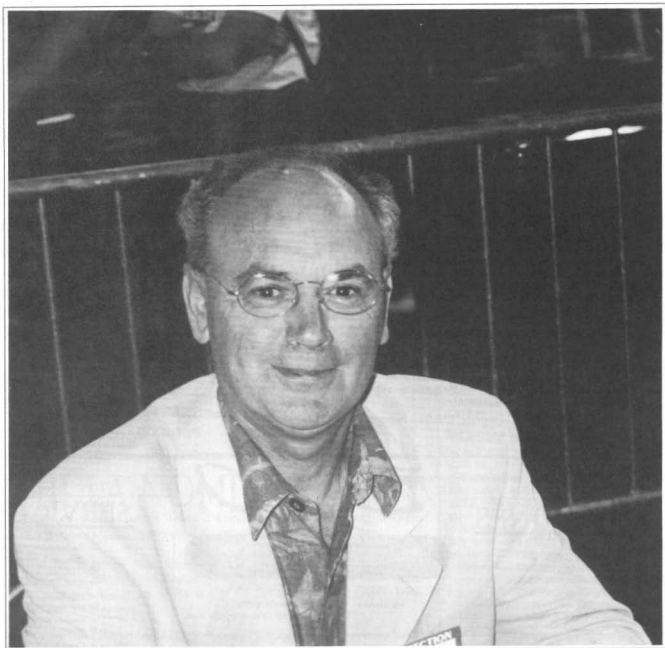


·MATRIX·

£1.75 · THE · NEWS · MAGAZINE · OF · THE · BRITISH · SCIENCE · FICTION · ASSOCIATION · 131
· MAY / JUNE 1998 ·



GARRY · KILWORTH

PLUS

1997 BSFA Awards

The Wrap Party

A Woman's Intuition

Brainless In Hollywood

MATRIX

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

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ISSUE 131 MAY / JUNE 1998

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Cover • **Garry Kilworth** at Intersection in 1995. Photograph by **Roger Robinson**.

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Vicki Sipe (p11)
Chris Terran (p15)

Artwork • **Bryan Talbot** (p18)

Design / Production • **Chris Terran**
Set in Palatino 9x7, Garamond, Helvetica.

Next Deadline • **Wednesday 10 June 1998**

ISSN • **0307 3335**

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Printed by • **PDC Copyright**, 11 Jeffries Passage, Guildford, GU1 4AP

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Registered in England. Limited by Guarantee. Company No. 921500.
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Founded 1958

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\$37 surface, \$47 air, payable to

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CLARKE CLEARED

FOLLOWING the *Sunday Mirror's* allegations of paedophilia made against Sir Arthur C. Clarke on 1 February, shortly before he was due to be knighted by Prince Charles, a Sri Lankan police investigation has cleared the writer. And the newspaper has withdrawn all its allegations, which Clarke has consistently and vehemently denied.

Three of the four young men the newspaper reports quoted in support of its story have now said that the accounts they gave were untrue, and have withdrawn their allegations; there have been suggestions that they received money for their stories. Sir Arthur intends to sue the *Sunday Mirror*, and told one journalist that he's confident he will win any court case, and will use any damages to build an underground swimming pool for the people of Sri Lanka.

In a statement, the writer said "At this stage I can only comment briefly on what has, ironically, become one of the most heart-warming events of my life: I never knew I had so many friends and

admirers all over the world. As my conscience is perfectly clear, my only regret now is the embarrassment the *Sunday Mirror's* allegations have caused to others. [...] Having always had a particular dislike of paedophiles, few charges could be more revolting to me than to be classed as one."

Sir Arthur did confess to "a mild sense of guilt, for not giving public support to the Gay Rights movement. Now my last feeble (though valid) excuses are eliminated, and I fear I may be pregnant with another book. (Outed at 80?) I rather hope not: the last is a year overdue. . . ."

• Sir Arthur was unanimously re-elected to the BSFA Council at the organisation's AGM held at Eastercon.

SPARROW WINS BSFA AWARD

THE WINNERS of the 1997 BSFA Awards were announced on 12 April at a ceremony during Interzone, the 1997 Eastercon. Best Novel was Mary Doria Russell's debut novel *The Sparrow*, a first-contact tale and winner of the Tiptree Award; it's also tipped to win the Clarke Award in May. The sequel, *Children of God*, is now available in import editions. Runner-up for the Best Novel Award was Jack Deighton for *A Son of the Rock* (Orbit: £5.99 pb), and Paul Kincaid's "Last Day of the Carnival - 36 Exposures" (Back Brains *Recluse* 23) came second in the Best Short Fiction category. □

• Full report next issue.

Best Novel
MARY DORIA RUSSELL
The Sparrow
(Black Swan: £6.99 tp)

Best Short Fiction
STEPHEN BAXTER
"War Birds"
(Interzone 126)

Best Artwork
SMS
"The Black Blood of the Dead"
(Cover of Interzone 116)

NEBULA NOMINATIONS

The SFWA (Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America) has issued the nominations for this year's Nebula Awards, which will be announced at a ceremony in Santa Fe in early May.

BEST NOVEL

Lois McMaster Bujold *Memory* (Baen, Earthlight); Kate Elliot *King's Dragon* (DAW, Legend); George R. R. Martin *A Game of Thrones* (Bantam Spectra, Voyager); Jack McDevitt *Ancient Shores* (HarperPrism, Voyager); Walter Jon Williams *City On Fire* (HarperPrism); Connie Willis *Bellhouse* (Bantam Spectra).

BEST NOVELLA

Adam-Troy Castro "The Funeral March of the Marionettes" (*F&SF* Jul 97); Paul Levinson "Loose Ends" (*Analog* May 97); Jerry Olton "Abandon In Place" (*F&SF* Dec 96); Robert Reed "Chrysalis" (*Asimov's* Sep 96); Bud Sparhawk "Primrose and Thorn" (*Analog* May 96); Allen Steele "Where Angels Fear To Tread" (*Asimov's* Oct/Nov 97).

BEST NOVELLETTE

Eleanor Aronson "The Dog's Story" (*Asimov's* May 96); James Alan Gardner "Three Hearings On the Existence of Snakes in the Human Bloodstream" (*Asimov's* Feb 97); Bill Johnson "We Will Drink a Fish Together . . ." (*Asimov's* May 97); John Kessel "The Miracle of Ivar Avenue" (*Asimov's* Sep 96); Nancy Kress "The Flowers of Aulit Prison" (*Asimov's* Oct/Nov 96); Paul Levinson "The Copyright Notice Case" (*Analog* Apr 96); William Saunders "The Undiscovered" (*Asimov's* Mar 97).

BEST SHORT STORY

Gregory Feeley "The Crab Lice" (*Alternate Tyrants*); Karen Joy Fowler "The Elizabeth Complex" (*Crank!* 6); James Patrick Kelly "Itsy Bitsy Spider" (*Asimov's* Jun 97); Michael Swanwick "The Dead" (*Starlight* 1); K. D. Wentworth "Burning Bright" (*Aboriginal Summer* 96); Jane Yolen "Sister Emily's Lightship" (*Starlight* 1).

The Nebulas are decided by the votes of active members of the SFWA. □

1998 Philip K. Dick Award

STEPHAN CHAPMAN
The Troika
(Ministry of Whimsy Press)

The 1998 Philip K. Dick Award was presented at Norwescon in Seattle on 10 April, and was won by **Stephan Chapman's** *The Troika*. The judges were Paula E. Dowling (chair), Brooks Landon, Carter Scholtz, Stephanie A. Smith and Robert Charles Wilson. The Award is administered by David G. Hartwell and Gordon Van Gelder and is sponsored by the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society; the award ceremony is sponsored by the NorthWest Science Fiction Society.

Other novels shortlisted were William Barton *Acts of Conscience* (Warner Aspect); Susan R. Matthews *An Exchange of Hostages* (Avonova); Richard Paul Russo *Carlucci's Heart* (Ace); Denise Vitola *Opalite Moon* (Ace); Catherine Wells *Mother Grimm* (Roc).

Last year's winner was **Stephen Baxter** for *The Time Ships*, with a special citation for **Michael Bishop's** *At the City Limits of Fate*. □

• You can obtain *The Troika* in this country from BBR, price £12.95 including P&P. Contact: BBR, PO Box 625, Sheffield, S1 3GY. Tel / fax: 01246 271662. Mobile / answerphone: 0973 712864

JO CLAYTON

Sir writer **Jo Clayton** died in hospital in Portland, Oregon on 13 February after a long illness. She was born in 1939, and died amongst friends and family the day after she had held a "leave-taking" ceremony in the hospital. Her remains were cremated and scattered in a Californian forest.

Katherine Kerr wrote in *Anisble*: "Her respite from multiple myeloma proved all too brief, and as the doctors had warned us, when the end came, it came quickly. She would have been 69 in two more days. She leaves behind nearly forty fantasy and science fiction books and a small army of grieving friends."

Before her death Jo had completed two novels and several short stories while in hospital; a third, incomplete novel may be finished from her notes by Kit Kerr, her literary executor. Fans in Portland intend to set up an emergency medical fund in her honour. □

IMPORTANT NOTICE

January / February Mailing

We've managed to do a partial reprint of the Great Lost Mailing, so if you haven't received *Vector* 197 and *Matrix* 129, please send an A4 SAE (45p stamp) to Paul Billinger at the address on the opposite page.

Vector 197 contained many articles on the work of Sir Arthur C. Clarke. **Stephen Baxter** on alternate space programs, and reviews of books by Clarke, Egan, McAuley, Robinson, Swanwick, Watson and many others.

Matrix 129 contained Sir Arthur C. Clarke on "Aspects of Science Fiction". Dave Langford on "Twenty Years of Uproar". John Grant on *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy and SF Art Techniques*, artwork by Ruby, plus all the usual reviews and features.

snippings

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

At Intuition, the **Doc Weir** Award for contributions to fandom and being an all-round nice guy went to **Andy Croft**. • New this year is the **Paper Tiger** Award, which will be given to the best piece of artwork on display at the convention and consists of a cheque for £100 and a framed certificate. Organised by Paul Barnett, editor at artwork publisher **Paper Tiger**, it was won by **Fred Gambino** for his cover of **David Biri's** *Brightness Reef*. The shortlist also included **Cathryn Easthope's** 'Heaven', **Fargnoli's** 'Angel', **Simon Meacock's** 'Time Machine II' and **Anne Sudworth's** 'The Enchanted Tree'. • The art auction raised £7,642.40 for starring artists to furnish their garrets. • The TAFF auction raised £101, plus a donation of £45 from 'Night of the Corpse' (no. 1 don't know either) which also raised £55 for **Greg Pickersgill's** fanzine distribution enterprise **Memory Hole**. • Advance copies of *Children of God*, **Maria Doria Russell's** sequel to her award-winning *The Sparrow*, were sold out before the book room was even opened. • The Intuition newsletter was a great success, splendidly put together by **John Dowd**, **Jan van 't Ent**, **Neyr Cenk Göke**, **David Harris**, **Will James**, **John Campbell** and **Roger Watt**. • The ambitious film programme suffered a number of last minute changes, including **Stanley Kubrick's** withdrawal of all prints of 2001 and the BFI losing the rights to **David Cronenberg's** films.

ONE STEP BEYOND is an SF and Fantasy Writers' Workshop taught by **Liz Holliday**, editor of *Odyssey* magazine. It'll take place in South Devon on 17-24 October 1998 and costs £230, including full board, tuition and teaching materials. Details from One Step Beyond, 31 Shottford, Wessex Gardens, London, W2 5LG. Email liz@123123.demon.co.uk. • Meanwhile, *Odyssey* and sister publication *Valkyrie* are running a short story competition open to all amateur writers. There's no entry fee, the prize is a computer, and the judges are **Mary Gentle** and **Harry Turtledove**. Details in the magazines.

GT CHORE SF ENCYCLOPEDIA Here! **Cheap!** Groler's CD-ROM edition of *The SF Encyclopedia* has been reissued by Focus Multimedia, at the bargain price of £9.99. Editors **John Clute** and **Peter Nichols** were unaware of this.

• **John & Judith Clute** had their back garden transformed courtesy of the BBC, in the *Home Front* DIY programme of 11 March.

SEMON CLARK will be the guest of the Peterborough SF Club on 3 June. Venue is the Bluebell Inn, Dogsthorpe.

Contact **Pete Crook** on 01733 370542 (evenings only).

DELANEY MAILING LIST A mailing list devoted to discussion of the works of **Samuel R. Delaney** has been started. **Zvi Gilbert**, the organiser, hopes to encourage topics such as 'criticism and discussion of Delaney's sf, fantasy, pornography, comics, autobiography, criticism and postmodern fiction; criticism of sf or paratextual based on the ideas promulgated in Delaney's works of criticism'.

• To subscribe, send an email to the following address with your preferred email address in the body: delaney-list-request@boutell.com. General enquiries: zvi@interlog.com.

UPC SF AWARD This open competition is run annually by the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya in Spain, and offers a first prize of 1,000,000 pesetas (about £4,200 at current rates) and publication for a work of science fiction in English, Spanish, Catalan or French between 25,000 and 40,000 words long. The deadline is 15 September 1998. Entries are anonymous, and it's essential to get the full rules before submitting anything.

Contact: Send an SAE to Chris Terran at the editorial address, or write to: **Edilio NEXUS**, Gran Capita 2-4, 08034-Barcelona, Spain. Tel: (93) 401 6343. Fax: (93) 401 7766.

DEATHS Archie Mercer died on 21 March. An active fan from the 1950s to the 1970s, he was a founder member of the APA OMPA and contributed much to fanzines, conventions and the BSFA; he was editor of *Vector* from issues 19 to 25. **Chris Priest** said in *Anisble*: 'I knew Archie first by his writing. He was editing for the BSFA at the time, and was one of the few established fans who took a tolerant and indeed indulgent line on the unruly young fans - me and **Charles Platt** in particular - then emerging'.

• **Archie Goodwin** died on 1 March, aged 60. He wrote and edited for many US comics, including *Spiderman*, *Batman* and *The Hulk*, and was editor-in-chief at Marvel Comics and Warren before becoming group editor at DC Comics for the last nine years of his life.

• **Kenneth Gatland**, space expert and writer, died on 11 December. In addition to a number of technical books on spacecraft published by Blandford, he was the technical advisor on the 50s radio serial *Journey Into Space*.

1998 Tiptree Award

CANDAS JANE DORSEY

Black Wine
(Tor)

KELLY LINK

"Travels With the Snow Queen"
(Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet, Winter 96/97)

Candas Jane Dorsey and Kelly Link are the co-winners of this year's Tiptree Award, which honours sf and fantasy which 'expands or

explores gender rôles'. Dorsey won for her novel *Black Wine*, also the recipient of the 1997 William J. Crawford Award for the best first fantasy novel; Link won for her story "Travels With the Snow Queen". The awards - a \$1,000 cash prize and a lot of chocolate - will be presented at Readercon 10 in Massachusetts on 10-12 July 1998.

One of the five judges was **Elizabeth Hand**, who commented: 'I think there were just some very strong short stories this year... Kelly Link's "Travels With the Snow Queen" was a terrific discovery, and I think there was - for me, at least - a real thrill in recognising someone new.' □

1998 HUGO NOMINATIONS

Buccooner, this year's World Science Fiction Convention, has announced the nominations for the 1998 Hugo Awards. They will be presented at the convention in Baltimore, Maryland on Friday 7 August.

BEST NOVEL

Joe Haldeman *Forever Peace* (Ace); **Robert J. Sawyer** *Frameshift* (Tor); **Dan Simmons** *The Rise of Endymion* (Bantam Spectra); **Michael Swanwick** *Jack Faust* (Avon); **Walter Jon Williams** *City On Fire* (HarperPrism).

BEST NOVELLA

Adam-Troy Castro "The Funeral March of the Marionettes" (*F&SF* Jul 97); **Geoffrey A. Landis** "Ecopoiesis" (*SF Age* May 97); **Paul Levinson** "Loose Ends" (*Analog* May 97); **Allen Steele** "... Where Angels Fear To Tread" (*Asimov's* Oct/Nov 97).

BEST NOVELETTE

Stephen Baxter "Moon Six" (*SF Age* Mar 97); **Michael A. Burstein** "Broken Symmetry" (*Analog* Feb 97); **James Alan Gardner** "Three Hearings On the Existence of Snakes in the Human Bloodstream" (*Asimov's* Feb 97); **Bill Johnson** "We Will Drink a Fish Together..." (*Asimov's* May 97); **William Saunders** "The Undiscovered" (*Asimov's* Mar 97).

BEST SHORT STORY

Andy Duncan "Beluthahatchie" (*Asimov's* Mar 97); **Karen Joy Fowler** "Standing Room Only" (*Asimov's* Aug 97); **James Patrick Kelly** "Itsy Bitsy Spider" (*Asimov's* Jun 97); **Mike Resnick** "The 43 Antarean Dynasties" (*Asimov's* Dec 97); **Robert J. Sawyer** "The Hand You're Dealt" (*Free Space* Tor); **Gene Wolfe** "No Planets Strike" (*F&SF* Jan 97).

BEST RELATED BOOK

Ben Bova with **Anthony R. Lewis** *Space Travel* (Writer's Digest Books); **John Clute** & **John Grant** (eds) *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (Orbit; St Martin's Press); **Vincent DiFate** *Infinite Worlds* (Penguin Studio); **Cathy Fenner** & **Arnie Fenner** with **Jim**

Loehr *Spectrum IV: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art* (Underwood); **Robert Silverberg** *Reflections and Refractions: Thoughts on Science-Fiction, Science and Other Matters* (Underwood).

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

Contact *The Fifth Element*; **Gattaca**; **Men In Black**; **Starship Troopers**.

BEST PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

Gardner Dozois (*Asimov's*); **Scott Edelman** (*SF Age*); **David G. Hartwell** (Tor and *Year's Best SF*); **Stanley Schmidt** (*Analog*); **Gordon van Gelder** (*F&SF*).

BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST

Jim Burns; **Thomas Canty**; **David Cherry**; **Bob Engelton**; **Don Maiz**; **Michael Whelan**.

BEST SEMIPROZINE

Interzone (ed David Pringle); **Locus** (ed Charles N. Brown); **New York Review of Science Fiction** (eds Kathryn Cramer, Ariel Hameon, David G. Hartwell & Kevin Maroney); **SF Chronicle** (ed Andrew I. Porter); **Speculations** (ed Kent Brewster).

BEST FANZINE

Anisble (ed David Langford); **Attitude** (eds Michael Abbott, John Dallman & Pam Wells); **File 770** (ed Mike Glycer); **Mimosa** (eds Nicki & Richard Lynch); **Tangent** (ed David Trusedale).

BEST FAN WRITER

Bob Devney; **Mike Glycer**; **Andy Hooper**; **David Langford**; **Evelyn Leeper**; **Joseph T. Major**.

BEST FAN ARTIST

Brad Foster; **Ian Gunn**; **Teddy Harvia**; **Joe Mayhew**; **Peggy Ranson**.

JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD FOR BEST NEW WRITER

(Sponsored by Dell Magazines)
Raphael Carter; **Andy Duncan**; **Richard Garfinkle**; **Susan R. Matthews**; **Mary Doria Russell**.

NOTES: 1. There are six nominations due to a tie for fifth place.

Scribble Scribble Scribble...

Pat Cadigan returns proper after her long absence in work and 'Web' young adult book with *Tea From an Empty Cup*, out in September from Voyager. Her first novel for some years, it's a fast-paced cyberpunk murder thriller set around the ruins of Japan, destroyed in a series of earthquakes. Publicity line of the month: "Just reading this book generates a van der Graaf harp..."

Ken MacLeod turned full-time writer in January, and besides working on his contribution to the 'Web' young adult series he's writing a fourth novel set in his future history, called *The Earth Tendency*. Ken says he "originally intended it to wrap up the series, but it looks set to unravel it. That's all I'm saying for now!"

Jeff Noon has a collection of 'cyber-short stories' out from Doubleday in October, to be called *Pixel Juice*.

Greg Bear's next novel is a bit of a departure for him. *Dinosaur Summer*, out in September from Voyager, is a kind of sequel to Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*. Set fifty years later, it's about Luthor Gluck's Dinosaur Circus which displayed the creatures around the world, and an attempt to return them to their home in Venezuela. Real people also make appearances, such as FX wizard Ray Harryhausen, Melian C. Cooper (director of King Kong) and the Western director John Ford.

Juliet McKenna is a new British fantasy author who has just sold her debut novel *The Thief's Gamble* to Tim Holman at Orbit. It's a "dazzling fantasy adventure with a central character who leaps off the page from the very first sentence", and will be available early in 1999.

Martin Scott is another new British writer signed up by Orbit. *Thraxas* is described as "comic fantasy-noir (think Terry Pratchett meets Raymond Chandler)", again, it'll be out early in 1999.

Robert Silverberg's enormous fantasy anthology *Legends* is set for UK publication in October, from Voyager. It features all-new stories set in their characteristic worlds from Pratchett, King, Jordan, Feist, Card, McCaffrey, Martin, Le Guin (yes, a new 'Earthsea' story), Silverberg, Goodkind and Williams.

Paul Barnett (aka John Grant, aka *King of the Hill*), Ron Tiner and Malcolm Couch are collaborating on *The Far Enough Window*, "a novel," says Paul, "in the vague tradition of the Victorian/Edwardian fairy tale and produced accordingly. I've written it (as PB). Ron is illustrating it and Malcolm is designing/producing it." They hope to find a buyer when it's shown at the London Book Fair.

Wearing his Paper Tiger hat, Paul Barnett has bought Arthur C. Clarke and Danny Flyn's collaboration *A Window on Tomorrow*, a lavish production using Flyn's spectacular artwork to illustrate various Clarke stories. It's scheduled for autumn 1999.

Jon Courtenay Grimwood has moved publisher. After complicated negotiations ReMix - already delivered to Hodder/NEL - will now be issued by Earthlight later this year, to be followed by *RedRider*, the first in a second series of novels. Earthlight boss John Jarrold said, "Jon's books have been called 'Quentin Tarantino in the 22nd century', which is too clichéd but it does give you a taste. His writing is both witty and violent, and more sophisticated than most genre fiction. I'm delighted to take on another British writer, and at the same time add more to the list."

Jon wrote on "Punk SF" in *Matrix* 130.

Simon R. Green's *Deathstalker* space opera series will be rounded off next year with *Deathstalker Destiny*, from Vista.

Ray Bradbury classics are being reassessed by Earthlight. In August comes *Sing the Body Electric* and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, and in October there's *The Golden Apples of the Sun* and *The October Country*.

Joanne Berlin is Earthlight's latest signing, a new American fantasy writer. Her debut novel is called *The Last Dragonlord* and should be out in December. Earthlight boss John Jarrold says, "St editors see many, many 'dragon' books, but this really got under my skin. The characterisation, and the sense of realpolitik in the world Joanne has created, are outstanding. She mixes in romance without ever becoming cloying, and I'm looking forward to reading the sequel, *Dragon and Phoenix*" (which will follow in 1999).

Freda Warrington has sold her epic fantasy *The Amber Citadel* to Earthlight for publication in 1999.

Stephen Baxter's *Moonside* is out from Voyager in early August, along with the paperback *Titan*.

Robert Rankin has delivered *Apocalypse* to Doubleday for publication in December.

Melanie Rawn's third volume in her 'Eldes' fantasy series is to be called *The Captain's Tower*, and will be published by Macmillan in 1999.

Philip K. Dick reissues continue from Voyager. Monthly from August we'll get the splendid *Ubik*, the near-legendary *Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, *The*

Zap Gun, *The Penultimate Truth*, *The Cosmic Puppets* and *A Maze of Death*.

Richard Calder's *Cythera* is out now from Orbit, and he says of the novel: "While living in the Far East I would often ponder over what I would hear of 'home' on the BBC World Service: the collective imagination of the UK seemed to be feverish with stories of juvenile crime, child molestation and the influence, whether perceived or real, of the media on the moral climate of the nation. A thread running through all these stories was a call for more stringent punishment and stricter censorship. Such was the background hysteria to some of this reporting that I often felt that I had tuned in to broadcasts emanating from another time, another planet. As such, the experience seemed to offer an interesting exercise in extrapolation. Throughout early '96 I began work on what was to become *Cythera*, a novel in which the self-righteous hatred celebrated in contemporary 'moral panics' is taken to a grotesque but logical conclusion."

Terry Pratchett has the intriguingly-titled *Carpe Jugulum* out from Doubleday in November. No further details at press-time...

Kathleen Ann Goonan, up-and-coming American hard-science writer, makes her debut in this country in December with *Queen City Jazz* (Voyager), her acclaimed first novel. It's in *Blood Music* - a nanotech plague has destroyed civilisation and driven most remaining humans insane. Verity goes to the coconated city of Cincinnati in an attempt to fix things, and on the way find a cure for her companion Bide. William Gibson says the novel is "An unforgettable vision of America transfigured by a new and utterly apocalyptic technology."

Peter F. Hamilton's *Night's Dawn* trilogy will be concluded with *The Naked God*, due from Macmillan in 1999. Meanwhile, a new short story collection *A Second Chance at Eden* is set for October release, along with the paperback *The Neutrum Alchemist*.

Samuel R. Delany's 1993 fantasy *They Fly At Ciron* gets - I think - its first UK publication in August from Voyager. It's a "mutation and expansion of a story written in 1962 and published in *Fantasy & SF* in 1971, in collaboration with James Salis", according to the FE.

Returning BSFA member Norman Finlay has some forthcoming stories you might like to look out. He writes: "I have placed some short of with Tom and Ginger Johnson of Fading Shadows Inc. (514 East Morris St., Seymour, Texas). Fading Shadows are probably best known in the fan world for their award-winning pulp fanzine, *Echoes*. The stories placed are *The Paradise Testimony*, *Pasture Lands* and *Anstaria*. And I will also be appearing in Tracy Martin's *zine Mindmazes* with a story called *Listening to the Night*."

If you've placed a story, why not let us know? Write or email the editorial address.

Six Card Trick

Orson Scott Card is to produce two more volumes in the 'ENDER' series for Tor Books, taking the total count to six. He'll be writing the first over this summer for publication in 1999, and it will concern Bean, a character in *ENDER'S GAME*, the first book in the series and winner of the Hugo and Nebula awards. The second will tell the story of Ender Wiggin's brother Peter, who ended up ruling the Earth; the provisional title is *Peter the Hegemon*, but reportedly it is not intended to be Ender Wiggin's novel. *The Hegemon* returns to the series.

Card says the six volumes will split into two 'natural' trilogies, the first representing the psychological, political and military aspects of the saga, the second the philosophical, metaphysical and anthropological aspects.

Robinson, Benford, Keyes, Christopher, Bradbury Movies?

Kim Stanley Robinson's 'Mars' trilogy has been optioned by Titanic director James Cameron for conversion into a tv series. Though the plans are still under discussion, it would be Cameron's first work for television. More definite is Threshold Entertainment's tv version of Ben Bova's book *Mars*, currently being filmed.

Cosm. Gregory Benford's new contemporary hard sci-fi thriller, has been optioned by Twentieth Century Fox and Jan de Bont, director of *Speed* and *Twister*. It is being scripted by Robert Collins. A new tv movie version of Daniel Keyes' classic story *Flowers for Algernon* - originally filmed as *Charly* (1968) - is being planned by Citadel Entertainment for screening on CBS. Writers will be Craig Zadan and Neil Meron. Cliff Robertson, who acted in and produced *Charly*, apparently was against Crichton's plans, and tried to prevent them from buying the rights; he is currently developing *Charly II*, a sequel.

Rights to children's novels have been bought by Disney subsidiary Touchstone Pictures. It was turned into a BBC tv series in 1984.

Tom Cruise is reported to be talking to Mel Gibson about a remake of *Fahrenheit 451*, originally directed by François Truffaut in 1965 from Ray Bradbury's novel.

Babylon Continues

The final episode of *Babylon 5* was shot in April, and creator and writer J. Michael Straczynski immediately started work on the follow-up series, *The Babylon Project: Crusade*. It takes place about a year after the events in the B5 final series, and concerns attempts to save Earth from a devastating planet which will wipe out all life on the planet within five years. It should be on air on 6 January 1999. Meanwhile, the three B5 feature films will also air on TNT, the first, *Thirdspace*, on 19 July (the Apollo 11 anniversary), with the next two on 23 November and 3 January 1999. The third is called *The River of Souls* and deals with an ancient relic which may be the key to eternal life for the Soul Hunter aliens.

Awards Miscellany

The winner of the New England SF Association (NESFA) short story competition was Loren W. Cooper's *The Lives of Ghosts*; runner-up was Terry Hickman's *The Game*. Honourable mentions went to Debbie Donardo's *'Misspelt Snow'* and Dora Krenz's *'The Secret Ingredient'*. Judges for the competition, which attracted 70 entries, were Walter Jon Williams, Jane Yolen and Ian Randal Straker.

WATERSTONE'S BIG SF PUSH

WATERSTONE'S, the book chain, is pushing sf and fantasy in a big way with their SF Promotion during April and May. There's 20% off a selection of titles, chosen by leading authors as representative of the genres, and a special guide to sf, fantasy and horror with contributions from John Clute, Peter F. Hamilton, Anne McCaffrey and others (see below for more details).

The list of titles is called 'The Expert's Choice', and was put together from suggestions supplied by Terry Pratchett, Robert Rankin, Ben Bova, Anne McCaffrey, Jeff Noon, Maggie Furey, Terry Brooks, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Michael Moorcock, Paul J. McAuley, 'Jonathan Wylie', Gwyneth Jones, Paul Kearney, and others. The most popular recommendation, echoing the choice of readers in last year's Books of the Century survey, was *Lord of the Rings*. It wasn't one of Pratchett's five choices, though 'Discworld' books were popular among his fellow writers. Jeff Noon's list was headed by Ballard's *Crash*, which coincidentally also features among a selection of sexually adventurous works being promoted at the same time. "Discovering Ballard was a revelation," said Noon. "He was the first writer who actually seemed to be in love with the future, with technology, with the media world." 'Jonathan Wylie' - the pseudonym of Mark and

Julia Smith - chose Mervyn Peake's *The Gormenghast Trilogy*, and said it was "The most captivating sequence of fiction [we've] ever read".

The full list selected is as follows:

- Isaac Asimov *I, Robot*
- J. G. Ballard *Crash*
- Iain M. Banks *Consider Phlebas*
- Marion Zimmer Bradley *The Mists of Avalon*
- Arthur Scott Card *Ender's Game*
- Orson C. Clarke *Remedios With Rama*
- Philip K. Dick *The Man in the High Castle*
- Stephen R. Donaldson *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant*
- William Gibson *Neuromancer*
- Peter F. Hamilton *The Reality Dysfunction*
- Frank Herbert *Dune*
- Aldous Huxley *Brave New World*
- Robert Jordan *The Eye of the World*
- Ursula K. Le Guin *The Left Hand of Darkness*
- Anne McCaffrey *Dragonflight*
- Niven *Ringworld*
- Mervyn Peake *The Gormenghast Trilogy*
- Terry Pratchett *Mort*
- Kim Stanley Robinson *Red Mars*
- Mary Shelley *Frankenstein*
- Neal Stephenson *Snow Crash*
- J. R. R. Tolkien *Lord of the Rings*
- H. G. Wells *The Time Machine*
- John Wyndham *The Chrysalids*

• Disagree with the 'experts'? Let us know! ☐

WATERSTONE'S CHARTS

Sales are for the two months up to 15 April 1998, and are kindly supplied by Waterstone's, 93-97 Albion Street, Leeds. Tel: 0113 244 4588

SF & FANTASY

1. Robin Hobb *Assassin's Quest* (Voyager: £9.99 pb)
2. Iain M. Banks *Consider Phlebas* (Orbit: £6.99 pb)
3. Tad Williams *Otherland* (Orbit: £5.99 pb)
4. Robin Hobb *Ship of Magic* (Voyager: £17.99 hb)
- 4+ Peter F. Hamilton *The Neutronium Alchemist* (Macmillan: £9.99 pb)
- 4+ David Eddings *Polgara the Sorceress* (Voyager: £11.99 tp)
- 7- Lois McMaster Bujold *Memory* (Earthlight: £5.99 pb)
- 7- Terry Pratchett *Hogfather* (Corgi: £5.99 pb)
9. Arthur C. Clarke *3001: The Final Odyssey* (Voyager: £5.99 pb)
10. C. J. Cherryh *Finity's End* (Hodder: £5.99 pb)
11. J. R. R. Tolkien *The Lord of the Rings* (HarperCollins: £12.99 pb)
- 12- Janny Wurts *The Fugitive Prince* (Voyager: £5.99 pb)
- 12- J. R. R. Tolkien *The Hobbit* (HarperCollins: £5.99 pb)
- 12- L. E. Modesitt Jr. *The Soprano Sorceress* (Orbit: £6.99 pb)
- 12- Elizabeth Moon *Divided Allegiance* (Orbit: £5.99 pb)
- 16- Terry Pratchett & Neil Gaiman *Good Omens* (Corgi: £5.99 pb)
- 16- Paul Wake, Steve Andrews & Ariel (eds) *Waterstone's Guide to SF, Fantasy & Horror* (Waterstone's: £3.99 tp)
- 18- Katherine Kerr *Red Wyvern* (Voyager: £9.99 tp)
- 18- Terry Pratchett *Mort* (Corgi: £5.99 pb)
- 18- Robin Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* (Voyager: £5.99 pb)
- 21- Terry Pratchett *Reaper Man* (Corgi: £5.99 pb)
- 21- William Gibson *Neuromancer* (Voyager: £5.99 pb)
- 21- Terry Pratchett *Feet of Clay* (Corgi: £5.99 pb)
- 24- Anne McCaffrey *Acorna* (Corgi: £5.99 pb)
- 24- Terry Pratchett *The Light Fantastic* (Corgi: £5.99 pb)
- 24- Terry Pratchett *Men At Arms* (Corgi: £5.99 pb)
- 24- Jack McDevitt *Eternity Road* (Voyager: £5.99 pb)
- 24- Raymond E. Feist *Rage of a Demon King* (Voyager: £11.50 tp)
- 24- David Weber *Honour to Honor* (Bantam: £4.99 pb)
- 24- Peter F. Hamilton *The Reality Dysfunction* (Macmillan: £7.99 pb)
- 31- Terry Pratchett *The Colour of Magic* (Corgi: £5.99 pb)
- 31- Harry Turtledove *Go and Empire* (Hodder: £4.99 pb)
- 31- William Gibson *Idoru* (Viking: £5.99 pb)
- 31- David Farber *The Sum of All Men* (Earthlight: £9.99 tp)
- 31- David Weber *Hairs of Empires* (Bantam: £5.99 pb)
- 36- David Eddings *Belgarath the Sorcerer* (Voyager: £5.99 pb)
- 36- Harry Turtledove *Worldwar: Striking the Balance* (Hodder: £5.99 pb)
- 36- Terry Pratchett *Soul Music* (Corgi: £5.99 pb)
- 36- Iain M. Banks *Excession* (Orbit: £5.99 pb)
- 36- Terry Pratchett *Witches Abroad* (Corgi: £5.99 pb)
- 36- Terry Pratchett *Pyramids* (Corgi: £5.99 pb)
- 36- J. V. Jones *Baker's Boy* (Orbit: £5.99 pb)
- 36- J. V. Jones *Master and Fool* (Orbit: £5.99 pb)
- 36- David Gemmell *Winter Warriors* (Corgi: £5.99 pb)

• **Paul Wake, Steve Andrews & Ariel** (eds) *The Waterstone's Guide to Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror* (Waterstone's: £3.99 tp, 204pp ill., indexed) — As part of their promotion Waterstone's have put together this impressive genre guide. The contributors include John Clute, Stephen Baxter, Peter F. Hamilton, Anne McCaffrey, Michael Marshall Smith, Robert Rankin, Ramsey Campbell, and Neil Gaiman, who all provide essays on various aspects of sf, fantasy and horror. Booksellers from Waterstone's branches around the country write on over 200 genre books, but are uncited individually (shame on you!); the list of contributors at the back reveals one Syd Foster, BSFA member, but we don't find out who he wrote on.

Clute's introduction is typically, wonderfully... Clutish ("There is no science fiction without a march of Time. There is no fantasy without a Dream that says, You must change your life!") Standout piece by the authors is an interview with Michael Marshall Smith, which won't surprise you if you remember his one in *Vector* recently. It's aggressive, joyous: "Personally I would like the genres to gang up on the mainstream, take it outside and kick the shit out of it." He's making a start himself. Robert Rankin's article is also good, a personal, touching and very funny reminiscence of his father. But Baxter's piece is disappointing, being little more than a list of favourite short stories, useful as a guide but not much more.

I really can't think of many omissions; the most obvious (and regrettable, to me) are Gary Kilworth and the British triple-act of Cowper, Cony and Compton. A few out-of-print authors do get articles (Bester, Norton, Shiner, Shekley and so on), but as this primarily a guide to what is currently available, and given space constraints, this isn't too surprising. The BSFA gets a plug at the end in the contact address list, along with Zene, BBR, the SF Foundation and the BPS.

As a reading guide, a list of essential titles, a survey of the genres, all well and entertainingly presented, this book has very little wrong with it indeed. All that, and the extremely low price, mean that it's the editor's choice this issue. Highly recommended, and congratulations to all concerned.

WHAT'S ALL THIS THEN?

YOU WANT bestseller charts? We got bestseller charts. Waterstone's has generously agreed to supply sales figures for sf and fantasy, and we'll be printing them from now on. The charts on the right are by way of being a dry run; they're based on sales from only one shop (the big one in Leeds), but next time I hope to collate the figures from several Waterstone's branches around the country, which should be more representative.

I've extracted 'spinfovery' titles - film, tv and game tie-in books, mostly - and presented them separately. Let me know if you'd prefer them all lumped together, or if you'd like them to be split down further, into separate sf and fantasy lists, for instance. I can assure you that these are actual sales figures, unlike certain other charts prepared

by certain other booksellers who, for whatever reason, wish to promote certain titles...

But these figures do show some interesting facts. I hadn't realised quite how popular **Robin Hobb** (Megan Lindholm) is, at least in Leeds - *Assassin's Quest* is way ahead of any other title, even spin-offs. And remember *Ship of Magic* is a hardback. **Iain M. Banks** *Consider Phlebas* is doing so well because it's part of the 20%-off promotion (see above), as are some other titles, and it's notable how consistently well **Terry Pratchett's** back catalogue sells. It's good to see **Peter F. Hamilton's** *The Neutronium Alchemist* doing so well, and **Jack McDevitt's** *Eternity Road* is also a pleasant surprise. Earthlight titles also feature well, which will please Mr Jarrold. ☐

SPINFOVERY

1. A. C. Crispin *Star Wars: Han Solo 3* (Bantam: £5.99 pb)
2. Kevin J. Anderson *X-Files: Antibodies* (HarperCollins: £9.99 pb)
3. Douglas Adams *Starship Titanic* (Macmillan: £5.99 pb)
4. Aaron Allston *Star Wars: X-Wing 5: Wraith Squadron* (Bantam: £5.99 pb)
5. Peter David *Star Trek: New Frontier #5* (Simon & Schuster: £4.99 pb)
- 6- Martin Day *Dr Who: The Hollow Men* (BBC: £4.99 pb)
- 6- John Peel *Dr Who: Legacy of the Daleks* (BBC: £4.99 pb)
8. Dave Stone *Oblivion* (Voyager: £5.99 pb)
- 9- Douglas Niles *Firststandin' Reborn* (TSR: £4.99 pb)
- 9- Joseph Sherman *Star Trek: Vulcan's Forge* (Simon & Schuster: £5.99 pb)
10. Steve Lyons *Dr Who: The Witch Hunters* (BBC: £4.99 pb)

SHOTS

KEEP ON TREKKIN' Shooting began on the ninth *Star Trek* film on 31 March, according to Paramount Pictures; the director is **Jonathan Frakes**, it's written by **Michael Piller** and a possible title is *Star Trek: Prime Directive*. In it Captain Picard and the rest of the *ST:TNG* crew discover the 'fountain of youth'. But the occupants of the planet face a dire threat, and to protect their lives Picard must commit treason and take up arms against the Federation itself.

N • Meanwhile, UK tv production company Cloud 9 is making a two-hour pilot of William Shatner's 'Quest For Tomorrow' books (co-authored with Bill Quick). A tv series may follow, with Shatner producing, directing and possibly acting (which will be a first).

POET LAUREATE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD Ted Hughes's 1968 children's book *The Iron Man* is being turned into an animated feature film by Warner Bros. The action is transferred to Maine and it will feature the voices of *Friends* actor **Jennifer Aniston** and crooner **Harry Connick Jr.** The story was also turned into a musical by the Who's **Pete Townshend** in 1986; there don't appear to be any plans to film the sequel *The Iron Woman* (1993), a thinly-veiled attack on Margaret Thatcher.

HAMLET AND DRUG ADDICT IN ALIEN LOVE TRIANGLE Kenneth Branagh and *Trainspotting*'s Danny Boyle will feature in the forthcoming st comedy anthology film *Alien Love Triangle*. Boyle will direct and Branagh will act in one of the three segments, to be shot this spring in the UK. **Bill Forsyth** has also been approached to direct another segment.

DICK'S SCANNER DARKLY FILM? A company called Jersey Films is said to be producing a film version of **Philip K. Dick's** extraordinary drugs novel *A Scanner Darkly*. The director is **Emma-Kate Croghan**, who also wrote and directed *Love and Other Catastrophes* (1996) and *Come As You Are* (1996). **Stephen Spielberg's** Dreamworks SKG company has reportedly acquired the rights to **James P. Crow**, written by **David Atkins** and apparently based on a Philip Dick short story.

DAVID CRONENBERG STARTS SHOOTING . . . not, unfortunately, *A Scanner Darkly*, but *eXistenZ* [sic]. It's the *Crash* director's next film, and shooting is under way in Toronto. Written by Cronenberg, the cast includes Willem Dafoe, Ian Holm, and Jennifer Jason Leigh and it's about a game creator — played by Leigh — whose new product, *eXistenZ*, taps into the fears and desires of its players.

NEW SF ANTHOLOGY SERIES *Betaville* is the Sci-Fi Channel's new sf anthology series, beginning in June. It will be set in the near future and will feature classic sf stories by authors including **James Tiptree Jr.**

FRANKENSTEIN REMADE Industrial Light and Magic are doing the hard work on a full-length computer-animated version of *Frankenstein* for Universal. S. S. Wilson and Brent Maddock are scripting, and the story will pick up where the classic 1931 James Whale film finished. Wilson says that the film will have "a real Gothic sensibility".

LEGEND OFF Warner Bros. have cancelled the proposed third remake of Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend*, featuring Arnie Schwarzenegger, despite director Ridley Scott's attempts to get the costs below the \$100million mark.

POSTMAN GETS RASPBERRIES AND YAWNS Kevin Costner's much panned film of David Brin's *The Postman* swept the board in the 18th annual 'Golden Raspberry Awards,' winning in every category it was nominated in. It won Worst Picture, Worst Actor (Costner), Worst Director (Costner again), Worst Screenplay and Worst Song (for the entire score). Thrrrrrrrrr.

• *The Postman* also won the Boring Institute's award for Most Boring Film of 1997. Also in the running were *Starship Troopers* and *Mimic*. Yaaaaawn.

WHOOPI IN CAMELOT Whoopi Goldberg is taking the

media news . . tv . . film

lead in Disney's drastically rewritten tv movie version of Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

COPPOLA TRIES IT ON Recently Francis Ford Coppola filed suit against Warner Bros. and the estate of Carl Sagan over rights to last year's film of Sagan's novel *Contact*. Coppola claimed the book was based on a tv project jointly developed by him and Sagan in the 1970s, and they had had an agreement to share in any proceeds. Sagan later sold the film rights to Warner, and Coppola also claimed he was entitled to a share of the film's profits, and claimed damages of \$250,000.

In February a Los Angeles judge threw out the suit, saying that even though Sagan had broken their agreement, Coppola had waited too long to file the suit, and the original agreement was probably not enforceable anyway. Coppola intends to appeal.

PRISONER MOVIE? Propaganda Films are talking to director Simon West about a possible film version of Patrick McGowan's cult 60s tv series *The Prisoner*.

DR WHO VIDEOS recently released are *The Mind of Evil* (BBCV 6361, £16.99), one of the 'lost' stories from the 1970s. With Jon Pertwee as the Doctor, this now only exists in black and white, though a few surviving minutes in colour from the final episode are included. *Battlefield* (BBCV 6330, £11.99) is the first story from the final season in 1989, with Sylvester McCoy and Sophie Aldred on Earth in the 1990s getting involved in a story mixing Arthurian legend and nuclear weapons.

HILL TOP Walter Hill has taken over from Geoffrey Wright as director of *Supernova*, about a rescue spaceship that answers a distress call and gets attacked by an alien. Hill was producer on *Alien*, *Alien²* and *Alien Resurrection*, and executive producer for *Aliens*.

FOX GETS STAR WARS 20th Century Fox has acquired the worldwide rights to the three new *Star Wars* films, for theatrical showings, video sales and broadcast. The first, directed by **George Lucas** and currently simply called *Episode 1*, is in post-production following its shooting last year in England; it should be released in May 1999, with the second and third in 2002 and 2005 (by which time the rights will be owned by 21st Century Fox, of course).

SPIDER WARS Fox is also reported to be "close" to acquiring the rights to film *Spider-Man*, with **James Cameron** directing and **Leonardo DiCaprio** as the acned and arachnoid hero. But there's competition: MGM, Universal and Sony are also interested.

X-FILES MOVES TO LA The next series of *The X-Files* will be shot in Los Angeles, after being based in Vancouver in Canada; the move followed pressure from lead actors **Gillian Anderson** and **David Duchovny**. Fox Mulder has been married "at some point in the show's timeline", according to a 20th Century Fox spokesperson responding to the spotting of a wedding ring on Fox's hand in a recent episode. This may come into play in future episodes. • *The X-Files* won the Golden Globe Award for best drama series on tv for the second year in a row.

SNIPPETS ABC and Adelstein Entertainment have renewed their option on Kevin J. Anderson & Doug Beason's "epic disaster novel" *Ilwind* for a possible *Yu* series or miniseries [writes *Leyla Harding*], it could appear this autumn. • *E.T.* The Extraterrestrial has finally been topped as the most money-spinning film ever, by *Titanic*. • **Brian Yuzna** (*Re-animator*) will direct the movie version of the comic book *Zen Intergalactic Ninja* for 1993 release. • The "techno-futuristic" movie version of *Beowulf* has finished shooting; it features **Christopher Lambert**. • **Roman Polanski** is directing the supernatural thriller *The Ninth Gate*, featuring **Johnny Depp**. • **FX** for **Roland** (*Independence Day*) **Emmerich's** cl. cloning thriller *The 13th Floor* will be done in Cologne, after a \$23-million grant from a German film foundation. • **Harold Becker** is directing **Al Pacino** in another remake of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, with script by **David Mamet**. □

—Chris Terran

·MATRIX·

THIS ISSUE we say farewell to **Roger Robinson**, who's been taxing your brains with his competitions for the last fifty issues. And his contribution hasn't been limited to that: he regularly supplies photographs for the magazine, and other less visible services are no less valued for that. He's not vanishing, though – he'll continue to devote his energies to Becon Publications, Friends of Foundation, his fundraising activities and all the many other contributions he makes to science fiction in the UK. We wish him well, and he has my eternal gratitude for putting up with me over the last three years. Thanks!

And we ring in the new in the shape of **John Ollis**, who from next issue will be setting the competitions. And I can tell you his first one is a *stinker*.

Talking of puzzles, you may be aware of the alarming difference in scholastic achievement standards between boys and girls that's developed over the last decade or so. Some facts: in a 1995 survey of fifteen secondary schools, referrals to Special Educational Needs departments had a typical boy/girl ratio of 7:3; the lowest percentage was 55% boys, the highest 81%. In 1997, 12.9% of girls gained grades A* or A in all GCSE subjects, 9.1% of boys did (that's nearly a third less!). Girls outperform boys in English, *whatever their ethnic group*, at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16.

The most common reason for referrals to SEN departments is lack of literacy skills, and this is also the crucial factor in boys' poor performance in both examinations and Teacher Assessment.

Why should this be? The usual reasons given are that during the 80s a huge effort was made to tailor the curriculum more specifically to girls' needs, in order to address a perceived earlier bias; and the fact that most teachers are now women (leading to lack of rôle models for boys, and right-wing claims of a hidden feminist agenda). Many 11-year-olds have now *never* been taught by a man.

But at least the problem's been recognised, and the larger one of illiteracy among all children. Too many youngsters have no reading material at home whatsoever; the greater number of parents who both work, and many more single-parent households, mean that fewer parents (in fact it's nearly always the mother) teach their children to read before they start school; and if a child has poor reading skills at 11 they will have gone through five or six years of being told they're failures – how would you feel about that?

If needs readers too. Join a voluntary scheme to help kids read – you know it makes sense.

—Chris Terran

Many thanks to

Brian Ameringer, Jan Banks, Paul Barnett, Stephen Baxter, Elizabeth & Paul Billinger, Claire Brolley, Brum SF Ford, Andrew M. Butler, Cardinal Cox, Jan van 't Ent, Mike Ford, Roy Gray, Colin Greenland, Jon Courtney Grimwood, Steve Grover, Leyla Harding, Chris Hill, Geoffrey Hunt, Edward James, John Jarrold, Steve Jeffery, Jonathan D. Jones, Gary Kilworth, Paul Kincaid, Dave Langford, Ken MacLeod, Lee Montgomerie, John Ollis, Simon Ounsley, Mark Plummer, Chris Reed, John D. Rickett, Julie Rigby, Dave Roberts, Roger Robinson, SF Weekly, Jan Sorenson, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Richard Stubblings, Tony Sutton at Waterstone's, Z. L. F. Symes, Bryan Talbot, Martin Tudor, and all the staff of Intuition.

recent & forthcoming books

Earthlight



The launch of a new genre imprint doesn't happen every day. Simon & Schuster has occasionally published sf and fantasy — Kim Newman, Brian Stableford — but they've never had a dedicated imprint. When John Jarrold left Legend last year, shortly before the title was sold to, and merged into, Orbit, he moved to S&S to set up **Earthlight** (it was originally called Spectrum, but was renamed after worries about possible confusion with *Baratan Spectra* in the US). Jarrold proceeded to sign up about good names, and the list was launched at Eastercon with a party, signings, free books in the membership pack, and toasts to all concerned.

The individual books are noted below, but there are some general comments. The list will concentrate on paperbacks, with trade (large format) softcover editions and the occasional hardback for lead titles. The launch shows the genre spread: traditional sf, epic fantasy, dark fantasy / horror, and traditional fantasy. There's a pair of new British writers, an American old favourite, an American recent favourite, and an American writer delivering a fantasy under a pseudonym. One thing I'd like to see is a UK publisher taking a leaf out of Avon's book and promoting new British writers with cheap editions; we'll see.

The cover art is fairly traditional, with only Jim Burns's painting (for the Bradbury) standing out. All artists get a credit, which far too many publishers omit these days. Jarrold has done his bit to support Interzone, with ads in the back of the books. Proofreading and copyediting standards seem high, but production is of the usual low standard for UK books, with cheap, yellowing-prone paper.

But it's the words that matter...

Orion

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



Gillian Rubinstein *Foxspelt* (● 1 Mar; £9.99 hb, £3.99 pb, 172pp) — YA contemporary fantasy from the author of the 'Space Demons' trilogy, about a boy who escapes his desperate problems by observing a fox so closely he almost becomes one. Children's Book of the Year in Australia. **James Bibby** *Ronan's Revenge* (● 16 Mar; £16.99 hb, 238pp + 7pp appendices) — Humorous sf, allegedly, 'lampooning epic fantasy from Conan the Barbarian to Robert Jordan'. 'An hilarious pastiche of sauce and saucery,' says Lenny Henry.

★ **Lucius Shepard** *Barnacle Bill the Spacer* (2 Mar; £5.99 pb, 292pp) — Paperback coll. of Shepard's recent shorts; the title story won the Nebula. Recommended. > Sep 97
★ **Lucius Shepard** *Green Eyes* (2 Mar [R 1984]; £5.99 pb, 275pp) — Reissue of Shepard's superbly imagined novel about a scientific way of creating zombies, darkly set in the Deep South. It also prefigured cyberpunk's obsession with voodoo. Highly recommended.
Lucius Shepard *Life During Wartime* (2 Mar [R 1987]; £5.99 pb, 488pp) — Reissue of a rather choked (but beautifully written, as always) future war novel. > Aug 88

★ **Sarah Ash** *The Lost Child* (● 16 Mar; £9.99 tp, 344pp) — Dark fantasy from the thoughtful author of *Moths To A Flame* and *Songspingers*. A child is murdered in an exiled and reviled community, and in the subsequent chaos members of the community start questioning their place in the world. 'Rich with the imagery of ritual and magic.'

★ **Ric Alexander** (ed.) *The Unexplained* (● 16 Mar; £17.99 hb, £10.99 tp, 431pp) — Follow-up to Alexander's well-received reprint anth. *Cyber-Killers*. It's themed on the paranormal, but the list of contributors shows that it's a long way from your standard X-Files cash-in. It includes stories from J. G. Ballard, Olive Barker, Ramsey Campbell, C. K. Cherryh, Robert Heinlein, Harlan Ellison, Roger Zelazny, Ian Watson and others. There's also a very rare Olaf Stapledon story, 'A Modern Magician', reprinted from the Jul 79 *F&SF*, and a foreword by Peter James. Recommended.

Richard White (ed.) *King Arthur in Legend and History* (Dent; Apr; £14.99 tp, 400pp) — Anth. of Arthurian writings.

★ **Tricia Sullivan** *Dreaming In Smoke* (● Apr; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp) — St. follow-up to the splendid *Someone to Watch Over Me*. Indolent dreaming is an integral part of life. First. The AI-controlled protective environment where human colonists live and work. When a dreamer goes berserk the AI itself starts to go haywire and suspicions arise that a virus has entered the machine via a dreaming port. But is it inorganic or an alien lifeform?

★ **Tricia Sullivan** *Someone to Watch Over Me* (Apr; £5.99 pb) — St. > Sep 97
Robert Brier *The Murder of Tutankhamen* (Weidenfeld; ● Apr; £20.00 hb, 356pp) — Non-fiction. Brier claims to discovered forensic and documentary evidence that the Boy King was murdered.

Pappy Z. Britle *Courtney Love* (Apr; £5.99 pb) — Associational biography of the rock singer and

★ **Lois McMaster Bujold** *Memory* (● 7 Apr; £5.99 pb, 462pp + 3pp appendix) — Superior space opera, a new Miles Vorkosigan novel, this was shortlisted for both Hugo and Nebula. The appendix is a Vorkosigan chronology.

★ **Peter Crowther & James Lovegrove** *Escaryd Gap* (● 7 Apr; £5.99 pb, 543pp) — Well, there's Tom Reamy's *Blind Voices*, Ian McDonald's *Desolation Road*, Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, Charles G. Finney's *The Circus of Dr Lao*... all superb fantasies, all concerning fantastic and carnivalesque incursions into American-style small town life. And there's another one. It's wrapped in a metafictional conceit — an author struggling with writer's block and a drink problem — and other Stephen King similarities soon emerge as he starts to imagine the town from hell that one day pulls itself into the idyllic American town of Escaryd Gap. There's the usual large cast, the usual sickening set-pieces... it's clearly an attempt at a King-like bestseller, but is done rather well.

David Farland *The Sum of All Men* (● 7 Apr; £9.99 tp, 661pp) — Epic fantasy from an author new to the field — 'David Farland' is the pseudonym of a 'well-known American science fiction writer'. He's got the basics right, at least: there are maps, attempts at evocative names (*Mystaria*, *Gabon*, *Iome*, *Sylvarresta*), it's 'Book One of The Runelords', and it's long.

Ray Bradbury *Quicker Than the Eye* (● 7 Apr; £5.99 pb, 261pp) — Bradbury's first coll. of short stories for over a decade. There are 21 stories (including nine previously unpublished) covering 1994-96, and an afterword.

★ **John Whitbourn** *The Royal Changeling* (● 5 May; £5.99 pb) — New fantasy alternative history from a fine writer who it's very good to see back. After Charles II dies, the Duke of Monmouth invades England and meets Theophilus Oglethorpe, who knows he is Charles's son, has even blood and is allied with evil powers to gain the throne.

Jane Welch *The Lament of Abalone* (● 1 Jun; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, first volume of 'The Book of Onf' and set in the same world as the 'Runespel' trilogy.

actress, sadly (and surprisingly, given the subject and the writer) lacking in sleazy sex and violence.

Alan Baker *True Life Encounters: Ghosts and Spirits* (● Apr; £7.99 tp, 320pp) — Fourth So-Fi Channel tie-in book on 'true-life tales of the unexplained'.

Linda Jarvin *Roll 'n' Roll Babes From Outer Space* (Orion; ● Apr; £5.99 pb, 304pp) — Javins enters Spice Girl territory with this 'hilarious erotic romp'. 'Three spunky alien babes are trapped on the most boring planet in the entire universe,' whatever that is, they 'steal a spaceship and arrive at Sydney, Earth, in search of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll'. The blurb gloats: 'The big bang was never so much fun.'

Alan Wilson *The Blood and the Shroud* (Weidenfeld; ● Apr; £20.00 hb, 256pp ill.) — Non-fiction. Presents the arguments for and against the authenticity of the Throat Shroud. **David Samuel** *Memory* (Weidenfeld; ● Apr; £16.99 hb, c224pp) — A chemistry professor explains the current thinking on memory.

Adam Nichols *The Paladin* (6 Apr; £5.99 pb, 503pp) — Fantasy, Book 1 of 'The Whiteblade Saga', set in a world based on Icelandic and Scandinavian mythology. Backwards prose niches like: 'Soft and silky and still damp he felt.'

Adam Nichols *The War of the Lords Vel* (6 Apr [R 1994]; £5.99 pb, 372pp) — Reissue of Nichols's first fantasy (title sic, with no apostrophe)...

Adam Nichols *The Pathless Way* (6 Apr [R 1996]; £5.99 pb, 401pp + 6pp appendix) — ... and his second.

Pat Shipman *Taking Wing* (Weidenfeld; ● May; £20.00 hb, c320pp) — Archaeopteryx and the evolution of bird flight.

★ **John Barnes** *Earth Made of Glass* (● May; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, c230pp) — St. sequel to *A Million Open Doors* (1992 > Aug 93), it's a far-future tale of a nascent galactic empire and conflicts between the centre and the frontier over new worlds. Outside, on the front line, is home to a culture based on a Millennalist black US sect. Graud (from the first book) and the humans are posted there with the aim of preventing a minor squabble exploding into war.

★ **John Barnes** *Kaleidoscope Century* (May; £5.99 pb) — Homilying sf; Barnes's best novel (which is saying something), and highly recommended. > Sep 95

Ric Alexander (ed.) *Cyber-Killers* (May; £5.99 pb) — First-rate sf anth. > Sep 97

Thomas Richards *Star Treks Myths and Legends* (May; £5.99 pb)

Eliette Abecassis *The Qumran Mystery* (● May; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, c288pp) — Much delayed thriller about the death of Christ and the disappearance of a Dead Sea scroll.

★ **Forrest J. Ackerman** (ed.) *Film Futures* (● May; £12.99 tp, c60pp ill.) — Anth. of sf stories turned into movies; reviewed by Ridley Scott. Contents include Bradbury's 'Farewell to the Master' (filmed as *The Day the Earth Stood Still*), Clarke's *The Sentinel* (1901), Dick's 'We Can Remember It For You Wholesale' (*Total Recall*), George Langelaan's 'The Fly', Zelazny's 'Damnation Alley', Lovecraft's 'Re-Animator' and many others.

★ **'Ann Halam'** *Crying in the Dark* (● May; £9.99 hb, £3.99 pb, c160pp) — New children's ghost story from Halam (who is Gwyneth Jones). A bullied and abused girl retreats into the past of her 17th century home, and gets trapped.

Nathan Archer *Reichers: Cold War* (● Jun; £14.99 pb)

Mickey Zucker Reichert *The Children of Wrath* (● Jun; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, c244pp) — Fantasy, the sixth 'Renshai' book.

★ **James Lovegrove** *The Krivon Continuum* (● Jun; £5.99 pb) — New sf novel from the author of the Clarke-nominated *Glass*.

Jostein Gaarder *Through a Glass, Darkly* (Phoenix; ● Jun; £16.99 hb, c250pp) — Philosophical fantasy. A girl is dying from cancer, and an angel comes through her window.

★ **Alan Sinclair** *Cavalcade* (● Jul; £16.99 hb, c288pp) — An SF from the author of *Legacies*. 'Having taken up an invitation to travel to a better world, the assembled humans find themselves in an enormous cathedral-like edifice. No one meets them, and it seems that the ship itself is the alien. Only one woman is wise enough or mad enough to believe that communication is possible, or desirable.'

★ **Greg Egan** *Diagonia* (Jul; £5.99 pb) — Superb mind-bending sf. > Jan 98

Key

pb = paperback; hb = hardback; tp = trade (large format) paperback; pp = extent

ill. = illustrated; ed. = edited; R [x] = reissue / reprint (first publication date)

> = review in *Vector*; x/d:dn = Graphic novel; ab = Audiobook; YA = Young Adult

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

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

Treat future dates with caution. All unquoted remarks by Chris Terran.

Quoted comments are from publishers' material — caveat emptor.

— Thanks to Michael J. Cross for his index: <http://www.nyctech.demon.co.uk/topofba.htm> —

Orbit



Including Little, Brown, Warner, Legend

- Chris Bunch** *The Demon King* (● 19 Mar; £9.99 pb, 507pp) — Fantasy, sequel to *The Seer King*
- Kathy Blake** *Handmade Books* (● Mar; £16.99 pb, c128pp ill.) — Craft book about art, crafting your own books.
- ★ **Tad Williams** *Otherland* (5 Mar; £9.99 pb, 943pp) — First volume of a four-part of meganovel using virtual reality to explore environments ranging from World War I to Wonderland, ancient Egypt to near-future Africa. "A rich and complex adventure story" says the PR, and it's true: while it's not award-winning material it's a great page-turning read, and is recommended.
- Chris Bunch** *The Seer King* (2 Apr; £9.99 pb, 518pp) — Fantasy, first in a trilogy.
- Margaret Weis & Tracy Hickman** *The Mantle of Khandis-Dai* (● 2 Apr; £9.99 pb, 349pp) — Science fantasy set in the new 'Starshield' universe.
- Kate Elliott** *King of the Dragon* (2 Apr; £9.99 pb, 591pp) — Fantasy, volume one of 'Crown of Stars'. Elliott was the co-author, with Melanie Rawn and Jennifer Roberson, of *The Golden Key*.
- ★ **David Thomson** *Beneath Mulholland* (● Apr; £20.00 hb, c288pp) — Subtitled 'Thoughts on Hollywood and its Ghosts', this is a coll. of essays about the way Hollywood actors and characters become part of our shared reality and gain a kind of ghostly existence. Also takes in alternative history when Thomson imagines the career James Dean might have followed and what Travolta's character in *Saturday Night Fever* would have become in real life. Other films examined include the fabulous *Chinatown* and *Vertigo*. J. G. Ballard gave this an extremely favourable review in *The Observer* of 5 April.
- Tom Holt** *Open Sesame* (2 Apr; £9.99 pb, 312pp) — Comic fantasy. Stories have a life of their own, and when Baghdad thief Akram the Terrible suspects he's been living in the tale of Al Baba over and over again, he resolves to escape. Which plays merry hell with the story... Terry Pratchett has explored similar ideas (notably in *Witches Abroad*), but the Discworld offers a much more stable and convincing setting for this kind of meta-fantasy — Holt's tendency to shovel in every joke he can think of, regardless of any underlying rationale or anachronism (the book starts off with Akram about to die and starting in *This Is Your Life* spoof), undercuts the story. When anything can happen, nothing is surprising (for comic). But it is fairly amusing and readable, and will pass a train journey satisfactorily.
- ★ **Tom Holt** *Wish You Were Here* (● 2 Apr; £15.99 hb, 252pp) — Comic fantasy. This is better: Lake Chicopee in America has a legend — immerse yourself in its waters and the ghost of Okeewana will give you your heart's desire. A group of tourists pays a visit, and young Wesley Higgins from Birmingham decides to try it out. While Holt still works best on the small scale — a couple of one-liners, inventive similes — this has the advantage of a plot that at least hangs together and provides some rationale for the action. And like all true UK fantasy, there's a Moral.
- ★ **Gregory Benford** *Cosm* (● 2 Apr; £9.99 pb, 368pp) — A quick Luc publicates for Benford's latest novel, and at a very reasonable price. It's hard to say, more akin to *Timescape* (1980) and *Artifact* (1985) than his 'Walmisley' books, in that it concentrates on scientists at work and play. A black female physics professor in California conducts an accelerator experiment, but a mysterious bowling-ball sized object appears and wrecks her equipment. She smuggles it back to her lab and with another physicist and her students tries to work out what it is: a created universe, in which time is passing exponentially faster than here. Full of absorbing scientific detail and sensuous goosies, it's slightly let down by Benford's sneering straw-man approach to environmentalists and politicians and reporters and religious people and administrators and... well, anyone who isn't a scientist, basically. In this he's following in the footsteps of Fred Hoyle's *The Black Cloud* and many other books since, but the reason *Timescape* remains GB's best novel is its more sophisticated approach to those who don't
- share his worldview. Readable, exciting, but flawed, though if you enjoyed *Timescape* you'll certainly like this.
- Michael White** *Life Out There* (● May; £15.99 hb, c304pp ill.) — Subtitled 'The truth of — and search for — extraterrestrial life', this "explores all aspects of the question of ET life, including the social, ethical and religious ramifications of eventual contact".
- ★ **Ken MacLeod** *The Cassini Division* (● 7 May; £15.99 hb, 240pp) — At last: MacLeod's third novel, linked to but independent of *The Star Fraction* and *The Stone Canal*. Finally sees the light of day. London is in ruins, and a woman sent to deal with a nanotech spill there gets involved in the spiralling conspiracies around her own anarchist society, the enigmatically hostile post-human civilisation around Jupiter, and the Cassini Division. Earth's defence against it. I. K. Mailey — a physicist mentioned in the previous books and responsible for working out the Theory of Everything — comes on-stage in this book, and suspects the fast folk's virtual worlds may be as threatening to humanity as they appear. But Earth is now overpopulated and something has to give... Recommended.
- James Burke** *The Pinball Effect* (● May; £9.99 pb, c320pp ill.) — Good grief, is this tiresome dweeb still around? This is another magpie look at connections in science and the world, suitable for those with 10-second attention spans.
- ★ **Walter M. Miller, Jr** *Saint Leibowitz and the Wild Horse Woman* (May; £9.99 pb) — Post-humous sequel to *A Canticle For Leibowitz*.
- Larry Niven** *Destiny's Road* (May; £9.99 pb) — Poorly received sf novel, despite LN's claim that it's his magnum opus.
- ★ **Tim Powers** *Earthquake Weather* (May; £9.99 pb) — Urban fantasy, sequel to *Expiration Date*.
- Douglas Hurd** *The Shape of Ice* (● May; £15.99 hb, c320pp) — Yes, that Douglas Hurd. It's a near-future political thriller in which foreign crises vie with domestic concerns for the PM's attention.
- ★ **Garry Kilworth** *Land of Mists* (● May; £16.99 hb, c384pp) — Final volume of 'The Navigator Kings' fantasy trilogy, in which Kieto and his Polynesian armies come into conflict with the Celts and Picts of the Land of Mists. See p16, where Garry talks about this book.
- ★ **Garry Kilworth** *The Princely Flower* (May; £9.99 pb) — ... and the second volume.
- Brian J. Ford** *Sensitive Souls* (● May; £16.99 hb, c288pp) — Non-fiction, "an all-embracing new vision of life" which explains, apparently, "how fish can mourn for lost love". Nice trick.
- L. E. Modesitt Jr** *The Paratith War* (● Jun; £9.99 pb, c432pp) — SF novel from the author of the 'Redice' fantasy series, a space opera that "examines the nature of the secular and sacred against a background of hard sf".
- ★ **David Feintuch** *The Still* (● Jun; £9.99 pb, c640pp) — And this is a fantasy novel from the author of an sf series, the 'Seaford Saga'. An exiled prince tries to reclaim his throne, he needs allies, and to rule he must command the Still, the ancient Power of Caladon. Having a still was ever a good way to win friends.
- Hilary Bailey** *After the Cabaret* (● Jun; £15.99 hb, c320pp) — Associational (HB edited New Worlds) for a while) continuation of the life of Sally Bowles, as told in Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin* and, perhaps more famously, in the superb film *Cabaret*.
- ★ **K. J. Parker** *Colours in the Steel* (● Jun; £9.99 pb, c320pp) — Debut fantasy novel from a new British writer who lives in the West Country, volume 1 of the 'Fencer' trilogy. In Perimadia, they settle court cases differently: lawyers dispute with words not words, and earn their fees with their own blood (unlike here, where it's their client's). This is the story of one fencer-at-law, and becomes the focus of a misplaced courage and the magical attentions of a rich foreign merchant.
- ★ **Debbie Benstead & Storm Constantine** *The Inward Revolution* (● Jun; £7.99 pb, c256pp) — Subtitled 'Summoning the Sacred Powers Within', this "shows in practical and accessible terms how we can unlock the raw potential of our inner energies". Benstead is "an esoteric psychologist", and Storm is... Storm.
- Kate Elliott** *Prince of Dogs* (● Jun; £16.99 hb, c544pp) — Fantasy, second volume of 'Crown of Stars'.

Corgi



Including Bantam, Doubleday

- Steve Perry** *Leonard Nimoy's Primotals: Target Earth* (Bantam: ● 12 Mar; £9.99 pb, 288pp) — Oh dear. This is based on "the celebrated comic book series created by Nimoy with concepts by Isaac Asimov", which tells me all I really want to know. There's a "M" after 'Primotals', too. (OK, K you insist: SETI programme detects incoming starship, which turns out to be crewed by descendants of some promising species taken from Earth by aliens, 65 million years ago.)
- Aaron Allston** *Star Wars X-Wing 5: Wrath Squadron* (Bantam: ● 12 Mar; £9.99 pb)
- A. C. Crispin** *Star Wars Han Solo 3: Rebel Dawn* (Bantam: ● 12 Mar; £9.99 pb) — Is there no end to this?
- Robert Weisbrod** *Xena: Warrior Princess* (Bantam: ● 12 Mar; £9.99 pb ill.) — "The Official Guide to the XenaVerse", apparently. But the Channel 5 series does have something of a cult following — at last usually seems to generate — so it's worth listing.
- George Lucas & Chris Claremont** *Shadow Dawn* (Bantam: 9 Apr; £9.99 pb, 511pp) — Fantasy, sequel to *Shadow Moon*; delayed and rescheduled all over the place, this is finally out.
- ★ **John Meany** *To Hold Infinity* (Bantam: ● 9 Apr; £9.99 pb, 554pp) — SF, a debut novel from a new young British writer you will have seen in *Interzone*, and possibly at conventions — he's been a fan since childhood. And he's got a Jim Burns cover, so he's been marked out for the big push. After the death of her husband, biologist Yoshiko Sunadomari flees Earth for the idyllic world of Fulgor to attempt a reconciliation with her estranged son. But he has fled, wanted for murder, corruption and trafficking in illegal technology. Yoshiko tries to clear his name, leading to a confrontation with the corrupt ruling elite of the planet.
- Connie Willis and Stephen Baxter provide glowing blurbs: "Meany has achieved a cold fusion" — I suspect Steve didn't mean 'it doesn't work' — "of post-cyberpunk tech noir with the expansive dreams of classic sf. The result is dark, complex and glitters with strangeness... Meany has rewritten sf. Everything is different now." Willis says: "It's impossible to believe this is a first novel. Dazzlingly imagined and dazzlingly executed... a work of true uniqueness by a true talent. Wow!" After all that, I feel a bit maddeningly that I found it rather hard going at first...
- George Foy** *Contraband* (Bantam: ● 7 May; £9.99 pb, 518pp) — Cyberpunk thriller from the author of *The Shift*. A decaying, plague-ridden city is home to Joe Marak, a compulsive smuggler. The draconian government decides to wipe out free trade, and Joe is left alone to carry on the fight for freedom, his only hope the reputed author of *The Smuggler's Bible*, who may not even exist. Foy has the standard-issue list of writers' jobs: fisherman, CD-ROM game creator, vacuum moulder, a 'paralegal' in New York law firms, and travelling into Soviet-occupied Afghanistan with an arms-smuggling caravan.
- Terry Pratchett & Stephen Briggs** *A Tourist Guide to Lancashire* (● 7 May; £9.99 pb, 32pp + fold-out map) — The text, with some mildly amusing piss-taking of rambles (by Eric Wheelbrace) and pieces on folklore and customs (by Nanny Ogg), so you'll know what to expect, and a large map — more of a portrait of the country really, by Paul Kidby — make up a rather thin and overpriced piece of spinoffery. For completists only.
- ★ **Terry Pratchett** *The Last Continent* (Doubleday: ● 7 May; £15.99 hb) — The 22nd Discworld novel, wherein Rincewind ends up in XXXX and encounters many Australian goats. Some for the first time. Also in AB at £8.50.
- Barbara Hambly** *Star Wars: Planet of Twilight* (Bantam: 7 May; £9.99 pb, 389pp + trailers) — Han Solo, Chewbacca, Leia and Luke get it on in yet another Star Wars spinoff.
- More over the page...**

Corgi



CORGI continued...

- ★ **Michael A. Stackpole** *Star Wars: I, Jedi* (Bantam: 7 May; £12.99 hb, 464pp) — The story of Corran Horn, X-wing pilot, who has to come to terms with his Jedi heritage and learn to use the Force when his wife vanishes on a secret mission.
- ★ **K. W. Jeter** *Star Wars: The Bounty Hunter Wars* (Bantam: 11 Jun; £5.99 pb) — How are the mighty fallen. You can't blame Jeter — we all have to make a living — but the spin-off world's gain is our loss.
- ★ **Terry Pratchett** *Wyrd Sisters: The Illustrated Screenplay* (11 Jun; £9.99 pb) — Plentifully illustrated with colour stills, the text of the Corgiware film adaptation, which does include some new jokes not in the books so there is something new for your money. Delayed from December.
- ★ **Robert Rankin** *The Dance of the Voodoo Handbag* (Doubleday: 11 Jun; £16.99 hb) — Henry Doors (nudge nudge) is the world's richest man, and runs Necrossoft (wink wink — some subtle satire here, folks) which not only sells software, but in return for your soul will give you immortality in the Necronet. Billy Barnes has a voodoo handbag which he feeds with his granny.

Voyager



Including HarperCollins, Flamingo, Fontana

- ★ **Jack Vance** *Night Lamp* (16 Mar; £5.99 pb) — Well-received far-future sf. > 193
- ★ **J. R. R. Tolkien** *Finn and Hengest* (HarperCollins: 16 Mar; £7.99 pb) — A "fragment and an episode" from Tolkien's bottomless bottom drawer. Edited by Alan Bliss.
- ★ **Kevin J. Anderson** *The X-Files: Antidotes* (16 Mar; £5.99 pb)
- ★ **Anon** *I Want to Believe: The Official Guide to The X-Files* (16 Mar; £10.99 tp)
- ★ **Robin Hobb** *Assassin's Quest* (16 Mar; £5.99 pb) — Female to the 'Farseer' fantasy trilogy.
- ★ **Robin Hobb** *Shop of Magic* (16 Mar; £16.99 hb) — First in a new fantasy series — 'The Liveship Traders' — set in the same world as Hobb's (who is Megan Lindholm) 'Farseer' trilogy.
- ★ **Douglas Coupland** *Girlfriend in a Coma* (Flamingo: 1 Apr; £16.99 hb) — A woman gives birth to a daughter while in a coma in 1979; 18 years later she wakes, a modern Rip van Winkle. Associational.
- ★ **Janmy Watts** *Fugitive Prince* (8 Apr; £6.99 pb, 540pp + 22pp glossary) — Epic fantasy. Book 1 of *The Alliance of Light*. Wurts — 'expert horsewoman, sailor, musician and archer' — is married to artist Don Maist; they collaborated on the cover.
- ★ **Stephen Deloit** *Independence Day: The Silent Zone* (6 Apr; £5.99 pb) — The back-story of the film, dating back to Roswell.
- ★ **R. A. Salvatore** *The Sword of Bedwyrr* (6 Apr; £5.99 pb) — First volume in a new fantasy series, *The Crimson Shadow*.
- ★ **Stephen Baxter** *Vacuum Dimensions* (20 Apr; £5.99 pb, 460pp + 4pp Xeelee timeline) — Baxter's first coll., which concentrates on his 'Xeelee' future history sequence. His second coll. is:
- ★ **Stephen Baxter** *Traces* (20 Apr; £16.99 hb, 556pp + 3pp afterword) — ... which offers 'visions of histories which differ from our own, either through small changes or through a fundamental difference in physical laws'. Reading the Xeelee stories together brings home just how dark Baxter's vision can be. And with *Traces*, and a re-read of some of the novels, prompted some thoughts about themes in his work. It's interesting how strongly the idea of abandonment features: the *Time Traveller* in *The Time Ships* is motivated by his abandonment of Weena; in *Raft*, a group of humans is stranded in another universe; *Flux* sees radically modified humans ruthlessly left to their fate on a neutron star, after being part of the Xeelee war effort. *Voyage* and *Titan* were both written as responses to America's post-Apollo abandonment of space; and so on. You'll find the theme in some of the stories in *Traces*, too. It's a very fine coll. indeed, from laments for the Russian space programme ('Zemlya'), to steampunk entertainments ("Columbiad", "A Journey to the King Planet"), to alternative-world stories (the very fine "Moon Six"), and even an homage to Glen Miller. The stories cover his entire career so far, and though none are bad one or two of the early ones are a bit clunky. But reading them together has been a small and pleasing revelation — I hadn't realised quite how good he is now at short forms. Both books are highly recommended.
- ★ **Jim Marrs** *Alien Agenda* (20 Apr; £6.99 pb, 378pp + 55pp appendix, sources, index) — 'The untold story of the extraterrestrials among us'. Bah.
- ★ **Michael Marshall Smith** *One of Us* (HarperCollins: 1 May; £14.99 hb) — New sf novel from the author of *Only Forward and Spares*, being marketed as his 'breakout novel'. It's described as "a sassy, near-future satirical take on a corporate America out of control and loving it".
- ★ **David Hewson** *Solstice* (HarperCollins: 1 May; £16.99 hb) — Millennial mainstream novel about strange events on the sun which cause electromagnetic mayhem on Earth.
- ★ **Robert Holdstock** *Mythago Wood* (5 May (R 1984); £5.99 pb) — Reissue of one of the finest fantasies of the last twenty years. If you haven't read it, why not? The latest in the series is:
- ★ **Robert Holdstock** *Gate of Ivory* (5 May; £16.99 hb, 286pp) — 'Mythago Wood' fantasy, picking up the story of Christian Huxley who witnessed his mother's suicide and vanished into the wood. But much as I was looking forward to this, I confess to some disappointment: the characters don't seem to come alive (Christian in particular is ill-defined), and there's no really strong central image, usually something of a trademark in 'Mythago' stories (in particular the astonishing *Lavondyss*); what should carry power — his mother's death scene — gets defused somewhere along the line. Unlike all the other books in the series, you don't get that feeling of a tale that needed to be told, or, like a wondrous melody — so obvious! — already existed in some sense. Disappointing then, but my expectations were high.
- ★ **Raymond E. Feist** *Rage of a Demon King* (5 May; £6.99 pb) — Epic fantasy, third in the 'Serpentwar' Saga. The fourth and final volume is:
- ★ **Raymond E. Feist** *Shards of a Broken Crown* (5 May; £16.99 hb) — See also Avon.
- ★ **David Bischoff** *The Crow: Quoth the Crow* (5 May; £5.99 pb, 277pp) — Tie-in to the comic /

- movie franchise. This makes great play with Poe stories.
- ★ **Wayne Hammond & Christina Scull** *J. R. R. Tolkien: Artist and Illustrator* (HarperCollins: 5 May; £16.99 hb) — A book of postcards is also available, at £5.99.
- ★ **Easton Royce** *X-Files 10: Dark Matter* (5 May; £3.99 pb)
- ★ **Philip K. Dick** *The Father Thing* (5 May; £7.99 pb) — Third volume of Dick's collected short stories.
- ★ **Alison Spedding** *Cloud Over Water* (18 May (R 1988); £5.99 pb) — Second volume in the Bolivian-resident fantasist's 'A Walk in the Dark' trilogy, retelling the story of Alexander the Great in fantastic mode.
- ★ **Mercedes Lackey** *Four and Twenty Blackbirds* (18 May; £5.99 pb) — Mystery / fantasy, sequel to *The Eagle and the Nightingales*.
- ★ **Clive Barker** *Scarlet Gospels* (HarperCollins: 1 Jun; £16.99 hb) — Dynastic dark fantasy about two families at war.
- ★ **Christie Dickson** *Quicksilver* (HarperCollins: 6 Jun; £16.99 hb) — Werewolf fantasy set in 17th century Holland.
- ★ **Elizabeth Massie** *Millennium 4: The Wild and the Innocent* (HarperCollins: 1 Jun; £5.99 pb) — Isn't that one of those dreadful US soaps?
- ★ **Kevin J. Anderson** *Resurrection Inc.* (15 Jun; £5.99 pb) — The tie-in specialist turns to real sf with this technothriller about a company which finds a way to raise the dead and use them as mindless slaves. Trouble starts when they start taking human's jobs: 'riots, Satanic cults and threats of political meltdown reach fever pitch in this first science fiction thriller'.
- ★ **David Zindell** *Neverness* (15 Jun (R 1988); £6.99 pb) — Zindell's first novel, a metaphysical space opera kicking off the 'Riemann for Homo Sapiens' series. The final volume is:
- ★ **David Zindell** *War in Heaven* (15 Jun; £9.99 tp) — ... which follows the story of Mallory Ringers's son as he tries to prevent an apocalyptic war.
- ★ **Eric Lustbader** *Dragons on the Sea of Night* (6 Jun; £5.99 pb) — Epic oriental fantasy.
- ★ **Colin Greenland** *Matter of Plenty* (6 Jun; £5.99 pb) — Third and final 'Tabitha Jute' novel, not getting a hardback edition, boo hiss.
- ★ **Mike Jefferies** *The Siege of Candlebarr Hall* (6 Jun; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, final volume in a series.



Robert Holdstock

Avon



In this issue's great tradition of plugging Waterstone's, here's another one. Larger branches of the store carry most of these titles, and reasonably priced too – the 'introductory' bargain books cost £2.99, for instance (£3.99 US).

Raymond E. Feist *Rage of a Demon King* (7 Jan; \$5.99 pb, 588pp) — Epic fantasy, third volume of the 'Serpentwar Saga' and sequel to *Rise of a Merchant Prince*.
Susan R. Matthews *Prisoner of Conscience* (7 Jan; \$3.99 pb, 312pp) — Bargain priced thoughtful adventure, sequel to *An Exchange of Hostages*. A military torturer of the Bench federation of worlds is assigned to a prison, but his 'processing' of the prisoners brings a terrible secret to light, which may bring justice to a victimised people but also threatens his career and life.

Amey Stout *The Royal Four* (7 Jan; \$5.99 pb, 301pp) — Fantasy, Book 2 of *The One Land Saga* and sequel to *The Sacred Seven*. A former mercenary and a dragon now rule the One Land, and they must become accustomed to their new roles while repelling a fresh attack from the elfwath Alvans.

★ **Carolyn Ives Gilman** *Halfway Human* (7 Jan; \$5.99 pb, 472pp) — Gender-bending sf. 'Teda Galeie is an asexual humanoid from Gammads, an isolated planet where both society and biology have been engineered in unusual ways. Teda becomes a pawn in the conflict that erupts between two planets, making the girl a sacrifice for interstellar diplomacy'.

Richard Adams *Tales From Watership Down* (11 Feb; \$6.99 pb, 332pp + 3pp glossary) — Legends and tales about the chatty and whimsical rabbits. Taking a leaf from the music industry, Avon is issuing this with four different 'collectible' covers; unlike CD singles though, you don't get slightly different contents (remix stories, anyone?).

★ **Severna Park** *Hand of Prophecy* (11 Feb; \$214.00 hb, 307pp) — St. sequel to Park's well-received (and Lambda-nominated) debut novel *Speaking Dreams*. Park – see right – lives in Baltimore and lectures for the Women in SF programme at the University of Maryland. Both books are set in a universe where humans are slaves or masters, loyal to one of two opposing empires. Frenna is a young slave girl pressed into service as a medic at a gladiatorial arena; she carries the cure to the virus that marks slaves out and guarantees them twenty years of youth followed by an agonising death. She becomes involved in an underground movement to end slavery.

Ben Bova *Moonrise* (11 Feb; \$6.99 pb, 560pp) — Adventure st, first in the series whose second volume is:

Ben Bova *Moonwar* (11 Feb; \$23.00 hb, 388pp) — Earth bans nanotechnology, and Moonbase declares itself independent. UN troops are dispatched to quell the rebels, and this is the story of their fight for freedom. (Hasn't this been done before somewhere?)

★ **Charles Pellegrino** *Dust* (11 Feb; \$15.95 hb, 359pp + 20pp afterword, 4pp bibliography) — Ecotastrophe st. A plague of mites infects Long Island, the precursor to the rapid disintegration of the entire eco-system. Scientists struggle to puzzle out what's happening and why, but Fundamentalists oppose them – politicians fumble and get in the way... all the usual stuff. (That's actually a little unfair – politicians are treated much more kindly than usual.) But despite having flaws as a novel – CP's penchant for melodramatically cinematic and unnecessary set-pieces, for instance, and his irritating Renaissance-men characters, one of whom is clearly based on himself – this is a first-rate read. Why? Because I learned more uselessly fascinating things from it than in a year of pub quizzes, and when the book turns to science it really comes to life: the Joy of Discovery, the hunt, the puzzle, the sheer exuberance of a first-rate mind following through the logic of the world. (Which points to



Severna Park

another flaw: this mood contrasts joltingly with the story, one of grim pessimism.) I don't have room for fact-dropping examples – glycerine crystals? vampire bats? – and can only urge you to try it; if you like Niven, Benford, Clarke, you'll love this. Highly recommended.

Adam Lee *The Dark Shore* (11 Feb; \$5.99 pb, 488pp + 4pp appendix, map) — Epic fantasy telling the story of the Seven Dominions of Irth, a marvellous, magical world, first in a series, as if you couldn't guess. 'Irth is being attacked by cacodemons – hideous flying creatures from the Dark Shore – who destroy everything and everyone in their wake. Mysteriously, the cacodemons are impervious to the protective magic of Charm and so it is up to a group of thieves, orphaned children and a displaced lord to battle for the fate of Irth.'

Stephen Leigh *Dark Water's Embrace* (11 Feb; \$3.99 pb, 325pp + 5pp appendix, map) — Bargain priced st, 'in the tradition of Ursula K. Le Guin'. A century after a spaceship crashes on the planet Mictlan, the only clue to the high rate of infertility, infant mortality and mutation plaguing the descendants is the discovery of a long-dead body of a Micoali, a member of the extinct native race. It will soon become clear that Mictlan's future – and the survival of its humans – lies in the planet's past.

★ **Rudy Rucker** *Freeware* (11 Feb; \$5.99 pb, 262pp) — Hyperactive sf, sequel to *Software and Wehware* and full of the usual Ruckerisms: weird sex, weird science, and clumsy writing. 'Moldies' are his latest brainchild, artificial lifeforms made of genetically-manipulated moulds and algae (and hence a bit... smelly). Naturally, despite being used in all the loosely-paid jobs and subject to inventively disgusting sexual uses, they're despised by all Right-Thinking people, and freedom only exists on the moon... recommended if you like Rucker (who is something of an acquired taste).

James Alan Gardner *Commitment Hour* (11 Mar; \$5.99 pb, 343pp) — Second of novel from a Canadian Clarion West graduate and winner of the 1989 'Writers of the Future' contest. It's a sequel to his debut novel *Expendable*. 'The Old Tech' culture of 20th century Earth is barely a memory; most of the world's population has long since dispersed to other planets, thanks to the alien confederation known as the League of Peoples. But 40 years ago the League abandoned Earth taking all their scientific knowledge. The village of Tiber Cove was founded as a cultural experiment, and as 20-year-old Fulin prepares for his coming of age ritual (the 'Commitment Hour') a stranger arrives bearing more high-tech than has been seen for years; his appearance leads to discoveries no one expects...

Eric S. Nyland *Dry Water* (11 Mar; \$3.99 pb, 362pp) — Bargain priced dark fantasy, in *Blaylock* / Powers vein. *Dry Water* in New Mexico is a kind of ghost town, and when psychic writer Larry Nigbs pays a visit he unleashes a storm of strange events and trepidation among the town's unconventional denizens, who include a witch, a Magus / neomancer and a ghost called Dempsey. 'A Navajo shaman helps Larry keep his otherworldly enemies from discovering – and abusing the powers of – the sacred 'Dry Water'.

★ **Damien Broderick** *The White Abacus* (11 Mar; \$5.99 pb, 339pp) — St from the Australian writer, critic and st commentator: he wrote *Reading By Starlight*, *Postmodern Science Fiction*. 'Set in the far future at a time of great political and cultural upheaval, young Telmah Lord Cima, a prince of the asteroid kingdom 16 Psyche, comes to Earth and meets a computer-augmented being named Ratio. In a plot that echoes Hamlet, they return to 16 Psyche in the wake of Telmah's father's 'accidental' death. But Telmah suspects murder, and vows to avenge his father.' As you'd expect it's chock full of post-modernisms, back references and homages: an afterword singles out as inspirations C. L. Moore's 'No Woman Born', Robert L. Forward, Martin Heidegger, Michael Heim's *The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality*, David Gelernter, critic Harold Bloom, Alfred Besta and, of course, Shakespeare. **Raymond E. Feist** *Shards of a Broken Crown* (11 Mar; \$24.00 hb, 417pp) — Epic fantasy, fourth and final volume of the 'Serpentwar Saga' and sequel to *Rage of a Demon King*. Feist, who is a Southern Californian by birth, lives in San Diego with his wife, children and four horses; 'I don't write fantasy,' he says, 'I write historical novels about an imaginary place. At least that's how I look at it.' When not writing he designs computer games, collects movies on laserdisc, and enjoys wine.

Adam Lee *The Shadow Eater* (11 Mar; \$13.00 pb, 334pp + map) — Epic fantasy, sequel to *The Dark Shore* (see above).

Victoria Strauss *The Arm of the Stone* (11 Mar; \$5.99 pb, 426pp) — Epic fantasy. The Stone, source of magic and power, is stolen from its keeper by an evil warrior and turned to dark use. But a legend predicts 'One Who Comes' from his lineage the precious gem from prison, throw off the tyranny of the evil Arm of the Stone, and restore harmony between the worlds.

WHAT'S THE BEST BRITISH SF NOVEL OF THE LAST FIFTY YEARS?

LAST CHANCE TO VOTE!

The BSFA is asking its membership to decide the best British sf novels of the last fifty years. And we need your votes!

Fill in the form opposite and send it in, or simply write your nominations on a sheet of paper. You can even use email.

Comments and annotations are very welcome.

Eligibility

A novel by a British-born author published between 1948 and 1998.

Number of books

Five please, ranked if possible. Annotations welcome.

Deadline:

30 June 1998

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Name: _____ Membership number: _____

PLEASE SEND TO

Andrew M. Butler
33 Brook View Drive
Keyworth
Nottingham
NG12 5JN.

Or email: vector-bsfa@rocketmail.com (subject line 'Poll').

The Rest



Jonathan Cape
Paper Tiger
Bantam
Vintage

Karl Shaw (ed.) *The Mammoth Book of Tasteless Lists* (Raven: £ 9.99 pb, c512pp) — Which Prime Minister did copulating with a parlour maid, which King owned a golf bag made from an elephant's penis, what are the ten most collectable body parts... all 'dredged from the trough of human experience'.

Steve Lyons Dr Who: The Witch Hunters (BBC: £ 2 Mar; £4.99 pb, 278pp) — The first Doctor, Susan, Barbara and Ian visit the village of Salem in 1692. Susan gets too involved with the nascent tragedy (cf Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*), and disaster looms for our plucky heroes.

Michael Collier Dr Who: Longest Day (BBC: £ 2 Mar; £4.99 pb, 276pp) — Debut novel. The Doctor and Sam arrive on the planet Hlath, a place of shifting time zones used for exiles, prisoners and waste dumping. But the computer that controls everything is malfunctioning.

Douglas Adams *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (BBC: £ 2 Mar; £12.99 pb, 4 cassettes, 5h50m) — Re-release of the original two audio series that started it all off back in 1978 [good record - doesn't time fly?]. Also available separately at £9.99 each, and on CD, but the box set is a bargain, and is highly recommended (especially if, like me, you haven't heard it since the original broadcast - it's as good as I remember).

Julie Verne *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas* (World's Classics: £ 5 Mar; £4.99 pb, 381pp + 48pp front matter + 3pp appendix + 60pp notes) — A new and unabridged translation by William Butcher (note the slight change to the usual modern title), copiously and thoroughly annotated and with an extensive introduction, a chronology of Verne's life and a selected bibliography. Also presents important manuscript discoveries and previously unpublished information on Verne's artistic and scientific references. SF Studies says this series contains 'by far the best translations / critical editions available', a genuine bargain, and recommended.

Melanie Rawn *The Mageborn* (Pan: £ 6 Mar; £5.99 pb, 753pp + 2pp genealogy + 3pp list of saints) — Fantasy. Book 2 of the *Exiles* series, ed. by Michael Whelan. Three sisters continue their desperate bid for control in their world Lennel, where women hold the key to all economic and social power.

Peter F. Hamilton *The Neutronium Alchemist* (Macmillan: 20 Mar; £9.99 pb, 986pp + 5pp timeline + 7pp cast list) — ... which means it just misses the 1,000 page mark. Second volume in Hamilton's huge and enjoyable space opera trilogy.

Alan Ahlberg *Woof!* (Penguin: 26 Mar; £6.99 pb, 3h) — Children's fantasy about a boy who turns into a dog. Reader Mark Williams.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle *The Lost World* (Penguin: 26 Mar; £6.99 pb, 3h) — Reader Nathaniel Parker.

Bram Stoker *Lair of the White Worm* (Pulp Fictions: 26 Mar; £4.99 pb)

H. Rider Haggard *People of the Mist* (Pulp Fictions: 26 Mar; £4.99 pb)

Edgar Allan Poe *Murders in the Rue Morgue and Other Stories* (Pulp Fictions: 26 Mar; £4.99 pb) — First three titles of a new imprint dedicated to publishing 'classic' (i.e. out of copyright) pulp fiction. Forthcoming books include Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, Rider Haggard's *She*, Edgar Wallace, Sapper and Marie Corelli novels, and the splendidly titled *Kidnapped by Cannibals*: the press info neglects to tell us who wrote this classic of children's literature. It also makes great play of the low price, but you can also get some of these titles for 99p from publishers like Wordsworth and Penguin. You can also get a complete coll. of Poe's stories in hb for £3.99 or so - poke round your remainder bookshop.

Peter Dickinson & Wayne Anderson *The Flight of Dragons* (Paper Tiger: £ 26 Mar; £13.99 pb, 112 pp) — Fantastical Dickinson and artist Anderson collaborate on a spoof natural history of dragons.

Stephen Saylor *Catrina's Riddle* (Raven: £ 1 Apr; £6.99 pb, c448pp) — Historical crime novel. 'I, Claudius meets Brother Cadfael', set in ancient Rome.

Bo Fowler *Scepticism Inc.* (Cape: £ 1 Apr; £9.99 pb, c288pp) — Debut novel from a graduate of Malcolm Bradbury's Creative Writing course at East Anglia University. This satire (spot the Dick reference) is narrated by a God-obsessed supermarket trolley born in 2022. It - or he - meets Edgar Malloy, who takes bets on metaphysical propositions and never loses.

Mike Ashley (ed.) *The Mammoth Book of Comic Fantasy* (Raven: £ 1 Apr; £6.99 pb, c512pp) — Contributors include Pritchett, Adams, Milligan, Holt. Also includes classic reprints and rare gems from comic fantasy's roots down the ages.

Robert Nye *The Late Mr Shakespeare* (Chatto & Windus: £ 1 Apr; £16.99 hb, c320pp) — Fantastic biography.

James Tully *The Secret of Prisoner 1167: Was This Man Jack the Ripper?* (Raven: £ 1 Apr; £7.99 pb, 112, c400pp) — Yet another Ripper theory.

Anne Rice *Pandora* (Chatto & Windus: £ 1 Apr; £12.99 pb, 244pp) — First in a new series of short vampire novels; the story of the eponymous vampire last seen in *Queen of the Damned*.

Keith Topping & Martin Day *Dr Who: The Hollow Men* (BBC: £ 6 Apr; £4.99 pb, 284pp) — The 7th Doctor and Ace visit the village of Haven Bridge early next century, home to a number of very odd children. The doctor is kidnapped and taken to Liverpool where he gets involved in a feud between a detective and a criminal, both from the village. Ace stays with a Chinese family there, scarecrows start to walk, and mysterious events escalate....

John Peel *Dr Who: Legacy of the Daleks* (BBC: £ 6 Apr; £4.99 pb, 245pp) — Susan, the Doctor's first girl companion, goes missing in the 22nd century. The Doctor, already searching for the lost Sam (the timelines get a little confused here), looks for her and finds that the Daleks weren't quite as thoroughly defeated as he thought.

Roger Robinson *(Re)Commended Science Fiction* (Bacon Publishing: £ 10 Apr; £5.50 pb, 440p pp) ISBN 1-870824-40-7 — This is 'a core library' listing of over 1,200 titles based on nominations for the major science fiction and fantasy awards between 1949 and 1997. Unfortunately it doesn't include the BSFA Awards (there appears to be some difficulty obtaining the full shortlists of the earlier awards), but every novel that appeared in the shortlists for the Hugo, Nebula, Dick, Clarke, International Fantasy, Campbell, Locus and World Fantasy awards is listed, with winners neatly marked. 50p from each sale goes to the

SF Foundation, and you can get it for £4.00 inc. P&P (\$8.50 US) from Beacon, 75 Rosslyn Ave., Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG.

John Rozum, **Alan Saviuk & Rick Magyar** *The X-Files: Skin Deep* (Cape: £ 17 Apr; £9.99 pb, unpaginated) — Four all-new stories in this tie-in GN, 'Surround', 'Crot Duster', 'Soma' and 'Skyduster'. For some reason X-Files comics seem to be very badly drawn.

Paul Wake, Steve Andrews & Ariel (eds) *The Waterstone's Guide to Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror* (Waterstone's: £ 21 Apr; £3.99 pb, 204pp ill., indexed) — Contributors include John Clute, Stephen Baxter, Peter F. Hamilton, Anne McCaffrey, Michael Marshall Smith, Robert Rankin, Ramsey Campbell, Neil Gaiman. Highly recommended. See p6 for more details.

Cedric Miles *When We Die* (Robinson: £ 1 May; £16.99 hb, c352pp) — The former professor of microbiology at Guy's Hospital explains exactly what happens to the body after death, from physical decomposition to forensic pathology, near-death experiences, embalming, mummification, funeral rites and eulogies. Gripping and fascinating.

Maxim Jakubowski (ed.) *The Mammoth Book of New Erotica* (Raven: £ 1 May; £6.99 pb, c508pp) — Contributors include Poppo Z. Brite, Will Self, Martin Amis, Cecilia Tan.

Garth Ennis, **Steve Pugh**, **Carlos Ezquerro** & **Richard Case** *Preacher: Ancient History* (Titan: £ 1 May; £9.99 pb, 222pp) — Extremely violent, foul-mouthed (if finding a page without 'fuck' on it and disgusting comic book. Many people like Preacher and think it's funny; it's won awards all over the place and gained organic reviews from a number of little boys who scribble for SFX. The Guardian and I.O. I don't like it. It's vile. But what do I know?

Paul Leonard *Dr Who: Dreamstone Moon* (BBC: £ 5 May; £4.99 pb, 250pp) — Sam is rescued from an out-of-control spaceship and ends up on a moon which is the only source of dreamstone, a mysterious crystalline substance which can preserve your dreams - or give you nightmares. She's pitched into a conflict between the miners and ecological protesters, and when the Doctor tracks her down he gets involved too... but on the wrong side.

Terrance Dicks *Dr Who: Catastrophe* (BBC: £ 5 May; £4.99 pb, 248pp) — The Third Doctor and Jo get caught up in a conflict between various races squabbling for control of the planet Kasterpatria. Fits between the 14 stories 'Planet of the Daleks' and 'The Green Death'. Dicks was Dr Who script editor from 1968 to 1974.

Stephen Cole (ed.) *Dr Who: Short Tips* (BBC: £ 5 May; £5.99 pb, 332pp; £7.99 pb, 2x90min) — Coll. of 15 Whovian short stories; the ab has 6. Contributors include Daniel O'Mahony, who you'll know from his reviews and articles in *Vector*, which gets a plug in the author notes. The book is read by Nicholas 'Brigadier' Courtney and Sophie 'Ace' Aldred.

Sally Morris & Jan Halliwell *Living With Elixirs: Marcus Morris, Priest and Publisher* (Lutterworth: £ 12 May; £25 hb, 312pp ill.) — Biography of the founder of the fondly remembered Eagle comic, home to Dan Dare. 'Known as the champagne printer', he lived the high life with his actress wife, believing that sex was given by God to be enjoyed, yet he never lost sight of the need to remind his readers how to behave and live well.' Details from Lutterworth Press, PO Box 60, Cambridge, CB1 2NT. Tel. 01223 350865, fax 01223 366951. Email lutterworth.pr@edial.pipex.com

Chris Claremont, **Eduardo Barreto**, **Jackson Guice** et al *Aliens vs Predator: Deadliest of the Species* (Titan: £ 29 May; £19.99 pb, c320pp) — Introduction by Raymond E. Feist. Very expensive but well-drawn GN in which Alien and Predator meet for the third time. The characters in this seem to be turning into your standard superheros, complete with stupidly impractical skimpy costumes for hypermammary women with no nipples. Ripley in T-shirt and knickers at the end of Alien carried a nice erotic charge, but this is getting bad.

Robert Shea & Robert Anton Wilson *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* (Raven: Jun (H) 1975; £9.99 pb, c800pp) — First UK publication for some time of this cult conspiracy book.

Russell Stannard *Ask Uncle Albert: 100% Tricky Science Questions Answered* (Faber: £ Jun; £4.50 pb, c192pp ill.) — Children's science book (why is water wet? Will the sun blow up?) by the physics professor at the Open University.

Mike McCormack *Crow's Requiem* (Cape: Jun; £9.99 pb, c256pp) — Literary fantasy.

Martin Amis *Heavy Water* (Cape: Jun; £14.99 hb, c256pp) — Coll. with some stories of genre interest: 'Straight Fiction' is set in a world where everyone is gay apart from a beleaguered straight community; in 'Career Moves' screenplay writers submit their works to mass-press zines while poets are first-class to LA, and 'The Janitor on Mars' is a Dickensian-sounding tale in which a sardonic robot has strange news about life in the solar system.

Simon R. Green *Deathstalker Honour* (Vista: £ 18 Jun; £5.99 pb, 621pp) — Science fantasy space opera, fourth and penultimate part of the life and times of Owen Deathstalker and written with cheekily cheerful awfulness. Good fun.

Anton Diney on *Babylon 5* (Boxtree: £ 19 Jun; £14.99 pb, ill.) — Yes, it's a *Babylon 5* cookbook, with dishes like *Tulpa Pod Salad* and *Tweebles*. Trees freed for this, you know.

Peter Beresford-Ellis *Celtic Myths and Legends* (Robinson: £ Jul; £15.99 hb, c512pp) — The first new translation for decades of myths and legends from all six Celtic cultures (Irish, Scots, Welsh, Cornish, Manx, and Breton).

Jeanette Winterson *The 24-Hour Dog and Other Stories* (Cape: £ Jul; £14.99 hb, c192pp) — Her first coll. There's a world where sleep is illegal, a diamond island where the jewellery is made of coal, and other strangenesses.

Hugh Brogan (ed.) *Signalling From Mars: The Letters of Arthur Ransome* (Pimlico: £ Jul; £12.50 pb, c384pp ill.) — Correspondence of the author of *Swallows and Amazons*.

Angela Carter *Shaking a Leg* (Vintage: Jul; £7.99 pb, c512pp) — Carter's collected journalism and essays. Recommended of course.

Mike Ashley (ed.) *The Mammoth Book of Arthurian Legends* (Raven: £ Jul; £6.99 pb, c512pp) — 'A comprehensive collection of stories.'

Volker Engel & Rachel Aberly *The Making of Godzilla* (Titan: £ 17 Jul; £9.99 pb, ill.) — Tie-in to the remake of the godawful Japanese monster movie, set for release on the same day as this. Engel is the Oscar-winning visual effects supervisor on *Independence Day*.

LETTERS TO MATRIX

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

Send letters to **Matrix**

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Or fax01327 361661

(marking emails and faxes clearly 'For Matrix')

Letters may be edited. If you don't want your full address printed please indicate this clearly.

Anonymous letters will be printed at the editor's discretion.

BEST LETTER WINS A BSFA T-SHIRT

A reasonable crop of letters this time, a trend which I very much hope will continue! I'd particularly like to hear from you if you haven't written before, or are a new member. What should you write about? Anything in this issue, of course, and suggestions for future articles are always welcome. Do I give enough coverage to hard SF? Fantasy? Science? Would you like author profiles? Are you happy with our running sales charts (see p6)? And your thoughts on the BSFA's first forty years would be particularly interesting.

Meanwhile, **Theo Ross** kicks us off with a dig at Andy Butler, and so wins this issue's T-shirt.

Theo Ross
Argyll

When Andrew M. Butler tells us (*Matrix* 130) that he considers Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* to be an offensive novel, he is expressing a personal opinion, as he has every right to do. When he tells us that "This is a novel which insists that only war veterans should vote", we may wonder what that opinion is based on. In chapter 2 (pp 29-31) in the NEL paperback of 1970, when Rico volunteers for Federal Service, he is told clearly that he may find himself, not in the military, but in a labour battalion or acting as human guinea-pig for medical research. In chapter 12, during officer training, he is reminded (p153) that "in peacetime MOST" - my emphasis - "veterans come from non-combatant auxiliary services and have not been subjected to the full rigours of military discipline". How does one manage to be offended by a novel without reading it?

Elsewhere in the same issue "Recent & Forthcoming Books" wonders whether *The Deeds of Paksenarian* has previously been available in the United Kingdom. *Andromeda* brought in the Baen paperback edition as it appeared, ten years ago. I'm not sure that I didn't give it a *Matrix* plug myself, in Maureen [Speller]'s Desert Planet Bookshelf. Intending readers should perhaps be warned that Elizabeth Moon (late US Marine Corps), like Heinlein (late US Navy), appears to believe - her heroine certainly does - that some things in life are worth defending, if need be, at the cost of one's own. Those who find this attitude offensive will have to swallow hard ... or miss another fine book. ☐

Andy Butler

33 Brook View Drive, Keyworth
Nottingham, NG12 5JN

Thanks for publishing the letter criticising Aleph's accuracy in *Matrix* 128, with the foolish words "at least she [sic] isn't having a go at Vector this time". You said at the time I'd upset him [sic]. Yeah, right, I'm really bricking it. Indeed, at the bottom of that very issue's column she [sic - you get the idea] was at it again.

And in issue 130 she's at it twice, on the first occasion having some harmless fun at the expense of our contents page. I look forward to issue 131, and what she makes of your contents page. "Andrew M. Butler looks upon Verhoeven's work and finds it". Shurely sumething mishing? "Tell me Butler, how did you find the film?" "Oh, the usherette showed me the way."

Someone I suspect there'll be silence. Come, Aleph, do your worst. Are you woman enough to bite the hand that edits you?

Meanwhile, I hate to say it, but I'm agreeing with Gary's opinion, again. In particular his assessment of *Alien* *Delicatessen* rather than Colin 'n' Mitch's review. I suspect that Hollywood picked the wrong director - they should've gone for Caro. It really felt like a film with an hour missing from it: Dominique Pinon wandering around in the wheelchair (relevance? A sop to the PC brigade?) collecting guns and goodies for no apparent reason. Keeping around failed clones in a room labelled 1-7 (and Ripley makes 8). With that success rate, I'd've held off with the stencilling. And Winona Ryder, left to certain death, finding her way around a ship with no problem. As for the three-hours-to-save-the-Earth plot ("Ripley, we love you, but we've only got three hours to save the Earth.")

Puhlease. Fortunately Mr Dalkin was back on form by decalring *Alien* to be a work of art in *Vector* 198. Bonkers, I'd say, but he doesn't get out much.

Nice issue though, but there was a sense of déjà vu when I read the cold confusion at Aleph's foot (but?). I know not everyone has seen issue 129, but do you have to repeat the joke? ☐

Aleph is not at all confused about his gender, but Andy clearly is. As to the

contents complaint, it actually read "Andrew M. Butler looks upon Verhoeven's work, and finds it" (it's the comma that's mishing). Well, I thought it was amusing. Perhaps I should have appended an ellipsis, but I didn't. It was an elliptical ellipsis, as it were. The cold confusion confusion happened because I got, er, confused. Sorry.

Ian Watson
Northants

My January mailing just emerged from the mysterious black hole or mailbox. Keith Walker evidently knows rather more than I do, and from a long way back. Don't anyone buy me a gin! Due to an unfortunate first and last encounter at the tender age of 16, uniquely among alcoholic drinks I haven't been able to abide the taste or smell of gin, even in disguise, for the past 39 years.

Quite right, Chris. Beer please. ☐

Norman Finlay
Edinburgh

I'm ANSWERING YOUR *Matrix* 130 column where you ask for some feedback. I think you are doing an amazing job. I'm sure most people do realise that the work done by the BSFA is done by volunteers. But many societies are the same. Most of the work is done by a few dedicated hands.

If anything, there's almost too much information in *Matrix*. I spent a couple of hours last night reading *Matrix* and *Vector*, enjoying myself very much (the way you do when much waited upon reading material pops on to your hall carpet) and admiring the layout of both magazines.

I was last a member some twenty odd years ago in the days of the spirit duplicator.

Tonight I'm going to begin reading [Jack McDevitt's] *Eternity Road*. ☐

Thanks for the kind (if embarrassing) comments - good to have you back!

I'm a bit worried that you think there's "almost too much information" in *Matrix*. Do you mean superfluous information? Or is the type size a problem? I'm conscious that the print is about as small as it can get while still - I hope - retaining legibility, but if anyone does have difficulty please let me know. A big problem is usually deciding what to leave out of the zine, and in my efforts to cram as much in as possible I may have gone too far.

Steve Palmer has a theory explaining the lack of letters, but it's so unlikely it can't possibly be true:

Steve Palmer
Devon

As usual, not enough feedback, eh? The perennial problem of editors. I thought I'd better send you some jelly old feedback before you go mad - although I should add that one very likely reason for not

having feedback is that everybody is really happy with *Matrix*! As somebody wryly commented to me, people tend not to write stuff saying "all is well" - they prefer to criticise. Seriously, though, take the silence to mean a satisfied audience.

Can I take issue with you on Mervyn Peake? I suspect his Belsen experience is directly referred to in *Titus Alone* - the bit at the beginning where he visits a factory. Read it and think of the concentration camps Incidentally, did you know another famous 'first man inside Belsen' was Michael Bentine? I agree, though, the 'Titus' trilogy is unique - a great inspiration to me, especially with regard to gothicness. Modern authors who make pretence of the gothic aura simply have to read the master.

As for David Curi's interesting remarks on SF and music, as a fan of most of Sting's work I'd say there was bugger-all of influence; but one name that has to be mentioned in this field is the German maestro of electronic Teutonicness Klaus Schulze. Many of his album titles and tracks have an sf feel and references, but the music itself is redolent of sf imagery - doomy and gothic in places, cold and antiseptic and technological in others, elsewhere simply futuristic. Check out the classic *X* and *Mirage* from his seventies period, or *Audentity* and *En-Trance* from the eighties.

P.S. Still no anime section. SFX is beating you on that score!

P.P.S. What is this in-joke about removal vans? Or have I misread something? P.P.P.S. What about doing a piece on the forthcoming BSFA website? That would be interesting.

P.P.P.P.S. That's enough P.S.'s! ☐

Anime: there may be something coming up.

Removal vans: At the time the *Matrix* van was spotted, when the *Post Office* had lost most of an entire mailing, associating the BSFA with any of the words 'Global', 'Managed' or indeed 'Distribution' provoked various reactions here, mostly unprintable.

Website: it's actually been up and running for some time now, put together by Tanya Brown - <http://members.aol.com/tamaraan/th/> ☐

Brian Aldiss
Oxford

Having just opened my *Matrix* 129, I was very touched to see a notice of my wife Margaret's death.

Not only did she produce a definitive 360 bibliography of my writing, which Borgo Press published, but her presence and support lay behind all of my books - right back to the primitive days when she had to produce four carbon copies of a novel!

Your sympathy is greatly appreciated.

☐

• Here's another of regular correspondent **Philip Muldowney's** splendidly wide-ranging letters:

Philip Muldowney
7 Colson Rd, Bitterne Park,
Southampton, SO18 1HG

Your editorial sounds so wistful! All that work, and only two letters in response... how the hell did the Royal Mail manage to lose several hundred packages posted in bulk? Mine seems to have been one of them as well. What are the odds that you will not get a definite reply as to what happened... have you noticed that, even more so than ever lately, when something goes wrong and you tackle one of these nebulous behemoths you get nowhere fast? Whether it is a public or private company, the actual response is somewhat the same, from ignoring you completely to what must be a masterclass in obfuscation. They are fond of all the usual customer relations bit, but more often than not any reply is a letter of terrible politeness, but of no practical usefulness at all. It is like wrestling a whale!

The episode with Arthur C. Clarke and the press leaves an acid taste in one's mouth. One can hardly say tabloid alone, because the whole caboodle jumped in the muddy waters with a vengeance. A coterie of jaded journalists, overpowered with the ennui of another royal trip, make a catspaw of a famous old man, with a calumny of sensational sexual assertions of paedophilia nature. It is an unpleasant comment on the true nature of the British press that because the story had so many connections that pressed the appropriately slimy editorial button – Royalty / child sex / exotic location / famous bestselling author – that the whole pack ran with the sad parcel of garbage. Truth? Honesty? Now, those are casualties of reporting my dear. And yet, by the very nature of the fact that Arthur Clarke felt the need to issue such a detailed rebuttal of a personal nature, some of the mud will stick, which is the

insidiousness of the exercise.

The *Guardian* of 16 March says that the retail consultancy Verdict suggests that the world of books is going to be convulsed by a price war. The gist of it being that with the American giant Borders having bought Books, Etc., with the other American giant Barnes & Noble expected to buy into the UK market, and with Waterstone's / Dillons merging into the HMV group, the scene is set for a right old knockabout on prices, for market share. Let us hope so.

With price comparisons with a lot of countries, Britain is an expensive place to live. Long before the recent rise in the pound, the scandal of high prices for things like cars, CDs, white electrical goods etc have been well documented. This applies equally as well to books, particularly to paperbacks – which of course do not figure high in the discounting stakes. The average price of a British paperback is now £5.99, the average price of an American paperback is now \$5.99. Given a conservative exchange rate of £1.60-£1.00, the true cost of an American paperback in sterling is £3.74. So the American paperback is 38% cheaper than its British equivalent. That is quite something... it is now simple to buy imported new American paperbacks at least 20% cheaper than their probable British equivalents. Case in point: in the past month I bought David Hartwell's *Year's Best SF 2* (US price \$5.99) for £4.75 in London's Forbidden Planet, Orson Scott Card's *Alvin Journeyman* (US price \$6.99) for £5.50 in Books, Etc.

Take hardbacks. Average new British hardback fiction is £17.99. Average new US hardback \$23.00. Again at £1.60-£1.00, the US hardback is £14.37. That is 20% cheaper than its British equivalent. It is possible to buy *Fantasy & SF* and *Asimov's* for £1.90 in Forbidden Planet (US cost £2.95) while British magazines like *Interzone* and *Odyssey* cost £3.00.

So what is going on? Prices for non-discounted books in the US are 20% to 40% cheaper than over here. The exchange rate is not a significant factor: it's been around \$1.60-£1.00 for some time. So what? Economies of scale? Do Americans get paid less? (Now there is a joke.) Or are the British book-buying public getting ripped off, as in so many areas of international price comparisons?

A footnote to all this: inflation. In 1965 the average US paperback was £1.75, the average British paperback 3/6, 17.5p in decimalised money. So at \$5.99 and £5.99 for your average paperback, US book inflation comes out at 3.42% over 33 years, while British book inflation comes out at 34.22%. A crude estimate maybe, but a sobering one nevertheless.

Jon Grimwood's piece was interesting. The amazing thing is how quickly the reality is starting to catch up with the fiction, and as Grimwood states, how the vocabulary of cyberpunk was so quickly subsumed into the general vocabulary. Was it only 13 years ago that *Neuromancer* was produced? I must admit to some amusement at Grimwood's amazement that Gibson was actually using a manual typewriter, as though he was still driving a Model T Ford. How will we be viewing the present day PC in 15 years' time? Artifact obsolescence grows apace. So will you be the one to shell out on a new super-wonder digital tv that they will be trying to flog you in the not too distant future?

You do not collect 17,000 books, you amass them. Trouble is, we all expect collecting to make us money. I went to an sf collectables show at Fareham a month or so ago, and this was full of dozens of dealers, in plastic figures to posters, without a book in sight. The amazing thing is the serious money involved. Over £100 for individual *Star Wars* figures, and over £500 for early *Star Wars* play sets. Are these going to be worth anything in twenty years' time?

Anyway, the way things are going in publishing, if you are going to be able to read previously published books by practically all sf authors, then we will all have to be collectors haunting the second-hand bookshops and specialists. The situation for anything that was not published five minutes ago is getting really desperate. I dunno about the mid- and backlist being destroyed, but so is everything else! ☹

• We Also Heard From: **Pete Lancaster** and **Peter Mabey**, who wrote cards to say that did indeed get the Jan/Feb mailing – thanks! **Steve Jeffery** provided his usual essential dissection. **Richard Stubbings** sent an email giving details of guest signings in his bookshop, but neglected to say where the shop was or provide an address or telephone number. Please note that I don't personally have email: they are forwarded to me by post and I can't reply or make enquiries unless you give me a way to contact you!

Verbal feedback came from various people, including **Yikki Lee France**, who put scaffolding around my crumbling ego, as did **Julie Tiller**, **Lee Montgomery** (Interzone Deputy Editor), who thinks that *Matrix* is "bland... it's like an in-flight magazine", but she cunningly bought me a pint first – other critics take note: **Mike Ford** (superfan), who's justifiably annoyed that the events listings carry items of interest only to historians; **John D. Rickett** (superchair), who is too kind for my own good; and **Mark Plummer** (superfurryanimal), who not only provided invaluable advice and discussion on the fanish content of the zine but also bought me another pint. Cheers! A number of people said how much they enjoyed **Jon Courtenay Grimwood's** (superauthor) article: how about writing next time? The authors who give so generously deserve more than this!

Thanks to everyone, and hope to hear from lots more of you next time!
— Chris

points arising

• "A couple of minor points," says **Mark Plummer** of *Matrix* 130, causing that familiar heart-sinking sensation. "The Martin Millar omnibus [p5] doesn't include the first three novels, assuming the contents are as stated. Those are the second, third and fourth books; the first is the wonderful *Milk, Sulphate and Alty Starvation* (Fourth Estate, 1987)." [The Fourth Estate catalogue has it wrong too, then.]

"Also, you may wish to have a word with Aleph on, in a bid to clarify which Bridget is standing for TAFF, muddies the waters still further [p24]. It is of course **Bridget Hardcastle**, as stated in the 'corrections' section, and not Bridget Wilkinson as Aleph implies. Unless this is some kind of subtle joke that I'm completely missing... [That's it, that's it! Yes, it was a joke. Honest, Exit, very quickly.]

• The credit for the **Rachel Pollack** photograph on page 3 of *Matrix* 129 got partially lost somewhere in

the printing process. It was taken by **Roger Robinson**.

• The photograph of **N. Lee Wood** on the cover of *Vector* 198 was taken by, er, me (**Chris Terran**), at the 1997 Arthur C. Clarke Award ceremony at the Science Museum.

• Typo creep in: **Jeff Noon's** Clarke Award shortlisted novel is *Nymphomaniac*, not *Nymphomation* as alleged on page 3 on *Matrix* 130.

• In 1985 I ordered **Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle's** then forthcoming novel *Footfall* from a Leeds bookshop, and was looking forward to reading it (hey, we all make mistakes). A week later I tried to pick it up, and was standing by the counter holding the damn thing when the assistant said, "Oh, sorry, I can't let you have it. It's not published until next week."

This doesn't happen any more. Publication dates

are more like... guidelines these days, and unless there's some special reason – newspaper serialisation, a legal problem – you'll often see books on sale weeks before the official day of publication. For instance: in the chart on page 6 the *Waterstone's Guide to SF*... appears at no. 16. This was officially published on 21 April, yet the chart only covers sales up to 15 April – the book was on sale at least a fortnight before it should have been.

So although "Recent & Forthcoming Books" gives publication dates where known, these should be treated with some caution. This can matter: if you're a collector, the exact publication date of a first edition can make an enormous difference to the value of a book; even one day's difference between the publication dates of the US and UK editions of, say, a **Stephen King** novel can drastically alter the prices each can fetch. ☐

competition extra

A Very Special Competition, with a Very Special Prize

Simply answer the following questions:

- Who, as part of the Norwich Group at the time, can reasonably claim to have introduced **Lionel Fanthorpe** to fandom (or vice versa)?
- Who will walk into a pub and claim a pint of "his own" when he finds one serving both 'Robinson's' and 'Owd Roger'?
- Who was the author and publisher of *Who's Hugh?*
- Whose first convention was the micro-con at Wicken House which had **Walter Gillings** as Guest of Honour?
- Who was the first employee of Chase Manhattan Bank to get a company loan in order to buy his own PC?
- Who, as publisher of Becon Publications, has been responsible for such diverse works as:
 - bibliographies of **Ken Bulmer** and **Barrington J. Bayley**;
 - *The Old Grey Wassail Test*;
 - *On Filkley Moor*;
 - *The Drunken Rabble Project*;
 - three books of 'Drabbles';
 - *Labyrinth of Shadows*;
 - **Tom Holt's** *Bitter Lemmings*;
 - *There are NEVER Enough Mushrooms?*
- What was the name of the fan Guest of Honour at Confabulation, the 1995 Eastercon?
- Name a person who provided many of the covers and signatures that appeared in **John Clute's** *Science Fiction: The Illustrated Encyclopedia*, and who has the same name as the answers to all the other questions.
- Who was the first fan to appear in the finals of *Fifteen to One* on television?
- Who helped create Friends of Foundation, and moved the Science Fiction Foundation Collection from Stratford to the University of Liverpool?
- Who recently lost his collection of first-day covers when the bank vault he was forced to store them in for insurance purposes was flooded by a water main?
- Who was the Chairman in Absentia of Follycon in 1988?
- Who raises enormous amount of money for charity, coordinates fandom's contributions to Books For the Blind, and helps select the sf titles that are recorded?
- Who is regularly assumed to have been a member of one of the Becon committees but can honestly cry, "Not guilty!"?
- Who has set the last 50 competitions in *Matrix*?

★ STAR PRIZE! ★

Yes, a fabulous **star prize** for EVERYBODY!

Simply answer ANY ONE of the questions and you can win the opportunity of a lifetime: a chance to buy the person named a drink of his choice the next time you see him – perhaps at a convention, or a London Tun meeting.

And while he's knocking it back, say a big

THANK YOU

for all his hard work



16. Name this person, caught in uncharacteristic pose (honest) at the Jubilee pub just before Christmas last year.

1999 BSFA AWARDS

By the time you read this the **1998** BSFA Awards will have been announced. I have enjoyed my first year administering the Awards and look forward to the next lot. Hopefully I will put into practice the things I learned on the way, especially about writing ballot papers – like remembering to include slots for name and membership number, giving dates for when I want them returned on the ballot as well as in *Matrix*, being a bit more careful in my proofreading . . . ! Thanks to everyone who participated, and gave me encouragement during what has been a fairly difficult year.

You can see the results on page 3, and in the meantime I would like to clear up a few bits and pieces.

- I have moved house since writing the piece for *Matrix* 130; my new address is in the box on the right, but the phone number and email address remain the same. Do not worry if you sent ballot papers or any letters to the previous address – they will have been redirected.
- I would like to apologise to **Paul J. McAuley** for getting the title of his novel wrong on the ballot paper and press releases. It should be *Child of the River*, not *A Child of the River*.

• I had a comment on a ballot paper regarding the short stories that were nominated from *Back Brain Recluse*. The answer to the question, "Trouble is, who reads *Back Brain Recluse*?" is: enough people for stories from it to make it onto the shortlist and get voted on in the final ballot. Remember, I did not decide what appeared on the final ballot – you, the membership, did. And if stories from a small-press magazine appearing on the final ballot encourages people to give the magazines a try then surely that is a Good Thing.

Finally, you can now start sending in nominations for the 1999 BSFA Awards. More on this next issue, but in the meantime here is a quick reminder of the categories.

- **Best Novel** first published in the UK in 1998.
- **Best Short Fiction** whose first appearance is in 1998.
- **Best Artwork** whose first appearance is in 1998.

You can nominate as many items as you like, at any time during the year. Please send your nominations to me, Chris Hill, at the address above.

Awards Administrator
CHRIS HILL

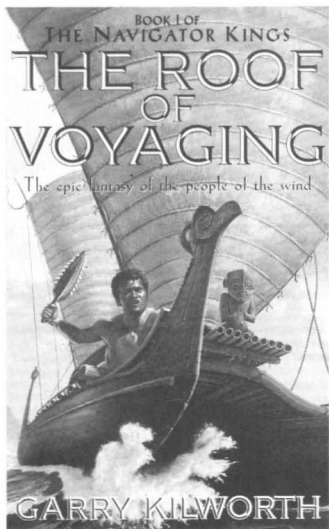
Send nominations to

Chris Hill
The Bungalow
Evinger Road
Whitchurch
Hants.
RG28 7EY
Or email
cphill@enterprise.net

— Chris Hill

GARRY •

Garry Kilworth recently delivered a talk at the BSFA London Meeting in the Jubilee pub near Waterloo Station. This is what he had to say about moving Scotland to New Zealand, a planet called Trevor, cricket in the Crimea, and why he stopped writing science fiction . . .



I'M VERY FLATTERED to be asked to be a guest at the London BSFA Group once again, not the least because these days I'm not generally perceived to be a science fiction writer.

But though I haven't written a full-blooded adult sf novel for some time, I've never ceased writing short sf stories and two years ago I won the 'Children's Book of the Year' award for a fairly solid sf novel, *The Electric Kid*. I've also just finished working on a Polynesian fantasy epic which is actually set on a parallel Earth and though it's not sf it gets the same sort of stick from mainstream critics of sf.

The Navigator Kings' series has a solid basis of myths and legends which I've collected on my travels in the Pacific. The world I've set up is called Oceania and I've now written some 350,000 words on the strange voyages undertaken by my Oceanian heroes and heroines. The last voyage – and this seemed to upset both mainstream critics and American publishers – is to a fourth century Britain inhabited by Celtic tribes. To make this feasible in my parallel world I had to move Britain to the geographical position of New Zealand and lose New Zealand somewhere in the fog and mists of the northern hemisphere.

Thus, when Maori warriors first set foot on a large island in the south of their great ocean, it is Scotland on which they tread. In this way I could have a guide taking my reader into what would otherwise be an unfathomable Polynesian world of strange gods and weird practices. The reader is on the same voyage of discovery as a captured Celt from the Blackwater Clan of Southern Scotland. This topographical shuffling, in order to get a clash of cultures, all seems very reasonable to me. No more unusual say, than dwarves and giants on a quest for a ring, or alien monsters bursting out of eggs. Yet American publishers shunned it with horror and a well-known Birmingham bookseller signalled with a waggle of his hand that it was not really fantasy. I always find it a little astonishing that when one tries to produce something a little different from the wads of other sf and fantasy on the shelves, experts in imaginative fiction suddenly become ultra-conservative in their views.

Nonetheless, science fiction and its associated genres have always been my life blood. I grew up reading Ray Bradbury, John Christopher, John Wyndham and Brian Aldiss. That is, I prefer my sf to have soft edges. I've never been a great fan of Clarke, Asimov or Heinlein novels. I like their short stories, and I've nothing against hardware *per se*, but I find them lacking in colour and characterisation. Science is not a favourite subject of mine, but I am interested in the situations which science throws our way.

For instance, I expect you heard about those guys last year who discovered another two Earth-like planets. These worlds had a sun the size of ours and were about the same distance away – in separate solar systems I presume – so are likely to be bearing some kind of lifeforms. Two guys, two planets. I heard them being interviewed on Radio 5 Live. When they were asked if they were going to name the planets after themselves they said no, they would probably choose Latin names. People often do name stars after themselves though, and are quite entitled to do the same with planets. I thought about this as I drove along, through the dark winding country roads of Essex.

What if, I thought – science fiction writers are always saying 'what if', for some reason – what if the names of the two guys were Trevor and Kevin? Quite possible. Lots of ordinary people, even astronomers, are called Trevor and Kevin. And of course they would have been justified in naming planets after themselves as they discovered them. These two planets were not that far away from Earth – 35 light years – and it's probable that one day a spaceship from Earth will reach them. So you have this scenario whereby the commander of the spaceship is sending an excited message back to Earth, 'Houston, Houston, we're approaching Kevin.' Doesn't sound right, does it? Loses all its dramatic content. Tv ratings would drop like a stone, especially if they weren't too careful about the names of the astronauts themselves. I imagine confusing messages like, 'Trevor is orbiting Kevin, while Kevin is landing on Trevor.' By that time there will be a whole bunch of newly discovered planets, all named after back-garden astronomers: Norman, Albert, Clive, Jeremy, Nigel, Sharon, Debbie, Lorraine . . . interesting, eh?

KILWORTH

Let's Go To Trevor!

And when you think about it, the word 'Earth' permeates our whole culture. It isn't just confined to science projects. It enters religion, literature, politics and everyday speech. On one of our newly discovered planets, for instance, the Lord's Prayer would state:

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done
On Trevor as it is Heaven . . .

And Wordsworth's poem "Sonnet Composed on Westminster Bridge" would begin with the line:

Sharon has not anything to show more fair;
Dull would he be of mind who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty . . .

On one planet Oliver Stone's third movie in the 'Vietnam' trilogy would be called:

Heaven and Nigel

Songs:

I vow to thee my country
All Trevorly things above

Plays:

This Kevin, this realm, this England

There are more in things in Heaven and Debbie, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy

The list is long and the jokes grow weaker.

To get back to the question I asked myself as I was composing this talk: why have I stopped writing sf novels? It's something that's been bothering me a lot recently. Not because I think there's something superior about sf, and inferior about animal fantasy or any other genre – to me as an imaginative writer they're one and the same thing: they come out of the same deep interesting well. No, it's been bothering me because I've never asked it before. I sort of stopped writing sf novels by default – and here are a couple of reasons.

One, I was earning very little money writing sf novels. While I was writing part-time, that wasn't important, but when I became a full-time author, relying on my earnings for the mortgage and groceries, it became a hell of a lot more important. My last sf novel, *Abandonati*, which took six months to write, sold only a few thousand copies and realised a total of £3,000. It was a solid little book. I have written one or two poor sf novels, but that wasn't one of them. My first animal fantasy, *Hunter's Moon*, eventually realised £85,000. It also sold half a million copies in condensed form via *Reader's Digest* and book clubs, and widened my reading public considerably. These differences are hard to ignore when you have a family to support.

Two, I was running out of ideas for long sf. After a plethora of writers over half a century have been churning out sf ideas, you begin to realise you have to be keenly interested in the heart of the matter to find new ones – which I wasn't. There are some fine hard sf authors around – Stan Robinson, Steve Baxter, Gwyneth Jones, Paul McAuley and many more – to whom sf ideas seem to come easily. I felt I wasn't fit for combat any longer. I was battle-weary, swimming against the tide, and would soon be in debtors' prison if I didn't write something that earned a bit of money.

So I stopped writing sf novels, at least for adults. However, if you think that writing for kids is any easier, you have to get into it to find out how wrong you are. You actually can get away with a certain amount of crap in the adult sf

world, but in the kids' section you're up against an army of school-teachers and librarians, and they won't let you get away with shoddy goods of any kind. Kids don't buy books, adults do, and when it comes to their children they're more discerning about their taste than when they buy books for themselves. Jeffrey Archer is OK for for mom and dad, and even for teacher, but offspring need to be educated as well as entertained, so they make sure it's well-written and deals positively with racial discrimination, gender concerns, bullying, drugs in school, and other important issues.

No matter how hard we try the adult book world continues to treat sf and fantasy as a second-rate literature and I can't ever see it changing – the literary snobs are too firmly ensconced on their high thrones – and they refuse to even try to understand forms of writing which are only different in the way they treat the subject.

More recently I've begun writing historical novels, set around the Crimean War. Some perceptive person once wrote that history is the science fiction of the past. They probably meant prehistory, or at least medieval history – something a little further back than the Crimea, but it is true that the past interests many sf and fantasy readers as much as the future.

Writing historical war novels was in fact just a short progression from writing fiction based on myths and legends. Great battles, once the dust has settled, take on a mythical quality. Those who take part in them with acts of heroism or stupidity – whatever – become larger than life with each retelling of the tale. Time, also, has an elastic feel to it, stretching and warping. Time becomes a flexible sheet as those recounting the action try to be in every part of the battle itself at once. In short the whole thing takes on a surreal quality. So writing and reading historical novels – even though based solidly on fact – becomes as much an exercise for the imagination as fantasy or sf.

I said that historical war novels were simply a progression from my Polynesian fantasy. This is true also of the use of researched material. The Polynesian books needed authenticity of culture and history behind them. They needed to be locked into reality somewhere to anchor what would otherwise be weightless drifting fiction. So too with historical war novels, only more so. The interest for the reader is often not in men killing men, but in the unusual quirky bits.

I mean things like the fact that when an army of sixty-thousand legs marches across the Russian steppes on a two-mile front, the stamping of their boots terrifies all the wildlife in front of them. The soldiers become a solid mass of beaters, with mice, weasels, stoats, rabbits, hares, quail, pheasants, partridges and a plethora of other creatures scrambling or flying before them, desperate to get out of the way of this multi-limbed monster.

Or the fact that when the Russian cannons opened up on these 30,000 British and French soldiers from the heights of Alma, the Brits saw the missiles bouncing along the ground towards them, and merely parted ranks to let them through with scoffing phrases such as, "No ball!" or "Wide!"

Or the fact that when the Battle of Alma was in full flood, with a hailstorm of bullets being exchanged between Russian columns and the British line, and cannons blasting and shells exploding overhead, one British staff officer lost his reason. He then rode up and down between the two battling armies, his eyes wild and bloodshot, shouting at British regiments, "Don't fire – they're friends – don't fire – they're not the enemy . . .". This particular officer frustrated the fighting on both sides as each time he did his run between the two forces, the battle stopped for a few moments while officers indeed tried to assess what was happening.

During the lull which followed the third run of the mad staff officer, a caustic Irish voice growled out – "Somebody shoot that silly bastard, for God's sakes, so we can all get on with it and go home."

It is in these rather minor touches that the real heart of such novels lies – and I think I've talked enough now. Perhaps we can have some questions . . .

— © Garry Kilworth 1998

• *Land-of-Mists*, the final part of Garry's *Navigator Kings* trilogy, is out in hardback from Orbit in May along with the paperback of the second volume, *The Princely Fowler*.

conventions

morgan gallagher on

THE WRAP PARTY is an sf con, based around a media programme – so we originally faced quite a problem in both defining the differences between 'media' and sf, when the genesis was both, and how to convey that difference to potential members.

Whilst *Babylon 5*, as television, is pretty unique, it comes from a long and noble tradition of other sf genres: serial novels, comics and chapter plays in both radio and cinema. So to do B5 justice we felt we needed to explore all these things; that way we'd have a clearer view of where, when and how the show's creator J. Michael Straczynski (jms) changed things around within the narrative structures of modern television. Our choice of Guests of Honour was obviously going to be the lynch pin in making all these diverse media open to our members, so we put a great deal of work into who we wanted, and why. I constructed a 'wish list' of perfect guests: jms, Harlan Ellison, James White, Bryan Talbot and Jack Cohen... and we went to work.

It took about nine months to persuade jms we were serious, and after we had snared him we switched our attention to Harlan. He doesn't do many UK cons, so it was hard work persuading him he'd enjoy The Wrap. We enticed him in the same way we enticed everyone: the programme was the most important element, and we went out of our way to show why that particular individual's input was vital. In terms of wanting to explore how sf has developed this century, we felt we needed a 'New Wave' author as well as an Elder Statesman to counterbalance the tv generation represented by jms. James White was the obvious choice for Elder Statesman, and was highly chuffed to be asked. Not half as pleased as jms and Harlan were that he'd agreed – they are both big fans of White's 'Sector General' stories.

We saw comics as a vital bridge between the written word and the moving image. Comics were there first, illustrating the fantastic imagery of space, inner and outer, and we recognised the need for a strong 'visual' presence. Bryan Talbot, in my humble opinion, is our greatest living comics artist, as well as a veritable treasure house on the subject of comics history. He took a lot of persuading. When we first asked him, he'd never seen B5, and originally turned us down because he felt he'd not give very good value. But we didn't get this line-up of guests by taking 'No' for an answer, and kept on explaining that it was his comics expertise we wanted, not any 'knowledge' of B5. We didn't care if he'd never seen it! Luckily, he gave in, and has since caught up with all of B5, and is such an enthusiastic guest that he's brought on board Peter David, John Ridgeway and Mike Collins. We've given all of them the same brief: come and talk about what you're interested in. It doesn't have to be B5, as long as it contributes to the overall theme. John Ridgeway, who's a big *Dan Dare* fan, is



"Warrior Caste"
Bryan Talbot

giving a talk on the History of SF Illustration and has already been working on it for a year. Mike Collins, who's drawing the new B5 comic, has actually chosen to centre his 'adaptation between moving image and comics' talk on B5. Finally, we couldn't do an sf con without the science, and Jack Cohen was the obvious choice. An excellent talker, an original mind, and an uncanny ability to ask awkward questions! Essential if you're going to get a good debate going, both in the programme itself and in the bar afterwards.

— © Morgan Gallagher 1998

Morgan is Chair of The Wrap Party. A fan since the 1980 Eastercon and originally part of Albion/Glasgow fandom, she now lives in Reading. Once *The Wrap* is a wrap she'll be following up her MA in Film and Television from the University of Warwick with a PhD in British Film History. □

THE WRAP PARTY

The Wrap Party is a one-off convention celebrating the End of Arc of Babylon 5. Fan-run and involving much more than just B5, it takes place at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, London from 21-24 August this year; the Guests of Honour include J. Michael Straczynski, Harlan Ellison, Jack Cohen, John Ridgeway, Bryan Talbot, Adam 'Mojo' Lebowitz, and John Matthews. Adult registration costs £75, or £80 at the door.

For more information contact:

- The Wrap Party, PO Box 505, Reading, RG1 7QZ
- Email: TheWrapParty@steamradio.com
- Web site: <http://www.steamradio.com/TheWrapParty>

YVONNE • ROWSE

Year after year you've read the Eastercon reports in *Matrix*. Perhaps you've wondered why anyone would want to go through the inevitable hell of the journey to spend an Easter weekend in the bowels of a monolithic hotel in a northern city (or occasionally Heathrow). Perhaps you think you might like to join in but you feel nervous about it. I've been to two Eastercons and a Novacon now and I would like to share some of the knowledge I've gained. In no particular order . . .

a woman's intuition

- If you're a woman and feel unhappy about men gazing at your breasts, buy a hat to wear your badge on.
- Before you go, try to find someone you know who is going too. Join a local group (I would recommend this anyway) or ask for an email pal in *Matrix*.
- Take no notice of people who say you're not a proper fan if you go to programme items. There were 137 of them at Intuition. I went to 17. They were interesting and I got into conversations with other people attending. Also you don't have to pretend you're really just sitting there on your own waiting for someone who may be just a bit late (and who never turns up).
- Smile at people. Make friendly comments. Don't assume that if they don't smile back they hate you. They're probably too vain to wear their glasses or suffering from the most appalling hangover.
- If you're the sort of person who can't leave a bookshop without buying a dozen books invest in a bag with wheels. And leave most of your clothes behind. Probably somewhere in the dealers' room is the complete collection of Theodore Sturgeon short stories you've been looking for (10 volumes, hardback, thankfully only up to volume IV so far) or enough second-hand books to fill all the gaps in those series you were collecting in the 1970s.
- Remember that most of the other people there are shy too. I don't know anyone, with the possible exception of Connie Willis, who can walk into a room containing several hundred people who all appear to know each other without feeling a twinge of mortal terror. Both Martin Tudor and Ian McDonald displayed some signs of nervousness when all eyes were on them. If you feel absolutely terrified go out and buy a copy of *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway*. This is not an sf book.
- Practice drinking slowly before you go. Hold a pint of beer in your hand and make it last an hour. Then do it again. Then try making it last two hours. While you're at the con you will see people who are never without a drink. They are *not* (except Martin Tudor) drinking at normal pace.
- Begin drinking more about a month before the con. Work up gradually. Remember that the bar opens at 11am and shuts when the last fan is carried off in a wheelbarrow just before the room is needed for breakfast. When you leave the con try to reduce your drinking gradually. All great athletic feats require warm-up and cool-down periods.
- Drink lots of orange juice at breakfast.
- Don't be embarrassed if you haven't read all or indeed any of the books by the guests of honour. Part of their purpose in being there is to encourage people to buy their books. The Andromeda stall in the dealers' room had piles of Ian McDonald books on Friday. By the time I went to buy a copy of *Sacrifice of Fools* on Sunday there were nothing but hardback copies of any of his books left.
- Don't drink the hotel's coffee at breakfast unless your body is used to huge inputs of caffeine. On top of a massive hangover this amount of caffeine can be fatal. Adding hot water doesn't seem to help. The water just floats on top of the sludge laughingly called coffee.
- If someone invites you to the Norwegian room party, go! To my immense regret, I missed it.
- It may be possible to survive a con without drinking. More information is required before a definitive statement can be issued on this topic.
- If you've got children send them to stay with your mother. You need at least two days to catch up on your sleep after a con.
- Don't be intimidated by the fact that some people seem able to discuss in detail any sf book ever written. To my mind a bad memory is one of the greatest aids to reading pleasure. It means I can re-read my favourite books and still enjoy them. It's also unnecessary to have read every sf author. I might even whisper, you don't have to watch *Babylon 5*!
- Be nice to the bar staff. They are under more stress than you could possibly imagine. Especially on Sunday evening when the beer runs out because no hotel ever believes that fans will really drink as much beer as the con committee sat they will.

So there you are. I'm sure other people could contribute their views on how to survive, and indeed enjoy, a convention. Why not take the plunge? I've signed up for this year's Novacon and the next two Eastercons. Pay your money now and work on feeling braver nearer the time. And if you see me standing by the bar looking shy, buy me a beer. It's a great ice-breaker.

— © Yvonne Rowse 1998

film

THE BUTCHER BOY

reviewed by andrew m butler

ONE DEFINITION of fantasy is that it's characterised by a moment of hesitation: are these events really supernatural ("There are fairies at the bottom of my garden") or is there some rational explanation ("I'm a station short of East Ham")? It's a hesitation at work in the movie of *The Naked Lunch*, where William Lee only ever saw a mugwump or a talking asshole after he'd been snorting the virgin powder. When a film is subjective, we begin to question the evidence of our senses.

Take the recent *FairyTale - A True Story* (whose ambiguity is signalled in a titular hesitation of emphasis as to whether the fairytale is a true story or the true story is a fairy). The fairies at the bottom of the Cottingley garden are cute as perceived and even photographed by the children, but the ousted creatures we see when the children are out of sight seem rather more sinister. (Actually, apart from a haunting scene which is nonsense in terms of the rest of the film, the scariest thing here is seeing the bad lieutenant himself, Harvey Keitel, playing a nigger gang in a U certificate film. What next, Abel Ferrara directs the Teletubbies?)

The subjectivity is at work to much greater effect in Neil Jordan's latest movie, *The Butcher Boy*. You know what to expect with a Jordan film: a love triangle of a less than conventional kind. It's there in *Michael Collins*, *The Crying Game* and *Interview With the Vampire*. And as the last two prove, the love interest of the two male leads hardly has to be a post-pubescent female. Francie Brady (Owens) is growing up in a small town in early 1960s Ireland, alongside his best friend Joe (Boyle). When Francie steals some sf comic books from new boy Phillip Nugent (Andrew Fuller), he brings down the wrath of the grotesque Mrs Nugent (Shaw),

a nightmare in lime green. His own family is disintegrating - a suicidal mother (Aisling O'Sullivan), a drunken father (Rea, Jordan's favourite actor) - and Francie finds himself sent away to a Borstal where he experiences visions of the Virgin Mary (the ironically, but brilliantly, cast Sinead O'Connor). Returning home, he discovers his best friend has taken up with Phillip, unleashing a bloody jealousy of double murder and arson. In fact he makes the violence of *Lord of the Flies* seem like faintly rowdy behaviour on a family picnic.

The master stroke is to fix on Francie as the central character, and never to stray more than a few yards from what he can see or think. He's a monster, yes, but we also see the monsters he meets. At first we're reassured. Rea also narrates as the older Francie. He must survive; nothing too drastic must happen to him. But the clarity of then and now breaks down as the narrator attempts not to upset his younger self. Perhaps he is mad after all.

In the shadow of the Cuban missile crisis, Francie sees (imagines?) the bomb drop just outside the town, and searches among the radioactive rubble for his friend. Searching for his friend at a boarding school, it's clear that at least one of the teachers is an alien. Or is he? We cannot be certain how much is a true story. We only see what he sees. And yet, we are also given glimpses beyond that: we can see what his mother is really doing with a chair on the table and a rope in her hand, he can't. We can see that his uncle (Hart) probably isn't a big shot in London. For the unreliable narrator to be unreliable, we have to glimpse through to the true story.

And yet - and yet, once more - Francie's visions are (apparently) real, as the Virgin Mary hands him a white flower. (The same proof the Time Traveller had in Wells's *The Time Machine*.) It might all be true.

The acting is excellent: Sean Hughes and Ardal O'Hanlon provide cameos, as does Patrick McCabe, who wrote the novel the film is based on and co-wrote the script with Jordan. Shaw is perhaps a little too grotesque, too Wicked Witch of the West, but then it is through Francie's eyes we see her. Rea is his usual magnetic self as both father and son, able to quietly steel a scene by seemingly doing nothing, but threatening senseless violence. But the revelation is Owens, presumably in his first film role, hardly putting a foot wrong in his roles as lone ranger, avenger, choirboy, bully and housewife. Everything depends on the way he views the world, and I doubt you'll see a more haunting performance this year.

— © Andrew M. Butler 1998

The Butcher Boy — Gefen Pictures, 1997. Director Neil Jordan. Producers Redmond Morris, Stephen Woolley. Screenplay Patrick McCabe, Jordan. Director of Photography Aidan Biddle. Music Elliot Goldenthal.

Cast: Eamonn Owens, Stephen Rea, Alan Boyle, Fiona Shaw, Ian Hart.
110 mins. Cert. 15. UK release 20 February 1998.

GATTACA

reviewed by dave m roberts

IT IS REFRESHING that every once in a while a science fiction film appears that does not rely almost entirely on its special effects budget, and at least makes an attempt to have an interesting premise and intelligent plot.

In a not too distant future, it becomes the norm to have your children genetically enhanced during pregnancy to your own specifications. This control also means that almost every aspect of your physique and personality can be determined by a genetic analysis of any part of your body. Drops of blood, eyelashes, even saliva left on a glass are enough. While it is not actually illegal to discriminate on the grounds of genetic make-up, it becomes the norm and is ingrained in society to such an extent that people who haven't been 'enhanced' are known as In-valids and effectively become Untouchables. Vincent (Ethan Hawke) is such an In-valid, with a burning desire to go into space. Jerome (Jude Law) is a Valid with the ability but no drive, and a broken back. With the use of samples from Jerome, Vincent 'becomes' Jerome and gets a place at the Gattaca Corporation, where he works towards a place on a mission to Titan. The two

become one and develop a symbiotic relationship. Vincent (as Jerome) provides the public face, and Jerome the private and intimate: A constant supply of blood, urine, hair and skin is needed to maintain the façade.

A week prior to the mission taking off, a flight director is murdered. Enter gumshoe, complete with tribby and knee-length raincoat. Vincent's presence at Gattaca is revealed, although not that Jerome is Vincent. At this point, Vincent starts a relationship with Irene (Uma Thurman), another Gattaca employee.

This is all very interesting and really provides the backdrop for what is in danger of becoming a police procedural film. Will Vincent be exposed or not? This is not helped by the love interest, which does no more than provide a catalyst for the probable exposure. For all that it added to the film, it could have been dropped entirely. What was intriguing, and was almost ignored, was the somewhat bizarre relationship between Vincent and Jerome. Vincent living Jerome's life, and all Jerome gets in return is to live in the manner to which he is accustomed, although he virtually becomes a prisoner in the flat the two share. The relationship appeared to be far too friendly, with very little of the conflict you would expect.

The story aside, the strongest aspect of this film is the future world created. Not one developed using flashy effects, but with impressive set design and fine art direction. The world created is a very cold and impersonal place. You learn almost as much about the society from the visuals as you do from the script. However, when this is coupled with some fairly wooden performances from all concerned, you get the feeling that the director, Andrew Niccol, is more interested in making the film look good than in creating a strong tale from the very interesting and dark premise. This is a shame, because it could have been a great film. Instead, it joins the ranks of good films that don't quite make it. Nonetheless, it's still a refreshing change.

— © Dave M. Roberts 1998

Brainless In Hollywood

Paul Haine argues that the irredeemable stupidity of most film and television science fiction will soon infect the literary world. If it hasn't already . . .

PROBABLY DUE to the popularity of *Independence Day*, we are now enjoying a bit of an sf revival on both the small screen and the large, and you may be forgiven for thinking that this is a good thing. But how good is it? I would argue that the more sf we see on screen, the less intelligent sf becomes.

My reasons? I think that if you want intelligent sf then you should turn to the books, because, with the only real exceptions that spring to mind being *Blade Runner* and *2001*, neither big screen nor small screen sf can deliver really intelligent, controversial, thought-provoking stories – they run the risk of offending people. Take the big screen. Four films immediately spring to mind as being attempts at intelligent sf: *Contact*, *The Postman*, *Starship Troopers* and *Sphere*. *Contact* – the book – is a fantastic tale of first contact with a superior alien race, and of how the petty dogma of religion and politics nearly turn the most profound event in human history into a meaningless missed opportunity. It debates the science / religion argument convincingly on both sides, the characters are believable, and the moment of first contact is far more plausible than giant spaceships taking position over the White House. *Contact* – the film – could never have translated this faithfully, because the American Bible Belt would never have stood for it. A story that asked them to think about what they believe in? It would have sunk without trace. As far as I could tell, the film was just telling you that you should believe in whatever makes you happiest, and whatever you believe and have faith in must be true, because it's true to you. Sagan's original text did not refute the existence of a creator, it refuted the personal connection that so many insist they have with God, and it refuted the belief that the universe was created solely for our own personal use. If the film had done this there would have been outrage. The producers would never have let it reach the cinema. The book was outstanding and intelligent, and a worthy tribute to Sagan's genius. The film was just an exercise in schmaltzy story-telling, designed to make us all feel good because we are each somehow important to the universe, and the creator loves us.

And what about *The Postman*? David Brin's text is another superb novel, with intelligence and depth, but did it translate properly to the screen? Did it shit. Costner managed to turn it into *Waterworld* on dry land, with himself in every scene and the main character just a liar with a mailbox. Again, this is a case where intelligent sf just cannot be translated to the screen, though this time it was probably because Costner was in charge rather than the producers cutting the offensive bits. And *Sphere*, again an intelligent novel translated badly. *Starship Troopers* may not have been what some would describe as intelligent, but Heinlein's right-wing diatribe certainly provokes discussion. Does the film? Of course not. It provokes discussion only about the special effects. The fact that these young women and men are in the army because they want to vote or have

children is glossed over, and the film concentrates on showing one standard battle scene throughout the entire film, and although the sight of the rampaging bugs is impressive at first, it quickly grows repetitive and boring, and Mr Gestapo Psychic at the end manages only a revelation of Deanna Troi proportions when he shouts out that the covering bug is afraid. Verhoeven does manage to sneak in a little bit of satire: for instance, cruelty to animals is censored (the cow scene) but humans are executed live and news reports focus on the blood and carnage; but the fascist society is never commented on.

So why doesn't intelligent sf work on the big screen? *Blade Runner* managed it. Oh, but *Blade Runner* was mauled and flopped on release. Well, what about *2001*? The same thing. No money made with either, not until a lot later anyway. Hmm. Have I just spotted something?

As long as producers want to make massive profits, intelligence in big-screen sf will not happen. For a film to make an enormous profit, it must appeal to the largest audience possible, and so has to be as dumb as possible to appeal to everyone. *Independence Day* would not have made as much money as it did without the special effects, because the plot is a load of cack. The same can be said of the forthcoming *Godzilla*. If it was just another 'Godzilla' film then it would never make it as far as the big screen, but because the Emmerich brothers are in charge and the special effects are going to be huge, it will make a packet.

So, dumb sf sells, whilst intelligent sf is just a pipe dream. It just doesn't work on screen. The average movie is too short for any serious concepts, because after you've put in the obligatory special effects, chase sequence and the nauseating romantic dialogue and love scenes between the two leads, regardless of whether it was in the original text, you're not left with much time. Big screen sf will always be dumb. It's an inescapable fact.

How is this a bad thing? After all, a person may see something on screen and then be tempted to investigate this strange world of sf some more. Movie sf may act as a stepping stone for many to get to the depth that so much literary sf is capable of. Not necessarily. If they see *Independence Day* and liked it so much that they want to read something in the same vein, they're not going to pick up *Foundation* or *Fairland*; they're going to read *The Dinosaur Trilogy* or *X-Files* novelisations. And eventually publishers are going to realise that they can make more money selling dumb sf than they make selling intelligent sf. And so the dumbing down of movie sf begins to affect the literary sf scene.

I'm not saying that screen sf is not entertaining, far from it. But for the most it lacks depth and intelligence, and the longer Hollywood keeps churning out as much sf as they can, the higher the risk that literary sf will take a nosedive into Warren J. Palmer land.

— © Paul Haine 1998

Paul Haine

DEALER UPDATE

Recent catalogues received . . .

• **BBR DISTRIBUTION** is your first port of call for small press magazines and books, specialist imported material (not that sort!), and the harder-to-get sf magazines. **Chris Reed** is a hero of the small press scene, and his new revamped catalogue shows why. Beautifully produced, it's almost a magazine itself, with editorial, reviews and information. Highly recommended.

Contact: BBR Distribution, PO Box 625, Sheffield, S1 3GY.
Email: bbr@fdgroup.co.uk Web: <http://www.spspace.co.uk/bbr/catalogue.html>

• **PORCUPINE BOOKS** is the name chosen by **Brian Ameringer** for his dealership. You'll know Brian from his and Caroline Mullan's occasional columns on book collecting in *Matrix* – but you may not know of his weakness for excurtating puns. The cover has a rather nice picture by Barbara Mascotti of a porcupine in chain mail, and Brian's a postal book dealer . . . the spines go through the mail, see?

Ouch. Brian's first catalogue of genre hardbacks is nicely produced, accurately annotated and contains some 350 items, all of sf/h interest. Prices start at about £4, average perhaps £8 with some collectables up to £40 or so (e.g. a first edition of Disch's *The Priest*). All books are returnable within two weeks of receipt for a full refund. Postage added at cost, credit card facilities may be available by the time you read this.

As I've personally dealt with Brian, I don't have any problem recommending his services highly. He is also very good with wants lists.

Contact: Porcupine Books, 37 Coventry Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 4QR. Tel. 0181 554 3799.
Email: cjb@compuserve.com

• **ARGUEDAMH PUBLICATIONS** produced an interesting catalogue for the World Fantasy Con. But much as I'd like to tell you where to find them, I can't – no address, no phone, no email. Pity, as there's some good stuff in it . . . and if anyone knows anything about them I'd be glad to hear it.

• **BERTRAM ROTA** is a dealer for collectors who specialises in sf and fantasy; he's a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association. The fully annotated catalogue produced for the World Fantasy Convention contains 100 very interesting sf/f first editions with prices from about £10 upward to £400 for Wells's *The Invisible Man* and £800 for a Tolkien letter, passing through Clarke's *A Fall of Moondust* (£20), Peake's *Thus Spoke* (£25), Dick's *Time Out of Joint* (£200) and Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (£225). Credit cards accepted, postage at cost.

Contact: Bertram Rota Ltd, 31 Long Acre, First Floor, London, WC2E 9LT. Tel. 0171 836 0723.
fax 0171 497 9058. Email: bertramr@compuserve.com

MURDER ONE is a shop in London (in Charing Cross Road, sit bits downstairs – immensely browsable) and also issues catalogues of new books (NOT secondhand). It's sparsely annotated, and will be of most use for obtaining new imported sf.

Contact: Murder One, 71-73 Charing Cross Road, London, WC2H 0AA. Tel. 0171 734 3483 fax 0171 734 3429. Email: 106562_1021@compuserve.com Web: www.murderone.co

events

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 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 it doubt, ask the landlord. Meetings are open to all.

☞ **Paul Hood** on 0181 333 6670 for further information.

27 May 98; 24 Jun 98; 22 Jul 98; 26 Aug 98; 23 Sep 98.

London Circle Meetings

Also at the Jubilee Tavern (see above), 'London Circle' meetings are on the first Thursday of the month and usually start about 5pm. No special events but very popular and crowded.

☞ Just turn up!

4 Jun 98; 2 Jul 98; 6 Aug 98; 3 Sep 98.

- **Birmingham** The Brum SF Group meets on the second Friday of the month on the second floor of the Britannia Hotel on New Street, venue of this year's Novacon. Membership is £15 per year, which includes a monthly newsletter.
- ☞ **Martin Tudor**, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarks Lane, Willemhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX.
- * bsf@brgortas.demon.co.uk

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 Oatlands Ave., Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8EQ

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

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 01255 812119

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

☞ **Ian & Julie** on 01482 447953 or Dave & Estelle on 01482 444291

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

☞ **Tim Groom** on 0116 279 2280

* rbean@globalnet.co.uk

Manchester — FOMT meets in Wetherspoon's pub (on the corner of Piccadilly Gardens, near the BR station) on the second and fourth Thursdays in the month, 6pm onwards.

☞ **Mike Don** on 0161 226 2880

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 of the Great Northern Hotel, opposite the BR station.

☞ **SAE** to 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5RB; ☞ **Pete** on 01733 370542

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

Reading SF Group meets weekly on Mondays at 9.00pm; for a full period they have moved to the Hope Tap, Friar Street, Reading.

Surrey Surrey SF Group meets in the Coronation Hall, Surbiton, a Wetherspoons pub 100 yds from the station, on the second and fourth Thursdays in the month, from 8pm.

10 May 1998: Fantasy Fair 8

Peterborough SF Club's annual shindig at the Cresset Exhibition Centre, Bretton, Peterborough, 10.30-4.00pm. Guests include Lone Wolf creator Joe Dever, new sf writer Gwynn Hunter and US author Lianne Norman. No rates info, but usually cheap.

☞ **Fantasy Fair 8**, c/o 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5RB

☞ **Bruce King** on 01480 216372

22-25 May 1998: Lazlar Lyricon II

Hitch Hiker's Guide to 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

14 Jun 1998: Empire Day IX

Star Wars convention whose flyer disastrously omits to say where it's taking place. Oops... but it does tell us that the event is "NOT RELATED IN ANY WAY TO STARCON". Guests include Gary Kurtz, Stuart Freeborn. At £6, £8 on the door. Wherever the door is.

☞ Falcon Society, 2 Waterside, Peartree Bridge, Milton Keynes, MK6 3DG

3-5 Jul 1998: Intercontact 98

University of Oslo, Norway. Guests Gwyneth Jones, Pat Cadigan, Johannes Berg. Reg. £15 alt. to 31 May, £5 sup.

☞ Intercontact 98, PO Box 121 Blindern, 0313 Oslo, Norway

* elf@icrigo.no

10-12 Jul 1998: Infinity

Angel Hotel, Cardiff. Guests include Diane Duane, Peter Morwood, Colin Baker, Ed Bishop, Dave Prowse, Jack Cohen, Lionel Fanthorpe, Andy Sawyer, M. J. Simpson. Reg. £40.

☞ Infinity, Swynant, 12 Stuart Street, Treherbert, CF42 5PR

* infinity@compuserve.com

☞ <http://www.cf.ac.uk/ccin/main/ents/sf/cf/infinity.html>

17-19 Jul 1998: Nexus 98

Media convention at Bristol's Hilton National Hotel. Guests include BS's Peter Juraski, Richard Arnold. Reg. £44, under 14s half price, under 5s free. Installment scheme available. Supp. £15.

☞ **Nexus 98**, 1 Lullington Rd., Knowle, Bristol, BS4 2LH

* <http://www.cosham.demon.co.uk>

1 Aug 1998: WestCon

A one-day media con at Bristol City Football Club, organised by members of the Nexus conrunning team. Guests include Barry Morse and Zena Merlon. Reg. £20 to 14 July, £22.50 thereafter and on the door: under 16s £14 / £16.50, under 5s free. Price includes a buffet meal, installment scheme available.

☞ **Westcon**, 46 Brins Close, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8XU

* na@nexcon.demon.co.uk

5-9 Aug 1998: Buccaneer

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

UK Agent:

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

☞ 01223 570179

☞ jgd@ix.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 Lebowitz, John Ridgeway, Bryan Talbot, Adam Major, Lebowitz, John Matthews. Reg. £75 (installment scheme available), £80 at door, under 17s half price, under 12s free. Room rates: £400ppn triple, £420ppn double or twin, £470ppn single.

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

* theWrapParty@steampunkradio.com

☞ <http://www.steamradio.com/TheWrapParty>

3-6 Sep 1998: Dragon'Con 98

Premiere con of the Southern USA, at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta. The huge guest list includes Harlan Ellison, C. J. Cherryh, Ray Harryhausen, Lynn Niven, Brian Lumley, James P. Hogan, Jerry Pournelle, Storm Constantine, Roger Dean, Anthony Daniels. Reg. \$50.

☞ **Dragon'Con 98**, PO Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362-0696, USA

* <http://www.dragoncon.org>

4-6 Sep 1998: Festival of Fantastic Films

At Sacha's Hotel in Manchester. Guests Gerry Anderson, Stephen Weeks, and from Hammer Films Hazel Court, Aida Young and Eddie Powell. Reg. £55 to 30 Jun, rising thereafter: under 16s £20, under 12s £15.

☞ Soc. of Fantastic Films, c/o 95 Meadowgate Road, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN

☞ 0161 707 3747 (evenings only); fax 0161 792 0991

* hnaad@globalnet.co.uk

* <http://savyv.com/~festival>

4-7 Sep 1998: Cult TV

Media con focusing on kitsch tv. Venue Telford Moat House in Shropshire. Guests include Johnnie Ball (Zoe's dad, among other claims to fame). Reg. £44 to 1 Jun, £49 thereafter: children 9-15 half price, under 9s free.

☞ **Cult TV**, PO Box 1701, Peterborough, PE7 1ER

* culttr@ukgeocities.com

* <http://culttv.base.org>

11-13 Sep 1998: Fantasycon 22

British Fantasy Society con. Venue Albion Hotel, Birmingham, guests Freda Warrington, Jane Yolen; MC Ramsey Campbell. Reg. £50 (£40 BFs members). Sup. £25 (£20).

☞ **Fantasycon**, 46 Oxford Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 6DT

* <http://www.djb.u-net.com>

11-13 Sep 1998: AKFT 98

Star Trek con at the Warwick Arms Hotel, Warwick. Reg. £30.

☞ **AKFT 98**, 7 Belgrave Close, St Mary Cray, Orpington, BR5 3TU

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-guess, Stephen Briggs and Dave Langford. Reg. £35, £25 unwaged.

☞ **PO Box 4100**, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 2GZ

25-28 Sep 1998: Albacon 98

Central Hotel, Glasgow. Reg. £30 alt., £35 on the door. Guests Diana Wynne Jones, Ray Harryhausen, Kim Newman, and astronomer Prof. John Salthouse

☞ **Albacon 98**, F/12, 10 Alass Road, Glasgow, G21 4TE

☞ 0141 558 2862

* albacon@ial.pipex.com

2-4 Oct 1998: Masque 6

The sixth British costume convention at the Albany Hotel, Eastbourne. Reg. £20, pre-AGCSE children half price.

☞ **Masque 6**, 43 Millbrook Gardens, Cheltenham, GL50 3RQ

* <http://www.z9n9.demon.co.uk/masque.htm>

9-11 Oct 1998: Voyage In Person 1998

Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea convention at the Novotel, Sheffield. Guests Terry Becker, Allan Hunt, Del Monroe. Reg. £45, Sat. £22.50, Sun. £16.50.

☞ **VIP**, 26 Miller Road, Holford, Bristol, BS7 9PQ

☞ 106530, 1222@compuserve.com

* <http://www.worldcompuserve.com/homepages/tvn/film/vip.htm>

13-15 Nov 1998: Novacon 28

Venue Britannia Hotel, Birmingham, guest Paul J. McAuley. Reg. £32.

☞ **Novacon 28**, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS

20-22 Nov 1998: Armadacon X

'cult' tv con at the Cophorne Hotel in Plymouth. Guests include Jim Burns, Douglas Dixon. £25 alt., £19 unwaged.

☞ **Armadacon X**, PO Box 38, Plymouth, Devon

☞ 01752 257635/267873

* eurobell.co.uk/buttons/armadacon

20-22 Nov 1998: BOZ-CON

St on at the Golden Tulip Hotel, Bergen op Zoom, Netherlands. Guests TBA. Reg. NLG 65 (about £22).
 * Annemarie van Eyck, Obrechtstraat 4, 2517 VT Den Haag, Netherlands
 * vantent@few.eur.nl

26-28 Nov 1998: Redemption

Babylon 5 and Blake's Seven can at the International Hotel in Ashford, Kent. Guests Gareth Thomas, Jane Killick, Sheelagh Wells, Joe Nazzaro. £35 att. to 1 Sep 98, thereafter £40.
 * Redemption, 28 Diprose Road, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 3QY
 * Judith@blakes7.demon.co.uk

Spring / Summer 1999: Eurocon

Dortmund, Germany
 * Science Fiction Tage e.V., Am Kattenbrück 28, D-44287 Dortmund, Germany
 * http://www.cbq.de/sf-tage-nrw

2-5 Aug 1999: Reconvene

The 50th UK National SF Convention and the last of the twentieth century, venue is the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool and the guests are Jeff Noon, Peter S. Beagle, John Clute, Ron Tiner and Tom Holt. Newsletter from Wlog@ic.digitel.it it's themed around 'Time was: Time is; Time shall be'. Reg. until Nov 98 £90; over 60s, 5-14s and sup. £15; under \$5 free.
 * 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ
 * nychele@iredrake.demon.co.uk

Jul 1999: Baroquon

The annual UK role-playing con, in Cambridge. Guest Mary Gentle.
 * 8 Saddler's Close, Baldock, Herts., SG7 6EF

11 Aug 1999: Total Eclipse of the Sun

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

13-15 Aug 1999: Wincon V

The 1999 Union at King Alfred's College, Winchester. Guests TBA. Reg. £20 att. to 1 Sep 98.
 * Wincon V, 53 Havant Road, North End, Portsmouth, Hants., PO2 7HH

26-29 Aug 1999: Conocopia

Venue Anaheim Marriott Hotel, Anaheim California. Guests Jerry Pournelle, Nicki & Richard Lynch, Ellen Datlow. Reg. £45, sup. £15.
 * UK Agent: John Harold, 8 Warren Close, Langley, Slough, Berkshire, SL3 7UA
 * info@99.nasfic.org
 * www.99.nasfic.org

2-6 Sep 1999: Aussiecon 3

The Worldcon goes down under to Melbourne. Guests Greg Benford, Bruce Gillespie; the deceased George Turner will still be honoured. Reg. £90 (with complicated variations - ask 'em).
 * UK Agent: Martin Hoare, 45 Tilehurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT
 * martinhoare@cix.co.uk

25-26 Sep 1999: Hypotheticalcon: 1999

"Scotland's other national convention" at the Central Hotel, Glasgow. Reg. £15, under 15s £10, under \$5 free, sup. £5.
 * Hypotheticalcon: 1999, Flat Q/2, 11 Clegmont Street, Glasgow, G22 5RN

27 Dec 1999-2 Jan 2000: Millennium

See in the new millennium (a year early if you're a pedant) at this con, to be held somewhere in northern Europe, probably the UK or a Benelux country. £400 per year, to be deducted from the eventual membership cost.
 * Millennium, c/o Malcolm Reid, 186 Casewick Rd., West Norwood, London, SE27 0SZ
 * vdputte@simplex.nl

26-29 May 2000: CostumeCon 18

Costuming con at Hartford, Connecticut. Reg. \$50 to 9 Aug 98.
 * CostumeCon 18, 11 Wintler Street, Amesbury, MA 01913-1515, USA
 * info@cc2000.org * www.cc2000.org

31 Aug-2 Sep 2000: Chicon 2000

The 58th and millennial worldcon, guests Ben Bova, Bob Eggleton, Jim Baen, Bob & Anne Passovoy, and Harry Turtledove (toastmaster). Reg. \$125 (presupporters \$115), various discounts; rates rise 1 Mar 99.
 UK Agent: Martin Hoare, 45 Tilehurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT

* martinhoare@cix.co.uk
 * PO Box 642057, Chicago, Illinois 60665, USA
 * chi2000@cchicon.org
 * http://www.chicon.org/

29 Dec 2000-1 Jan 2001: Hogmanaycon

Celebrate the real millennium at the Central Hotel, Glasgow. Guests Spider & Jeanne Robinson, Sydney Jordan, Vince Docherty, Prof. Oscar Schweighofer. Reg. £25 att. £5 sup.
 * 26 Avonbank Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2PA
 * 0141 569 1934

BIDS BIDS BIDS BIDS BIDS**21-24 Apr 2000: Eastercon**

Venue will be decided at the 98 Eastercon. Current bids are:
 Radicon at the Radisson Edwardian, Heathrow: £2 presupporting.
 * Pam Wells, Flat 6, 7 Bootham Terrace, York, YO3 7DH
 Central Hotel, Glasgow: £2 presupporting.
 * 15 Kersland Street, Glasgow, G12 8BW

2001: Worldcon

Boston Presupporting \$8. Venue is Disneyworld in Florida.
 * PO Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701-0205, USA
 * http://world.std.com/~sbarsky/s2001.html
 Philadelphia Presupporting \$10.
 * Suite 2001, 402 Huntington Pike, Rockledge, PA 19046
 * 2001@cjbey.com

2003: Worldcon

Toronto Presupporting £9.
 * UK agent Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, RG1 5AU
 * ansible@cix.co.uk
 * hancock@infocamp.net
 * http://www.worldhouse.com/worldcon-2003
 Cancun, Mexico Presupporting £5/£7.
 * KIM Campbell, 69 Lincoln St., Leamard Rd., York, YO2 4YP
 * or PO Box 905, Essex, TQ 26039-0905, USA
 * artensie@cjbeyarr.net
 Bärcon (Berlin) No further details.

Corflu

reviewed by Mark Plummer

Griffin Hotel, Leeds: 13-15 April 1998

Corflu is big on traditions. The annual fanzine fans' convention seems to have loads of them, although this is partially conditional on who you ask as there's no formal consensus on which ones really are traditions, something which might seem more than a little ironic given fandom's obsession with chonding its own past. There's certainly the one about selecting the Guest of Honour by drawing the name from a hat, and the Sunday brunch which features the guest's speech; and then there's the selection of the Past President of the FWA (Fan Writers of America); and maybe the baseball game...

But in one clear respect, the 1998 incarnation broke with the past when, following last year's successful bid, Corflu crossed the Atlantic for the first time. It had been a controversial move, attracting a fair bit of comment on both sides of the ocean, but that's all academic now. One way or another, somewhere between 75 and 100 fanzine editors, artists and readers - including a good number of Americans - ended up in the Griffin Hotel in central Leeds.

The organisation seemed a bit slapdash as even the minimal programme was subject to cancellations and rescheduling, and hardly any of the doze or so items went off as and when planned. But that's probably not really the point. Some of the British fans found Corflu's programming too light, some of the Americans thought there was too much, but ultimately the convention was about meeting people. And so the UK contingent got to see the newly-arrived TAFF winner Ulrika O'Brien as well as two of the three other candidates, Victor Rosenzweig and Vicki Rosenzweig. There were US veterans like Rich Brown, Ted White and Art Widner, and even a living visit from Bradford fan Derek Pickles making only his second appearance at a convention since the 1950s.

Christina Lake produced a fine programme book, assembling a number of (mostly) previously published articles on US/UK relations and there were, as one might expect, somewhere between fifteen and twenty new issues of fanzines in circulation. John D. Rickett was selected in the Guest of Honour lottery, and Greg Pickerskill was acclaimed Past President of the FWA. Oh, and the baseball game was replaced with a cricket match... which was cancelled. About par for the course really, but a good social weekend all round.

—© Mark Plummer 1998

Stiles; 5. Sue Mason; 6. Teddy Harvia, Dan Steffen; 8. Sheryl Birkhead, 1. Mayhew; 10. Brad Foster)
Best Letterack: Harry Warner (2. Lloyd Penney; 3. Vicki Rosenzweig; 4. Robert Lichtman; 5. Steve Jeffery; 6. M. Strekow; 7. Howard Waldrop; 8. Buck Coulson, Joseph Nicholas; 10. E. B. Flynn, D. M. Shenwood)

Best New Fanzine Fan: Lesley Reece (2. Ulrika O'Brien; 3. Claire Brailley; 4. Aileen Forman, Tom Springer; 6. Mark Plummer; 7. Tommy Ferguson; 8. Alison Freebairn; 9. Anita Rowland; 10. E. B. Frohne)

Fan Fave: Geri Sullivan (2. D. West; 3. Robert Lichtman; 4. Christina Lake; 5. Michael Abbott, Lesley Reece; 7. Ian Gunn; 8. Mark Plummer; 9. Victor Gonzalez; 10. Claire Brailley)

Members' Noticeboard

Advertisements and announcements are FREE to BSFA members. Send your ad to the editorial address, or phone (0113) 217 1403.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AVAILABLE NOW! Books for the Reader and Collector from Brian Arneson. Many of you already know me from convention dealers' rooms, auctions and BSFA affairs. In April I produced my first ever Science Fiction Fantasy & Horror catalogue which has hundreds of interesting items for sale at modest prices. Let me have your name and address (postal or email) and I will make sure you receive a copy, or drop me your 'Wants List' now to get ahead of the game.

Wants End. 37 Coventry Road, Bordes, Essex, IG1 4QR Email: cjbey@compuserve.com
WANTED
RADIO PLAYS WANTED Radio aficionados (and recent BSFA joiners) Ellen Chespire is desperate to get her ears on a few radio plays, both broadcast on Radio 4 a few years ago. They are: *An Alternative to Suicide* (90 mins.) and *The Silver Sky* (80 mins.) by Tania Lee. If anyone has either of these and can copy them, Ellen will happily negotiate terms in kind from her own extensive radio collection. If you can help provide clues in this desperate search, contact either Ellen or Grahm on 0181 550 6026.

WANTED A SF & F Videos. B) Popular Science Books. C) Books concerned with "Computer Applications in Natural Sciences and Engineering" including some older ones as far back as the 70s. Send SAE for wants lists, please say which. Send your own list with offers on item C. Contact Manfred Dietz, 42 Kugel-Hofstrasse, D-70739 Ludwigsburg, Germany.
BOOKS NEEDED FOR A LOVING HOME. John Crowley, Gypsy, Gardner Dosses ed. *The Year's Best SF*. Eighth Annual Collection in the US edition, also known as *The Best SF Five* in Britain, either edition will do. These are for reading, so cheapness is appreciated (condition is not a condition). Contact Syd Foster on 01782 296729. Thanks guys!

WANTED: a copy in any condition of *The Rabbit Runners* by Eric Frank Russell. Contact John Olla, 51 Belmont Road, Luton LU1 1LL.
MUSTER CLASSICS WANTED - not for me, for a friend, honest gaud. Market rate is around a quid, will pay up to £2 dependent on condition or will swap for duplicates. Titles wanted include: *Acropolis Follies*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Just So Stories*, *Mad Flanders*, *Prince and the Pauper*, *Wind in the Willows*, *Wuthering Heights*.
 Andy Butler, 33 Brook View Drive, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5JN. Tel: 0115 937 5549. Email: vecturc_laf@compuserve11.com

FAAn Awards

The FAAn Awards were voted on by fanzine fans and the results announced at Corflu.

Best Fanzine: *Idea* (2. *Attitude*; 3. *Trap Door*; 4. *Apparathik*; 5. *Banana Wines*; 6. *Never Quite Arriving*; 7. *Plokt*; 8. *Mimosa*; 9. *Thyme*; 10. *Beuto*; Emerald City, File 770, Wild Heids)
Best Fanwriter: Christina Lake (2. *Gen Sullivan*; 3. *Dave Langford*; 4. *Victor Gonzalez*; 5. *Mark Plummer*; 6. *Michael Abbott*; 7. *Alison Freebairn*; 8. *Maureen Kincard Speller*; 9. *Tommy Ferguson*; 10. *Frost Lesley Reece*)
Best Fan Artist: D. West (2. *Ian Gunn*; 3. *Bill Rotler*; 4. S.



Skull

Roger Robinson's very last Crackers

COMPETITION 131: "LASTS"

As **theoretical** promised some time ago my last competition as setter will mirror my first, and be all about endings of various sorts. Here we go, and don't forget the theme:

1. What is the title of the 1971 film based on Matheson's novel *I Am Legend*?
2. What does the 'Z' stand for in Raymond Z. Gallun?
3. Who wrote the title story in the anthology of Jerry Cornelius stories *The Last Hurrah of the Golden Horde*?
4. Which Asimov novel starts: "Andrew Harlan stepped into the kettle"?
5. What is the book by an author whose middle name is Franklin, and whose title is an anagram of "Lady Gets Girl's Hat"?
6. Who was the last editor of *Science Fantasy* magazine before it changed its name to *Impulse*?
7. Which British tv sf show had its last episode on 21 December 1981?

And that's all, folks! Over to you, Mr Ollis!

RESULTS OF COMPETITION 130: "CLARKE REPRISÉ"

The answers to my penultimate competition – which was repeated from issue 129 for those of you (including myself) who missed an issue of *Matrix* – are:

1. Charles
2. Philip K. Dick
3. Neil McAleer
4. 1989
5. Clarke went to Huih's Grammar School
6. *Ten Story Fantasy*
7. Keir Dullea
8. Keir Dullea (!)
9. *Glade Path*
10. King's College, London

The only entrant to get near a full house was **David Lewis**, so he gets the usual book token and copies of Clarke novels donated by **Voyager**. He only missed the answer to question 2 – and then only because of imprecise wording in the question. I was looking for another author whose birthday was 16 December but not necessarily in the same year (1917) as ACC.

Matrix Crosswords 21 & 22 Solutions and Results

A dozen or so of you solved one or the other – or in most cases both – so I had to get the hat out. And **Paul Lennox** (crossword 21) and **Lesley Milner** (22) are the lucky token winners. As it happens they both correctly solved both of the crosswords. I was speaking to John English, the crossword compiler, recently and passed on most of the comments you sent in with your entries. As he is a delicate soul (just a joke, John!) I spared him the dire threats that some of you send . . .

Crossword 21 Solution

S	T	E	M	S	T	J
L	A	G	R	A	N	G
L	E	T	R	I	O	U
F	I	L	K	I	N	C
V	T	U	G	H	T	
G	A	L	A	X	I	
T	S	Y	A	A		
N	E	P	T	U	N	E
A	B	S	O	L	U	T
A	L	T	S	I	A	
S	T	O	O	D	R	O
M	G	I	L	E	U	I
T	A	V	E	R	N	
N	R	O	S	S	E	N

COMPETITION EXTRA!

See page 15

The crossword will return next issue

Crossword 22 Solution

The book around the perimeter of the puzzle was *The Gods Themselves* by **Isaac Asimov**. The title of the puzzle was taken from the quotation from Schiller, "Against stupidity, the Gods themselves contend in vain," used to title the three parts of the novel (with the addition of a question mark).

T	H	E	G	O	D	S
V	E	N	E	R	I	
R	L	E	M	E	P	T
O	R	G	I	A	C	
A	U	O	I	O	I	
M	N	E	M	O	N	I
T	K	E	B	A	G	
I	R	I	D	I	A	N
E	I	C	T	R		
S	T	O	P	I	T	
I	L	U	B	I	A	
A	C	R	O	S	T	I
U	P	E	E	A	E	L
C	L	A	I	M	A	N
A	A	S	I	S	E	V

Big Butt

mainlines the news

• **APOCRYPHAL MAYBE** but it should be true: at Intuition, **Roger Robinson** was overheard telling of a newspaper story concerning budget cuts in Essex libraries. The headline?

BOOK LACK IN OINGAR

• **EASTERCON** **DONAS** **ANDROMEDA** boss **Rog Peyton** smacked his lips and ordered 100 copies of **Maria Dora Russell's** *Children of God* to sell at Intuition, but found they were the audiobook version. (Don't laugh, it's cruel.) The newsletter gave the coveted Basil Fawley Award for charm and courtesy to the Britannia Hotel, maybe due to a fight that broke out between staff in the pizza restaurant on Saturday. • **Ian Sales** had a nice time, between losing an evening, his glasses, and filling **Tanya Brown's** boots with beer. • Why did **Stanley Kubrick** withdraw all prints of 2001? The newsletter knew: "because it encourages people to try to land on huge black monoliths orbiting Jupiter".

• **Steve Jeffery** attempted seduction on the lovely **Jill Reed** with a couple of pictures of 'her boys', **Bodie** and **Doyle**. "The way to Jill's heart is through a picture of **Madness's** bum," he said unwellly. • For some reason the juggling workshops were a great success, unlike the aspiring jugglers: perhaps it was a training programme for connumerans. • Swamped with **Pulp Fiction** flyers, attendees dealt with each other to produce ever more ripping tales of derring-do about hair-raising journeys through floods and storms as they battled towards Manchester. Was it all worth it? Only they know . . .

• **TOP SHELF** **DEPT** **Kevin Smith** addicts will recall a scene in *Malrats* where the two main characters visit a topless psychic. "Focus," sez one, "I'm hoping she will," sez his sexually-obsessed friend. Now **Ford** are releasing a new car called the **Focus**. But that's a porn mag," declares *The Observer*. You know, **Focus**, **Fiesta**, **Focus** . . . Question is, who will appear topless in *Focus's* next Forum? And what will **Dr Greenland's** next prescription be for?

• **MORE** **MUCK** **Alph** never believes rumours. Well, hardly ever. Like the one that says that **Anne McCaffrey's** follow-up to *The Master Harper of Pern* is about a talented dragon catcher, and will be called *The Master Baiter of Pern*.

• **AN** **DRAM** Following the guest appearance of an **Iain Banks** novel on *The Archers*, 'Mike Tucker' has popped up writing *Dr Who* stories; curiously, his next *DW* novel, due in the autumn, is called *Matrix*. Mismatched friends have been informed. (Trivia buffs will know that the actor who plays **Tucker**, **Terry Malloy**, played one version of **Davros**. They may not know that **Tucker's** collaborator on *DW* stories, **Robert Perry**, played with veteran rock band *The Eric*. Confused yet?) Meanwhile the rather damp Midlands contingent of the BSFA committee are mourning the death of John Archer under a Fergie. It's a different world, innit?

Also flood-affected over Easter was **Steve Jeffery**, when an OAP home in Kidlington had to be evacuated. Asked if he'd been, er, discommoded, Steve commented: "What? Six o'clock."

• **CAINE** **MUTINY** But we mustn't be cruel. Steve took great delight in the following joke (as did **Alph**), culled from **Tommy Ferguson's** *Tommy's World* 36:

There's this room, and in it are **Jim Morrison** and **Ray Manzarek**. They both have their trousers round their ankles and **Gillian Taylor** is crawling around on all fours with her mouth open. Next to **Jim** and **Ray** are the **Beatles**, including **Yoko**, and they've all got their trousers down to their ankles and **Gillian Taylor** is crawling around on all fours with her mouth open. Next to the **Beatles** are the **Rolling Stones**, and the whole band has their trousers round their ankles and **Gillian Taylor** is crawling around on all fours with her mouth open. Suddenly, one of the walls flies apart as a **Mini Cooper** comes crashing through it. The mini stops, the door opens and out steps **Michael Caine**, who shouts: "YOU WERE ONLY SPOSED TO BLOW THE BLOODY DOORS OFF!"

— N. C. & R.

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

• **Alph** welcomes scandal, rumour, clichés, cuttings, droppings, small pieces of cheese, and bribes (no address).

the completely innocent **matrix** is fitted up on an **acorn** as000, third decreed by various bits of software (notably **zap**, which was somewhere else at the time **guy**, convincingly alibied by an **hp laserjet** 51, caught bang to rights by **pdc** copyright, tripped down the stairs by **bramley** mailing services, sent down for life by the royal mail, and found guilty by you

— **matrix 131** — soundtrack by the cardigans, dr dddg (—serotony—), david bowie, the squirrel nut zippers, sharon shannon, electronic, —the piano—, alana morissette, i. s. bach, and the crushing of faded dreams — "all the lonely people / where do they all belong?"