web that holds the secret of what's happened to him. The fourth volume is:
- ★ **Graham Joyce** *Spiderville* (Dolphin: 1 Oct; £9.99 hb, £3.50 pb, 112pp) — 'Schooltime is Webster' — but Conrad finds he is barred from one of the education sites on the Web. Just what is he going to do, and can he stop it?
- ★ **Michael Moorcock** *Stormbringer* (Oct; £6.99 pb)
- Hugh McDaid** & **David Oliver** *Robot Warriors* (1 Oct; £17.99 hb, 208pp ill.) — Non-fiction about the secret technology of robot attack, including much recently-declassified Pentagon information and photos.
- ★ **Iain Sinclair** & **Dave McKean** *Slow Chocolate Autopsy* (Millennium: 1 Oct; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 208pp ill.) — Linked fantasy stories, illustrated by McKean, about a man who can travel through time but can't move outside of London's boundaries. Subjects include Christopher Marlowe's death in Deptford and the murder of Jack 'The Hat' McVitie in the East End.
- Alan Baker** *Alien Contact* (1 Oct; £7.99 tp, 320pp) — First in a series of tie-ins with the Sci-Fi Channel on programmes examining 'true tales of the unexplained'. Also available, same details: **John Spencer** *UFO Sightings* and **Keith Tutt** *Unexplained Natural Phenomena*. General editor is John Spencer, chairman of BUFORA.
- Peter Cochrane** *Tips for Time Travellers* (1 Oct; £3.99 pb, 208pp) — Non-fiction from the head of BT's Advanced Technology & Applications division, looking at the effects of future new technology on business and society.
- Christopher Miles** & **John Julius Norwich** *Love in the Ancient World* (Weidenfeld: 1 Oct; £20.00 hb, 176pp ill.) — Pictorial guide to love and sex from the Neolithic to Greece and Rome.
- Adam Nichols** *The Paladin* (Millennium: 1 Oct; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 384pp) — Fantasy, first in a new series.
- James Bibby** *Ronan's Revenge* (Millennium: 1 Nov; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 320pp) — Latest instalment in the humorous fantasy series. Delayed from May.
- Jostein Gaarder** *Helo? Is Anybody There?* (1 Oct; £10.00 hb, 128pp) — Children's book about 8-year-old Joe, who meets up with an alien. "An enchanting story that opens up the wonders of the universe for children."
- Graham Philpot** *The Troglodytes* (1 Oct; £10.99 hb, 32pp ill.) — Young children's book about the creatures who live inside every computer.
- Yvonne Navarro** *Music of the Spears* (Nov; £4.99 pb, 288pp) — Latest Aliens book taken from the Dark Horse comics.
- Wendy Cooling** (ed.) *Quids For Kids* (Dolphin: Nov; £10.00, 80pp) — Series of YA anth. Includes *Scared Stiff* (horror), *Seriously Spooky* (ghosts), and *Out of this World* (virtual reality).
- Mercedes Lackey** *Storm Breaking* (Nov; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.
- Mickey Zucker Reichert** *Last of the Renshai* (Nov; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.
- Tim Sebastian** *Ultra* (1 Nov; £16.99 hb, 352pp) — Technothriller about the chemical and biological weapons used in the Gulf War.

Hodder & Stoughton

Including NEL, Coronet



- Michael Williams** *Alcatraz* (5 Jun; £16.99 hb) — Fantasy from the author of *Acadcy*.
- Courtney Brown** *Cosmic Voyage* (5 Jun; £16.99 hb) — Non-fiction. Er, sort of. 'Nut books' have an undeniable appeal, and this one has even made it into *Topix* & *Flatterclass* courtesy of Joe McNally, brave man (see *Anisble 119*). Brown, whose PhD is plastered all over the cover (and you should always be suspicious of that) is in telepathic contact with Martians, alien 'Greys', Jesus, the Buddha, God, and his dead Aunt Elsie (read it if you don't believe me), and thinks that the writers of *Star Trek*: TNG have their minds manipulated by ETs to come up with ideas for the show. "During the two years I conducted the research for this book, I was often struck by the similarities between many of the ideas. . . in the show *ST:TNG* and the data obtained about real ET activities through remote viewing." Blimey. So that's where they get those crazy ideas.
- 'Richard Bachman'** *The Regulators* (NEL: 19 Jun; £5.99 pb) — Horror from the resurrected Stephen King pseudonym.
- Steven Sprull** *Daughter of Darkness* (NEL: 19 Jun; £5.99 pb) — Horror.
- Amy Stout** *The Royal Fox* (NEL: 19 Jun; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.
- Pierre Ouellette** *The Third Pandemic* (NEL: 19 Jun; £5.99 pb) — Techno-thriller.
- ★ **David Wingrove** *The Marriage of the Living Dark* (3 Jul; £16.99 hb) — The eighth and final volume of Wingrove's 'Chung Kuo' series.
- Mark Canter** *Down to Heaven* (3 Jul; £16.99 hb) — SF thriller from the author of *Ember*.
- Diane Duane** *The Book of Night With Moon* (3 Jul; £16.99 hb) — Volume 1 in a new fantasy series, in which cats are revealed to be the secret rulers of the world.
- ★ **Paul Johnston** *Body Politic* (3 Jul; £16.99 hb) — Debut sci/fic novel from a new Scottish writer, being marketed as the new Ian Banks. 'It is 2020, and Edinburgh is now independent. When a gruesome series of murders is committed — the first in the city for five years — Quint Dalrymple, an engagingly iconoclastic hero, is called in. In tracking down the murderer he uncovers a tale of government corruption, sex-slave rings and a serial killer who specialises in a unique form of organ removal.' Hodder have also bought Johnston's second 'Dalrymple' novel, due next year.
- Alan F. Alford** *Gods of the New Millennium* (3 Jul; £16.99 hb) — Non-fiction.
- Stephen King** *Desperation* (NEL: 17 Jul; £5.99 pb) — Horror.
- Philip G. Williamson** *Orbus's World* (NEL: 17 Jul; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, second volume of 'Enchantment's Edge'.
- C. J. Cherryh** *Cloud's Rider* (NEL: 17 Jul; £5.99 pb) — SF.
- David Sosnowski** *Rapture* (Sceptre: 17 Jul; £5.99 pb) — SF thriller.
- Harry Tuttle** *World War: Striking the Balance* (NEL: 21 Aug; £5.99 pb) — Final volume of *Tuttle's* lizards-invasion-Earth trilogy.
- Brian Lumley** *The Complete Crow* (NEL: 21 Aug; £5.99 pb) — Horror.
- A. A. Attanasio** *Centuries* (28 Aug; £16.99 hb, 437pp) — SF, "a novel for the millennium". Attanasio says it's "a science fiction epic that spans the ten centuries between our own apocalyptic age and the next millennium. It is a bridge to the futuristic era of Solis, my novel set on Mars a thousand years in the future."
- Chaz Brenchley** *Light Eriant* (4 Sep; £16.99 hb) — Horror.
- Ben Bova** *Moonwar* (4 Sep; £16.99 hb) — Hard sf.
- Piers Anthony** *Yon Il Wind* (NEL: 18 Sep; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.
- Simon Clark** *King Blood* (NEL: 18 Sep; £5.99 pb) — Horror.
- Stephen Brown** *Cosmic Voyage* (NEL: 18 Sep; £5.99 pb) — See above.
- Clayton Chasman** (2 Oct; £16.99 hb) — Horror.
- J. D. Robb** *Rapture in Death* (2 Oct; £16.99 hb) — SF-crime thriller.
- ★ **C. J. Cherryh** *Finity's End* (2 Oct; £16.99 hb) — SF.
- Nigel Kerner** *The Song of the Greys* (2 Oct; £16.99 hb) — Non-fiction.
- Chris Curry** *Level 13* (2 Oct; £16.99 hb) — Horror.
- J. D. Robb** *Immortal in Death* (NEL: 16 Oct; £5.99 pb) — SF-crime thriller.
- David Wingrove** *The Marriage of the Living Dark* (NEL: 16 Oct; £5.99 pb) — The eighth and final volume of Wingrove's 'Chung Kuo' series.
- Diane Duane** *The Book of Night With Moon* (NEL: 16 Oct; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.
- ★ **Robert A. Heinlein** *Starship Troopers* (NEL: 16 Oct (R 1959), £5.99 pb) — Reissued to coincide with the delayed film. This book, originally intended as a juvenile but rejected for that market because of its violent content, is probably responsible for more arguments in d circles than any other (warning: here's my two-penn'orth). It won the Hugo in 1960, and its influence is still felt today in the militaristic of *David Drake* and *Jerry Pournelle*, films such as *Terminator*, and, more piously, in the extreme right-wing libertarian militias now active in the US where it — along with RAH's later and even more objectionable *Farnham's Freehold* — serves as a kind of sourcebook of paranoia and fear. In my opinion, it helped to warp mainstream American of for many years by fossilising it into a 1950s Cold War derived xenophobia and denying it the productive 'aerogram' (as John Cule terms it) which came to humanise the genre when it grew up in Europe during the 60s. However, it's undeniable that the book is immensely readable and thrilling. Its homosexual subtext is perhaps more obvious today than it was in 1960, and there's also the interesting (and often unnoted) fact that the protagonist is black. It's a book which you should have read (if only to disagree with everything I've just said). Recommended.

The Rest



Jonathan Cape
Paper Tiger
Bantam
Vintage

Robert L. O'Connell *Ride of the Second Horseman: The Birth and Death of War* (Oxford: 1 Sep; £19.99 hb, 320pp ill.) — Investigation into the processes of war from 5500bc to the present day.

★ **Storm Constantine** *Three Heralds of the Storm* (Meisha Merlin: Jul; £4.50 chap., 60pp. ISBN 0-9658345-1-4) — Signed coll. of three short stories, "Last Come Assimilation", "How Enlightenment Came to the Tower" and the previously unpublished "Such a Nice Girl", plus a short biography. Available from Inception, 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon. OX5 2XA. Price includes pp. chieftains Pops payable to Inception.

Jasp Goudami *Viral Sex* (Oxford: 1 Jul; £19.99 hb, 272pp ill.) — History of the research into AIDS and the HIV virus.

Michael Heim *Virtual Reality* (Oxford: 1 Aug; £17.99 hb, 216pp ill.) — "Virtual reality is an art form and a way of living with technology," and this book "suggests ways of harmonising computers with culture." Heim lectures in California and is the author of *Electric Language* and *The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality*.

J. R. R. Tolkien *The Hobbit* (BBC: 1 Sep; £25.00 ab, 4hrs) — Five CDs plus booklet and map, containing the 1968 Radio 4 dramatisation featuring Paul Daneman as Bilbo. One CD contains "specially composed Hobbit music".

Gary Russell *Doctor Who: Business Unusual* (BBC: 1 Sep; £4.99 pb)

Paul Leonard *Doctor Who: Genocide* (BBC: 1 Sep; £4.99 pb)

Stephen Jones *Clive Barker's A-Z of Horror* (BBC: 4 Sep; £12.99 pb)

David Filkin *Stephen Hawking's Universe* (BBC: 4 Sep; £19.99 hb)

Rachel Aberley *Spain: The Making of the Movie* (Titan: 19 Sep; £7.99 tp, ill.) — Todd McFarlane's comic character is now a movie, and this book features interviews with him and director Mark Dippe, original concept sketches, ill. sfx details, and plenty of colour illustrations. Canada-born McFarlane is now estimated, thanks to *Spawn* and its range of spin-offs (toys, the Sony Playstation game *Spawn: The Eternal* due early 1998, an adult animation series on HBO, etc) to be worth \$75million. Buy this book and make him richer!

Melanie Jenni, **Rennifer Roberson** & **Kate Elliot** *The Golden Key* (Pan: 19 Sep; £7.99 pb, 107pp+3pp app.) — Fantasy. And yes, that page count is correct. It's set in 'a land where all illustrations are recorded as paintings, and where the members of one family, the Grijavas, are magically able to manipulate time, space and reality in their artwork. Sario Grijava, obsessed with his beautiful cousin Saavedra, traps her inside a painting from which she may never escape ...'. Cover painting by Michael Whelan.

Barry Cunliffe *The Ancient Celts* (Oxford: 1 Sep; £25.00 hb, 400pp ill.) — Up-to-date account of archaeological research into the Celtic and Iron Age inhabitants of Western Europe.

Ian McEwan *Enduring Love* (Jonathan Cape: 1 Sep; £15.99 hb, 304pp) — The double-edged title points to a love story, but laced with McEwan's bitter and dark imagination. If you've enjoyed Chris Priest, try McEwan.

Stephen Jay Gould *Life's Grandeur* (Vintage: Sep; £9.99 pb, 256pp) — Non-fiction essays on evolution from one of the best science writers around.

★ **Peter Carey** *Jack Maggs* (Faber: 1 Sep; £15.99 hb, 320pp) — New novel from the noted Australian fantasist / magic realist, whose Booker-winning *Oranges and Lemons* is now being filmed. "A thrilling story of mesmerism, possession, dangerous bargains and illicit love in Victorian London".

Joan Thirk *Alternative Agriculture: A History From the Black Death to the Present Day* (Oxford: 1 Sep; £25.00 hb, 370pp ill.) — How present day trends in agriculture were prefigured in earlier periods. Did you know that Catherine of Aragon introduced the fresh salad to the UK?

Orhan Pamuk *The New Life* (Faber: 1 Sep; £15.99 hb, 304pp) — Fantasy about a magical book where reader undertakes a metaphysical journey through Turkey in search of its secrets. Pamuk, a Turk, "has earned the right to comparisons with Borges and Calvino" (NY Times).

★ **Mike Ashley** (ed.) *Shakespearean Whodunits* (Raven: 1 Sep; £5.99 tp, 472pp) — Anth. of 25 new stories, each a mystery based around a Shakespeare play and its characters. Contributors include Stephen Baxter (it's that man again), Patricia McKillip, Peter Tremayne and others. Sounds intriguing.

Ronald Hutton *The Stations of the Sun* (Oxford: Sep; £9.99 tp, 560pp ill.) — A journey through the ritual year in Britain.

Stuart A. Vyse *Believing in Magic* (Oxford: 1 Sep; £18.99 hb, 272pp ill.) — Examination, using behavioural research and why superstition is so prevalent today and how it is the natural result of well-understood psychological processes.

Victor Walkley *Celtic Daily Life* (Raven: 1 Sep; £4.99 hb, 64pp) — Shows "how to recreate for yourself aspects of Celtic daily life, such as soaps and perfumes, jewellery, food recipes and natural dyes".

Jonathan Glancy (ed.) *City Futures* (Jonathan Cape: 1 Sep; £20.00 hb, 256pp ill.) — Non-fiction coll. of essays on the shape of 21st century London, from the architects who will actually be building it.

Ian Pears *An Instance of the Fingerprint* (Jonathan Cape: 1 Sep; £16.99 hb, 608pp) — A murder mystery set in 1660s Oxford, with a cast of scientists, cryptographers, mathematicians, theologians and politicians.

Joni Mitchell *A Memoir* (Chatto & Windus: 1 Sep; £16.99 hb, 252pp) — I know, I know. So you want a science-fiction connection? Her song "Woodstock" includes the line "We are stardust", possibly the first pop culture reference to stellar nuclear synthesis.

Anthony Grafton *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Faber: 1 Sep; £12.99 hb, 176pp) — This intriguing book is ... well, a history of the footnote. I wonder if Pratchett gets a mention? It only has a footnote.

Chris Baldick & **Robert Morrison** (eds.) *The Vampire and Other Tales of the Macabre* (World's Classics: Sep; £5.99 pb, c272pp) — Anth. of macabre stories from London and

Dublin magazines published between 1819 and 1838, including stories from Edward Bulwer, Letitia Landon, William Carleton, James Hogg and others.

★ **Mike Ashley** (ed.) *The Mammoth Book of New Sherlock Holmes Adventures* (Raven: 1 Sep; £5.99 pb, 512pp) — Anth. of Holmes-based stories, many new. Contributors include Michael Moorcock, Eric Brown, H. R. F. Keating, Basil Copper and many more. Includes a complete Holmes chronology.

★ **Anne McCaffrey**, **Richard Woods** & **John Howe** *A Diversity of Dragons* (Simon & Schuster: 6 Oct; £16.99 hb, 96pp ill.) — Enormous (29x37cm) novella by McCaffrey with Woods' paintings by Howe, often in the style of other artists. It's a tour through dragons as conceived by various authors — Pratchett, Tolkien, Tolkien, Le Guin and so on — with extracts from their work. There's also a bibliography of modern dragon-related books.

John Richards *The Doctor Who Book of Lists* (BBC: 6 Oct; £5.99 pb)

Mike Tucker & **Robert Parr** *Doctor Who: Illegal Alien* (BBC: 6 Oct; £4.99 pb)

David J. Howe *Doctor Who: Monsters* (BBC: 6 Oct; £15.99 hb)

John Peel *Doctor Who: War of the Daleks* (BBC: 6 Oct; £4.99 pb)

★ **Peter F. Hamilton** *The Neutronium Alchemist* (Macmillan: 10 Oct; £17.99 hb, 966pp+10pp app.) — Second volume of the 'Night's Dawn' trilogy: the first was *The Reality Dysfunction*.

Anthony O'Hear *Beyond Evolution* (Oxford: 10 Oct; £19.99 hb, 240pp) — Polemic against the trend to explain human behaviour in evolutionary terms.

Stephen Jones (ed.) *The Mammoth Book of Best New Horror* (Raven: 1 Oct; £6.99 pb, 512pp) — New edition of the first-rate horror anth., with stories from Brits, Constantine, Fowler, Ian Sinclair, Michael Marshall Smith, Karl Wagner and others.

★ **Iona & Peter Oup** *Children's Games With Things* (Oxford: 1 Oct; £18.99 hb, 320pp ill.) — Here's a truly alien culture, and it's one we've all lived in: The Oup's magnificent investigations into children's culture (*The Lore & Language of Schoolchildren*, *Children's Games in Street & Playground* (1969) and the wonderful *The Singing Game* (1985)) concludes with this volume about games which use equipment of some form: marbles, jacks, fivesones, skipping, ball-play and so on. The continuity of children's pastimes is astonishing, despite being totally ignored or even suppressed by adults — some still being played can be traced back for many centuries. Recommended.

Iona & Peter Oup (eds.) *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford: Oct; £25.00 hb, 560pp ill.) — Over 500 rhymes, songs, jingles, lullabies and rhyming alphabets, with notes on their origins, publishing history, literary associations, variations, parodies, and parallels in other languages. Second revised edition.

Iona & Peter Oup *The Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book* (Oxford: Oct; £15.99 hb, 238pp ill.) — 800 nursery rhymes, with over 600 illustrations.

Mike Ashley (ed.) *Chronicles of the Round Table* (Raven: Oct; £5.99 pb, 448pp) — Specially commissioned new stories and rare reprints for the Arthurian scholar. Contributors include Brian Stablesford, Fay Sampson, Darrell Schweitzer and others. Foreword by Vera Chapman.

Patrick McCormack *Albion: The Last Companion* (Raven: Oct; £5.99 pb, 240pp) — Epic Arthurian fantasy.

★ **Gardner Dozois** (ed.) *Best New SF 10* (Raven: Oct; £7.99 pb, 608pp) — New edition of the indispensable annual anth., with stories from Bertold Kessel, Kress, McHugh, Park, Reed, Silverberg, Sterling and many others, plus a review of the year, invaluable recommended-reading lists, and excellent introductions. But I do wish they'd sort the numbering out. Recommended.

Simon Armitage *CloudCuckooLand* [sic] (Faber: 1 Oct; £14.99 hb, £7.99 pb, 128pp) — Poems based around Armitage's discovery of the heavens through a powerful Russian telescope he bought in 1996. Also includes a National Theatre-commissioned play for children based on events around a total solar eclipse.

Miroslav Holub *The Rampage* (Faber: 1 Oct; £7.99 pb, 96pp) — Poems from a practising immunologist, "with a view of the world that owes as much to the nightmare paintings of Bosch as to the findings of modern science".

Patrick O'Flaherty (ed. & trans.) *Paratrantra* (World's Classics: Oct; £6.99 pb, 420pp) — New translation of India's equivalent of Aeschylus's *Fables*, "teaching the principles of good government and public policy through the medium of animal stories".

Michael Cox (ed.) *Twelve Tales of the Supernatural* (Oxford: Oct; £4.99 pb, 256pp) — Anth. including Le Fanu, W. W. Jacobs, Mrs Riddell, A. N. L. Munby and others.

Michael Cox (ed.) *Twelve Victorian Ghost Stories* (Oxford: Oct; £4.99 pb, 256pp) — Anth. including Henry James, Le Fanu, Margaret Oliphant, Amelia Edwards, Vincent O'Sullivan and others.

★ **Jay Russell** *Burning Bright* (Raven: Oct; £5.99 pb, 320pp) — Dark fantasy set during the Cable Street riots in Spitalfields in 1934 and contemporary London, where an American demon hunter, an IRA sympathiser, a voodoo priest, a golem and a Fascist order of New Templars are in town. Russell, author of *Celestial Dogs and Blood*, is making a splash — Paul McAuley describes him as "a major new talent" and he's been well-reviewed by such as Peter James, Ellen Datlow of *Omni*, and Peter Atkins.

Gus Van Sant *Pink* (Faber: 1 Oct; £9.99 tp, 128pp) — Van Sant is a US film-maker, and this first novel is about the appearance of two mesmeric young men who appear in town, one of whom may be a dead star of the 'infomercial' world. "Gradually Jack and Matt draw Gus into their world, revealing to him the secret of the Pink dimension".

Michio Kaku & **Jennifer Thompson** *Beyond Einstein* (Oxford: 1 Oct; £7.99 tp, 240pp ill.) — Explanation of superseding theory from one of its leading proponents (Kaku) and the author of *Hyperspace* (Thompson).

Huw Price *Time's Arrow and Archimedes' Point* (Oxford: Oct; £9.99 tp, 320pp ill.) — Investigation into time in modern physics. John Gibbin says it's "splendidly provocative ... a feast for the imagination".

Laurence Miles *Doctor Who: Alien Bodies* (BBC: 23 Nov; £4.99 pb)

Avon

Continuing our occasional series on American publishers



Avon Books was founded in 1941 by Joseph Meyers, a man with "terrible taste, not only in literature, but in women and even in home furnishings" according to a former competitor. The imprint was then unashamedly pulp in design and writing, though distinguished by being the first to publish Raymond Chandler story collections (now very valuable) and having A. Merritt on their list. Avon soon became embroiled in a lawsuit with Pocket Books, who accused the company of stealing the Pocket Books format, distinctive page-edge staining and the term "pocket-size book". Avon won, but lost on appeal in 1942; their response was to change the colour of the stain and carry on publishing. But a further appeal in 1944 resulted in Avon winning again, with the result that the Pocket Books format was thenceforth fair game.

Avon started to outgrow its pulp origins, improving the kitschy cover designs and publishing authors such as James M. Cain, Agatha Christie, Sinclair Lewis, William Faulkner, Wilkie Collins, James Hilton and Damon Runyon. Now-collectable series such as *Avon Fantasy Reader* and *Avon Fantasy Novels* were started, and in the 60s Avon began to build up its sf and fantasy list, until now it is one of the leading US publishers in the field, issuing both hardbacks

and paperbacks (under the palindromic AvoNova imprint).

The current Publisher and Senior VP is Lou Aronica, who has a long track record in publishing. He created the Bantam Spectra imprint and was one of the editors of the successful *Full Spectrum* anthology series in the late 80s and early 90s; he's also responsible for the resurgence of *Star Wars* spirituality and wookieeboks in recent years, but I suppose we all have our days.

The Senior Editor is Jennifer Brehl, who at Doubleday edited most of Isaac Asimov's later books; she joined Avon in 1995. The Executive Editor is Jennifer Hershey, by her editing credits include books by Arthur C. Clarke, Neil Stephenson, David Brin, Connie Willis, Greg Benford, Sheri S. Tepper, Kim Stanley Robinson, and John Crowley.

Avon has an adventurous and high-quality list, including a number of Canadian and British authors (UK resident or ex-pat). The jackets tend to be more stylish and individual than is the norm for US publishers, emphasising graphic design and interesting typography. But Avon will soon be undergoing big changes, with the launch of Eos in February 1998.

AVON Eos will be the new flagship imprint of Avon Books, and was created by Aronica, Brehl and Hershey. Aronica says: "The sf and fantasy field has been perceived as somewhat stagnant in the past few years. Outside of the 'star' writers and big books at the very top of the genre, it has been dominated by media-related books. It's time to bring new voices and established writers to the forefront again, time for the literature itself to stir up most of the excitement and controversy."

Scheduled books in the first few months include Gregory Benford's *Cosm* (a contemporary hard sf story involving the creation of a new universe), Rudy Rucker's *Fracture* (next in the series begun with *Software*), Ben Bova's *Monsoon*, Severna Park's *Dawn of Prophecy*, Damien Broderick's *The White Abacus*, Eric S. Nylund's *Dr. Walter*, and Raymond E. Feist's *Shards of a Broken Crown*. A particular feature is that each month's releases will include a title selling for \$3.99 rather than the usual \$5.99, with the laudable aim of introducing new authors.

Good cover design is important to the Eos ethos, as it clearly was to Avon (see below). The result is that the imprint looks more like a UK publisher to my eyes; US publishers - Baen, for instance - tend to have a 'branding' approach to book packaging which tells you very little about the book, and looks pretty awful too. Aronica says: "For the past 20 years, packages have looked essentially the same... we're breaking those rules."

Eos will have a web site with 'lectures' from authors like Benford and Bova. Next March will see the launch in the UK of Simon & Schuster's Earthlight imprint; it will be interesting to compare their approaches.

—Chris Terran



Jennifer Hershey, Jennifer Brehl and Lou Aronica

• The books below should be available from internet and specialist stores such as *Andromeda*.

Jane Lindskold *When the Gods Are Silent* (Jun; \$5.99 pb, 285pp) — Amiable light fantasy. Albuquerque-resident Lindskold's fifth novel and distinguished by strong female and vaguely ineffectual male characters (though they're all likeable). A farmer sets out to discover why the world's magic disappeared, in the hope of curing his wife's illness. He recruits Rabbie, a female warrior, and they join forces with a travelling crowd. Various adventures ensue. Lindskold has also written a scholarly biography of Roger Zelazny, and is working on completing two novels he left unfinished on his death in 1995 (see below for the first of these).

Severna Park *Speaking Dreams* (Jun; \$5.99 pb, 258pp) — SF, nominated for the Lambda Award. Park lives in Baltimore and lectures for the 'Women in SF' program at Maryland University.

Ron Sarti *Legacy of the Ancients* (Jun; \$5.99 pb, 366pp) — Science fantasy. Book Two of 'The Chronicles of Scar' and set in a post-holocaust US.

Kevin Randle *Conspiracy of Silence* (Jul; \$12.50 pb, 320pp) — UFO book. Apparently the US government has been concealing evidence of alien visitations. Well I never. Randle is described, cynicismally, as a 'trained US Air Force intelligence officer'.

★ **William Barton & Michael Capobianco** *Alca Centauri* (Jul; \$23.00 hb, 438pp) — Ambitious hard sf with a humanistic slant, the third collaboration from the authors of *Iris* and *Belt and Traveler*. Capobianco, the President of the SFWA, lives near Washington DC, and Barton in Durham, North Carolina. A startup sets out for the eponymous star, sent in desperation by an Earth threatened with an imminent overpopulation crisis. The small crew awakes to find one of their number dead, and discover relics of a pair of vanished civilisations whose very alien cultures they investigate using a kind of time viewer (some interesting speculative science there). Meanwhile, members of the crew screw each other joyfully and explicitly, remember their upbringing, and spies and traitors emerge. It's not an easy or pleasant read (there's a very British downbeat air about it, and the style approaches stream-of-consciousness at times), but rewards perseverance. Recommended.

Stephen R. Lawhead *Grail* (Jul; \$24.00 hb, 452pp) — Arthurian fantasy from the Oxford-resident author of Christian fantasy, fifth in the *Pendragon* cycle.

★ **Neil Gaiman** *Neverwhere* (Jul; \$24.00 hb, 336pp) — First full-length prose work from the writer of *Sandman*, and based on the BBC TV series shown earlier this year. Recommended.

James Alan Gardner *Expendable* (Jul; \$5.99 pb, 337pp) — St, a debut novel from an Ontario-resident writer who won the Grand Prize in the 1989 'Writers of the Future' contest; he's also had shorts in *Asimov's*, *Amazing* and *SF5*. Interesting for using that most un-American genre, the disabled and disfigured, as heroes. The cover does not emphasise this.

★ **Nancy Springer** *Fair Play* (Jul; \$5.99 pb, 246pp) — Fantasy, a modern-day retelling of 'The Frog Prince' with a splendid cover by Mary Grandpré. Plump divorcee Buffy Murphy, storyteller manque, stumbles across a talking frog who demands a kiss. Her recent experience of battles makes her leery, but her ghostly valley-girl teenage daughter has no such qualms. Brilliantly funny, humane and literate, for sheer enjoyment *Fair Play* is hard to beat; highly recommended.

Tom Deitz *Landslayer's Law* (Jul; \$5.99 pb, 293pp) — Fantasy, a 'David Sullivan' adventure (I imagine Deitz hasn't seen *The Sport*, or he might have chosen another name). The walls between the mystic realms and the real world are breaking down — Faerie can be seen in satellite

photographs. Evil property developers plan to use it for construction, and Davy and his companions try to stop the imminent war between humans and High King Lugh of Faerie.

Dave Duncan *Time Indefinite* (Aug; \$23.00 hb, 334pp) — Fantasy, final volume of 'The Great Game' trilogy. Duncan is a Scottish-born geologist now resident in Alberta, Canada, and this concludes the story of Edward Exler, a young British soldier of WWI, who finds that he is destined to be one of the rulers of Nextdoor, an alternate world where a collection of humans rule as gods.

★ **J. R. Dunn** *Days of Cain* (Aug; \$23.00 hb, 326pp) — Time-travel sf. The Holocaust is a frighteningly difficult event to write (and read) about. It is simply beyond understanding for most of us — we prefer to cover our eyes, so it's often approached obliquely or metaphorically (as in the GN *Maus*), setting a genre novel like *Days of Cain* in Auschwitz itself is a huge risk. Its genre antecedents are clear, and include *Asimov's The End of Eternity*, Anderson's *Time Patrol* series, John Varley's *Millennium*, and Haldeman's *The Forever War* (itself a displaced Vietnam novel). Non-genre sources can be seen in the bibliography of works consulted by Dunn, a military historian and assistant editor of *The International Military Encyclopedia*; he's also had numerous sf stories (published to some acclaim) in *Omni*, *Amazing* and *Asimov's*. Praise for the novel also graces the very beautiful cover, from some highly-respected authors including Tim Powers and Maureen F. McHugh.

The course of history — described in brutally bleak terms as a 'Great Wheel' of death, murder, pain and suffering — is policed by an elite recruited from past and future human civilisations in order to protect the existence of the 'Moiety', the Chardun-esque total mind at the Omega Point of the universe. Ironically and Le Carré-like, what they mostly protect history from are attempts at alteration by renegades from their own number, who are inevitably deeply affected by the horrors they witness, from first century Jerusalem to the Irish famine to Auschwitz to Cambodia and beyond. Alma Lewin, always seen through others' eyes, is one such renegade, described as 'saintly' by many of her former comrades (religious imagery pervades the novel); after failed attempts to kill Hitler at various points in his career she and her followers attempt to expunge the death camps from history directly, and the enters Auschwitz as an inmate. The book becomes intensely harrowing.

The apparently Nazi-like Moiety operative Gaspar James is given the job of recovering Lewin. A German clerk at the camp attempts to retain some shred of humanity amid the slaughter. A female inmate struggles to live, and stay sane, from day to day. The writing is necessarily flat when describing the camp, clipped and brutal for the Moiety operatives. And finally, despite some lingering unease, the book is justified — it is possible to write a genre novel about the Holocaust. Every character is affected, wounded, by what they see and do; there is no forgetting. Highly recommended.

Roger Zelazny & Jane Lindskold *Donnerjack* (Aug; \$24.00 hb, 502pp) — VR sf.

Paul J. McAuley *Fairlyland* (Aug; \$5.99 pb, 405pp+15pp trailer) — The 1996 Clarke Award-winning novel. The trailer is an extract from *Cliff of the River*.

Ian McDowell *Merlin's Gift* (Aug; \$5.99 pb, 251pp) — Earthy Arthurian fantasy, sequel to *Mordred's Curse*.

Dave Duncan *Present Tense* (Aug; \$5.99 pb, 418pp) — Fantasy, second volume of 'The Great Game'.

mailbox



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printed please indicate this clearly. Anonymous letters will
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T-Shirt Winner

From Jon Courtenay Grimwood

jon@hardcopy.cityscape.co.uk

I'm probably going to get shot down in flames, but
what the hell....

In 'Points Arising' [M 126 p13] there's a comment
that sf is being marginalised because a number of
books (mine among them) are being marketed as cult.
Yet, "the function of the popular media is to reinforce
stereotypes", according to an answer to Philip Mul-
downey's letter asking if we're all such easy targets.

So why not help create a positive stereotype of sf as
hip, cult, happening? (Choose your own cliché.) It has to
be a plus point if someone outside sf wants to read
Jeff Noon or Paul McAuley. And if someone reads
Stephenson's brilliant *Diamond Age* because it's a
clever reworking of the Victorian novel rather than
because it's about nanotech, then good - at least
they're reading sf.

Trying to grab non-sf readers can't really be said to
be marginalising the rest of us. Can it? No doubt
someone will tell me I'm wrong!

Brilliant issue of Matrix, as always. ✽

• The point was more one of labelling and marketing -
hope, in some cases - than concern about the health of sf
itself. It's the label 'sf' that's being marginalised, rejected,
along with the genre's history and the subculture that's
nurtured it... or at least the popular stereotype of it (cf. the
Guardian piece on *lain Banks* reported on in M 126, p6).
When we talk about 'sf' we mean something entirely
different to the 'sci-fi' so beloved of the mass media: in fact,
what we mean is precisely those kind of works that appear to
be having the label removed, leaving sf - sorry, sci-fi - to be
applied solely to the Trek droid and the bookboobles and the
mindless cud-chewing of sharecroppers.

You're absolutely right: current sf IS "hip, cult,
happening". 'Sci-fi' must definitely be not. Which is why, of
course, publishers fight shy of the label. Not since the New
Wave of the 60s - when the genre unfortunately
self-imposed before it could make much use of it - has sf
been such an integral part of the zeitgeist (for which we can
probably thank - or blame - the millennium). The difference
now is that it's not the practitioners who are rejecting the
'sf' label, but the marketers. Current writers are mostly
following in clear and strong sf traditions, but applying
new standards of literary excellence and cultural awareness
- and they are not rejecting the genre's history. (Back in the
60s there was less history, of course... and the available
models and traditions were mostly pretty dire, anyway.
There's a playful argument that the first sf novel is not
Frankenstein or The Time Machine, but Alfred Bester's
The Demolished Man. You can safely ignore anything
written prior to that....)

In an absolute sense, no, it doesn't really matter what the
label is, and of course I welcome the wider readership that
out-of-genre publication and promotion brings. I just feel
vaguely resentful that sf - the good stuff, the real MacLeod
as it were - is being stolen and passed off as something else,
something definitely NOT that nerdy-sci-fi-stuff. Misappro-

printed, and used without acknowledgement or awareness.
Science fiction is being misappropriated.

But this is an old, old complaint. And next century it'll
be even older.

Mark Plummer has a comment on genre with respect
to the Clarke Award:

From Mark Plummer

14 Northway Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 6JR

It's a moot point, but it could be said that Jeff Noon's
Vurt, which won the Clarke Award in 1994, was as much
a "non-genre" book as the previous year's
winner, Marge Piercy's *Body of Glass*; neither was
published as an sf novel and Noon, unlike Piercy, had
no sf track record at the time of his win. Both books
were, however, submitted and not called in by the jury
so somebody at their respective publishers recognised an
sf element therein. ✽

• Mark modestly neglects to note that he was a serving
judge on the Clarke Award (on behalf of the SF Foundation)
when both of the books he mentions won. See page 20 for
more comment on the Clarke Award.

To other matters. Here's a neat marketing idea:

From Wayne Stamford

31 Adderwell Road, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1NJ

Well, I have never in my cream puff seen such a thing
as the membership survey. Blooming beautiful! I think
a fair proportion of us are completely barking, though! That
is the only possible explanation for some of the advice
comments cited. Has anyone thought of market-
ing a range of dartboards with the editors' faces on
them? I think there has to be a confusion in some
minds about the difference between fannishness and
the simple absence of content-free, fashionably
ironic jumble (guess who is not a regular reader
of SFX).

[To be fair to the editors, the survey perhaps appeared skewed
as we didn't ask you what we were getting right. The idea
wasn't to find out how wonderful we all are - we know
that already (the bubble with fashionable irony) - but to
find out what we're getting wrong.]

While I'm at it, congratulations for another good
issue. I must say how much I value the "Out of Focus"
section. Two years ago far too rare a sighting of the
Julie Venner / Guru Carol Ann Kerry Green phenom-
enon. The Brian Ameringer / Caroline Mullan slot
looks as if it will be interesting. My answer, at the
moment, to the invasion of the shelf-space snatchers is
limiting myself to short stories. Cast out the strangling
verbiage of written-by-the-yard waffle, I say! Of
course, I must admit that I haven't managed to train
myself to acknowledge coming home from the regular
trips to the second-hand shop with an arm-full of
novels as really buying them. I mean, it's only like
passive smoking, isn't it? Cough, cough. ✽

• Brian and Caroline's column certainly struck a chord:

From Kathy Taylor

kathyandian@compuserve.com

I enjoyed Brian and Caroline's article "Catching" the
Collect'n Bug". I'm still stuck in the Accumulator
phase and have been for years, although I can't match
anything like that amount of books. I had a mere three
thousand or so last time I checked a couple of years
back, and I haven't filled up that many more
bookcases since then. As there are less than a hundred
on my to-read list, not counting the non-fiction, I still
have the illusion I'll catch up some day.

I suffered a lot from the "What a lot of books
you've got! Are you a teacher?" recently. We moved
house last November and each removal firm
exclaimed and looked horrified at the books. To me
the worst thing about that comment is that I am a
teacher (science) and the number of books has nothing to

do with my job!

I don't remember buying my first book, but I
remember choosing them. When I was rather young I
used to be allowed to choose one book a week which
my mother would buy for me, and I got an extra book
if I was good at the dentists. I used to go to the library
with my card and my mother's so I could get 16 books
out at once - 8 from the adult section. Then I used to
walk home very slowly reading the top book all the
way. I still use libraries and on Thursday I got
Charlotte, my ten-month-old daughter, her first library
card. I wonder how many years it will be until she's
borrowing my library card because she's read all there
is that's worth reading in the children's section? ✽

From Claire Brialley

26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7HA

I particularly enjoyed Brian and Caroline's column, al-
though I don't think they've solved my accumulation
problems; I don't have the mind-set or strength of will
to convince myself to become a collector any more
than I do to resist books in the first place. Although
Brian's definition of his collection ("the books I want
to own (at the moment)") is a nicely tongue-in-cheek
way to manipulate the terminology, if not to control
the books! Hope to see more of their columns in
future.

Good coverage of the Clarke Award as well, and
nice to have the photos in. Glad to see you took pity
on Dave Langford by not publishing his photograph
this time - and the same thought covers the bar staff
of Fishliter Catering.

I was interested to see Jennifer Swift's suggestions
on promotions - once we have stocks of the new leaf-
let, we'd also be very keen to hear from any members
who are prepared to take a supply and keep their local
book/comic/sf shops and libraries stocked up with
flyers. The committee's query spread out, but we cer-
tainly don't have access to every city in the UK, never
mind the towns as well. ✽

Ten Years Ago...

Matrix 71, Aug / Sep 87... "And welcome to the second year
of my reign of terror", wrote Maureen Porter (now Kincaid
Speller) of her tenure as Matrix editor, introducing a special
issue produced for the Brighton Worldcon. • BSFA
Co-Ordinator Paul Kincaid wrote an introductory piece for the
hoped-for influx of new members: "Like most such organi-
sations, the origins of the BSFA are lost in mists as murky as
those which surround the builders of Stonehenge. We may not
be as venerable, but we can damn well be as mysterious."

• The death of James Tiptree, Jr (real name Alice Sheldon)
was announced; she shot her husband, who was suffering
from Alzheimer's, and then committed suicide. The couple had
spoken of a suicide pact. • Alfred Bester had to withdraw as
Guest of Honour from the Brighton Worldcon following an acci-
dent. • Another GoH, Doris Lessing, broke a prior agreement
by saying she would only attend until Saturday. • The Stru-
gatski brothers finally got official USSR blessing for their visit.

• Further withdrawals came from Jerry Pournelle, Greg
Benford and Somtow Sucharitkul (now known as S. P.
Somtow), who had a rather splendid excuse: he had to
supervise the music he'd written for the King of Thailand's
birthday party. • Barrington Bayley won his court battle with
bankrupt publishers Allison & Busby for back royalties, but
didn't expect to see much from it. • David Brin discovered
Hollywood. On seeing the Warner Bros screenplay of The
Postman he was reported as being upset that not only did they
not include any characters, dialogue or scenes from the novel,
they also reversed the moral subtext so that characters Brin
considered evil became the heroes. • William Gibson was
signed up - briefly - for Alien III. • John Landis was cleared of
all charges relating to the on-set deaths of Vic Morrow and
two child actors. • Ken Dodd appeared in Dr Who as the
Tollmaster; it shouldn't be too taxing to make up your own
jokes. • Four pages of letters - where have you all gone? ☺

• Keith Walker, a founder member of the British Fantasy Society (BFS), has some harsh words following on from the item on the cost of this year's World Fantasy Convention (see Matrix 126, p6).

From Keith A Walker

KWalker777@aol.com

I was pleased to note your honest comment on the [World Fantasy Convention] which is, of course, a rip-off. Unfortunately the BFS seems to have lost touch with the common people. The current Society seems churlishly to want to forget the legacy and work of those who created it. It has rather stupidly, with the pig-headed arrogance of present-day youth, chosen to re-write a clumsily garbled history of itself which is largely inaccurate. It has chosen to reject the needs and voice of its own members.

I rejoined the BFS last year, having lost my membership when I gave up the fanzine library (which has now probably lost most of the BFS's valuable assets seen sold off). [The BFS fanzine collection was donated to the SF Foundation Library in Liverpool last year. —Chris] I was surprised to find a Society which was curiously in a time warp. It didn't seem to have progressed over the last ten years and seemed to be in a petified state. In stark contrast to the BSFA, my membership of which I've maintained for thirty-plus years, which has steadily improved its services to members over time.

The really odd thing to me has been that the BSFA has never lost that fanzine touch, in contrast to the BFS which has pro-hopeful pretensions but produces only good amateur results and has never been, or wanted to be, fanzine.

The highly overpriced World Fantasy Con illustrates the contempt and total disregard that the BFS has for its own members. What should be an opportunity to reward their loyalty and to recruit new members, spreading the world of fantasy amongst others, is being used as an opportunist platform to woo publishers and the like. I shall not be attending even if I could afford to. The last one I attended dragged, well that's hardly the right word for they tell over themselves to get a spot in the limelight, everyone and anyone who had ever had anything remotely fantasy-oriented published onto a series of poorly-moderated panels. That clearly wasn't where the action was and was simply a diversion whilst off-stage

deals were being struck, etc., between authors and publishers, artist and publishers and so on. Fans, like small children and animals, were not wanted. ✽

• I contacted the British Fantasy Society, who replied:

From Robert Parkinson

Secretary, British Fantasy Society, 2 Harwood Street, Stockport, SK4 1JJ

Many thanks for the opportunity to reply to Keith Walker's letter.

Keith makes quite remarkably for someone who should know better, to give the impression that the BFS is somehow involved in the "rip-off" that he describes the World Fantasy Convention (WFC) to be. The BFS is not responsible for organising the WFC, does not set tariffs or pick the hotel. Keith has some opinions about the BFS to which he is well entitled, but why he opens the letter with a comment on the WFC and then goes on to berate the BFS in the same paragraph seems maliciously mischievous and misleading.

Naturally I feel defensive about the BFS being the Secretary but not for a minute do I deny that Keith is perfectly free to express his opinions. Even so, some of his comments are simply factually incorrect and need addressing. He describes the Society as having "lost touch with the common people", and that we have "chosen to re-write a clumsily garbled history of itself which is largely inaccurate". If this is the case then how come no one (except Keith) has taken the Society to task over the apparent inaccuracies of the *Silver Rhapsody* booklet to which he refers? Furthermore, I am scarcely deluged with letters from dissatisfied members who think we have moved away from the interests of the everyday fan of the genre.

I cannot for a moment understand why Keith thinks the BFS has "pro-hopeful pretensions" and "has never been, or wanted to be, fanzine". I became interested in the BFS as a fan of the genre and am still very much one. All the committee members are active readers and enthusiasts of the genre, none of us do it for money and glory, because that isn't what we want. If Keith cannot understand or accept this then he has the problem, not us.

I have already covered the point that the BFS is not involved in running the WFC. It is pointless having our own convention outside of the WFC for logistic

and financial reasons, though I do accept that the costs of the WFC will undoubtedly keep some members away, myself among them.

If Keith found the last WFC less than satisfactory then he needs to address his complaints to the committee of the WFC, not the pages of a BSFA journal.

Nothing in this letter is personal against Keith; I don't know him well personally. However, I couldn't let some of his unfounded comments stand without reply. It's a shame that he has been unhappy with his renewed membership but ultimately you can't please all the people all the time. If the BSFA sues Keith much better than I wish him a continued happy membership. ✽

• I also asked the World Fantasy Convention if they wished to comment, but at press time hadn't received a reply. However, Keith sent an update:

From Keith A Walker

KWalker777@aol.com

It seems from talking to one of the BFS's officers as though the BFS is trying to pretend that it has no involvement in the WFC. This is, of course, complete nonsense! It's unlikely that a WFC could be held in the UK without the support of the BFS. Technically it's possible but it's highly improbable. The BFS claims it is simply an innocent 'guest' of WFC and is very kindly being allowed to hold its AGM here. Who is it trying to kid?

The people involved in organising WFC are BFS members albeit at an exalted rank. The 'no involvement' ploy is simply a co-opt to try to remove criticism from the BFS for its failure to honour its trust to its members. It has let its members down by virtually denying them access, because of the astronomical prices!

As it is, the only BFS members who will benefit are the damned Committee who will essentially serve their own self-interests. It is a sad day in the history of the BFS when making a fast buck comes before serving the needs and interests of its members. This is not the Society that I created! ✽

WE ALSO HEARD FROM Elizabeth Billinger, Claire Brialey (again), Andrew M. Butler, Gary Dalkin, Steve Jeffery, Dave Langford, and Martin McCallion. Thanks to one and all! —Chris

—points arising—

• The Atrocity Exhibition J. G. Ballard surely wrote the script. The emotionally crippled hero, searching for a meaningful existence. The self-obsessed heroine, lost in the glare of air-lamps and flashbulbs. Both living their lives through, and for the media. Yachts and land-mines, castles and AIDS, magazine covers and lepers. The world stases.

And finally — crash. She is mangled in the wreckage, her last moments frozen in popping flashbulbs. Machinery swings into action: jets fly, tv clears the schedules, presidents speak, the Internet is swamped with conspiracies. Pop stars and Hollywood actors grieve at the funeral, watched, it's claimed, by half the world's population on satellite tv. She is now an icon to rival Monroe and Elvis and Dean, he a forgotten lord of doleful countenance. All play out their rôles: the children, the mother, the angry brother, the Prime Minister, the estranged-in-laws, the journalists, the silent crowds filing a city with flowers.

The world stases, and stases, and stases.

• Concise apologies to Dave Langford for suggesting that corrections to The Encyclopedia of Fantasy should be sent to him (Matrix 126 p6). DO NOT DO THIS! As is clearly explained in the book, and as Dave quite clearly told me, corrections should be sent to John Clute at 2216 Cambrian High Street, London, NW1 7BU or email jclute@cix.co.uk

• On dear: more apologies to Joanna Hilken for misspelling her name in the photograph caption on page 15 of Matrix 125.

• Notes on the Quotations

p6. George Bernard Shaw: *Man and Superman* (1905)

p7. John Acheson: *Thoughts on Government*

The second US president, 1795-1826 (as distanced from the sixth US president, the contemporary composer, the discoverer of Neptune ...)

p13. Ursula K. Le Guin Introduction to "The Day Before the Revolution" in *The Wind's Twelve Quarters* (1975)

p14. Emma Goldman: *Anarchism and Other Essays* (7) Goldman (1869-1940) was born in Lithuania, raised in Russia and emigrated to the US in 1885. An anarchist and pioneer feminist, after being jailed for opposing conscription and inciting strikes (this features in Kim Newman & Eugene Byrne's *USSA* series of alternative-world stories) she was stripped of her US citizenship and deported to the USSR in 1919; she soon became disillusioned with Bolshevism.

p15. John Stuart Mill On Liberty (1859)

p16. Aldous Huxley *Chrome Yellow* (1921)

p18. Philip Wylie (source unknown)

Wylie (1892-1971) was an American social commentator and writer; he coined the term 'Maoism' to describe the US cult of the mother, and his books include *When Worlds Collide* (1933) with Edward Balmer (successfully filmed in 1951), and *The Disappearance* (1951), a readable and — given its period — surprisingly acute tale of the consequences of the world splitting into two parallel streams, one containing only women and the other men.

p17. Ambrose Bierce: *The Devil's Dictionary* (1911)

Bierce (1842-1913) was a journalist and writer of supernatural fiction who disappeared in Mexico in 1913. He too features in the Newman/Byrne *USSA* stories.

p18. Dave Nellist is a left-wing Labour activist.

p18. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* (1840)

Proudhon (1809-1865) was a French anarchist, duly jailed for three years and exiled to Brussels. Which is the setting for the finale of Ian Watson's *Oracle*.

p19. David Bowie, interview in *Playboy*, Sep 1976

Bowie — famously photographed at a London station giving what appeared to be a Nazi salute — has long used of themes and images in his music: "Like an Animal", "Space Oddity", "Ziggy Stardust", "Diamond Dogs" (inspired by copyright issues from being a direct descendant of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*), and so on. And of course he appeared in the film *The Man Who Will Eat Earth* (1976). He was also much influenced at one stage by William Burroughs's 'cut-up' technique, which he used to construct lyrics.

p19. Jean-Luc Godard, interview in *Variety*, 8 Oct 1980

French film-maker Godard wrote and directed the 5 movies *Alphaville* (1965) and *Weekend* (1969).

p20. George Orwell "Shooting an Elephant" (1950)

p22. Robert A. Heinlein *Gyrfalcon* (1963)

p22. Alan Bennett *Gerry On* (1971)

p23. Ian Watson interview, *Foundation*, 30 March 1984.

In 1981 Watson stood for election to Northamptonshire County Council as a Labour candidate. In a Tory heartland area he did well, getting exactly 32% of the vote. You can read more about this in Jeffrey M. Elliott's wide-ranging interview.

p24. Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle *Cathexis* of Fealty (1981).

Cathexis was used throughout the book, which is a more thoughtful presentation of Niven's political ideas (as usual; they normally tend to land caricature of their opponents (as in Lucifer's Hammer and the Fire Foot).

p24. Henry Brooks Adams *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907)

p27. Thomas Hobbes *Leviathan* (1651)

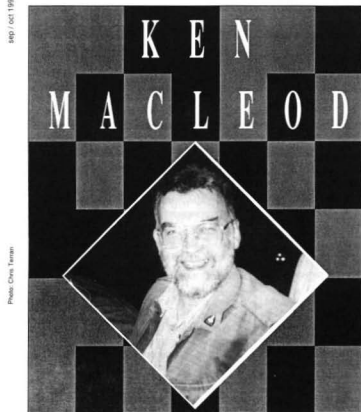


Photo: Chris Tremain

Libertarianism, the Loony Left and the Secrets of the Illuminati

Ken MacLeod burst on to the sf scene in 1995 with *The Star Fraction*, a complex, exciting, politically sophisticated novel set in a near-future independent enclave in North London, Norlonto. It was runner-up for the 1996 Arthur C. Clarke Award and went on to win the Prometheus Award in America. His second novel, *The Stone Canal*, brackets the first with two cleverly intertwined stories, one set

in contemporary Britain and the other in a far-future anarchist society on a colony planet. As well as the political content there's an exuberant use of high technology and speculative physics; they are definitely – and joyously – modern science fiction books. Here Ken reveals some of the background to the societies portrayed in the novels...

"Where do you get your ideas from?"

IT MAY BE a cliché, but it's true: sf writers do get asked that question, a lot. I've written two sf novels which have had the odd distinction of being described as left-wing, indeed Trotskyist, by some reviewers, and as free-market libertarian by others. At first glance these contradictory assessments come from opposite sides of the Atlantic, but I rather suspect that the libertarian element in my books is more obvious the more familiar the reader is with libertarianism. British libertarians see it just as readily as do Americans, while the Trotskyist allusions are more easily picked up in the UK, a country where hundreds of thousands of people must have been members of Trotskyist organisations – if only for the three years between the freshers' fair and the finals.

Those hundreds of thousands include me. I was converted to Trotskyism in about 1972, and was active in left-wing politics, off and on, between 1976 and 1991. Even when I got fed up with Trotskyism and became a quite sincere member of the Communist Party – one of the last people to be politically won to the British Road To Socialism – I found that my political reflexes were unchanged: burnt-in like a CD-ROM. These days, well... I still have a basically Marxist analysis of the world and I still think the people who have to work for a living will eventually have little option but to take over the world and run it as a caring sharing co-op. I don't think the existing left will have much to do with making that happen.

Part of the reason why I think so is suggested in *The Star Fraction*: the Left's alliances are all too often opportunistic and counter-productive. There's a slight tinge of personal bitterness in that book, as well as a smidgen of nostalgia, both of which hark back to the time in the late seventies when I lived in an extended household of Trotskyists, feminists, and exiled nationalists collectively known as The Cats. What I came to feel – in a confused, sullen, resentful way – was that the agenda of my political activity was being set by an ever-expanding coalition of minorities, and had nothing to offer the majority of the population and in consequence had nothing to offer me. As Margaret Thatcher, and now Tony Blair, have spectacularly demonstrated, I was not alone in that selfish thought.

As well as doing the usual Trotskyist stuff – selling papers, going to meetings and marches, reading perspectives documents, splitting and wrecking, underestimating the peasantry and so forth – I was interested in other political ideas, and particularly in other 'extremist' political ideas. I literally wandered across libertarian political theories by accident. The first time I came across real live libertarians was around 1980, when I delivered a bundle of copies of *The Free-thinker* to the Alternative Bookshop in Covent Garden. Pamphlets from Amnesty International, the Legalise Cannabis Campaign, and an assortment of unrespectable anarchists, dissident socialists, feminists and gay liberationists were displayed next to critiques of socialism and defences of capitalism.

I was intrigued. Up until then, I'd always thought of free-marketeers as Tories – people who might be for one kind of freedom out of sheer self-interest, but who were against all sorts of other freedoms, including the freedom to enjoy sex and drugs and rock and roll. This was different. And, to be honest, I was alienated enough from my own political activity to welcome, at the moment, any stick with which to beat it.

Chris Tame and Brian Micklethwaite, who ran the shop and still run the Libertarian Alliance, were not at all put out when I told them I was a communist and I wanted to know what they were all about. They told me, politely and at length. I was amazed to learn that *Illuminatus!*, by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson, was (among other things) a satire on the US libertarian movement and its leading personalities. They were intrigued to find that I had an idea for an sf novel set in a society where 'the state was privatised', and they told me the name for this arrangement: anarcho-capitalism.

I already agreed with much of what the libertarians had to say, about sex and drugs and rock and roll. I became reluctantly convinced that free speech meant nothing unless it meant free speech for people you regard as utterly mistaken and thoroughly depraved: fascists, holocaust revisionists, tobacco advertisers, etc. As the eighties wore on, I found it increasingly hard to refute what the libertarians had to say about the economic idiocies and political follies of the left. At the same time, I had to disagree with them on other points, and I still do. There's the little matter of capitalism, for example. My enthusiasm for the free market is a great deal more conditional than theirs.

There is also the tricky question of what 'consent' actually means. An indirect, but personal, acquaintance with the issue of sexual abuse – and the disillusioning effect this had on my notion of how much 'bourgeois respectability' was worth – occasioned some painful reflections on this point. This is what lies behind the section in *The Stone Canal* in which two sympathetic characters go on a killing spree, and what (I think) makes it a communist novel about libertarians, in much the same way as *The Star Fraction* is a libertarian novel about communists.

So far as the political ideas are concerned, it's easy enough to explain where they came from. They came from thinking about my experiences with the British far left; from thinking about the implications of various libertarian proposals; and from thinking about the implications of the 'non-market socialism' associated with the few but persistent propagandists of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. The conflicting political interpretations of my novels have their roots in the inevitable tensions that result.

What is libertarianism, anyway? 'Libertarianism', like 'freedom', is a contested term. It's used as a synonym – in fact, it was originally a euphemism – for socialist anarchism. It's also used, particularly in the US, to describe an outlook which at its extreme could be called capitalist anarchism. This tends to be regarded as an American import, quite irrelevant to Britain. This is a mistake. Libertarianism is rooted in elements of a political and legal system which America shares with Britain, and which originated in Britain. Its first organised political expression was the radical wing of the English Revolution, the Levellers. Contrary to a labour movement myth, the Levellers weren't pioneer socialists – that honour belongs to the Diggers. The Diggers opposed property, root and branch. The Levellers based their whole political theory on it. They were libertarians of the 'proprietary' persuasion, without a doubt.

The first time I came across the word 'libertarian' was not in a text of political philosophy but in James Bligh's *Cities in Flight*: 'Under the relentless pressure of competition from the USSR and its associated states, Earth's Western culture had undertaken to support a permanent war economy, under the burden of which its traditional libertarian political institutions were steadily eroded away.' (p168 of the Arrow 1974 edition). Since the West's traditional institutions are hardly notorious for socialist anarchism, Bligh here clearly refers to a political ideology which affirms the rights, however derived, to 'life, liberty and justly acquired property' – the principles of classical liberalism, developed by John Locke, Adam Smith, Lord Macaulay, Lord Acton, Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill.

Interestingly enough, the analysis of the 'permanent war economy' and its predicted political effects, to which Bligh alludes, was advanced in the US by one wing of American Trotskyism, later influential on the New Left, and at almost the same time by the remnants of what is now called the Old Right, the maligned 'isolationists' who opposed the New Deal and US involvement in World War Two and the Korean War and the Cold War. Most of them, it turns out, were classical liberals. Nowadays this truth about the isolationists has gone down the memory hole: any opponent of Roosevelt's domestic and foreign policies is vaguely assumed to have been some kind of fascist. Dimitrov, who launched this smear at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, would be proud of its continuing success.

The tradition of liberal anti-imperialism has been carried into the present, most notably by the late Murray N. Rothbard, whose *For a New Liberty* is one of the manifestos of modern anarcho-capitalism. Rothbard's anti-imperialism extended to an attempt to ally with the US New Left against the Vietnam War, not to mention his memorable response to the Falklands/Malvinas campaign: 'Finish the American Revolution! Sink the Brits!' Whatever this was, Thatcherism it wasn't.

Libertarianism, like sf, has a respectable past and a disreputable present: its roots in the work of people who are conventionally admired, even revered, certainly regarded as mainstream; its leaves and branches populated by obscure pamphleteers and amateur publishers and indigent academics and Internet addicts like us. Just as there are people who will indignantly deny that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Brave New World* are sf, there are plenty of people who profess to be shocked at the idea that John Locke and John Stuart Mill and Adam Smith were (ugh!) libertarians.

So I've found, anyway, in discussions on the Internet. I used these discussions, and conversations with some of the friends I made through them, to bring into focus the anarcho-capitalist enclave of Norlonto in *The Star Fraction*. The ideas behind Norlonto derive from Rothbard's *For a New Liberty*. The slightly different anarchy of New Mars, in *The Stone Canal*, owes more to another exposition of anarcho-capitalism, *The Machinery of Freedom* by David Friedman. (The court system of New Mars is partly inspired by one of Friedman's real-world models of 'free market anarchy', the Iceland of *Njal's Saga*.) I have no strong views about the likelihood of such societies arising or persisting, but they certainly provide interesting templates for sf – as I'm far from the first to discover.

What's the political relevance of writing about the extreme implications of a way of political thinking? After all, we all know that – except in extreme circumstances, like Germany in the thirties – extremism loses votes, as the alleged socialists in the Labour Party demonstrated in the eighties and the alleged libertarians in the Tory Party may yet demonstrate in the nineties. The fact is that while utopianism is useless as an electoral strategy, it is very useful indeed as a way of changing people's minds over the long run.

Take the example of socialism. The utopia of *News From Nowhere* has nowhere been achieved, but the idea of it has helped to bring about changes that were once considered 'socialistic' – although William Morris himself would almost certainly have regarded them as paltry at best and going in completely the wrong direction at worst, i.e. towards state capitalism, albeit democratic welfare-state capitalism. The point is that if people see Morris's vision of socialism – a world-wide classless, stateless, moneyless society – as desirable (and personally I find it difficult to read *News From Nowhere* without desiring it, without indeed feeling something as intense as homesickness or unrequited love for it) and if people believe – as Morris emphatically didn't – that democratic welfare-state capitalism is a stepping stone to socialism, then *News From Nowhere* undoubtedly helped to bring about our present wonderful society. Similarly, the dystopia of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has done a great deal to undermine support for even democratic state socialism, despite the fact that George Orwell actually supported the Labour Party and was a pretty authoritarian democratic state socialist himself.

The threat of a '1984' society is (we may charitably assume) what motivates the 'libertarian' militarism of sf's cold warriors: the Defence of the Free World. There is a case for this: faced with the choice between Stalinism and liberal democracy, tens of millions of people have supported the sort of policies advocated in fiction by Niven and Pournelle. Unfortunately the methods used, from nuclear deterrence through napalm bombing to contra terrorism, actually undermine what you're allegedly trying to defend. To refer back again to Bligh, the relentless competition with the Soviet bloc has been won, but the West's traditional libertarian political institutions have been eroded in the process, and are still eroding by the day.

We live in a country where the knee-jerk response to a perceived social problem, or to the misuse of objects – from handbags to hooch – is a hasty, ad hoc law, or the threat of a law; and a world where the knee-jerk response to a national problem is an international intervention, with the new missionaries of the Non-Governmental Organisations softening up the stricken populations for the new colonial marines, the boys in the blue berets. Humanitarianism and peace-keeping have become the new ideologies of imperialism, undermining fragile states of national independence which millions fought, and sometimes died, to achieve.

As a socialist, I have no hesitation whatever in opposing this erosion of the West's traditional libertarian political institutions; and as an sf writer, I have no compunction at indicating the grievous consequences of their loss, and suggesting the glorious consequences of their future recovery.

So much for the loony left and libertarianism. What about the secrets of the Illuminati? Most of us who have heard of that mythical conspiracy at all have heard of it via Robert Anton Wilson. (It was quite a surprise to me to find that it actually existed.) Wilson and Shea used it as a deliberately confusing metaphor for both the 'conspiracy' of big capital and the state which makes up the New World Order (the phrase was used by conspiracy theorists long before George Bush – as they see it – incautiously blurted it out) and as a metaphor for the alliance of 'Left' and 'Right' libertarians which their book projects as the last, best hope of defeating it.

It was that idea which inspired the 'Last International' in *The Star Fraction*, and which Wilde plays with in *The Stone Canal*. But I sometimes wonder if there isn't something in it, and I recently stumbled on an intriguing link between libertarianism and socialism, in a series of personal connections between Robert Anton Wilson and one of the founding fathers of socialism. This common ancestry may be as spurious as Pildown Man, but here it is:

Of all the libertarian writers, Robert Anton Wilson must be the best known and best liked by socialists and anarchists of the left. RAW's individualist anarchist ideas were influenced by his friend Laurence Labadie, whose father Joseph Labadie worked with the great American libertarian Benjamin Tucker. Tucker regarded his venerable friend Josiah Warren (1796-1874) as his first source of light. ('Light?' Another masonic/illuminist allusion? Ha!) Warren founded individualist anarchism after the collapse of a utopian commune founded by his venerable mentor, the English communist Robert Owen.

According to Nesta Webster, the first and probably worst of this century's great conspiracy theorists, Robert Owen was a member of the Illuminati....

I rest my case.

— © Ken MacLeod 1997

• The Stone Canal is now out from Legend/Orbit, priced £5.99. Ken's next book, linked to his previous ones, is *The Cassini Division*, due to be published by Legend/Orbit in March 1998.

books, &c

WHAT DO YOU COLLECT?

Last issue we talked about the progression from book accumulator to collector, and how you either have to kick the habit, find ways to limit your collection, or own Crystal Palace. We'll now take for granted that (most of) you have made the transition. Ok, there are still a number of accumulators out there, with ever-increasing numbers of books (the world record is in excess of 1.5 million volumes, owned by John Benham of Avoca in Indiana, according to a recent *Guinness Book of Records*), but this time we're going to talk about Collecting.

The basic thing about collecting books, as we identified last time, is that it allows you to buy what fits certain categories and thus limit what you retain. *Et voilà!* Then you have a clear conscience (like Caroline) about books in the house / garage - they're for *The Collection*. It's no longer a matter of personal choice - it's pre-defined. If it meets the criteria, you buy it, read it and shelve or box it.

So, what do you collect?



When you start reading you do so almost at random, according to other people's gifts, recommendations or whim. (Brian started to read books newly-returned to the library because someone else thought they were good. He also developed a principle of reading anyone who'd published lots of books. They had to be good because they wouldn't have been published otherwise. Hence he read all of Agatha Christie and Dennis Wheatley - thank goodness he never really got started on Barbara Cartland!) You soon discover there are certain books and types of books you like more than others. If you're lucky your library will put little stickers on the spine - rockets (for sf), skulls (detective). Then the more sophisticated reader progresses to certain writers, or perhaps only one, or one period of a writer's work. Once you've identified the works you particularly enjoy, you may try to get copies of your own (it's frustrating wanting to read a particular book only to find it's out of stock).

So it's reasonable for people to accumulate the books they particularly enjoyed and want to re-read. Once they have all these works in paperback, they find they then have problems re-reading without causing the books to deteriorate. One solution is to get two copies of each text, one for best, for display, and one to read until it falls apart and gets replaced (this also allows you to proselytise - but **BEWARE**: books lent are almost never returned).

Another solution is to have nice hardback copies, which allow re-reading any number of times (providing you don't like strawberry yoghurt, or reading in the bath); book clubs cater well for this market. But if you like a bit more of a challenge you'll probably try to get **first editions**. Why?

Some Options

First Edition	Reader's/Author's Preferred Cover
First UK Edition	Illustration
First US Edition	Reader's/Author's Preferred Binding
First Paperback Edition	(E.g. leather, nylon, wool, PVC, human skin)
First Hardback Edition	Reader's/Author's Preferred Cover
Limited First Edition	Blurb
General Trade First Edition	Publishers' Series
First UK Hardback Edition	Copies signed/inscribed/personalised
First US Hardback Edition	by the Author
First THUS	Cover Styles
(Usually a revised text, but some dealers use it for a re-tilting or an illustrated edition.)	(E.g. by a particular artist, 'keyhole' covers, metallic or mirrored finishes, bare breasts, embossed)
Reader's/Author's Preferred Text	

Because, by definition, these are issued in limited numbers and are therefore more sought after (new editions can always be published, but there's only one first edition). Of course, you could specialise in second editions as they'd be easier to find, and would cost less. But if the trend doesn't catch on, you'd be the only one who collected them, and a big element of collecting is the social one of display to others.

Some people collect **uncorrected proof copies** as these are issued before the actual book is published (and are not generally for sale, so are more difficult to find). These often have a slightly different text to the published book and may have been corrected by the author (or by some guy at the publisher) with facsimile hand-alterations, depending if the text has been rewritten, or just typo-corrected. As uncorrected proofs are a lot more fragile than the final book, with paper (or thin card) covers, some proof collectors also keep copies of the first edition as well (it makes comparing the text easier, too!).

Of course this has assumed that the first edition was published in hardback, which is often not the case. Thus we have some extra collectable categories - first editions and first hardback editions - and some people want to limit themselves to the first **British** or first **American** editions, too.

You've also got the problem of identifying the first edition. How do you find out whether the US or the UK edition was issued first? How can you tell if a book is a bookclub edition, and whether it's the first anyway? What was the first binding state? (Do you know what this means? And is it important?) Has the book been restored, rebound or reconstructed? We'll try to deal with some of these issues in a later article. However, as an illustration, in 1979 Millington planned to issue a hardback of *Elision Wonderland* (vt *Earthman Go Home*), which would be the first hardback edition. (The paperback was published in 1962, but no one would publish *Elision* in hardback then.) They also made a deal with the Readers' Union Book Club that they could publish the same book. Unfortunately for Millington their publication was delayed, so the Book Club edition was issued first, and is the first hardback edition of a collectable book!

Some people like particular cover illustrations or text blurbs, either absolutely or because they feel this enhances the text ("One of the merriest, most erotic and notorious novels of the century" - this is from the Avon paperback of Jerome Branch Cabell's *Jurgen*, which also has five naked ladies running about merrily, in case you didn't get the message). These people may end up with multiple copies of a particular text because of this.

Alternatively, you may wish to collect every edition of a specific, favourite, book (particularly if it has been heavily revised by the author), or even every edition of all the works of a particular author, including alternate titles, works issued under pseudonym (and then perhaps re-issued), illustrated editions, inscribed copies, non-genre material, reference works (Randall Garrett wrote a couple of books about saints!). A lot depends on the space you've got and the limits imposed by this.

Some collect books by publisher. So if a book was issued by both Badger and Penguin they need a copy of both (e.g. *Who?* by Algis Budrys). There are dealers' lists that have all books sorted by publisher and code number - they can be a real pig if you're looking for certain texts! Some publishers issue **limited editions** - where they number each copy and perhaps have the author sign each one - and some people just collect these.

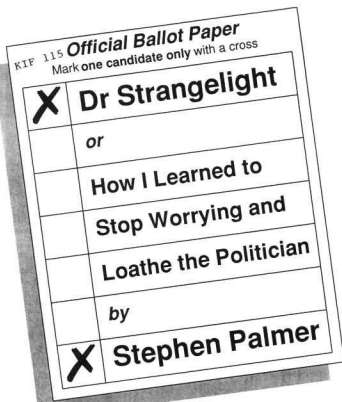
A few years ago Brian met a guy at a US Worldcon who was researching sf paperbacks issued in the US, and planned to write a book. He'd promised his wife that when he'd written the book he'd clear all the duplicates out of the house, all of the extra editions, all 27-28,000 of them! He was talking enthusiastically about variant bindings on paperbacks of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, where only the price had changed and nothing else indicated the fact that this represented a new edition. If we remember correctly, he had over 80 copies of this one text!

So, this time we've looked at some of the ways you can tailor a collection concentrating on the packaging: the publishing history, format, style, the physical object that is a book. Next time we'll look at ways of tailoring a collection through the contents!

— © Caroline Mullan & Brian Ameringen 1997



©Shep



ON 1 MAY this year I did not vote. This decision caused consternation amongst some of my friends, while others were too disinterested to care. Still others agreed; they did not vote either. Three main reasons caused me not to vote in the General Election:

1. *To vote in Britain is to bring in either a Conservative or a Labour Government.*

This is not a choice. The 'first past the post' election process means that if one party has ten more seats in Parliament than the other, all the people who voted that other party effectively have no voice. A proportional representation system would force politicians to co-operate, which is ultimately a good thing. European evidence, for instance from Italy, may suggest that it is a bad thing, but proportional representation means the abandonment of competition, which cannot be bad. Any system that forces competition is ultimately a divisive thing, at whatever level it works.

2. *To vote in Britain is by implication to support a system of government that is inherently self-serving and corrupt – on account of the undemocratic power wielded by politicians – and, perhaps more importantly, active on such a large scale that cannot account for actual human beings.*

This argument of scale is important. Small is Beautiful. Because national government operates on the global, economic scale, it is unable to deal with the reality of individuals, in particular the fact that they have needs that can only be met on the local, community scale. National government is by its very nature an anonymous thing, a thing that cannot accept human identity. It is inhumane by reason of its scale.

Stephen Palmer will be well-known to readers of *Vector* as a reviewer, but last year, poacher-turned-prey, *Orbit* brought his first sf

politics
and
sf

novel *Memory Seed*. In between a full-time job, writing, and moving house, he finds time to play in his band *Mooch*, and regularly produces CDs. You can read more about him in Gary Dalkin's interview in *Vector* 192.

Steve didn't vote in the General Election earlier this year. But as you'd expect, this wasn't laziness . . .

For this reason we should reject it. Change from the inside being impossible, on account of the immense inertia of such social systems, the only possibility remaining to the interested individual is rejection, and the embracing of the local community (for instance, by joining a LET – Local Exchange and Trading – scheme).

3. *To vote in Britain is to support the monarchy, and a system where there is no written constitution nor even a bill of rights.*

This is a bad thing.

Several arguments have been put to me in favour of voting, but these are not all they seem:

1. *You must vote because of democracy.*

Britain is by no means a democratic nation (no constitution, no bill of rights, many, many organisations – MIS/6, QUANGOs, etc. – with no responsibility to regulating or monitoring organisations; not to mention the fact that the public has little or no right of examination of the processes of government). In fact, Britain is one of the most undemocratic countries in the West. If you vote, you are not propping up democracy. You are propping up a system where you legitimise those who control you.

2. *The nation must get to its feet and make its choice!*

The British nation does not 'make a choice', an analogy used by many political commentators. Rather, millions of unconnected individuals get to their feet and make their choices. This idea that the nation is *en masse*, making a choice is erroneous, since there is no organisation on the national scale to get all these people together in a meaningful way.

3. *You must vote because people died to acquire the vote.*

This is true, but not relevant. Acquiring the vote is simply one step on the long road to emancipation for many classes of people, e.g. women, slaves, etc. I think it is an inevitable step towards a truly humanist and democratic social organisation, but not one that demands a certain response from later generations.

4. *Stop being such a bloody idealist.*

Without ideals there would be nothing to aim for.

In conclusion, I think people should, indeed *must*, vote locally. When you vote locally, the scale is such that your vote actually does make difference, particularly if you have a political voice of your own that your community is aware of. But as the scale increases, your vote is less relevant and can do less work. It thus becomes more useless. At the top scale, that of national government, your vote does no work at all and you are effectively powerless.

Not voting is a choice. It is not a cop-out. By not voting you are choosing to reject the current system. This is not a neutral act, nor an act of laziness, but a positive choice that really means something. You are empowering yourself. (The alternative of spoiling your ballot paper has always struck me as something out of primary school.)

In summary, we should consider one of the most profound statements in this area, which was written by Douglas Adams in *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*:

Who can possibly rule if no one who wants to do it can be allowed to?

— © Stephen Palmer 1997

• Stephen Palmer's novel *Glass* is out now from *Orbit* in paperback, priced £5.99.

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ian

watson

from the oracle's mouth

The zealots in Judaea in the first century map persuasively on to their contemporary equivalents in Ulster, as I only began to realise while the elements of the novel clicked into place. So: contemporary Ulster events, and the world nineteen hundred years ago – connection or coincidence? Exploitation, or illumination? It's risky writing something up close to what's going on. Did anyone notice how Stephen Leather's thriller *The Long Shot* stars Carlos the Jackal as master assassin – but unfortunately half way through the process of writing in real life the French nabbed Carlos, leading to a mid-story tap dance of "Does anyone know how Carlos escaped from the French?" Ian McDonald's remarkably good (in my opinion) *Sacrifice of Fools* puts joint Anglo-Irish sovereignty over Ulster just a little way ahead. He might even be right, though there's an old Ulster saying, "Hope for the best but expect the worst."

Anyway, I have barged in where angels fear to tread, since I found myself impelled to say a few things about Ulster and English perceptions and about the behaviour of our security services, as well as a few other matters – my Roman being in the present, after all, because of a security services operation.

There are always a few other matters. Which is why I am now deep in another novel, starring a female member of the security services who is extremely manipulative. Since I belong to the method acting school of writing (deep identification with my characters during my six or nine month seance with them) maybe I am now trying to manipulate readers of *Matrix* by writing about *Oracle*?

Alternatively, Chris Terran kindly asked me to write a piece, and this is what has come from my Amstrad planchette. I wish you all discoveries, and a good read. I was interested in the review in *Locus* of *Oracle*, suggesting that it is two overlapping books, which would become one if I engineered a sequel. Actually, the sequel is up to (or down to) the reader's own imagination, since the closing situation has many ramifications if one thinks clearly about the implications.

Looking through this piece, I realise the extent to which I have discussed narrative considerations rather than stepping upon a soapbox to pronounce upon the Troubles. I think that would be a bit of an impertinence. I would rather my characters exemplify positions.

Oh, and watch out for two amusing compositing errors which I'll swear I corrected, but which uncorrected themselves, drat it. Cryptic clues (cue Dylan): "She makes love just like a roman." Also: "The universe consists of spare-time."

— Ian Watson 1997

EARLY LAST SUMMER I was at Kirby Hall, a redoubtable National Heritage ruin near Corby in Northamptonshire, watching the largest contingent of Roman soldiers to assemble since the legions left Britain over fifteen hundred years ago. I must say it was very decent and serendipitous of the British and Dutch re-enactors to mount this spectacle so close to where I live just after I started to write *Oracle* – which is about a Roman centurion who is inadvertently brought forward in time, approximately twenty miles from Corby as the eagle flies (or indeed the cawbie, since Corby is full of Scots).

Just at the moment when I needed to know things, here were the very folks *libens, volens, and potens* to tell me (in the words of the Past Times T-shirt), nay, to exemplify Romans regenerated in the present day. Which is why *Oracle* includes an acknowledgement to Bucco, this being the nickname of Quintus Hesterfild Bucconis, an actual soldier whose gravestone is in Mainz, whose modern avatar is Bill Allen of Chelsterfield, of the crooked spire.

The other two good people to whom *Oracle* is dedicated are Agnes and Graham Andrews (well known to *Vector* readers as a reviewer), Belfasters of Brussels. Can it be a coincidence that my Roman is picked up and sheltered by a Belfast couple? No connection with living persons intended, honest M'lud! (And the fact that a chap working for the novel's time-probe project, who has a religious bee in his bonnet, is named Dave Trimble was definitely a Freudian slip of my ironic subconscious. At the time when I was writing the book a certain Ulster politician wasn't in the news at all. It was Graham who pointed out the coincidence to me.)

Plot-logic – in which Stanley Kubrick gave me a nine-month crash course a while ago – required a speaker of Latin, and what might be the logical background of one such? A former candidate for the priesthood, long since lapsed. Lapsed, *why?* Because of what personal trauma? Events homed in on one another like bees converging on the hive bringing pollen to make honey.

(A nine-month crash course sounds like a bit of a contradiction, but it is not actually a misnomer for my adventures in plotting at Kubrick Castle. Crash, vroom, skid, crash, okay forget the kiddie market we'll keep the robot gigolo, vroom, skid, but how much does it weigh for God's sake, and can the manager of Macey's really see a statue of a horse in the street outside...?)

I mentioned that while I was writing *Oracle* the politics of Ulster was not especially prominent in the news (the mainland British news at least) compared with the hotting-up, cooling off, hotting-up of the past few months. Here comes publication day, and as in the novel the Continuity Army Council (who intend to continue until British sovereignty ends) are rumbling in the background like a minor Vesuvius, though mostly ignored, while honeyed words are spoken or snarled about decommissioning weapons. To most people in this sceptred, as opposed to emerald, isle the Northern Irish situation is an incomprehensible mess. Indeed it's astonishing to what extent over the past many decades English governments themselves have behaved like blinkered idiots, blind to the mind-sets of bigotry. This came urgently to me, the more I found out about the novel I was writing (for writing a novel should be a process of discovery).

IAN WATSON HAS ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN POLITICS. AND NOT JUST IN HIS FICTION – IN THE 80S HE STOOD FOR HIS LOCAL COUNCIL ON A LABOUR TICKET. HIS NEW SF THRILLER ORACLE HAS THINGS TO SAY ABOUT TERRORISM, NORTHERN IRELAND, AND THE SECURITY SERVICES...



• *Oracle* is published by Gollancz in September, priced £16.99.

obituary

So who owns death? So who death owns?
 So owns who death? So owns death who?
 So death who owns? So death owns who?
 Who so owns death? Who so death owns?
 Who owns so death? Who owns death so?
 Who death so owns? Who death owns so?
 Owns so who death? Owns so death who?
 Owns who so death? Owns who death so?
 Owns death so who? Owns death who so?
 Death so who owns? Death so owns who?
 Death who so owns? Death who owns so?
 Death owns so who? Death owns who so?

Andrew M. Butler on William Burroughs

5 February 1914 - 3 August 1997

WILLIAM SEWARD BURROUGHS was probably more of a user of science-fiction imagery and prose style than an *sf* writer *per se*, but has nevertheless had an incalculable influence upon the present and previous generations of genre writers. His use of word collages, cutups and extreme (some would say pornographic) subject matter had an impact on the New Wave of the 1960s, and Ballard and Moorcock were among those defending his reputation in the 'Ugh!' correspondence in the *Times Literary Supplement*, which followed the review of *Dead Fingers Talk*. More recently, he has been an influence on the cyberpunk generation, notably William Gibson who featured him as Dixie Flatliner. Burroughs's work has in recent years appeared in several cutting edge, *sf*-tinged anthologies, including those produced by Semiotext(e) and High Risk Books.

Burroughs was born in Saint Louis, Missouri in 1914 to a reasonably wealthy background – though not the William Burroughs Adding-machine Company money – and was educated both at the Los Alamos Ranch School (later to be associated with the American atom bomb) and Harvard. After a spell in Europe (where he married the German Jew Ise Klapper to get her a US visa) and a series of odd jobs including cockroach exterminator, bartender and private detective, he ended up in New York. Here he met Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, and was caught up in the murder of David Kammerer (who, like Burroughs, was gay) by Lucien Carr. It was also here that Burroughs first experimented with drugs, and developed a morphine habit.

Ginsberg and Kerouac introduced Burroughs to Joan Vollmer, with whom he had a son, William Seward Burroughs III. After a period growing cotton and marijuana on plantations in Texas, and brief spells in New Orleans and Algiers, the family fled the country to Mexico City. It was here, in a haze of benzedrine and alcohol, that Burroughs accidentally shot Joan dead in a William Tell re-enactment. The guilt of this action was to plague him for the rest of his life: "The death of Joan brought me into contact with the invader, the Ugly Spirit and maneuvered me into a lifelong struggle, in which I have had no choice but to write my way out." One of the first fruits of this was a novel called *Junk*, published under the pseudonym 'William Lee' as *Junk* by Ace Books in 1953, in the double *double-dos* format so well known to *sf* readers.

To escape the bad memories held by Mexico City, Burroughs went to Tangiers, for boys, drugs and cheap rent. Here he started writing *The Naked Lunch* (1959), for he sent in instalments, like love letters, to Ginsberg. *The Naked Lunch* is perhaps best viewed as a series of routines – ideas stretched and played with to surreal ends, like a demented comedian. Some of them are repeated, with variations, foreshadowing the way Burroughs would generate writing by cutting up and rearranging paragraphs, and inserting material from elsewhere. If you want a unifying theme, it is that of the study of the corrupting addiction of power, whether in the form of drugs, politics, sex or death. Burroughs was very much in the ironic, body-obsessed tradition of Dean Swift.

It is here that many of Burroughs's recurring characters first appear: Johnny, Dr Benway, Bradley the Buyer, A. J., Clem Snide the Private Asshole, and Burroughs's alter ego William Lee came to wider attention. These continue through titles such as *The Soft Machine* (1961, 1966, 1968), *The Ticket That Exploded* (1962) and *Nova Express* (1964, published in the UK by Panther as science fiction).

After a period in the doldrums in the 1970s he returned to form with a trilogy consisting of *Cities of the Red Night* (1981), *The Place of Dead Roads* (1983) and *The Western Lands* (1987). The first mixes detective fiction, science fiction and a boy's own adventure, and blurs boundaries of time and space. Time travel resurfaces in

Dead Roads, with the time traveller Kim Carsons, a pseudonym of one William Seward Hall, assassinated at the end of the novel by Joe the Dead. The final book in the trilogy concerns Carsons/Hall's attempts to continue beyond this state, to enable them, and Burroughs, to write beyond death.

During this period, he again had to come off addictive drugs, and moved away from the New York scene which risked his bank balance, writing abilities and health. With his long-time secretary James Grauerholz, he moved to Lawrence, Kansas where he settled down to write, collect guns and play with his orgone accumulator. He was put on to a sound financial footing with a multi-book deal which included the publication of archive material and letters, and began to write libretti. *The Naked Lunch* returned to scandalise again, with Cronenberg's disappointingly literal-minded film version, and the rediscovery of the storyboards produced with film-maker Antony Balch. He read material to a background by Sonic Youth and John Cale, among others, on the CD *Dead City Radio* and appeared in Gus Van Sant's *Drugstore Cowboy* (1989), as well as making an album with Van Sant.

But it is Burroughs as the weaver of words who we will remember: whose screen treatment of Alan Nourse's *The Blade Runner* provided a title for a quite different movie, whose words have been appropriated in such titles as *Terminal Identity*, *Storming the Reality Studio* and *Across the Wounded Galaxies*, group names such as Soft Machine and Steely Dan, as well as, perhaps closest to home, the title of the magazine *Interzone*.

— © Andrew M. Butler 1997

So who's the stiff? So who's stiff the?
 So the who's stiff? So the stiff who's?
 So stiff who's the? So stiff the who's?
 Who's so the stiff? Who's so stiff the?
 Who's the so stiff? Who's the stiff so?
 Who's stiff so the? Who's stiff the so?
 The so who's stiff? The so stiff who's?
 The who's so stiff? The who's stiff so?
 The stiff so who's? The stiff who's so?
 Stiff so who's the? Stiff so the who's?
 Stiff who's so the? Stiff who's the so?
 Stiff the so who's? Stiff the who's so?

Cardinal Cox on William Burroughs

Golden lads and girls all must
 As chimney-sweeps, come to dust

Cymbeline; IV, 2

"So who's the stiff?" breathed Inspector Lee, currently on secondment from the Nova Police to the local constabulary of *Interzone*.

"Difficult to say, had a whole suitcase of fake identities, Frank Carmody, Will Dennison, Bull or Wilson Hubbard."

"Like the Nova Mob stooge?"

"Uh-huh, and old Bull Lee. These aliases all supplied by agent Kerouac."

"So what he ever do?"

"We tried to get him once for the murder of his wife, but there was a technicality. They weren't married. He was in the films *Drugstore Cowboy* and *Twister* (not the crap one about mid-west storms). Did some hit-hop album called *Spare Ass Annie*."

"Get Dr Benway to open up the corpse and tell us how he hit the big one."

"Easy, boss. The shit was a junkie."

"That'll always kill 'em."

Down in the docks, Venusian fish-boys were jerking each other off, a twenty-one cum salute.

— © Cardinal Cox 1997

Death, as the psalmist saith, is certain to all:
 all shall die.

Henry IV Pt 2; III, 2

Life is very dangerous and few survive it.

William Burroughs, 1914-1997

MY ENTANGLEMENT in the Web came about during the first few months of 1996. Simon Spanton, a fiction editor at Orion, contacted my agent to see if I would be interested in writing a children's science fiction novel as part of a six-book series set in a future World Wide Virtual Reality. Simon had been my editor at Pan for my last two books, *Engineman* ("This novel is fine, Eric - but do you think you could lengthen it by fifty thousand words?") and my collection *Blue Shifting*. The Web book would be my first book for children and an opportunity to work again with Simon.

The idea of the Web was devised and developed by Simon. He gave each writer a five-thousand-word 'bible', detailing everything about the future world: politics, religion, medicine, climate, business and geography, among others. And, of course, much detail about the Web itself. It even had a glossary of Web-speak, the lingo spoken by the Web-users of the future.

The Web series of novels would be set in the year 2027, in six different countries around the globe. The premise was that, by 2027, communications, education and business transactions (quite apart from leisure pursuits) would be conducted via the technology of the Web. National and local government rely on the facility: the phone and fax are things of the past and the Web is a key part of business. Retail is run as much from the Web as from shops, cinema is dying and books are the preserve of a minority. But most importantly, from the point of view of the children of 2027, the Web is one vast fantastic playground, an almost infinite series of venues available at the push of a button. The user enters the Web either with a simple headset, glasses and gloves - or via a rubber-textured Websuit which would give the user a more sophisticated and realistic interface with the reality of the virtual Web.

The six writers met in London in June 1996 for a meal and an afternoon discussing the nitty-gritty of Simon's fictional world. The writers were Stephen Baxter, Stephen Bowkett, Maggie Furey, Peter F. Hamilton, Graham Joyce and myself. We each had a vague outline of our individual books, and many questions and suggestions to fire at Simon. What began slowly - with doubts certainly on my part that any coherent series of books could be designed by such a committee - soon snowballed in exhilarating fashion as ideas were taken up, expanded upon, fleshed out and stored. We devised a timeline for the six books and were casting about for a thread that might link the novels - other than the common venue of the Web and perhaps characters shared from book to book - when Maggie Furey came up with the idea that the novels should have a series villain.

Magically, the idea fitted with a number of our scenarios. A villain (we called her the Sorceress, which would become the title of Maggie's own book) would provide each writer with a dramatic focus for our stories, and the series with an overall sense of threat or behind-the-scenes danger escalating with each book and culminating with the final novel in the series, Maggie's *Sorceress*.

film

The Fantastic Films of

WE ARE IN THE MIDST of a cinematic Shakespeare revival. In the last year adaptations of *Othello*, *Richard III* and *Twelfth Night* have played across the country, to which we can add films about the work of Shakespeare: *In the Bleak Midwinter* and *Looking For Richard*. Three more adaptations lay claim to be true films of the fantastic, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* and *William Shakespeare's Hamlet*. All three of these, and in addition *Richard III* and *Twelfth Night*, dislocate the text in time, and place the characters in brave new worlds. This in itself does not make the adaptations into fantasy films worthy of note in *Matrix* - it is after all merely following a long-established theatrical trend of revisiting perhaps over-familiar material by juxtaposing fresh contexts with old texts. Hence a jackbooted neo-30s *Richard III*, a pre-Raphaelite *Twelfth Night*.

Adrian Noble's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a film version of the Royal Shakespeare Company's most recent production, is different. Set in a fantastical whenever, the 'real' world where perhaps a romantic stylisation of the late 18th century, the players of the play-within-the-play inhabiting a Blimpish alternative 1930s, and the fairies of the Athenian wood a surreal digitally-enhanced studio wonderland, Noble gives all three intersecting domains equal validity. The viewpoint we are given is that of a young boy who lives within the house in which the guests are gathered to see the play-within-the-play. The boy wanders between the worlds, seeing such things as he could not dream of, such 'country matters' as he could have no knowledge of. The only interpretation is that the dreamworld he enters is as objectively real as our waking reality, that we are such stuff as dreams are made of.

On a very low budget the film is constantly inventive, beautiful on the eye, funny, strange and thoroughly entertaining. With fine performances from Lindsay Duncan (Titania), Barry Lynch (Puck) and Alex Jennings (Oberon), this *Dream* occupies the same enigmatic interzone as Neil Gaiman's *Sandman*. What more recommendation could there be?

HOW THE WEB



Eric Brown

has been a prolific short-story writer since his first appearance in *Interzone* in 1987. Since then he's published a novel, *Engineman*, and the short story collection *Blue Shifting*. Recently he was asked, along with five other leading writers, to contribute to a proposed children's sf series, 'The Web'. Here's what happened...

All that was required now was to go home and write them.

The idea for my own novel, *Untouchable*, was sparked by a line from Simon's 'bible', in the section on India: "Set against this [India's economic success story] the plight of the Untouchables has become even more appalling and there is extensive international pressure for reform..."

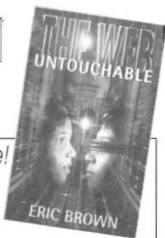
I had travelled extensively throughout India in the 80s and set numerous short stories and part of a novel in the subcontinent. It occurred to me that the plight of an Untouchable in future India could be dramatised to good effect using the medium of the Web to contrast real-time living conditions and attitudes with those maintaining in virtual reality. I made my protagonist a ten year old Untouchable street kid, Ana, whose right leg had been amputated by an evil gang-rod. The book opens with Ana and her blind brother Ajay begging on the streets, having escaped the gang-rod. They are seen by the Indian Fagin, and in the ensuing chase Ajay is recaptured and handed over to a mysterious western woman. Ana meets a young Brahmin boy and

Baz Luhrmann relocates *Romeo and Juliet* to a millennial Venice Beach. The heavens look down in judgement in repeated shots of a gigantic figure of Christ atop a monolithic church which divides Montagues from Capulets. Even the handguns have icons of Mary on their butts. This is a city on the verge of collapse, evoking both the apocalypse-barely-under-control of Katherine Bigelow's *Strange Days* and the gas station destruction of her previous *Point Break*, together with visual referencing of her ex-husband James Cameron's 'Terminator' films in the gunplay and the quiet interlude in the desert outside LA. With the concentrated intensity of Cameron and the hyperkinetic anarchy of Ken Russell (in the days when he had a budget) Luhrmann fashions a narrative in which even the elements bend to the power and anguish of teenage emotion. When Mercutio invokes a "plague on both your houses" it is as if he were a magician. A great storm rages in from the sea and darkness falls on his fallen body. In the end Romeo (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Juliet (Claire Danes) can only find respite in death, tranquility in the embrace of the church which has towered over their story. Supernatural judgement waits outside, the Chief of Police informing the survivors that they will be punished.

There is no worn-out Freudianism, no Oedipal complex in Kenneth Branagh's interpretation of *Hamlet*. The Great Dane (Branagh himself) is unneurotically happy with his lover Ophelia (Kate Winslet), until his uncle Claudius (Derek Jacobi) murders his father, the King of Denmark (Brian Blessed), and with undue haste Claudius weds his mother, Gertrude (Julie Christie). As in John Boorman's masterly retelling of Malory in *Excalibur*, the land and the king are one. So great a crime against God's natural order brings forth a very real ghost, no manifestation of a griet-stricken mind, and tangible disquiet to the very earth Branagh and Blessed tread upon.

With such corruption - countenanced or ignored by all but Hamlet - at the heart of the state, the kingdom must fall, justice coming to cut the cancer from the nation.

WAS SPUN



Enter the Web... free!

The first set of 'Web' books consists of:

- Stephen Baxter *Gulliverzone*
- Stephen Bowkett *Dreamcastle*
- Eric Brown *Untouchable* (Oct)
- Graham Joyce *Spiderbite* (Oct)
- Peter F. Hamilton *Lightstorm* (Feb 98)
- Maggie Furey *Sorceress* (Feb 98)

Orion Books have generously donated six sets of the first four titles... and all you have to do to get one is write a letter or email to *Matrix*. First come first served!

is introduced to the miracle of the Web. While exploring the virtual reality, Ana discovers that for reasons has captured other street kids and is keeping them captive inside the Web... for whom that become clear with the unfolding of the plot.

It was the first novel I had written for children (the target age is 10 to 14). I observed a few obvious tenets of the discipline: I kept the sentences in general shorter than those I used in my adult work, the vocabulary a little simpler, and kept character introspection to a minimum. Other strictures, which I thought I might find limiting, in the event did not bother me: no swear words (W. H. Smiths don't like them) and no gratuitous violence. What struck me most about the experience of writing for children was how similar it is to writing for adults: I brought the same techniques of construction, characterisation and plotting to bear on the novel as I did with my adult work. What mattered was to get the reader interested in the plight of the central character. There had to be emotional involvement with the aims and wishes of the heroine. The reader had to be taken through the same roller-coaster

ride of discovery, ambition, disappointment, success – and all the permutations thereof – that occur in more sophisticated adult fiction. The reader, whether an adult or a child, wants to share in the adventures of a character he or she finds believable and sympathetic. To this end I constructed the novel with plenty of twists and turns, chases and escapes, revelations of character and insights... or at least I hope I did.

I delivered a third draft to Simon before the deadline date in September 1996. He came back with a list of comments and suggestions, both to improve the novel as was and to make it fit with the other books in the series.

The publication of the series would commence with two books in July 1997, the next two in October, and the last pair of titles in February 1998.

One comment from Simon, about the finished series of novels in general, was about how each of us had brought to our respective books interests and preoccupations exclusively our own: although each book conformed to the specifics of the future Simon had envisioned and we had fleshed out, we had used the template to explore themes and ideas interesting to each of us.

Stephen Baxter's book, *Gulliverzone*, is set in England and in a vast Web theme park based on *Gulliver's Travels*, and is furiously paced and full of throwaway ideas and detail: for instance, in 2027 Boris Becker is the Chancellor of Europe, and the Poet Laureate is Damon Albarn.

Dreamcastle by Stephen Bowkett introduces us to a group of children from a small town in New England who use the Web to access D&D-style adventure zones, until their games lead to unforeseen consequences.

In *Lightstorm* by Peter Hamilton, a young invalid boy uses the Web to investigate the ecological corruption by a realworld energy company, at great risk to himself and his Web-friends.

Graham Joyce's *Spiderbite* is set in England and follows the adventures of three friends who call themselves the Tech-Rats, and their involvement with the sinister Planetologists, a religious cult intent on brainwashing the populace through the manipulation of the Web.

Maggie Furey has the unenviable task of wrapping up the series with the last book of the six, *Sorceress*, set in Greece, links with the other books in the culminating story of the eponymous sorceress who, obsessed with avoiding death by attempting to achieve immortality in the Web itself, endangers the lives of the two Greek girls and the young English boy who stumble upon her plans.

Orion books have put a lot of effort into the marketing and advertising of the Web books, which looks likely to pay off if pre-publication interest equates to sales. The series has already been translated into Italian; Germany and France are showing interest, and a second series of six books has been commissioned for publication in 1998.

— © Eric Brown 1997

William Shakespeare

Gary Dalkin argues that Branagh's *Hamlet* is the finest fantasy film ever made

So it is that Denmark is overrun by a rival prince, the storming and seizure of the palace intercut against the deaths of Claudius and Hamlet, evoking the dramatic and brutal arrival of the forces of Wayland Yafani in the climax of *Alien³*. Such a comparison might seem bizarre, yet both contain the same feel of events running out of control, of self-sacrifice and redemption in a world gone wrong. Hermetically sealed worlds are breached by forces from outside, and a sort of justice is restored. Unlike in previous *Hamlets* there is less a feeling of tragedy than renewal and a new beginning, for Branagh has created an Elsinor which is not a dark, gloom-struck Gothic edifice, but a home full of light, colour and – until the murder – love. With the cleansing violence perhaps normal life with its joy and laughter can return to the land.

It is in the creation of Elsinor itself that the film is most fantastical. Blenheim Palace on the outside, the largest set ever built in a British studio on the inside, Hamlet's home as dreamt by Branagh is a 19th century Ruritanian marvel, all gold, endlessly reflecting floor-length mirrors, marble staircases and chessboard patterned floors upon which the drama is played. It is a visual creation quite unlike anything ever seen on film before, and establishes its own reality quite as much as the densely textured worlds of Ridley Scott or Terry Gilliam. Given the four-hour running time (Branagh films the complete text of the play; all previous films and many stage versions are cut) and the added depth and clarity of the 70mm film format, the audience is drawn into the alternative universe of Elsinor in a way no other film has ever managed to achieve. Branagh's *Hamlet* is in essence a Christian allegory of the consequences of defying the order of creation, set in a fantastical parallel Victorian world. It is undoubtedly the most ambitious British film since *Lawrence of Arabia*. In addition to the epic running length and enormous visual scale given by the vast sets, locations and format, the play itself – by general opinion the greatest in the language, if not the world – there is the cast. Beyond those already

named, *Hamlet* features Charlton Heston, John Mills, John Gielgud, Jack Lemmon, Billy Crystal, Richard Briers, Robin Williams, Ken Dodd and Richard Attenborough. The film has many of the ingredients of the modern fantasy novel: great length, court intrigue and a pseudo-historical setting with supernatural incursions. It lacks a dark lord set to conquer all (fortunately) and has much better dialogue. Branagh creates such intensity and drive that the film races by, feeling shorter than many pictures half its length. The result is a most intelligent, thrilling, moving and visually ravishing epic. It is not just Branagh's finest film by far, but both the finest fantasy film and the finest British film ever made. If you think that's hyperbole, go and see it, but make sure you see one of the 70mm prints in a cinema with a huge screen, magnetic six-channel sound, excellent projection and very comfortable seats. Anything less would be a travesty.

— © Gary Dalkin 1997

A Midsummer Night's Dream – Director Adrian Noble. Cast: Lindsay Duncan, Alex Jennings, Barry Lynch, Desmond Barritt.

105 minutes. Widescreen 1.1.85. Cert. PG. Released 29 November 1996

William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet – Director Baz Luhrmann. 20th Century Fox.

Producers Luhrmann, Gabriella Martinelli, Martin Brown. Screenplay Luhrmann, Craig Pearce.

William Shakespeare. Cast: Leonardo DiCaprio, Claire Danes, John Leguizamo, Minnie Driver, Pete Postlethwaite.

CinemaScope 1.23.5. Cert. 12. Released 28 March 1997.

William Shakespeare's Hamlet – Director Kenneth Branagh. Cast: Branagh, Kate Winslet,

Derek Jacobi, Brian Blessed, Julie Christie, Charlton Heston, John Mills, John Gielgud, Gerard

Depardieu, Jack Lemmon, Michael Maloney, Judi Dench, Billy Crystal, Richard Briers, Robin

Williams, Ken Dodd, Richard Attenborough. Adapted screenplay Branagh. Music Patrick Doyle.

Photography Alex Thomson. Production Design Tim Harvey. Producer David Barron.

240 minutes. 70mm 1.2.2 (shown in some cinemas in a 35mm CinemaScope reduction).

Cert. PG. Released 14 February 1997.

Rope Tricks

science fiction after socialism

David Curl

(A) WARE THAT I was moving through a Twilight Zone of contemporary politics, I was a fascinated, appalled spectator of the recent General Election campaign. I contributed some of my time and effort towards the Great Victory, as I'll remember all my life... just as I'll also remember the election-night party that I attended and the alcohol poisoning that I suffered from on Day One of the New Era. Traditional party political narratives have been shown by recent events to be in an advanced state of degeneration. The best that the Conservative Party could do, campaign-wise, was 'Britain is Booming: Don't Let Labour Blow It', an inept version of an older and better slogan which, themed around 'Great Again' and 'Ruin', chimed more convincingly with some of the national myths. This poster alternated amusingly with a similarly-coloured ad for Harpic on a billboard which I pass every day on my way to work; elsewhere it was photographed next to derelict building sites and other apparent sources of blight. Conversely, the Labour Party took power as "a party of the radical centre", as, according to its leader, a "social-ist" party. Managerial competence blended with a kind of High Anglican philanthropy seems to be the tone of the new government, and this is at least better than the mixture of incompetence and corruption which characterised the last years of the Major regime.

However: happening to arrive at Trafalgar Square at 6.30pm on Sunday 13 April, I discovered that a riot had occurred following the previous day's Liverpool Dockers / Reclaim the Streets demo. The Square smelled of urine; the bins were overflowing and there was rubbish everywhere. The nineteenth-century architecture of central London -

nothing but shops and offices and official buildings and statues, it all belongs to capital or the state... ornate, gross, centuries of surplus value stored up like fat!

- was overscrawled with graffiti:

**ART FOR ALL
OR NOT AT ALL**

over the National Gallery;

SUK SALAD

(what?)

...and, over and over, the anarchy symbol

and

**RECLAIM
THE
STREETS**



politics
and
Sf

David Curl lives in Holloway, North London, with his wife Helen and hamster Magnus. He currently works at a hostel for the mentally ill, and has written for various small fiction and poetry zines, including Works, Massacre, TTBA and The Third Alternative.

Everywhere, pink Anti-Election Alliance stickers reading

**FUCK MIDDLE ENGLAND,
BRAINEAD TORY BASTARDS**

**USE YOUR CROSS WISELY,
CRUCIFY A POLITICIAN**

**TO ALL CANDIDATES
AND CANVASSERS
IN THIS CONSTITUENCY:
FUCK OFF**

Strange that a coalition between a militant group of trade unionists on the one hand and a bunch of eco-utopians on the other should crystallise from the urban scene all the anger and abandonment and fear and rage felt by those whom the evolving consensus ignores. There: the refusal by people who once would have allied themselves with some grand left-libertarian and world-historical vision to ally themselves with any kind of programme. Joyous speed-driven idiocy. Living for the moment.

From the beginnings of modernity until now, many of us have lived according to a dream of freedom. This dream, which at its heart concerns the inevitability of progress and the perfectibility of human nature, has existed in many forms and borne many names. It's haunted our own century as Socialism, a creed which has, especially in its Marxist forms, tended finally to efface the religious sense of history as necessarily bounded or cyclical, replacing it with the more scientific notion of history as both linear and unbounded. Marxism propounds a materialist Heaven on Earth, perhaps many generations hence - a millennial hope which has been used to justify the infliction of suffering in the here and now; a new Pascalian wager no less cynical than the original one - but one day sure to arrive.

This story has been influential within fantastic fiction; fantastic fiction has helped to shape the contours of the story, which is so influential that even the stories told by the dream's enemies are warped by its gravity. Conservatives like to tell the tale of a governing class established as such through some unexplained act of Providence. When corrupt, these creatures - who in any case live beyond any ordinary or common morality - are corrupt on a grand scale. Some horror stories, vampire stories especially, are analogues of this narrative. Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the protagonist of Edgar Allan Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher": these are aristocratic figures, thrust into the darkness, *changed*, under the new light of democracy. The grandeur of vampires and the covert readerly sympathy that they often attract can be ascribed to the perverse attraction felt by the modern democratic subject for the older forms and assumptions of arbitrary power. To give a late example, R. A. Lafferty's short fiction looks back to the grand aristocratic cynicism of the past, the old unquestionable forms of excellence. The commanding presence of these ghosts in his fictions renders ironic Lafferty's apparent support of the ever-expanding universe, the ever-expanding curriculum. In the nutshell of a Lafferty short story, we see the enemies grapple: truly, in an sf short written by a master of the genre, the metaphorical poem lives again.

But mainstream sf has usually subscribed to the socialist view of history, or to one of its analogues. As dominant within sf as the modernising faction within the Labour Party, there's the story of a heroically sensible group of technocratic reformers taking over and using the world-machinery for the general good. In postwar sf, one thinks of Asimov, whose mid-1940s 'Foundation' sequence revolves around an elite group of 'psychohistorians' who have effectively discovered history's rulebook; the sequence shows the group's struggle to preserve human knowledge beyond the fall of the Galactic Empire, thereby shortening the inevitable age of darkness that must result. 'Psychohistory' and

Marxism-Leninism both claim to be 'sciences' of human development. However, whereas the latter sought to appeal, at least in principle, to the oppressed peoples of the world, the former is necessarily and unashamedly elitist. After all, one of psychohistory's axioms is

that the human conglomerate may itself be unaware of psychohistory analysis in order that its reactions be truly random.²

This is in effect a codification of how American capitalism regarded itself at the time the sequence was written. The system, not usually acknowledged as such then or now but rather seen as part of natural order along with the laws of physics, depended upon each company attempting to maintain a competitive edge in terms of knowledge and technique, themselves conceived as forms of property. In particular, competition between firms selling similar products was often focused around the disciplines of advertising and market research, which saw the public as an uninformed mass to be statistically investigated and programmed: this is precisely psychohistory's attitude to the broad mass of people. Thus the drives and techniques of postwar American capitalism, which saw itself as the saving grace of a world in which previous Empires were finished, decimated by war, are converted by a kind of alchemy into a complete scientific system to rival that claimed by the USSR. Reluctantly, one has to admit that it is a great tribute to Stalinism that a nation as backward at the start of the century as Russia should force an American mythologist into this kind of defensive manoeuvre; likewise that the free-market Americans should have been forced into the New Deal, the Marshall Plan, and so on.

In terms of the direct influence of socialism within sf, one thinks of course of H. G. Wells, and through him of all the early and Golden Age science fiction which glorifies a wise and benevolent scientific elite. Many of the early twentieth-century writers explicitly endorsed socialism, with rather than against their better natures. Often, after becoming intoxicated with their own supposed rationality and sound judgement, they set up, in place of the God in whom they self-consciously disbelieved, grand capital-lettered abstractions such as Reason or Mankind. Eventually, Wizard of Oz style, they found that they themselves had to ventriloquise in order to hear their abstractions speak. Now, I wouldn't want to denigrate Wells, one of the founders of sf and in his early life not only sane and grounded, but also in his own person a representation of the new-found articulation of the lower middle-classes and an energetic refutation of the notion of the writer as gentleman. Some of his early short fiction, notably "The New Accelerator" and "The Man Who Could Work Miracles", is astonishing and haunting simply for the way in which it celebrates the glory of anomalously rapid motion. Then in his early novels – *The Time Machine*, *The First Men in the Moon*, *The War of the Worlds*, *The Island of Dr Moreau* et al. – Wells provides a series of possibilities for the human race, with science as both good (innocently exhilarating) and bad, capable of hurling an Edwardian space capsule complete with comfortable sofas and gilt trimmings Moonwards, capable also of creating the kind of holocaust of evil and misconceived genetic engineering that eerily prefigures the actual 'experimentation' carried out by the Nazis fifty years later. The Sphinx in *The Time Machine* stands as an ambiguous emblem of all that is unquestionable and yet must be questioned; the Palace of Green Porcelain, so like the palaeontological museums that Wells himself would have visited, stands for the persistence of memory, the sense that has haunted and continues to haunt sf that its own concern for the future is an illusion, and that the eeriness of the present is its true subject. By the time of *The Shape of Things to Come* however, one of Wells's most influential 'novels' in terms of the way in which subsequent writers have dreamed of sf's political mission, Wells had himself become a self-deluding ventriloquist. *Things to Come* is so literal in its recitation of dates and statistics, so concerned with the present-day for at least its first third that it might well have been called *Things That Already Are*. Similarly, Wells's bullying, self-righteous insistence on the wrong-headedness of believing in nation-states, re-armament, and war grates when one remembers that he was also, a couple of years into the First World War, the author of the national-chauvinist keep-yeer-spirits-up classic *Mr Britling Sees It Through*. No artist can be perfectly consistent, but on the other hand each and every work of fiction needs some grain of humility or of final scepticism in order to preserve it as something worth reading. Over the last century, the idea of faultless linear prediction has soured sf; likewise, the loud insistence on one unalterable party line and the concomitant neglect of the inner life has often changed socialism into another form of oppression.

Lastly there's the story of the anarchic wonderland we could live in, if only everyone ceased sanctioning, by voting and in countless other ways, our present civilisation. This is perhaps the oldest fantastic narrative, the dream of a flight from human civilisation into a state which is at once the apotheosis of civilisation, and a return to some older, more 'natural' order. It's also not merely a spectre haunting the world, but a phantasm driving it; in another sense it is the

Communist fiction shorn of its armourplate (naked, unaccommodated, the thing itself). Ursula Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas" is about those who choose to walk from a social contract which allows ease and comfort for the many at the expense of one small child's suffering; those with true integrity simply walk away into an unexplained and perilous Beyond. *The Dispossessed* is similarly a dream of flight, with anarchist refugees from the authoritarian planet Urras setting up their own society on its sister-world, Anarres. For this anarchist community, capitalism is the self-evidently ridiculous and near-unimaginable Other; when Shevek and some of his friends begin to feel that some of the principles of Anarres's foundation have become obscured by the growing power of the planet's bureaucracy and finally admit to themselves that they have been oppressed within the supposedly free society, they dream of another escape, of an Anarres beyond Anarres.

The important thing to remember about all of these stories, the conservative story, the Fabian or managerial story, and the anarchist story, is that they are all (but least of all anarchism, which is not only more spiritual, but also more corporate) in some sense fantasies, tricks. As with all abstractions, they depend upon us replacing our remembered sensory and kinaesthetic experience with something simpler, more totemic. When this trick cannot be performed then the world becomes as chaotic as that inhabited by the eponymous hero of the Borges story "Funes the Memorious", full of countless sense impressions and absolutely incapable of any abstraction. Funes is forever engaged upon quixotic attempts to effect a kind of closure at infinity, wishing to order the world with, for example, his own solipsistic system of numbers –

Luis Melián Latínur, Olimar, sulphur, the reins, the whale, the gas, the cauldron, Napoleon, Agustín de Vedia.³

and so on, interminably – but finding these efforts doomed before they even begin. We are doomed to the same kind of failure, living in a late-capitalist, media-saturated world filled with the decayed fragments of the once-grand narratives. One thing that the conservative and social-reformist narratives described above have in common is that they are all linear: they all relate our small struggles in the here-and-now with some grander world-historical struggle to preserve the best of the old ways, or else to realise the good society. Implicitly or explicitly the socialist story and its analogues depend upon a future boundless in its possibilities, and it is for that reason that they fail to gain any purchase in the contemporary world. We now find ourselves, for the first time in human history, without a geographical or political frontier: the Space Race, despite NASA's Mars programme, seems both irrelevant and mundane in a way that would have seemed impossible fifty or thirty years ago. Technology progresses, but as the dreams of sf are realised (sort of) we find ourselves living amongst the real world faultlines of 'Actual Machines'

and not

the power-fantasy techno-dreams of 'Fucking Magic'.⁴

Previous FM dreams seem remote, ghostly, parodic. Moreover, we now find ourselves inescapably aware of our own limitations and those of the planet and the universe. The implications of, for example, Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem, of chaos theory and of quantum physics have now largely filtered through: sf readers and writers now instinctively realise, in a way that we didn't in the fifties, that the nineteenth-century dreams of human perfectibility, of arbitrarily fine measurement and prediction, are over. Much of the best sf written over the last thirty years is, for want of a better word, archeological: one thinks of Ballard's explorations of strange mental states and of post-technological landscapes, notably

the rusting gantries in abandoned, rubbish-strewn Cape Canaveral, the empty swimming pools and motels, the dead astronauts marooned in still-orbiting capsules.⁵

One also thinks of the Jerry Cornelius sequence written by Michael Moorcock and others, which celebrates the dream of the sixties, a time when the Whig view of inevitable progress reached its apotheosis and then disintegrated. The sequence begins with Jerry as a dangerous, sexy, androgynous playboy, a polymorphously perverse James Bond, a Messiah for a time when one could

wander in and out of the professions as though these were merely french windows on the stage set of our lives.⁶

By the time of *The Condition of Muzak*, published in 1977, the stage sets of life seemed more tawdry, the universe of personal and sexual experimentation, of endless fun and pleasure, of ever-ready research-fellowships, was by this time a contracting one. Likewise, Stephen Baxter's stories "Prospero One", "Zemlya" and "Sun God" are ways of excavating and thus mourning the limitless dreams of space, a dream which now seems to belong to an earlier and more primitive age. In Ken MacLeod's *The Star Fraction*, the history of socialism is itself mined: in this novel of factions, of situationist wordplay, of all the last wars fought at once, the left seems to have effaced itself and disappeared. In today's world we, like Funes, are in danger of making nothing out of too much; or else finding ourselves, led by a suddenly redundant wish to push back the frontiers, lured into some

opinion

Time up for the Clarke Award?

John Jarrold is one of the half-dozen or so people in the UK who decide what science fiction and fantasy you can read. He's currently *sf* editor at Simon & Schuster, preparing for the launch of their new *sf* imprint Earthlight, and has previously been editor at Legend, Macdonald and Orbit/Futura. But here he takes off his editorial hat and speaks personally, as a long-time reader...

THE ARTHUR C. CLARKE AWARD. Oh, deary, deary me. Most years since the inception of the Award, in 1986, the shortlist has been wrong-headed, inept and plain stupid. But this year, they really went to town. Two top class *sf* novels – by Kim Stanley Robinson and Stephen Baxter – three perfectly good novels which had no place on a Best of the Year shortlist, and a Picador literary novel which is fine, nothing special, but more to the point NOT A SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL. Depends on your definition of a science fiction novel, say you. Any novel which is published as a science fiction novel, say I.

Christ almighty. You'd think it was fairly simple, wouldn't you, to at least find six of the best *sf* novels every year with which to make up a shortlist. So why do the Clarke committee always screw up? Their decisions make Nostradamus's centuries look crystal clear. This year's shortlist doesn't just take the biscuit for ineptitude and unbelief – it bought Peek Freans and McVities wholesale.

Let's make it simple. Iain M. Banks's *Excession* would have been worthy of winning the Clarke Award in any year since 1986. This is not to mention Peter F. Hamilton's *The Reality Dysfunction* or Ken MacLeod's *The Stone Canal*. I do not believe that the judges for this award went into the final session without these books on any of their shortlists – I simply don't believe it. So how did none of them end up on the shortlist? Please, please don't tell me "We found six better novels," because I would hate to call anyone a liar, cheat and scoundrel. Nor do I.

So, what are we left with? This year's Clarke Award was won by *The Calculus Chromosome* by Amitav Ghosh, published by Picador. The paperback came out this month (August), and has no mention, anywhere, of the fact that this book won the Clarke Award. There was plenty of time to add a mention, if Picador had wished to do so. Instead, they ran a mile, not wishing their readers to believe that a Picador novel could possibly be connected with such a downmarket genre as *sf*. Many of the major bookselling chains have shown interest in the Clarke Award, but this will not last when even the publishers of the winning entry show no interest in publicising the fact. If one of the purposes of the Clarke Award is to publicise *sf*, as is often said, then this is an abject failure.

All I can do to call on every UK science fiction editor to call time on a totally discredited award. And I say this with immense sorrow, because the UK desperately needs a major *sf* award. Unfortunately, the Arthur C. Clarke Award can no longer be the one. It hurts me deeply, since Arthur himself was one of the first *sf* writers I ever read, and this article has nothing to do with disrespect to him. I still respect him, as I have always done, as one of the fathers of modern *sf*. I'm afraid that the people who have made up – and I use the term advisedly – such ridiculous shortlists have done Arthur no favour. Even more importantly, they have pissed on the best *sf* novels in recent years, more times than not. This year in particular.

— © John Jarrold 1997

— Continued from previous page

abyss of self-abasement (noose; McDonald's; the Spice Girls) or else blank uncomprehending hate (the noose dangled by Class War supporters in front of a moderate trade union leader at a public gathering). There are no great crusades for artistic freedom left in Europe or America; sure, we may pragmatically wish that the film *Crash* be available to those who want to see it, but the polemics put out by those who are libertarians-and-nothing-else, the diatribes about the best instincts of the British people

and so forth which flow from the decent-and-nothing-else tabloids... these seem rehearsed. To live in an illusion of freedom is to live in the outpost-ghetto that the characters in Simon Avery's "Anonymity Walks" ¹¹ imprison themselves within. Moving through an eternal December, forever broke, choosing partners and ideas as though in some slow depressive underwater version of shopping... and above all, never, never calling their parents because this would be a kind of betrayal.

Well, well. "Ours is not to look back", as Mark E. Smith, lead singer of The Fall once remarked. "Ours is to continue the crack". We have to be centred enough to value the past, without becoming entranced (depression has been described as a trance-like state) with some myth of the Golden Age. If we can look at science fiction's first hundred years as a separable genre coldly and justly then we may be able to write the kind of visionary *sf* which has a mature and joyous sense of itself, and which has at its heart a kind of final scepticism. Otherwise, we will be crushed under the boulder of nostalgia, and the *sf* that we produce will be a kind of exhausted pastiche, grand but with no life-giving connection to real sensory

Paul Kincaid is, of course, reviews editor of *Vector*. He's also the author of *A Very British Genre*, a short history of British *sf* and fantasy, and has previously been the Administrator of the BSFA and co-editor of *Matrix*. But the hat he wears here is as Administrator of the Arthur C. Clarke Award, a post he's held since 1995 when he took over from David Barrett.

JOHNN JARROLD, oh deary me! Clearly he cannot trust judges as reputable as authors Gwyneth Jones and Ian Watson, critics Andrew Butler and Steve Jeffery, or lifelong *sf* reader Lord Mark Birdwood to choose worthy science fiction from the fifty books they read during the year.

I confess myself puzzled by his definition of a science fiction novel. *The Calculus Chromosome* was published by Picador, who do not have a science fiction imprint, and so it was not published as science fiction. But then, Picador's parent company, Macmillan, does not have a science fiction imprint either, so when they published Peter F. Hamilton's *The Reality Dysfunction* it was, by this definition, no more *sf* than *The Calculus Chromosome*. Yet John seems to feel that Hamilton's novel should have been considered.

The judges all felt that *The Calculus Chromosome* was science fiction, so did the author, so did the reviewers (see, for example, Brian Stableford's review in *Vector* 192). John may disagree, but most other people who have read the book seem to consider it unequivocally science fiction. Most other people who have read the book also seem to feel that it was a worthy winner of the Clarke Award. John is entitled to his opinion, and without breaking the confidence of the judges I cannot explain why they disagreed with his personal opinion about what should have won. I can, however, say that the judges' decision was as near unanimous as I have ever known in the short history of the Clarke Award, and the judges all agreed that, upon re-reading, *The Calculus Chromosome* provided more of what they expected from a good science fiction novel than any of the other books under consideration.

I notice that John did not make a song and dance about the Clarke being a discredited award last year, when the runner-up was Ken MacLeod who was then published by John. No award is completely free of criticism, and no one will agree with every single decision of the jury, but I can't help feeling that such intemperance pisses on *sf* far more than the Arthur C. Clarke Award.

— © Paul Kincaid 1997

• A complete list of past Clarke Award shortlists and judges can be found in *Matrix* 121.

The Shortlist

- Stephen Baxter (Voyager £16.99) • Amitav Ghosh *The Calculus Chromosome* (Picador £15.99) • Jack McDevitt *Engines of God* (Voyager £5.99) • Kim Stanley Robinson *Blue Mars* (Voyager £9.99) • Sheri S. Tepper *Gibson's Decline and Fall* (Voyager £9.99) • N. Lee Wood *Looking for the Mahdi* (Vista £5.99)

The Judges

British Science Fiction Association: Dr Andrew M. Butler and Steve Jeffery
International Science Policy Foundation: Lord Mark Birdwood (Dr Maurice Goldsmith died earlier this year)
Science Fiction Foundation: Gwyneth Jones and Ian Watson

experience. May God also forbid that we become the "loyalists" of any consensus, however benign or inspired: as with human designs generally, the political projects of these times will succeed and fail, proving good for some people and bad for others. As for what happens now, well, we can listen to the fading of the old Marxist story into the endless white noise of history, or watch its displacement into cyberspace as happens in Ken MacLeod's firework display of left-wing erudition. We can then read vampire novels, because vampires, no matter how faint their vital signs, are never finally dead; or, better, we can switch off the news, walk away from our political allegiances, turn aside from the old dreams... and fall endlessly into the darkness back towards the body and spirit.

— © David Curl 1997

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3. Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths* (London: Penguin, 1970), p.83.
4. Bruce Sterling, "A Workshop Lexicon": *Interzone* 39, September 1990.
5. Stephen Baxter, *Twisting Ganties and Lawn Ornaments*: *Interzone* 105, March 1996.
6. Trevor Blackwell & Jeremy Seabrook, *The Politics of Hope: Britain at the End of the Twentieth Century* (London: Faber & Faber, 1988), p.17.
7. *Interzone* 112, October 1996; with Simon Bradshaw.
8. Asimov's, Vol. 21 No. 1, January 1997.
9. *Interzone* 120, June 1997.
10. Daily Mail editorial, 6 June 1997.
11. *The Third Alternative* 11, Winter 1996-7.

read me first

- Please enclose an SAE when contacting conventions.
- Efforts are made to ensure the accuracy of all the information here, but always check first.
- 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.

regulars

BSFA London Meetings

The BSFA's regular London meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month (except December), 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 0181 333 6670 for further information.

24 Sep 97, 22 Oct 97, 26 Nov 97.

London Circle Meetings

Also at the Jubilee Tavern (see above), '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!

2 Oct 97, 6 Nov 97, 4 Dec 97.

Birmingham — The Brum SF Group meets on the second Friday of the month at a pub in Birmingham; contact them for details. Membership is £15 per year, which includes a monthly newsletter.

☎ Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarks Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX.
☎ brumsf@btinternet.com

Cambridge — Cambridge SF Group meets on the second Monday of the month in The Wrestlers, New Market Road, Cambridge.

• Cambridge Fantasy Group meets on the second Sunday of the month in the Zebra pub on Newmarket St., Cambridge.
☎ John Oram, 3 Outlands Ave., Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8EQ

Cardiff — Cardiff SF Group meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in Wellington's Café Bar, 42 The Hayes, Cardiff.

Colchester — Colchester SF / Horror / Fantasy Group meets on the third Saturday of each month at 12.30pm in The Playhouse pub in St. John's Street.

☎ Des Lewis on 0125 812119

Hull — The Hull SF Group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, 8pm to 10.30pm at Ye Old Blue Bell, Market Place, Hull.

☎ Ian & Julie on 01482 447953 or Dave & Estelle on 01482 444291.

Leicester — Leicester SF Group meets on the first Friday of the month; venue varies.

☎ Tim Groom on 0116 279 2280
☎ rbeane@globalnet.co.uk

Manchester — FONT meets in Waterspoons' pub (on the corner of Piccadilly Gardens, near the BR station) on the second and fourth Thursdays in the month, 8pm onwards.

☎ Mike Don on 0161 226 2980

Peterborough — The Peterborough SF Club meets on the first Wednesday of the month at the Bluebell Inn, Dogsthorpe, and on the third Wednesday of the month in the bar at the Great Northern Hotel, opposite the BR station.

☎ SAE to: 58 Pennington, Oulton Grindley, Peterborough, PE2 5RB.

Portsmouth — The South Hants SF Group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at The Magpie, Fratton Road, Portsmouth.

Reading — Reading SF Group meets weekly on Mondays at 9.00pm in The Sun, Castle Street, Reading.

26-28 Sep 1997: Masque 5

Costuming con at the Sheringham Youth Hostel, Sheringham, Norfolk. Reg. £25 to 31 Jul, thence £30. Hostel accommodation £25 ppn full board.

☎ 35 Ivyfield Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 3EP

☎ Masque5@compulink.com, uk

27-28 Sep 1997: Hypothetical '97

'Scotland's Other National Convention', Central Hotel, Glasgow. Guests: Anne Gay, Brian Waugh. Reg. £15 att, £5 spn. [to 1 Jun].

☎ Hypothetical '97, Flat 3L, 38 Scotstoun Street, Glasgow, G14 0UN

☎ http://web.ukonline.co.uk/hypothetical/

23 Oct-2 Nov 1997: Coachcon

Coach trip starting in London, via Portmeirion, to Euro-Octocon in Ireland, and back to London for the World Fantasy Convention.

☎ SAE or 2xIRCs to 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX

25-27 Oct 1997: Euro-Octocon '97

The 1997 Eurocon and Ireland's national sf con combined, at Dublin Castle. Guests include Robert Jordan, Gid Alderman, Dave Duncan, Maggie Furey, Katherine Kurtz, Harry Harrison, Morgan Llywelyn, Michael Scott, Freda Warrington, and Chris Reed of SBR (reflecting a small press stream in the programming). Reg. £30. Accommodation must be booked well in advance.

☎ Eurocon '97, PO Box 5130, Dublin 4, Ireland

☎ karen@eicon.com

☎ http://www.iol.ie/~carroll/eurocon/

English agent: D. J. Lally, No 2 alc, 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX

☎ 0171 735 3819

29 Oct 1997: Unofficial pre-WFC Gathering

The Jubilee pub, Waterloo (see BSFA details in 'Regulars').

30 Oct-2 Nov 1997: World Fantasy Convention
Theme is Dracula, 100 years old. Venue is the Britannia International Hotel in London's Docklands. The vast guest list includes Iain Sinclair, Joan Aiken, Bob Eggleton with Rob Holdstock as MC. Reg. £100 att, £30 spn.

☎ PO Box 31, Whitby, North Yorks., YO22 4YL

7 Nov 1997: Colin Greenland

... will be appearing at the Taylor Room, Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool on at 12pm, to mark the presentation of his papers to the SF Foundation Collection.

☎ Andy Sawyer on asawyer@liverpool.ac.uk

☎ http://www.liv.ac.uk/~asawyer/sffcfhome.html

10-15 Nov 1997: Wyrd Sisters

Stage version of the Pratchett novel, adapted by Stephen Briggs, at the Crescent Theatre, Brindleyplace, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tickets £5 advance/concessions, £7 on the door. ☎ 0121 643 5858 (Mon-Fri 11am-4pm)

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 £30 until 30 Sep. Warning: the hotel is filling up! There are no single or double rooms left.

☎ 14 Park Street, Lyte, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS

14-16 Nov 1997: Cozy Con 2

Relaxation at the Atlanta Hotel, The Hague. Reg. £18 att, £9 spn. Hotel £20 ppn shared.

☎ Annemarie van Eywck, Obrechtstraat 4, 2517 VT Den Haag, Netherlands

☎ vantent@ew.eur.nl

21-23 Nov 1997: ArmadaCon IX

Astor Hotel in Plymouth. Guests Colin Greenland, David Hardy. Registration £25, £20 unwaged.

☎ 4 Glenaege Avenue, Mannamead, Plymouth, Devon, PL3 5HL

☎ 01752 267873 or 01752 673295

13-14 Dec 1997: Babylon 5 Academic Conference

Presented in association with the SF Foundation at University College of Ripon & York St John in York. Cost inclusive of accommodation is £75, or non-residential with meals £48. Both include the conference dinner.

☎ Farah Mendesohn, Faculty of Humanities, University College of Ripon & York St John, Lord Mayor's Walk, York,

YO3 7EX

☎ fm7@york.ac.uk

6-8 Feb 1998: Decadence

The tenth British Film (of music) convention at the Forte Posthouse Hotel, Gatwick. Reg. £24 att, £10 spn.

☎ Top Flat, 11 Evesham Road, Chalfont, GL52 2AA

☎ decadence@29m2.demon.co.uk

☎ http://www.29m2.demon.co.uk/

28 Feb - 1 Mar 1998: Microcon 18

Venue is Devonshire House, Stocker Road, Exeter. Reg. £5, £20 students.

☎ Microcon 18, 25 Victoria Street, Exeter, EX4 6JA

13-16 Mar 1998: Corflu

Ian Sorensen's Corflu - the fanzine fans' convention - to the UK for the first time. Location is the Griffin Hotel in Leeds. Reg. £25 att, £5 spn, rooms £25 ppn double/twin, £40 ppn single.

☎ Ian Sorensen, 7 Woodside Way, Hamilton, ML3 7HY

☎ ian@sorensen.demon.co.uk

27-29 Mar 1998: Deliverance

Blake's Seven con at the Royal Moat House, Nottingham. Reg. £45 att, serving 1 June.

☎ Deliverance, 18 Bury Ave., Newport Pagnell, Bucks., MK16 0ED

10-14 April 1998: Intuition

The 1998 Eastercon at the Piccadilly Jarvis Hotel in Manchester. Guests Connie Willis, Ian McDonald and Martin Tudor. Reg. £30 att, £15 spn.

☎ Intuition, 1 Waverley Way, Carshalton Beches, Surrey, SM5 3LD

☎ INTUITION@snof.demon.co.uk

☎ http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/~acb/intuition/intuition_index.html

22-25 May 1998: Lazlar Lyricon II

Hitch Hiker's Guide con run by the Z29 fan club celebrating the 20th anniversary of the series; venue Scotch Corner Hotel, Darlington. Reg. £30, guests Kevin Davis, Dirk Maggs.

☎ 67 South Park Gardens, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 1HZ

3-5 Jul 1998: Intercontact '98

University of Oslo, Norway. Guests Gwyneth Jones, Pat Cadigan, Johannes Berg. Reg. £15 att, £5 spn.

☎ Intercontact '98, PO Box 121 Blindern, 0313 Oslo, Norway

☎ elf@origo.no

10-12 Jul 1998: Infinity

Angel Hotel, Cardiff. Guests include Colin Baker, Ed Bishop, Dave Prowse, Jack Cohen, Lionel Fanthorpe, Andy Sawyer. Reg. £40.

☎ Infinity, Swn Y Nant, 12 St John Street, Treherbert, CF42 5PR

☎ infinitysffcon@hotmail.com

☎ http://www.cf.ac.uk/ccin/main/ents/sffcon/infinity.html

10-15 August: Bucconeer

The 56th Worldcon at Baltimore, Maryland. Guests C. J. Cherryh, Milton A. Rothman, Stanley Schmidt, Michael Whelan. Reg. \$80 att. (plus various complications if you voted or pre-suggested).

UK Agent:

☎ John Dallman, c/o EDS Unigraphics, Parker's House, 46 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1DB

☎ 01223 570179

☎ jsg@icx.compulink.co.uk

General info:

☎ baltimore98@access.digex.net

☎ http://www.access.digex.net/~balt98

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. Reg. £65 (institutional scheme available, under 17s half price, under 12s free. Room £40ppn triple, £42ppn double or twin, £47ppn single).

☎ The Wrap Party, PO Box 505, Reading, RG1 7QZ

☎ TheWrapParty@bipin.co.uk

☎ http://www.bipin.co.uk/TheWrapParty

11-13 Sep 1998: Fantasycon 22

British Fantasy Society con, Venue Albany Hotel, Birmingham, guest **Freda Warrington** plus more TBA.
 ☐ BFS, 2 Harwood Street, Stockport, SK4 1JJ

18-21 Sep 1998: Discworld Convention II

The second convention devoted to all things Pratchett takes place at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool, with guests including one-guest, **Stephen Briggs** and **Dave Langford**.
 ☐ PO Box 3086, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8TY

25-28 Sep 1998: Albacore '98

Central Hotel, Glasgow, G2 5AT. £15 sup. Guests **Ray Harryhausen**, **Diana Wynne Jones**, **Kim Newman**.
 ☐ Albacore '98, F1/2, 10 Atlas Road, Glasgow, G21 4TE

2-5 Apr 1999: Reconvene

The last Eastercon of the twentieth century at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Guests **Jeff Moon**, **Peter S. Beagle**, **John Clute**. G25 att. £152 sup., discounts for unwaged.

☐ 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ

11 Aug 1999: Total Eclipse of the Sun

Totally passes down Cornwall, Northern France and bits of Italy.

2-6 Sep 1999: Aussiecon 3

The Worldcon goes down under to Melbourne. Guests **George Turner**, **Greg Benford**, **Bruce Gillespie**. G25 (£30 with complicated variations - ask 'em).
 ☐ UK Agent: Martin Hoare, 45 Thelwell Road, Reading, RG1 7TT
 ✉ martinhoare@cix.co.uk

27 Dec 1999-2 Jan 2000: Millennium

See in the new millennium (a year after you're a pedant) at this con, to be held somewhere in northern

Europe, probably the UK or a BeNeLux country. £4.00 per year, to be deducted from the eventual membership cost.

☐ Millennium, c/o Malcolm Reid, 186 Casewick Rd., West Norwood, London, SE27 0SZ

31 Aug-4 Sep 2000: Chicon 2000

Millennial worldcon, guests **Ben Bova**, **Bob Eggleton**, **Jim Baen**, **Bob & Anne Passovoy**, and **Harry Turtledove** (toastmaster). G25 (£125 (presupposers \$115), various discounts, rates rise 1 Mar 98).
 ☐ PO Box 642057, Chicago, Illinois 60665, USA
 ✉ http://alcon3.worldcon.org/www/bids/bids.html

29 Dec 2000-1 Jan 2001: Hogmanaycon

Central Hotel, Glasgow, G20 01 att. £201 sup. (har har).
 ☐ 26 Avonbank Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2PA

STOP PRESS

The 11th Leeds International Film Festival, 16-31 October 1997, has a major science fiction thread.

Screenings include E.T., the first three 'Alien' films, *The Abyss*: Special Edition, *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *The Thing*, *THX-1138*, *Sleeper*, *Solaris*, *Stalker*, *The Stepford Wives*, and *Mad Max*: each film is preceded by an episode from the ancient Flash Gordon serial *Space Soldiers*.

Seminars/features include 'Stripped to Science' on superheros movies, and 'Effective Management' on special effects. Also **Pete Postlethwaite** and **Romeo** and **Julie** (see page 50) and introduces *Romeo and Julie* (see page 50) and answers questions (Hyde Park cinema, Sun 19 Oct), and the creators of *Tales of the Legion* will tell us how to make a V.I. series. Plus lots of special events, quizzes, tours, premieres etc.

Contact Tel 0113 247 8398. Fax 0113 247 8397

• **Chicon 2000** won't be bidding unopposed for the 2000 Worldcon, see listings.

• Candidates for the 1997 **TAFF** Race are **Victor Gonzalez**, **Ulrika O'Brien**, **Vicki Rosenzweig** and **Tom Sadler**. Votes must be cast by 13 Dec 1997, and the winner will attend Intuition, the 1998 Eastercon.

• Further details from **Martin Tudor**, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Wilenham, West Midlands, WV13 1HX

• **Wincun V** will be the next Unicorn in Summer 1999, chaired by **John Richards**.

• The 2000 **Eastercon** is currently being contested between a Jersey bid, one being organised by **Pam Wells** at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, and **Andrew A. Adams**'s bid at the Central Hotel, Glasgow.

Convocation

reviewed by **Claire Briailey**

New Hall College, Cambridge, 18-20 July 1997

College conventions can involve a series of trade-offs: low cost for comfort, large function space for isolation from restaurants and shops, good programme for high-profile guests. New Hall, however, offers an increasingly pleasant compromise which Convocation took up. The on-site accommodation is comparable in price and quality to some convention hotels; function space has been expanded in recent years, and the town is reasonably accessible; and the convention had secured **Stephen Brust** (profitable and sociable American fantasy author) as their guest of honour as well as **Brian James Wallis** and **Andrew Ristone**. There were still a few surprises, such as college licensing hours, but that was easily solved by nearby pubs and off-licenses. There was the unexpected prevalence of students: not real Cambridge ones, but the American high-school variety. "Don't give them any alcohol," we were warned by the committee. "They will be Sent Home at once!" We held this opinion in reserve.

Convocation had been elected both the Union and the British gaming convention for 1997, and aimed to integrate role-playing and literature wherever possible through the common theme of story-telling. Some lighter items and games provided opportunities for participation, and the convention as a whole offered plenty of time for chatting, relaxing and remembering why we go to conventions in the first place.

Integration aside, the programme seemed weighted a little too hard towards gaming, with more talks and panels on games alone than the combination of literary and 'fantasy' items. With around 100 people present, attracted to the con for a wide range of reasons, it can be a challenge to run a convention which engages the interests of the committee and all the attendees. Convocation made a reasonable effort at programming, but it succeeded largely through the choice of venue, a fortunate mix of good company and the consequent relaxed atmosphere. This was perhaps best illustrated by the party on Saturday night. At a larger convention, the lack of alternative programming could have left many attendees at a disgruntled loose end; at Convocation, it encouraged most of them to congregate in the bar after they'd been out to eat, secure in the knowledge that they weren't missing anything and that all the people with whom they wanted to spend time could be found in the same place. Not that the formal programming wasn't popular: the **Goth** talk earlier in the day had attracted an almost total rush to the programme room.

The con organisation was pretty seamless, and consequently successfully unobtrusive; if they had any problems, they dealt with them quietly. No one fell (or jumped) in the moats or tountain; no one got locked out of the accommodation blocks (although I made a good attempt at it in the early hours of Saturday morning); and anyone who disposed of a high-school car or two did so very discreetly.

The next Unicorn is expected to be held in 1999 - specific date and venue to be announced later - by a team equally experienced in running campus-based conventions. If you feel like going to a small convention with a compact programme and plenty of opportunities to socialise and relax, watch the convention listings

— Claire Briailey 1997

NEWS

• This year's **Eurocon** in October is combined with **Octocon**, Ireland's national sci convention. Irish cons combine astoundingly cheapness, a splendid crack and enviable guest lists (see the listing for details). One programme stream is devoted to the small press, including items on how to get started, life expectancy, "Full colour or cheap and cheerful?", "Nobody ever got famous writing for small press magazines" (with **Simon Clark** and **Michael Carroll**, who did), "Is entertainment enough?" with **Candas Jane Dorsey**, and "Isn't it just of bunch of bigheads and show-offs who like to see their own name in print?". Other participants include **BBR's** **Chris Reed**, and **Albedo's** **Brendan Ryder**.

Members' Noticeboard

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

WANTED

WANTED: Copy in any condition of Norton Juster's children's fantasy *The Phantom Tollbooth*. Cheapest appreciated! **Chris Terran**, 9 Beechwood Court, Back Beechwood Grove, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS4 2HS

WANTED: A) SF & F videos. B) Popular Science Books. C) Books concerned with "Computer Applications in the Natural Sciences and Engineering" including older ones as far back as the '70s. Sent SAE for wants lists, please say which. Send your own list with comments on Germany. Contact: **Manfred Diehl**, 62 Kaiser-Wilhelm St, D-6705 Ludwigshafen, Germany.

BOOKS WANTED: Copies in good condition of: Robert Leining *Black Sun*, Christopher Priest *Book of the Edge of Forever*, Elizabeth Troop *ed Silver Deadly Sin*, Robert van Gulik *The Fox-Magpie Murders* (in Picts and Murders), Kate Wilhelm *And the Angels Sing*, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro *Arctost*. Please contact **Andy Mills** on 0113 259 1153 (home) or at mills@leeds.gov.uk (work).

BOOKS NEEDED FOR A LOVING HOME: John Crowley *Egypt*, Gardner Dozois *ed*. The Year's Best SF, Eighth Annual Collection in the US edition; also known as *Best New SF* Five in Britain, either will do. These are for reading, so cheapness is appreciated (condition is not a condition). Contact: **Syd Feather** on 01752 296729. Thanks gang!

WANTED: a copy in any condition of *The Rabble Rousers* by Eric Frank Russell. Contact: **John Ollis**, 51 Belmont Road, Luton LU1 1LL

MINSTER CLASSICS WANTED: - not for me, for a friend, honest guy. Market rate is around a quid, will pay up to £2 depending on condition or will swap for duplicates. Titles wanted include: *Asop's Fabians*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Hamlet*, *Just So Stories*, *Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *Macbeth*, *Mid Flinders*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Tom of the Swag*, *Daisy Miller*, *Prince and the Pauper*, *Wind in the Willows*, *Wuthering Heights*.

Andy Butler, 33 Brook View Drive, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5JN. Tel: 0115 937 5549

BOOKS REQUIRED: - Ace Doubles, Banks, Conner, Delany, Niven, Sabinaghen, Stabelford, Sterling, New Yorkings series, and many more. Send SAE for wants list to **lan.forshe**, 12 Winston Way, Forest, Cambridgeshire, PE7 3BU. Tel: 01733 241638

FOR SALE

THREE HERALDS OF THE STORM is a booklet collection of three short stories by **Storm Constantine**, including one previously unpublished story. Produced 1997 by **Meisha Merin Publishing Inc.** in the US, and available in the UK from **Inception**, c/o Steve Jeffery & Vikki Lee France, 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 2XA (email peetee@aoi.com). £4.50 inc. postage in the UK/EU. Enquire for details of other Inception limited editions, magazines and books by Storm Constantine.

STOCK CLEARANCE: I have hundreds of paperback and hardback books, some 2,000 magazines ranging from pulp Adventures to digital New Worlds and Science Fantasy, thousands of comics (some even pre-war) and over 100 cinema posters. Free list on request. I am also in the hunt for pre-1965 comics, especially *Golden Age* and *Silver Age* American titles and 1950s British reprints of US titles such as *Captain Marvel Adventures*, as well as books by **Frederic Brown** and **John D. MacDonald** and many pulps such as *Weird Tales*, *Strange Stories* and non-fiction titles like *Black Mask*, *Wu Fang*, *Doc Savage*, *G-8* and *The Shadow*. I'll pay cash or will allow a generous exchange from my list. Contact: **Ron Bennett**, 36 Halloway Park Crescent, Haregate, North Yorkshire, HG2 4AA

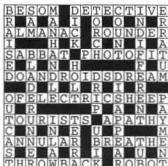
MISC

NET NEWSIE: I was convinced at intervention that I should get on-line; that it was the only way to keep in touch. The only thing is, I don't know anyone on-line. Can I have a computer pal please? My address is yvonne@balliasea.softnet.co.uk

Crossword 19 Solution and Results

A healthy dozen and a half entries this time - mostly with the usual alphabetical comments. At a quick glance all the entries were completely correct. Definitely so was that from first-out-of-the-hat **Bridge Hardcastle** (who incidentally also submitted a completely Unravell'd Spagetti) - a well-deserved book token is on the way!

— Roger Robinson





Skull C

Roger Robinson's
crackers

COMPETITION 127: "TELLY ADDICT?"

A straightforward (and I think fairly easy) tv trivia quiz this time for all those of you who avertise in front of your televisions during the long hot summers. All I need is a **one word answer** to each of the following eight questions – and, as I expect a bumper postbag, an answer to the tie-breaker.

1. Lumley's character in a UK tv series starting in 1979.
2. Barrie's character in a UK tv series starting in 1988.
3. Co-author, with an astronomer, of a UK tv series starting in 1961.
4. Home planet of eponymous hero(es) of a long-running UK tv series starting in 1963.
5. Not-so-token actress in a US tv series starting in 1966.
6. Surname of actress who was the voice of Lady Penelope.
7. Make of car with registration KAR 123 C (or No. 6).
8. Lady Penelope's hyphenated surname.

Tie-Breaker: Look at the answers to the eight questions and tell me the military rank of the head of household.

RESULTS OF COMPETITION 126: "ALPHABETI SPAGHETTI SLIGHTLY UNRAVELLED"

A better response this time, with seven all correct (and two near-misses) – with the winner of the book token being Ian Sales.

The answers were Tom Holt, Jeff Noon, Iain Banks, Larry Niven, Andre Norton, Alfred Bester, August Derleth, Carolyn Cherryh, Michael Moorcock, and Jennifer Roberson.

The tricky ones seemed to be Carolyn (C. J.) Cherryh and Jennifer Roberson. Yes, I know all her books credit her as just C. J., but all the best encyclopedias etc. give the complete Carolyn Janice. By the time you got down to these last two you knew from the clues that they were both women, non-UK residents, one of whom had won a Hugo. Jennifer Roberson may not be in the *SF Encyclopedia*, but as a regular DAW author she is in the *Fantasy Encyclopedia*.

THANKS – BUT NO THANKS (YET)

Thanks for the appreciative comments on my time as Quizzer-to-Matrix – and I even forgive (and expect) the muttered curses that accompany entries.

BUT... no one has yet approached me offering to run a competitions page. Come on Chaps and Chappesses – APPLY NOW. It is not that difficult or onerous a task.

• Send entries for the crossword, the competition and the post of Quizmaster to Roger Robinson at the address above.

Matrix Crossword 20

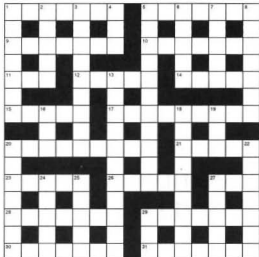
by John English

Across

1. Preuss upset about Clarke's last 24 (7)
5. Worker on Mars, one of 24 (7)
9. Edible crustacean – throw away (7)
10. Author in west upset by occasional pains (7)
11. What Logan did, with enthusiasm centre needed after year's end (3)
12. Regretting destruction by force (5)
14. Untrue part of tales Lafferty spun (5)
15. 8. Tube station for 24? (5,7)
17. One of 24 with one of these, by MacLeod? (9)
20. Rip our pet out to make fragrant mixture (9)
21. African dictator with book is a fool (5)
23. Tossed about, losing the initial measured quantities (5)
26. Poetic gift found in Moria by Smeagol (5)
27. Small coin in Arab market, finally losing a grand (3)
28. Tea with Cardigan, one has unleavened bread (7)
29. Half of the good doctor with his tomorrows numbered – ridiculous! (7)
- 30, 31. One of 24 on plain – I desire excitement (7,7)

Down

1. Look up in capital, see one of 24 (7)
2. Raised tip of pen (gold) – Batman's batman? (5)
3. What to look with contract – break iron tenet? (5,4)
4. Upfilled at heart – "Arise, knight!" (3)
5. Property of Cavortie – see giant vary it unpredictably (11)



6. Robber lifted type of transistor, enclosing greeting (5)
7. Girl dancing, full of energy – one of 24 (5)
8. See 15
13. As army marches – this is power! (11)
16. Check with animal doctor (3)
18. Groups of three rulers seen in Rhode – I'm upset, one goes to Virtud Island (9)
19. Sash central to 2 (3)
20. Short stalk found in biped I cleft (7)
22. Taut, ice cracked due to one of 24 (3,4)
24. The famous sailor on board ship (5)
25. First shopping arcade isn't large (5)
27. One of 24 – most of melange is on Arakis at first (5)
29. One type of double? (3)

CROSSWORD
SOLUTION
See page 26

Big Butt

ALPH 1
bogarts the news

• **GOLFING FOR CATS** No wonder the membership has been going down. Plug 'BSFA' into a web search-engine and you'll get: The Baha'i Student Forum of Amsterdam; the Belgian Speed and Funboard Association; the Bulletin of the String Figures Association; and the British Sports and Field Association. So instead of all this so-far rubbish, we should have been running articles on Islamic traditions in cat's-crade design by surfing Belgians and hare-coursers.

• NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCKS

[Algan he felt fingers on his genitals, tightening, tightening, until he screamed with pain.

Yes, it's another castration attempt from 'Bobbitt' Holdstock, in his 1978 horror novel *Necroscope*. But the real horror is a salmon sandwich, which one character watches 'being shoved into Greg Picksgill's [sic] mouth'.

• **OUT OF CONTEXT #2** From programme 3 of Mark Lawson's *A Brief History of the Future*, Radio 4, 19 July.

Fiction that looks ahead has generally been most popular at times when the future seemed uncertain. H. G. Wells had capitalised on turn-of-the-century nervousness. From the 1950s, the form was invigorated by an invention which might prevent the next century from turning: *David Pringle*.

(... whose comments about atomic weapons were unfortunately ignored by our reporter.)

• **FE FIE FO FUN** Those who get hold of the *Shirley Jackson* book mentioned in *Matrix 126* will be able to read a fascinating introduction penned by *Donna Tartt*. This presumably came too late to be mentioned in her entry in the *Fantasy Encyclopedia*, which only notes her novel *The Secret History*, a thriller with a brief supernatural interlude. Jackson is absent from the *FE*, presumably on the grounds that she wrote, er, supernatural fiction, which is largely excluded.

• **MATRIX EDITOR BRIBE SHOCK PROBE BIG SCANDAL!** Aleph can reveal why there's a feature on *Avon Books* in this *Matrix*: the editor was bribed. And he's easy. *Chris Terran* received a suspicious package from America (yes, it was brown) containing a snazzy little executive-toy thingy, all matt-black plastic and perspex (very 80s), designed to cunningly (and magnificently) hold a pen in mysterious suspension, balanced on its tip. Oh, and it also had a built-in digital clock, which multi-purpose facility thus ensures the object's appearance in the next 'Innovations' catalogue. It came from *Avon Books* to mark the launch of their new line, *Avon Eos*; the last *Aleph* saw *Terran* appeared to be trying to trim his nasal hair with it.

• **SKUFFY WRITER PREDICTS THE FUTURE!** Those who remember *Michael Blumlein's* tasteful story 'Tissue Ablation and Variant Regeneration: A Case Report' in *Interzone 7* back in 1984 will be intrigued by a report in the *Guardian* on 5 September. It seems a new type of artificial skin can be used to treat the foot ulcers sometimes developed by diabetes sufferers. And the source of this wonderful product? 'Michael Edmonds, consultant physician at King's College hospital, London, said one foreskin could produce 250,000 square feet of the artificial skin.' The donor was, not Ronald Reagan.

• **BOOKS YOU WON'T BE READING** Here's how *Clarke Award* judges while away the time. *Steve Jeffery* suggests the following, formed by changing one letter only in the title.

Mary Gentle Golden *Bakerybread* – A pagan cookbook on the preparation of ritual bakery products. (To which *Aleph* suggests the sequel: *Bake Back Plenty* by *Colin Greenland* and *Philip K. Dick's Pies, Inc.*)

Russell Hoban *Ridley Wanker* – A boy loses the ability to speak intelligibly from excessive self-abuse. ○ – N₆<?<N₆

BIG BUTTERS: (Names withheld on legal and medical advice.)

• *Aleph* welcomes scandal, rumour, clippings, cuttings, droppings, small pieces of cheese, and bribes (in editorial address).

the farm-fresh *matrix* is grown to maturity on an aconit *a5000*, copiously manured by various bits of software (notably *zap*, the john innes of text editors), ripened to perfection by the *lasernet 5L*, picked in sun-kissed succulence by *pdc copyprint*, seductively packaged by *bramley mailing services*, sent to market by the *royal mail*, and prodded suspiciously by *you*

—matrix 127— soundtracked by john adams (-shaker loops—, christian zell & activity—), o-bloody-assy, electronic, heavy purcell, herbert howells (thanks maureen), martin simpson—goodness gracious me—, stewart reich, and too many prons. rip vincent hanna
— "my name is not important" / it's a signal or sign"

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