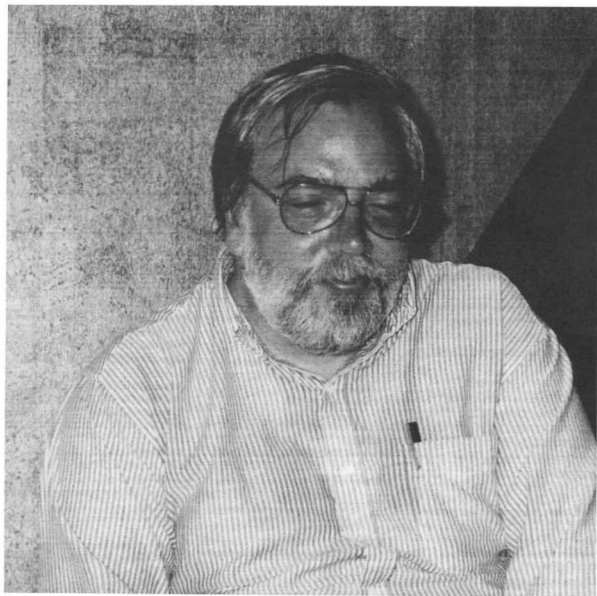


The news magazine of the British Science Fiction Association

Matrix

Issue 143

May/June 2000



John Sladek 1937 – 2000

Matrix

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Editorial

The pages of *Matrix* seem to be featuring the obituaries of both authors and fans with depressing regularity these days. Last issue it was A. E. van Vogt, one of the veterans of the Golden Age of sf. This time it's John Sladek - one of the leading lights of the 1960s New Wave - and, closer to home, John D. Rickett, well-known fan and APA contributor. In any field such attrition is, sadly, inevitable, but in a genre that concerns itself with the future and themes like longevity and time travel it all seems particularly poignant. I'm sure I'm not alone in hoping that the cover of the next issue will feature something other than a photo of another late sf personality.

On a brighter note I'm pleased to be able to welcome Greg Pickersgill who takes over from Yvonne Rowse in our fan news department. Greg, I'm sure, will need no introduction to many of you out there in the world of fandom. His first column proper starts next issue, but turn to page 16 for his handy 'everything-you-wanted-to-know-about-fanzines-but-were-too-afraid-to-ask' feature. In future all fanzines for review should be sent to him at the address listed on the facing page.

This issue also features the two Garys, Dalkin and Wilkinson, on the long-awaited return to British cinema screens of Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange*. For those of you, like me, who've only ever seen it on a scratchy Continental video import their views make interesting reading.

Finally, a big 'thank-you' to everyone who said nice things about our first issue (the cheques are in the post!). I'm pleased that all the hard work put in by everyone on the team was appreciated.

Onwards!

John Sladek (1937 - 2000)

John Sladek, born in middle America, initially made his name in Britain as part of the New Wave. Along with his friend and collaborator Thomas M. Disch, Sladek was seen as the next big hope for sf at the end of the 1960s. His first novel *The Reproductive System / Mechasm* (1968) features a self-replicating machine that took over America by eating other pieces of metal and machines, a version of *Tetsuo* twenty years ahead of the movie. Alongside the manic cast of characters Sladek indulged in the word games that were to mark his novels - paranoia anagrams, the secret message encoded in Pi, the location of Oz between New York and Pennsylvania and so on.

His next novel, *The Muller-Fokker Effect* (1970), anticipated cyberpunk, in its tale of a man trapped on magnetic tape, alongside the chaotic crew of white supremacists, Indians, Playboy types, conspiracy theorists and a millionaire window peeper who treated life as a soap opera. But the 'next five minutes' setting seemed to be leaving sf behind, and Sladek published no full-length science fiction until the 1980s.

His magnum opus was *Roderick, or the Education of a Young Machine*, which was divided into two parts for publication in Britain (*Roderick* [1980] and *Roderick at Random* [1983]) and initially into three in the US (although only one volume was actually published). *Roderick* was a robot who was trying to learn to become human, in a world where humans were behaving more and more like machines: teachers were too busy to teach; priests too busy to pray, and so on. The serious business of the nature of humanity is leavened by the wonderfully cross-purpose conversations conflating Elmer Rice and Edgar Rice Burroughs and Williams Burroughs, or the pornography of computer terminology.

For his BSFA Award-winning novel *Tik-Tok* (1983), Sladek stayed with robots, featuring the confessions of a robot whose 'asimov circuits' had malfunctioned, leading it on a murderous rampage which owes debt to the career of Frankenstein's monster, as well as being told in twenty-six alphabetical sections.

During the 1980s, Sladek moved back to the States and produced one more novel, *Bugs*. Whilst his solo detective novels, *Black Aura* (1974) and *Invisible Green: A Thackeray Phil Mystery* (1977), had featured an American in London, this reversed the direction and featured the misadventures of a Brit adrift in the States, with a heavy debt to Evelyn Waugh.

The detective novel *Black Aura* featured Sladek's scepticism about the paranormal, a subject which Sladek explored at great length in his *The New Apocrypha* (1973), an essential counter to *The Charists of the Gods* and its ilk. More telling is the series of pseudonymous pseudoscience books Sladek wrote, which outsold the debunking volume. His *Arachne Rising* (1977), a convincing discussion of the missing thirteenth sign of the zodiac, was cited in the *Encyclopedia of the Unexplained* without a hint of its spoof nature.

Sladek also worked at short length, including a series of painfully accurate parodies; his version of Philip K. Dick netted him fan mail from the author. Other shorts offered bureaucratic forms as narrative, and the spectre of Kafka and Dickens hung over a number of shorts in which individuals lost their identity to bureaucratic processes. At his best, Sladek can make you afraid and make you laugh.

Aside from a few short stories, Sladek has been silent since the late 1980s, an ironic silence given the explosion of comic sf and fantasy from Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett, and lesser imitators. Carroll and Graf brought some of his work back into print in the late 1980s and *The Reproductive System* was a VG SF classic. Alas, he is now only to be found second hand, but anyone who wishes their satire to be sharp, their prose to be allusive and their characters to be real should seek him out.

Andrew M. Butler

Orion/Gollancz are due to re-publish *The Reproductive System* in this country in July. More please! (ed.)

News

Books, people and events making the headlines

SF Age folds

Science Fiction Age will be discontinued after its May 2000 issue with editor Scott Edelman leaving publisher Sovereign Media Co. Its sister magazine *Realms of Fantasy* will continue.

Pan sign Asher in 3 Book Deal

Neal Asher has just clinched a contract with a major publishing house as Pan Macmillan agreed to publish three of his sf novels. He will be courting the big time with *Gridlinked* in March 2001, following this up with the unrelated *The Skinner*, with *The Line of Polity*, a sequel to *Gridlinked*, close behind.

Neal has been climbing the small press ladder for close on twenty years with publications in diverse small press magazines and imprints (rewind to these good old, bad old days by reading his article 'Getting There' in *Focus* 35, May 1999). He is untroubled by his long wait in the wings; "In a way this is probably the best way for it to happen," he says. "I have more appreciation of what is being offered, I've learnt my trade, I have a large body of work to call upon, and I am capable of producing what the publisher wants."

To see his full spectrum, you can check out his webpage at <http://website.lineone.net/~nealasher>.

eDemand eXceeds eSupply

Stephen King, who released an original collection last year solely in audiobook format, has now released a novelette-length story only as an e-book. Amazon.com is giving "Riding the Bullet" away for free, though you have to download a Glassbook Reader (which requires Windows, and Internet Explorer 4 or later, to run) first, while Simon & Schuster's site SimonSays.com has an excerpt you can read for free. "Riding the Bullet" instantly became such a success that online booksellers couldn't meet the demand; 400,000 orders were received in the first 24 hours. The story is available from Alexandria Digital Literature among many other online merchants.

Holy SFX! Batmobiles on Mars?

NASA engineers have called in the man who designed the Batmobile to give advice on building a new generation of exploration vehicles to traverse Mars, according to the *Space.com* Web site. George Barris received the call from engineers at the Johnson Space Center in Houston.

"I'm usually the one who gets the call from motion picture and television studios to design and build vehicles for film and TV," Barris, now in his late 70s, told *Space.com*. "This is the first time I have been contacted for the real thing."

Engineers from NASA's Mars EVA (extra vehicular activity) project office called Barris after they came across a model of his "Moon Scope," a full-size working six-wheeled vehicle designed in the 1960s for lunar exploration. NASA is now co-operating with Barris, who has given the space agency permission to use any of his designs.

Barris is a long-time designer of fantastic vehicles for Hollywood, including the Munsters' hearse, the Green Hornet's car and *Knight Rider's* talking TransAm. Barris is scheduled to receive the Life Career Saturn Award from the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films in June.

Piracy setback for SF in China

China may axe *Popular Literature* magazine for allegedly pirating stories and photographs from *Science Fiction World*, the country's most respected SF periodical. According to the official *Xinhua* news agency, this would be the first case of copyright infringement involving science fiction in China, where the genre is still controversial.

Until the mid-1990s, SF was regarded in China as "spiritual pollution" and "pseudoscience" and was banned. SF began to emerge from the shadows when authorities stressed that science and man's imagination are vital for the nation's creativity and competitiveness. Alas, competition may have gone too far. Liu Bo, an official with the State Press and Publications Administration, told *Xinhua* that Hebei-based *Popular Literature* may be permanently closed down if the alleged infringement is proven.

Pumpkin acquires new Tuttle collection

Lisa Tuttle is to have a new collection of short stories *My Pathology and other stories* published by Pumpkin Books in late May, along with the slightly delayed publication of Ian Watson's *Mockymen*. Both titles will sell for £16.99 and will be limited edition hardcovers of about 320 pages. Lisa is boosted by the development. "It can be difficult – if not impossible – to get a collection published," she says, "and this brings together most of the short fiction I've had published during the past decade. I'm really, really pleased. My feeling is, that

when a book exists, things can happen...more so than when short stories are scattered through "little" magazines or pulps or the occasional anthology..."

Tales from the Big Engine room

A new publishing venture, Big Engine, encompassing fantasy, science fiction and horror, has just been founded by novelist and editor Ben Jeapes and will see books in print by October.

Big Engine's first wave of titles will include two reprints: *The Leaky Establishment*, David Langford's 1984 comedy classic with a brand new introduction by Terry Pratchett. Plus *Swan Songs: The complete Hooded Swan Omnibus* by Brian Stableford, reprinting in one volume, Brian Stableford's six novels – *Halcyon Drift*, *Rhapsody in Black*, *Promised Land*, *The Paradise Game*, *The Fenris Device* and *Swan Song* – which redefined the genre of space opera. There will be two debut works of horror: *Feather and Bone*, by Gus Smith, and *Dead Ground*, by Chris Amies. Big Engine also plans to publish a new Interzone anthology, *The Ant Men of Tibet and Other Stories*, edited by David Pringle.

Ben has two novels and 18 short stories to his credit, spends sleepless nights itching to improve the present state of SF publishing, and is resolved on putting his 12 years publishing experience to good use. Ordering will be possible from the Big Engine website at www.bigengine.co.uk and relevant information will be duplicated on www.jeapes.ndirect.co.uk.

Dan Dare

Any Dan Dare fans out there? The great British comic book hero is 50 this year and to celebrate there is a special exhibition of Eagle comic artwork, memorabilia, models and more at the Atkinson Art Gallery in the resort town of Southport, Merseyside. It runs from April 14th to July 1st and the admission is £2.50. For further information contact: Kathleen Houghton, Atkinson Art Gallery, Lord Street, Southport, Merseyside, PR8 1DB. Tel: 01772 700874 or 0151 934 2111. E-mail: kathleen@littleweasel.freereserve.co.uk.

Call for papers

As part of 2001: *A Celebration of British Science Fiction*, to be held at the University of Liverpool, England, 28th June – 1st July 2001, The Science Fiction Foundation and the University of Liverpool welcomes suggestions for papers on all aspects of post-

war British Science Fiction (written sf, art, music, film and television), but particularly on Arthur C. Clarke (patron of the Science Fiction Foundation) and John Wyndham (whose papers are held by the University of Liverpool).

Abstracts should be sent to: Dr. Farah Mendlesohn, Middlesex University, White Hart Lane, London N17 8HR, UK, or e-mailed to: Farah3@mdx.ac.uk by 30th September 2000.

Guests of Honour at the event will be: Brian Aldiss, Stephen Baxter, Nicola Griffiths, Gwyneth Jones and Ken MacLeod.

Awards

Lethem 'round in circles

Jonathan Lethem has won a National Book Critics Circle award in the USA for his novel *Motherless Brooklyn* (Doubleday), a mystery about a detective with Tourette's syndrome.

Stephenson wins *Dreaming Down-Under* Competition

Adelaide writer/editor Robert N. Stephenson has won the HarperCollins Australia *Dreaming Down-Under* Competition to write an ending to George Turner's uncompleted novella "And Now Both Time Waste Me. The winner will be published on the HarperCollins Australia website.

1999 Aurealis Awards Announced

The 1999 Aurealis Awards were presented on Monday 6 March 2000, in a ceremony held at the South Australian Writers' Centre. The winners were:

Division A: Science Fiction

Best Novel: Egan, Greg - *Teranesia* (Gollancz, HarperPrism);

Best Short Story: Lawson, Chris - "Written in Blood" (*Asimov's Science Fiction*, #281, June 1999)

Division B: Fantasy

Best Novel: Routley, Jane - *Aramaya* (Avon); **Best Short Story:** Canavan, Trudi - "Whispers of the Mist Children" (*Aurealis* #23)

Division C: Horror

Best Novel: Harris, Christine - *Foreign Devils* (Random House Australia);

Best Short Story: Williams, Sean & Simon Brown - "Atrax" (*New Adventures in Sci-Fi*, Ticonderoga)

Division D: Young Adult

Best Novel: Luckett, Dave - *A Dark Victory* (Orion)

Best Short Story: No Award.

Convenors' Award: Terry Dowling, *Antique Futures: The Best of Terry Dowling*.

Egan Declines Aurelius

Greg Egan has declined the 1999 Aurealis Award for Best Novel (see above). Egan, twice winner in the 1995 awards, has previously requested that his work not be

considered for the Australian National Science Fiction Achievement "Ditmar" Awards. A report from the Aurealis SF judges, read at the Awards ceremony and scheduled for publication in *Aurealis*, alluded to Egan having requested that his work not be considered for the Aurealis Awards.

Brian Aldiss to be Grand Master

Our own Brian Aldiss will receive the prestigious Grand Master Award for 1999 at the Nebula Awards banquet to be held May 21st, 2000 in New York City at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. This is the accolade awarded by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, SFWA, in recognition of a lifetime of achievement in science fiction or fantasy writing.

At the same banquet Daniel Keyes, author of *Flowers for Algernon*, will be named Author Emeritus and will give a speech.

1999 Nebula Awards Final Ballot

Novels

George R.R. Martin, *A Clash of Kings* (Bantam, Feb99)

Vernor Vinge, *A Deepness in the Sky* (Tor, Feb99); Tor, Jan00)

Maureen F. McHugh, *Mission Child* (Avon Eos, Dec98; Eos, Nov99)

Sean Stewart, *Mockingbird* (Ace, Aug98; Ace, Mar00)

Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Talents* (Seven Stories Press, Nov98; Warner Books, Jan00)

Ken MacLeod, *The Cassini Division* (Tor, Jul99)

Novellas

L. Timmel Duchamp, "Living Trust" (*Asimov's*, Feb99)

Michael A. Burstein, "Reality Check" (*Analog*, Nov99)

Adam-Troy Castro & Jerry Olton, "The Astronaut From Wyoming" (*Analog*, Aug99)

Andy Duncan, "The Executioners' Guild" (*Asimov's*, Aug99)

Ted Chiang, "Story of Your Life" (*Starlight* 2, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Ed., Tor, Nov98)

David Marusek, "The Wedding Album" (*Asimov's*, Jun99)

Novellettes

Brian A. Hopkins, "Five Days in April" (*Chiaroscuro Webzine*, Jul99)

Jack McDevitt & Stanley Schmidt, "Good Intentions" (*F&SF*, Jun98)

Esther M. Friesner, "How to Make Unicorn Pie" (*F&SF*, Jan99)

Mary A. Turzillo, "Mars is No Place for Children" (*SF Age*, May99)

Bruce Sterling, "Taklamakan" (*Asimov's*, Nov98)

Phyllis Eisenstein, "The Island in the Lake" (*F&SF*, Dec98)

Short Stories

Michael Swanwick, "Ancient Engines" (*Asimov's*, Feb99)

Frances Sherwood, "Basil the Dog" (*Atlantic Monthly*, Sep99)

Constance Ash, "Flower Kiss" (*Realms of*

Fantasy, Aug98)

Michael Swanwick, "Radiant Doors" (*Asimov's*, Sep98)

Leslie What, "The Cost of Doing Business" (*Amazing Stories*, Kim Mohan, Ed., WoTC, Feb99)

Bruce Holland Rogers, "The Dead Boy at Your Window" (*The North American Review*, Dec98)

The final ballot will be mailed on March 11th, with a final deadline of April 15th. The detailed rules are available at <http://www.sfwa.org/awards/rules.htm>.

The Nebula Awards are voted on, and presented by, active members of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, Inc. The Awards will be announced at the 2000 Nebula Awards Weekend to be held in New York City on May 19th-21th, 2000.

Charnas wins Tiptree

Suzi McKee Charnas has won the James Tiptree Jr Memorial Award, named in honour of Alice Sheldon, for her novel, *The Conqueror's Child* (TOR, 1999).

The shortlisted works were:

Speaking Stones (Stephen Leigh) (Avon, 1999)

The Terrorists of Intransit (Louise Marley) (Ace, 1999)

The Singer from the Sea (Sherri S. Tepper) (Avon, 1999)

If I Told You Once (Judy Budnitz) (Picador USA/ St. Martin's, 1999)

"In the Second Person" (Sally Caves) (TERRA INCOGNITA Winter 1999/2000)

"Pinkland" (Graham Joyce) (in *Crossing the Border*, ed. Lisa Tuttle, Indigo, 1999)

The Woman with the Flying Head (Yumiko Kurahashi) (M.E. Sharpe, 1998)

"5001 Nights" (Penelope Lively) (Fjord, 1997)

The Iron Bridge (David E. Morse) (Harcourt Brace, 1998)

"Sexual Dimorphism" (Kim Stanley Robinson) (ASIMOV'S, June, 1999)

"The Actors" and "Dapple" (Eleanor Aranson) (F&SF, Dec. 1999, & ASIMOV'S, Sept 1999)

A Civil Campaign (Lois McMaster Bujold) (Baen, 1999)

Silver Birch/Blood Moon (ed. Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling) (Avon, 1999)

"Remailer" (Debra Doyle and James D. MacDonald) (in *Not of Woman*

Born ed. Constance Ash, ROC/Penguin, 1999).

Teranesia (Greg Egan) (HarperPrism, 1999)

The Vintner's Luck (Elizabeth Knox) (Farrar Straus Giroux, 1998)

"Dragonfly" (Ursula K. Le Guin) (in *Legends*, ed. Silverberg, Tor, 1998).

1999 Chesley Awards nominees

The Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists (ASFA) announced this year's nominees for the Chesley Awards. The Chesley Awards, named after the famed astronomical artist Chesley Bonestell, are presented each year to artists and art directors that ASFA feels deserve special recognition. This year's Chesley ceremony will be held at the Chicago Worldcon, taking place August 31st, September 1st, 2nd and

3rd at the Chicago Hyatt Regency and Convention Center (exact time and location TBA). The works listed below were either created, published or first exhibited in 1999.

Best Cover Illustration nominees:

Bob Eggleton for "Dragon and Phoenix" by Joanne Bertin
 Bob Eggleton for "Rainbow Mars" by Larry Niven
 Jody Lee for "The Black Swan" by Mercedes Lackey
 Todd Lockwood for "The Spine of the World" by R.A. Salvatore
 Michael Whelan for "Otherland: Mountain of Black Glass" by Tad Williams

Best Paperback Cover Illustration nominees:

Rowena Morrill for "The Garden of Stone" by Victoria Strauss
 John Jude Palencar for "The Terrorists of Irustan" by Louise Marley
 Jean Pierre Targete for "Wrapt in Crystal" by Sharon Shinn
 James Warhola for "Callahan's Crosstime Saloon" by Spider Robinson
 Stephen Youll for "Eberien: Book One; the Company of Glass" by Valery Leith

Best Cover Illustration Magazine:

Jill Bauman: *Fantasy and Science Fiction Magazine* June 1999
 Alan Clark: *Cemetery Dance* Fall 1999
 Bob Eggleton: *Fantasy and Science Fiction Magazine* August 1999
 Greg Hildebrandt: *Realms of Fantasy* August 1999
 Ron Walotsky: *Fantasy and Science Fiction Magazine*, April 1999

Bram Stoker Awards Nominations

The final ballot for this year's Stoker Awards, for works published in 1999, has been released. Winners will be announced at the World Horror Convention in Denver, Colorado, May 11 - 14, 2000. In addition, Richard Matheson will receive the International Horror Guild Living Legend Award.

Novel

Darker Than Night, Owl Goingback (Signet)
Hannibal, Thomas Harris (Delacorte)
"Low Men in Yellow Coats", Stephen King (Hearts in Atlantis)
Hexas, Tom Piccirilli (Leisure)
Mr. X, Peter Straub (Random House)

First novel

Widow's Walk, Steve Beai (Indigo)
Every Dead Thing, John Connolly (Simon & Schuster)
King Rat, China Miéville (Macmillan UK; Tor US)
Wither, J.G. Passarella (Pocket)

Long fiction

"Five Days in April", Brian A. Hopkins (*Chiaroscuro* [webzine] Jul 1999 [story link])
 "Dread in the Beast", Charlee Jacob (*Dread in the Beast*)
 "Right to Life", Jack Ketchum (Cemetery Dance Publications)
 "Mad Dog Summer", Joe R. Lansdale (1999: *New*

Tales of Horror and Suspense)

Short fiction

"The Grave", P.D. Cacek (1999: *New Tales of Horror and Suspense*)
 "The Entertainment", Ramsey Campbell (1999: *New Tales of Horror and Suspense*)
 "Halloween Street", Steve Rasnic Tem (F&SF July 1999)
 "After Shock", F. Paul Wilson (*Realms of Fantasy* Dec 1999)

Fiction collection

Death Drives a Semi, Edo van Belkom (Quarry Press)
The Nightmare Chronicles, Douglas Clegg (Leisure)
Hearts in Atlantis, Stephen King (Scribner)
Deep into the Darkness Peering, Tom Piccirilli (Pocket)

Anthology

The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror: Twelfth Annual Collection, Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling, eds. (St. Martin's)
The Mammoth Book of Best New Horror 10, Stephen Jones, ed. (Carroll and Graf)
The Last Continent: New Tales of Zothique, John P. Pelan, ed. (Shadowlands Press)
 1999: *New Tales of Horror and Suspense*, Al Sarrantonio, ed. (Avon)

Non-fiction

DarkEcho (all 1999 issues), Paula Guran, ed.
The Essential Monster Movie Guide, Stephen Jones (Titan)
Vincent Price: A Daughter's Biography, Victoria Price (St. Martin's)
Helnotes (all 1999 issues), David B. Silva & Paul F. Olson

Screenplay

"The Green Mile", Frank Darabont (Castle Rock)
 "The Blair Witch Project", Daniel Myrick & Eduardo Sanchez (Artisan Entertainment)
 "The Sixth Sense", M. Night Shyamalan (Hollywood Films/Spyglass)
 Buffy the Vampire Slayer "Hush", Joss Whedon (Fox)

2000 George Turner Prize

Shortlist

The shortlist for the 2000 George Turner Fiction Prize for science fiction and fantasy has been announced. The shortlist for the A\$10,000 George Turner Fiction Prize, sponsored by the Transworld division of Random House Australia, is:

Keri Arthur for *Spook Squad*
 Kerry Greenwood for *Stormbringer*
 Simon Haynes for *The Adventures of Hal Spacejock*
 Michelle Marquardt for *Blue Sky and Silence*
 Liz Martin for *Hashakana*
 Claire McKenna for *Protection*
 Simon Moore for *dot space dot*
 Nicole Trevartha for *Fire in the Blood*

The winning author will be announced on April 7th and the winning novel published by Random House Australia in September 2000.

Media News

Gary Wilkinson & others
 Round up the latest on film & TV

Matrix Oscar success

Last year's sf hit *The Matrix* scooped four 'technical' Oscars: Best Sound, Best Editing, Best Special Effects and Best Sound Editing, leaving revivals *The Mummy* and much fancied *The Phantom Menace* without anything. Over at the Razzies, the annual awards for the worst that Hollywood can offer, *Wild Wild West* - 'a wretched remake' - was awarded Worst Picture of 1999. The film's stars Kevin Kline and Will Smith won Worst Onscreen Couple and it also scooped Worst Director, Worst Screenplay and Worst Song. Heather Donahue was, rather unfairly, awarded Worst Actress for her 'increasingly irksome' character in *The Blair Witch Project*.

Alien invasion

Jonathan Frakes, who played Commander Riker in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and who has already directed *First Contact* and *Insurrection*, is to direct his first non-Trek feature, *Steve Was Here*. Produced by Devlin and Emmerich, of *Independence Day* and *Godzilla* fame, the spoof sf film has residents of a poor town faking a Roswell-like alien landing in order to attract tourists. The plot thickens (as with *Galaxy Quest*) when real aliens turn up.

The Horror!

Brad Pitt has been approached to play the part of Jack the Ripper for the feature film adaptation of Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's graphic novel *From Hell*. Blaxploitation star and Tarantino diva, Pam Grier, will join rapper and ex-criminal Snoop Dogg in the urban supernatural thriller *Bones*. Grier will play a clairvoyant and girlfriend to Snoop's character, a ghost who returns for revenge twenty years after his death. And deserving a special Oscar for most gratuitous title ever, the forthcoming and presumably straight to video, *Vampire Lesbian Kickboxers*?

Burton goes Ape

After a long development, which included both Oliver Stone and James Cameron, attached as possible directors it has now been announced that the remake of *Planet of the Apes* will be directed by Tim Burton.

Lucas breaks the bank

George Lucas topped the Forbes poll of

entertainment earners of last year with a whopping \$400m (£250m) from his *Phantom Menace* (plus merchandising of course). He earned over twice as much as his nearest rival Oprah Winfrey. JK Rowling, the writer of the Harry Potter books, was highly placed at number twenty-four (\$40m) the second highest placed British entrant to the Rolling Stones at eleven.

Rowling's loss is Kubrick's gain

It now seems that Steven Spielberg will not be directing the Harry Potter movie. He was rejected after wanting to brighten up the darker aspects of the book and, horror of horrors, have an American child in the leading role. However he will definitely be directing Kubrick's last project *AI* (however, see below - ed.). Spielberg will be working with Kubrick's brother-in-law and long-time collaborator Jan Harlen who has been announced as an Executive Producer on the project. Narrowed down from a shortlist of twelve directors, the front-runners for the Potter film are now Terry Gilliam and Alan Parker, along with Chris Columbus (*Bicentennial Man*) and Brad Siberling (*City of Angels*) still in the running.

Dinosaurs take to the air

Despite the critical slating that *The Lost World* received the Jurassic Park dinosaurs are planned to rumble out again for a third movie. This time directed by Joe Johnston (*Jumanji*) it will be based on an idea by Steven Spielberg with ground breaking special effects including 'lots of flying reptiles'. However Spielberg has apparently told Johnston not to 'copy him'. Chance of decent plot then?

As if by magic a film appears

The 70s children's television character Mr Benn will be stepping 'through the other door' into a live action movie starring John Hannah. Not much news on plot as yet, other than it will be set in England and will be 'life affirming'. Also our bowler-hatted hero will be 'fleshed out' gaining a job in a museum and a girlfriend played by Jane Horrocks. Ben Kingsley has been signed up to play the shopkeeper. Only thirteen episodes were originally made but the popular show has been off repeated ever since and the producers are hoping to tap into the huge nostalgia for the show. Finance is currently being finalised and pre-production is due to start soon.

Poe's worst nightmare

In possibly the most bizarre casting decision of all time Michael Jackson is planning to play the eponymous hero of *The Nightmares of Edgar Allan Poe*. Producer Gary Pudny says they will use morphing technology to transform the squeaky-voiced prince of pop into the writer. It's time to be very afraid, as

apparently Wacko's "whole new thrust" will be towards movies. Beyond pop videos, including the justifiably acclaimed *Thriller*, Jackson previous movie experience was the Scarecrow in the best-forgotten *Wizard of Oz* remake *The Wiz*.

Mummy too

Universal have announced they are extending their new franchise *The Mummy* after its easy adventure performed well against the po-faced *The Phantom Menace*. The main stars Brendan Fraser, Rachel Weisz and Jon Hannah will be returning, and the new film will be again be written and directed by Stephen Sommers. Due to be released in spring 2001 the film will be set in a foggy London. It also looks like we will be getting another sort of mummy, as it seems that the hero's nine-year-old son will be involved in the action.

Fox wants Fox

David Duchovny has apparently been offered \$1m by Fox TV to play 'Fox' Mulder in another series of *The X-Files* as his contract expired at the end of the seventh season, currently being shown on Sky. Even if he doesn't sign the show will continue without him as Gillian Anderson still has a year to run on her contract. Fox have also just bought the rights to one hundred and ten episodes of *Tales of the Unexpected*, which they plan to remake. The original stories, well the first episodes at least, were based on Roald Dahl's excellent short stories. Let's hope they don't update the 'jangly music and women dancing in front of flames' titles.

Disaster Movie

After earthquakes, volcanoes and asteroids, the next threat to planet earth is... dust mites. Jan De Bont is to direct *Dust* based on an apparently scientifically plausible novel written by Charles Pellegrino, the scientist whose research inspired Crichton to write *Jurassic Park*. Massive fires create enormous suffocating dust clouds full of mites sucking the air from anything they encounter. It's up to the white-coats, *Andromeda Strain*-style, to sort it all out. After the well-received *Speed*, De Bont went on to direct *Twister*, the rather less well-received *Speed II* and the disastrous *The Haunting*. Perhaps *Dust* will see a return to his initial promise.

Fincher back to sf

The director of *Alien³* is to return to science fiction with *Passengers*. Based on a Silverberg short story, invading incorporeal aliens take over the minds or 'ride' humans, controlling their bodies for three days of sex, violence, car chases and other assorted fun. The film centres on a weird romance of two estranged lovers; a man tries to find the woman he first met when they were each being 'ridden'.

Tomb Raiding

Oscar-winner Angelina Jolie is apparently in discussion to bring the pneumatic CGI babe and nerd poster girl, Lara Croft, to screen in a live action version of the computer game *Tomb Raider*. The film will be directed by Simon West (*Con Air*) based on script by *Face/Off* writers the Michaels Werb and Coleary with a budget of rumoured at £20-£30m. Current rumours include Renzo Russo and Brian Blessed (in a presumably typical immodest shouty role) as Lara's parents and a title sequence somehow incorporating the Millennium Eye. Apparently Paramount are already rubbing their hands at the mechanising potential. Expects lots of coverage in *Loaded*, etc. Can't be any worse than the *SuperMario Brothers* movie can it?

ER royal highness

ER's Julianna Margulies, and Anjelica Huston are in talks to co-star in *The Mists of Avalon*, a four-hour TNT mini-series based on Marion Zimmer Bradley's novel. According to *Daily Variety*, Huston is eyeing the role of Viviane, the Lady of the Lake, who tries to preserve the pagan beliefs of Avalon and gain control of Camelot. Margulies would most likely play King Arthur's sister, Morgaine, Viviane's pawn. Production is scheduled to begin in April in Prague and due to air in 2001.

Alldiss Correction

Following last issue's news item on Steven Spielberg's interest in resurrecting Stanley Kubrick's *AI* film project we received the following correction from Brian Alldiss. Our apologies for any confusion caused.

"The short story Kubrick bought from me was not entitled 'Artificial Intelligence', as is stated, but 'Supertoys Last All Summer Long'. As you say, Bob Shaw and I worked with Kubrick on the screenplay, without results. Kubrick wanted to turn the intense claustrophobic story into another space wham-0, since he was jealous of the success of *Star Wars*. I felt this was wrenching my story out of true. Anyhow, I've been into all this in public, for instance in the *Guardian* last summer. It was only when I had left Castle Kubrick that Supertoys became *AI*.

Recently, I have written two more stories of David, the android boy: "Supertoys When Winter Comes", and "Supertoys in Other Seasons". Steven Spielberg has bought these stories, so his interest in the project is still alive."

The Triumph of the Will of Stanley Kubrick

For Gary Dalkin the future's Orange

1968: year zero. With 2001: A Space Odyssey Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke reinvent cinema with the greatest English language film to date. Simultaneously in Russia the monumental 8 hour 20 minute War and Peace is the equivalent of a cinematic scorched earth policy. The ultimate historical recreation and the ultimate vision of the future coincide. Everything before is instantly irrelevant. As the year 2001 approaches, 1968 remains the most important year in cinema history.

In 1971 Stanley Kubrick uses the work of another acclaimed English SF writer to go back to the future. Shortly thereafter he becomes the only director to effectively ban his own work by withdrawing it from distribution.

You'd think Kubrick had planned it all along, a slowly ticking time bomb on a long clockwork fuse. *A Clockwork Orange* presents a violent near-future dystopia juxtaposing the alternatives of a violent but 'free' society, or a safe but highly regulated one. The narrative offers various viewpoints. Those of the nihilistic teen-thug Alex Burgess (played by a 27 year old Malcolm McDowell), a writer Mr Alexander (an artistic/liberal intellectual position - the film is based on the novel by Anthony Burgess, 'inspired' by an assault on his wife by 4 GI's in 1944), a chaplain (a Christian/humanitarian position) and a government minister (a conniving, pragmatic, do whatever wins votes position).

In a hopeless, pre-punk 'no future', Alex is happy enjoying meaningless sex and violence, presumably much like the audience of so many of the films which dominated the box-office in 1971. The writer Mr Alexander, who with his wife has suffered the most at Alex's hands, defends the freedom which would allow Alex to continue his violent lifestyle. (But then does the similarity of names suggest that they are in some way alter egos, one physically destructive, the other proving that the pen is mightier

than the sword in subversion?) He argues that the common people would surrender their freedom (and, yes, the film does, like virtually any Ken Russell film of the time, feature shots of Nazi soldiers) for a more peaceful life, support a government that will however pragmatically get the violent scum off the streets. "The tradition of liberty is all. The common people will let it go. They will sell liberty for a quieter life - that is why they must be led, sir, driven, pushed!"

And who can blame them if they get the trains to run on time as well? Not me, I certainly don't want scum like Alex at my door. It all prefigures the Thatcher years to a remarkable degree - the short, sharp shocks, "Prison works" and "Three Strikes and Out" pragmatism. The government minister is worse than Alex, because he does have a real moral choice, and chooses deceit and corrupt buck-passing when everything goes wrong. ("We tried to help you. We followed recommendations ... An enquiry will place the responsibility where it belongs..."). But what makes it look like Kubrick must have planned it all along is that in withdrawing the film he betrayed the tradition of liberty, chose a quieter life. He did the very thing Mr Alexander denounces, but then, the government minister does eventually guard the writer a subversive, telling Alex, "He was a menace. We put him away for his own protection." And then the film is re-released after Kubrick's death. So is it just ironic, or a very carefully planned joke with a three-decade punchline? Who is subverting who? Is the posthumous re-release of *A Clockwork Orange* the final triumph of Kubrick's will?

Of course other questions remain. Why is some of the acting so deliberately hammy? Michael Bates as the Chief Guard, Patrick Magee as Mr Alexander. Why, after the still barely dated future of 2001: A Space Odyssey, does *A Clockwork Orange* seem to present such a clumsily developed vision of things to come? Why, after 2001, did Kubrick renounce his famed visual brilliance for

a series of flat, visually unappealing movies - what's happening on screen may be striking, but the cinematography is resolutely mundane. Only a shot of the car in which Alex is joy-riding as it approaches the writer's house and the right headlight is framed with a corona which matches the exaggerated eyelashes around Alex own right eye, is there any imagination in the cinematography.

And why is the music so badly used? Applying classical music in 2001 was a stroke of genius, but unfortunately Kubrick so fell in love with the idea that he continued the novelty ever after. Certainly the Alex of Anthony Burgess' novel loved Beethoven - Burgess himself wrote symphonies as well as novels, though recordings are hard to come by - but the wretched synthesised versions which pollute *A Clockwork Orange* make no artistic sense. In a key sequence in which Alex is brainwashed into feeling sick at the thought of violence or sex, the film footage used to condition him is accompanied by Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. The whole point is to make Alex feel as bad as possible, yet Beethoven's Ninth is generally considered to be one of the most uplifting works in the classical canon. So much so that the European Union has adopted it as their 'national' anthem - or perhaps they are just trying to tell us something about the brainwashed state they have Europe in - perhaps we can wake-up one day, 'cured'. It seems crassly pragmatic plotting, engendering sympathy for Alex because he can no longer enjoy his favourite music, his one connection with higher human values, taken from him and corrupted. (Which when you think about it, is exactly how the EU are currently using Beethoven.)

Mr Alexander, having discovered Alex is responsible for his disabling injuries and, indirectly, for the death of his wife, tortures Alex with a recording of Beethoven's Ninth. It is even music which betrays Alex, for it his rendition of the wonderfully innocent *Singin' in the Rain* which gives the game away.

Yet with wild implausibility Mr Alexander plays Alex the same electronic version of Beethoven which accompanied the mind-control film. Surely he would have a recording of the original? No one in their right mind would buy the electronic version featured here for *pleasure*. By this stage the whole thing is really in danger of falling apart, and though the finale in the hospital with the corrupt politician (Anthony Sharp) rather saves the day, the ambiguously hip final shot rather suggests that Kubrick himself didn't quite know what to do with the film. Or is Alex simply reborn as his old-self, a proto-punk Star Child?

As for encouraging violence? The film answers its own criticism. Those who commit acts of violence are responsible for their own actions (though Kubrick might suggest otherwise in *The Shining* (1980), and you may as well blame (and therefore ban) the Bible, as a movie, for either can be used as a stimulus to a bit of the old ultra-violence. Alex has both sexual and violent fantasies inspired by reading the Bible, and the Prison Chaplain (Godfrey Quigley) points out that removing someone's freewill does not make them good, it only means they can't choose to do bad. Central to *A Clockwork Orange* is the fact that film can be used for mind-control as well as providing an 'inspiration' towards anti-social violence. Its genius is to suggest, just like the police who go from Droog thugs in white uniforms, to street thugs in blue uniforms, that the two functions may not be mutually exclusive. In fact, they might even be the same thing. *A Clockwork Orange*, a slow-ticking mind-bomb on a three-decade fuse, now exploding at a cinema near you. More consistently interesting and intelligent than anything new likely to be released this year, only a cunuch jelly would miss it.

All dialogue quoted from Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* - illustrated screenplay published by Ballantine Books, Inc, New York, 1972

Good to be Bad

A personal view of Kubrick's classic by Gary Wilkinson

There is a time towards the beginning of your life when everything is shiny and new. A time when you feel you can conquer the world. A time before sheer experience wears the novelty off everything. An impressionable age indeed. A time when I saw my first Kubrick film in the cinema -- a simply brilliant two-part deconstruction of man's capacity for violence and how minds can be broken down and men turned into unemotional robots. That film was *Full Metal Jacket*. I didn't realise it at the time but I would have to wait for over a decade to finally see *A Clockwork Orange*.

I first read the book *A Clockwork Orange* when I was approximately the same age as its 'hero' Alex and from that moment on wanted to see the film. At times I would sometimes think I was only person in the country not to have seen it; either abroad or via some fuzzy fifth-generation pirate video. Of course there was no possible way it could completely live up to its reputation. Video nasties are never quite as demented as you would be led to expect and the same goes for Kubrick's missing film.

Like *Full Metal Jacket* it is a game of two halves. The first forty or so minutes are probably unmatched for sheer visual intensity - Alex is so alive, so vital; an intelligent, witty and debonair anti-hero indeed - but as soon as he loses his droog outfit, goes to jail, and becomes a more innocent and vulnerable figure the film loses at lot of it impetus. The scene where is Alex is admitted to prison and his old life, along with his dignity, is slowly stripped away from him seems to go on forever and much of the second half seems to drag. Unfortunately some of the characters are more caricatures than real people and the film has plenty of Kubrick's dehumanising wide shots. This creates a cool detachment that is evident in much of Kubrick's work; as with that other ultra-stylist, Peter Greenaway, we become aware that we are watching art rather than being involved in a story. Also *Full Metal Jacket* shows us we don't need hooks in our eyes and fancy films to reprogram us - a short bloke shouting at us continuously can do the job just as well.

The look of the film itself is very kitsch, bordering on camp. The droog outfits themselves are classic and forever contemporary but the hair-cuts, the signage in the milk-bar, the furniture in the writer's house and the hideous coat Alex wears whilst strolling past the record stalls scream nineteen-seventies and dates the film badly.

Some of the humour works well but where it veers into Benny Hill territory it looks incredibly dated and adds fuel to the fire to the many accusations of misogyny the film has gathered. Also I was surprised at how many references to homosexuality there are - it seems half the male cast are forever leering at pretty little Alex and there are no strong female roles in the film. The only women there are seem to be rape victims, strippers, accomplices in Alex's torturer or weak nothings like his mother.

Also the film misses the final chapter of the novel as Kubrick used the American version which was published without it. So we don't get to see Alex maturing into an adult and putting aside childish things, like the old ultra-violence, and start breeding the next generation of violent youth.

However the films ultimate political message is as relevant as ever with people like Jack Straw currently in charge of law and order and politics stage-managed with ever more sophisticated versions of spin.

The wonderful music - 'Gorgeousness made flesh' - is a key part of the novel and so it is with the film. For years all I had was the sound track album, along with a few stills, to try and recreated this missing masterpiece in my head and for a while it was hardly off my turntable. The electronic versions of 'Ludwig Van' and others create a twisted and unsettling version of the familiar. The music itself symbolises Alex's vitality; his love of it is the one spark of goodness in his evil soul. The loss of his love of music after his brainwashing is just as castrating to him as his inability to have sex.

Finally, perhaps the most damning criticism against the movie is it becomes increasingly obvious that Kubrick identifies a little too closely with the sadistic point of view. Why else would a director, who would put his actors through upwards of hundred takes, give Alex a pet snake when he knew that Malcolm McDowell had a deep-seated fear of reptiles?

So *A Clockwork Orange* is maybe not as 'horror-show' as I expected and maybe not quite the masterpiece I wanted. However it is a millions time better than anything else on at the multiplex. And if you are still at the age when it sometimes feels so good to be bad, well...as they say - the really don't make them like they used to. Viddy well, my brothers, vidy well. Stanley Kubrick RIP.

I want my DVD

Gary Dalkin rounds up some more new releases

It's Sommers time already, Stephen Sommers time, and an object lesson in both how to and how not to produce a DVD. *Deep Rising* (1998) was a box-office flop in the UK, yet has somehow made it onto Region 2 DVD, leapfrogging over other more popular, and more deserving titles of similar vintage. The cover quote from *The People* says "A head-on collision between *Titanic* and *Alien*", which, excepting tone and quality, is a fair summary. This is indeed a tale (or tentacle) of a big nasty beastie causing bloody mayhem on a luxury cruise liner undergoing her maiden voyage. The setting is the present, somewhere in the South China seas, and our heroes are a gang of bandits come to rob the liner, only to find a largely deserted ship, the obligatory gorgeous girly who has managed to avoid becoming monster munchies, and something very nasty below decks. It has already made mincemeat of most of the passengers and crew, something it does with deliciously disgusting special effects of the sort pioneered by *The Thing* (1982). This is rather fun, and quite entertaining in a very stupid way, but would be much better if it took itself more seriously. We have some very good action, strong effects work and some stylish, Hong Kong inspired direction, but the tongue-in-cheek tone means *Deep Rising* never delivers the nerve-wracking suspense and thrills which might otherwise have been on the menu.

The picture is good without being outstanding, but as usual, despite the claimed 2.35:1 aspect ratio, the image has been cropped, with shorn-off computer displays and the like particularly noticeable. The disc also comes with a trailer, and a 'featurette'. This is an extended version of the trailer with a few soundbites from the cast. There's nothing else. If you like dumb, B-movie monster pictures this one may be worth renting, but there's nothing to encourage you to own a copy. Even the sound is only Dolby Pro-logic, unlike the two following

titles, which both boast Dolby Digital.

Stephen Sommers' next picture put him in the big league and a sequel is already in the works. *The Mummy* (1999) is Indiana Jones 4 in all but name, and a thoroughly entertaining film wherein the tongue-through-cheek style is perfectly balanced with rousing swashbuckling Boy's Own adventure. The UK Region 2 DVD has been heavily praised, but as seems to be the way, is still missing two of the best features of the US Region 1 disc: an anamorphically enhanced picture, and Jerry Goldsmith's entire music score isolated on separate tracks. Both R1 and R2 versions of the disc have a wide range of excellent extra features: commentary by Sommers and editor Bob Ducsay, and a lengthy documentary on the making of the film considerably more substantial than the puff-pieces ITV run as mid-Saturday afternoon fillers. As an added complication, there are both widescreen and panned and scanned discs available, though why anyone would want to buy the edition with half the picture missing and some of the finest 'scope ratio photography of the 90's ruined is a total mystery.

Coming full circle, where *Deep Rising* has an decidedly unfriendly beastie ascending from the abyss, James Cameron's *The Abyss* (1989) has humanity descending into the void to encounter generally friendly (they do threaten to flood Miami with a tidal wave, but that shouldn't bother us in the UK) Non-Terrestrial-Entities. This Region 1 release is real rarity, a two DVD set for a single film, and while there are some things missing that one might reasonably expect from such an extensive presentation, this must be counted among the most impressive DVD releases so far. *The Abyss* is generally considered to be something of a disappointment after Cameron's *The Terminator* and *Aliens*. It has been accused of lacking suspense and action, being slow, and sentimental. Well, that must be some other film. *The Abyss* doesn't have the graphic violence of Cameron's previous films, but it has the same relentless suspense, and the same level of excitement from the superbly staged action set-pieces. As for slow, that simply isn't true, and sentimental? Well it does have more genuine emotional power than a dozen *English Patients*.

The first of the two DVDs presents the film itself, twice. First in Cameron's 140 minute original cinema release cut. This is

the 'Director's Cut', in that Cameron himself shortened the film to a contractually obligated running time. This version is simply very good. Also on the disc is the 1992 Special Edition, running 171 minutes. The differences between the two editions are documented in detail, as are the reasons for the changes. The Special Edition was produced mainly for laser disc, but was given a limited cinema release, and anyone who managed to catch it on the big screen hopefully realised that here was another Cameron SF masterpiece, and that with *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* making four in a row the world has never seen such a consistently brilliant SF film maker. This disc is so packed that the traditional director's commentary appears in text form only. The only downside is that the image is not anamorphically enhanced, but the picture is still very good.

The second disc is simply vast. The main feature is an hour long documentary, *Under Pressure: Making the Abyss*, which previously has appeared on the laser disc set, and in a limited edition Special Edition video box-set. Beyond this there is considerably more behind the scenes footage, 731 storyboards, the complete screenplay, and a 26 chapter 'book', taking one through the entire production from conception to restoration for the Special Edition. There are hundreds of pages of material here, the work clearly being a labour of love. There are even three DVD-ROM games! What is missing is an isolated music score, which should really be a standard feature by now, and an anamorphic enhancement, which makes a significant difference on a widescreen TV. Strange, then, that the discs should carry that supposed mark of highest quality, THX. Even so, the sensible money would go on these Region 1 discs. By the time *The Abyss* gets a UK release you can almost guarantee it will have been cut down to a single disc and priced at Fox's usual excessive £25.

Expect to pay around £15 for *Deep Rising*, and if you buy on-line you can find *The Mummy* for under \$18 and *The Abyss* for under \$27.

More DVD reviews from Gary next issue (ed.)

The Green Mile

Andrew M. Butler goes the distance with King's Death Row epic

There's a line at the end of *The Green Mile* about how, for some, the green mile seems to go on forever. Have the makers some sense of self-awareness after all? Is this some acknowledgment that three hours of a Stephen King adaptation is too long, no matter how good? *The Green Mile* was that King title which, rather inefficiently, attempted to emulate the serial techniques of Dickens, and ended up by selling us a novel for at least twice the usual price. Sensible people waited for the single volume edition, the remaindered individual volumes or ignored it altogether.

And then it made the transition from page to screen that all King material does sooner or later. Given the director was Frank Darabont, responsible for *The Shawshank Redemption*, one of the more watchable predecessors, the omens were good, but, given the presence of one Tom Hanks in the cast (cue trembling right hand) it would have to pretty bleeding marvelous direction to come out ahead. Not that I'm against Tom Hanks *per se* – his early comedies are a joy to watch. However the new, adult Hanks (*Philadelphia*, *Saving Private Ryan*) and 'chick-flicks' Hanks (*Sleepless in Seattle* and *You've Got Mail*) make you yearn for the depth of, say, *Big*.

An old man in a retirement home remembers a terrible time in the 1930s when he was chief officer on death row. His charges include

a Franco-American (crime unknown), a red-neck psychopath and a gentle giant black, accused of murdering two girls. Hanks's routine is threatened by his urinary problems and a sadistic guard with connections, Percy (Doug Hutchison; although in the southern accent it's closer to Pussy) and brightened by the appearance of a remarkably talented mouse who befriends one of the prisoners. If it wasn't a mouse, it would have been a pigeon or a budgerigar, and sure as one of the convicted is wrongly imprisoned, so the mouse has to get it from the sadistic guard. And this, I'm afraid, gets the biggest cry of anguish from the audience, more so than any of the executions we witness.

So far, so realistic (allowing for the mouse), but the black prisoner, John Coffey (Michael Clarke Duncan), has a healing touch, and massages Hanks's genitals better. Gosh, thinks the audience, the warden James Cromwell has a wife with an inoperable tumor, perhaps John can cure it. Hanks's character, being a step above the rednecks, takes a mere hour or so to work this out, leaving him with that age-old liberal dilemma: can I live with my conscience if I let a miracle worker be executed?

Aside from the rednecks, the 1930s characters are remarkably liberal, with not even Pussy displaying any racism to John, and an absence of the n-word in general. The Louisiana

penitentiary system seems also to be liberal, with a mere three prisoners on Death Row during the course of the picture, two of them being white. Despite the lack of prisoners, the guards will insist on walking close enough to the bars to be put in a chokehold by whoever is behind the bars.

In short, *The Green Mile* is a tedious piece of work, which cloaks its shallow exploration of evil and redemption in inconsistent, arbitrary magic, and obscures any examination of race by refusing to confront the feelings head on. It has a decent special effect, but one which was used to better results in last year's *The Mummy*. The inexplicably symbolic thunderstorms which coincide with the film's alleged more exciting moments seem overblown, and as subtle as a brick. A waste of over three hours.

The Green Mile (1999). USA. 188

minutes. Colour. Cert. 18

Directed and written by Frank Darabont.

Produced by Frank Darabont and David Valdes.

Original music: Thomas Newman.

Cinematography: David Tattersall.

Film Editor: Richard Francis-Bruce.

Cast: Tom Hanks, David Morse, Bonnie Hunt, James Cromwell, Michael Clarke Duncan, Graham Greene, Sam Rockwell, Doug Hutchison.

Guest Column

Stephen Baxter learns
lessons from E. Coli



The Asimovian humanoid robot is a classic sf concept. But it has become a concept so passé that only Hollywood is still interested in it (*Star Trek's* Data, *Terminator*, *Bicentennial Man* ...).

This is one instance where the science has caught up with the fiction. Though the machines run our lives, and perform some tasks brilliantly (notably, of course, beating Kasparov at chess), decades of research seem to have shown that we are a long way from producing robots which can live in our complex, messy human world. The skills they would need – for instance visual perception – are still a long way from being realised.

The problem seems to be that robots need to be taught everything about their environment – unlike humans. At a very early age – say a couple of months – human babies are fascinated by simple magic tricks in which you make objects appear, and disappear. The reason

is that we arrive in the world 'knowing' that stuff doesn't just disappear and appear. But that is precisely the kind of 'obvious' fact about the world you have to teach a robot if you want it to operate in a universe wider than a chessboard.

But maybe we're going about this the wrong way. Is there a way for robots to act smart without actually being smart? Now some researchers are looking at approaches pioneered in nature.

Consider the humble bacterium *E. Coli*, which lives in the human gut. *E. Coli*, despite being somewhat cerebrally challenged, is extremely good at homing in on food sources (and evading toxins). It achieves this with a simple set of chemical sensors, and a navigation system of startling crudeness. All it knows to do is two things: keep going the same way it is going already, or tumble around at random and set off some other way.

And, er, that's it.

But that turns out to be all it needs. If the bug detects that the smell of food is getting stronger, it keeps on going. If the smell starts getting weaker, it spins at random and sets off in some other direction.

You might try this out with pencil and paper, or a simple computer program. It turns out to be remarkably effective. The *E. Coli* gets as close as it can to the food,

then casts around until it finds it is on a path that takes it closer, and so homes in along a series of straight-line segments.

Now, the bug has no map, no plan of the future, no memory of the past. All it needs to be able to do is smell the grub, and operate its two driving rules. The strategy will even work when the bug is faced with two food sources, or a moving source – situations difficult to program for in any conventional way.

This kind of strategy turns up frequently in natural systems. An adaptable rule set is often preferable to a fixed program of responses, and evolution seems to select for ways to combine the simplest possible sensory inputs in ways that produce a rich behavioural response.

Smart-acting robots would be very useful. Imagine sending them into a new, messy Chernobyl; imagine them autonomously exploring the oceans of Europa. But they don't have to be too smart. Since I don't actually need to hold a conversation with my vacuum cleaner (still less mother it, or support its run for Senate, or have a love affair with it, or all those other things Asimov's heroes did with their robots) maybe the *E. Coli* model is all I need.

But I admit I would pay top dollar to see Robin Williams up against Sergeant Bash on *Robot Wars*.

The Talented Mr Fell

Leonard tells it how it is...

And so Andrew Seaman, your esteemed editor, describes your faithful narrator and droog as mysterious. Which suggests that my contributions to the hallowed pages of *Matrix* should be considered as talented, under water and a game. I'm slightly worried about being underground, but at least I have, in the shape of Dave Roberts, a boy who is following me.

What am I parlying about my-fellow droogs? Well, a bit of the old Patricia Highsmith, so recently immortalised on celluloid by Anthony Minghella.

In the process of developing *Hague: The Vampire Years*, with Molly Brown, Pat Cadigan and Jon Cockney Grimwood, I've started going to the cinema to see if there are any more gems of the silver screen that could form the basis for our acts of homage. Actually, when I mention doing this with Molly, Pat and Jon, it might be more accurate to say that I've done it in their general vicinity. Like the next postcode but one. And they'll be sorry when this is the runaway hit of the summer of 2000.

Speaking of our friend and his, the vomit-inducing Jon Cockney Grimwood, something struck me as being extremely odd about his name. So I liberated the junior Scrabble set from Betty Arthur's Jimmy (I've had to acquire a new thirteen-year-old boy for researching sf since my previous one has outgrown the role, or out groan it, want might say, in a fit of puberty - perhaps I'll get hold of Dave Roberts next year) and set up the tiles.

There was just something about Jon Cockney Grimwood which didn't

ring true as a name. And I've never been able to put my finger on it before. I swizzled the letters and discovered the name 'MOORCOCK'. Could it be a pseudonym being hinted at? Well, I couldn't find the name Michael, but Wendy is there, leaving the letters JIGON. I've got it, by jingo. Jon Cockney Grimwood is in fact the pseudonym of Wendy Moorcock, whose next novel will be called *onJig*. You read it here first.

Quite who the tall, dark, bearded cove is who goes around pretending to be Mr Grimwood is anyone's guess.

Anyway, back to the research, and the cinema. I slipped into a showing of *Festen*, which appears to be Swedish for Fester and is a Scandinavian version of *The Addams Family*. It has a lot more swearing and sex than the Hollywood version, and misses out my favourite characters such as Cousin It, Thing, Morticia and, well anyone who is familiar from any version I've seen before. Not a lot of use in other words, and so a lack of progress on both the screenplay and the columns.

To be honest, I wasn't certain whether the esteemed and able Seaman wanted a column from me. When Mitch and Alice first deigned to print my material, I assumed that this would be a start of an illustrious career for them. And indeed it has been, with their aspiration to the dizzy heights of prodrom in the form of a series of Pocket Essences. (Frankly all I expect to find in a pocket is fluff, but that's their choice not mine).

And after them it was the invaluable Mr Robb, who always seemed to

have just too much material to publish me, and possibly didn't want to show up that Steve Baxter chap. Mr Robb soon left to spend more time with his Star Wars collection. I leave you to draw the obvious conclusion. To lose one editor might seem a misfortune, to lose two smacks of carelessness. (Incidentally, some of Mr Robb's books can be found at some of the finer remainder emporia, in particular his work on Wes Craven. I was disappointed by this, since it skipped entirely over *Country File* and seemed never to have heard of *Newsround*. What kind of research is that?).

And so leaping over the mercifully tedious and brief tenure of editorix Vikki Peverel come at last to A. Seaman, who I'm sure will be a fine captain at the helm of the Good Ship *Matrix*, as it sails into the choppy waters of the millennium, taking arms against a sea of fantasy, hacking away at the horrors of publishing and films and gossip.

Me, I'm proud to have furthered the careers of so many of the good and the great, and hope that after dealing with me, Mr Seaman doesn't want to stop being involved in *Matrix* (*perish the thought, Ed.*). In the next month I hope to have a treatment of *Hague* ready for your comments, with the final discovery of what precisely scares Pat Cadigan...

Leonard Fell's views are entirely his own (and quite possibly not shared by anybody else). Readers with strong constitutions, libel writs, etc. may wish to contact him at: leonard_fell@yahoo.com

Books

Forthcoming books and publishing schedules, compiled by Janet Barron



Key

HB = hardback
TPB = trade paperback
PB = paperback
MW = Millennium SF Masterwork

NOIP Now out in paperback

= Reissue

= nonfiction

*** Watch out for these

All others, first UK edition. Unless references are given, all quotes are from the publisher.

Igor Aleksander *Towards Conscious Machines*
(Weidenfeld Science May HB £14.99 196pp)

A world expert in artificial intelligence looks at attempts to build artificial brains

Iain M Banks *Look to Windward*
(Orbit Jun HB £16.99 352pp)
The new Culture novel.

#Greg Bear *Queen of Angels*
(Millennium Jun PB £6.99)

#Greg Bear *Beyond Heaven's River*
(Millennium Jun PB £6.99)

#Greg Bear *Tangents*
(Millennium Jun PB £6.99)

#James Blish *A Case of Conscience*
(Millennium MW Jun PB £6.99)

Ray Bradbury *Long After Midnight*
(Earthlight May PB £5.99)

Marion Zimmer Bradley *Priestess of Avalon*
(Voyager May HB £16.99)

Orson Scott Card *Earthfall: Volume Four of Homecoming*
(Orbit PB June £6.99 384pp)
Coincides with re-issue in paperback of first three volumes.

Storm Constantine *The Crown Of Silence: Book Two of the Magravandis Chronicles*
(Victor Gollancz May HB/TPB £16.99/£9.99 324pp)

NOIP Storm Constantine *Sea Dragon Heir*
(Millennium Jun PB £6.99)

##Keith Devlin *The Maths Gene: why everyone has it but most people can't use it.*
(Weidenfeld Science May HB £20.00 320pp)
Explains how our innate pattern-making abilities allow us to perform Mathematical reasoning. 'Essential reading for anyone fascinated, infuriated or intimidated by mathematics.'

#Philip K. Dick *Minority Report*
(Millennium MW May PB £7.99)

#Philip K. Dick *We Can Remember It For You Wholesale*
(Millennium MW May PB £7.99)

Gardner R. Dozois *SF Adventures to Far Horizons*
(St. Martin's Press PB April 464pp)

Graham Edwards *Stone & Sea*
(Voyager May PB £5.99)
Book Two of the Stone trilogy.

Raymond E Feist *Kronor: Tears of the Gods: Book III of the Riftwar Legacy*
(Voyager June HB £17.99)

##Tim Halliday *How Animals Behave.*
(Weidenfeld Science May HB £14.99 196pp)
How animals behaviour can throw light on humans.

NOIP Brian Herbert, Kevin J. Anderson *Prelude to Dune: House Atreides*
(NEL May PB £6.99 388pp)

Ian Irvine *A Shadow on the Glass: Volume One of A View From the Mirror*
(Orbit PB May £6.99 608pp)
Fantasy epic from Australian author.

Kate Jacoby *Black Eagle Rising: The Third Book Of Elita*
(Victor Gollancz May HB £16.99 416pp)

Valery Leith *Night and Istar: Eerien Book Two.*
(Victor Gollancz May HB/TPB £16.99/£10.99 400pp)
Sequel to *The company of Glass: Volume One of A View From the Mirror*

James Lovegrove *The Foreigners*

(Victor Gollancz Jun HB £16.99 352pp)
The new novel by the Clarke nominated author of *Days*.

L.E. Modesitt Jr *Gravity Dreams*
(Orbit PB May £6.99 592pp)

Stan Nicholls *Warriors of the Tempest: Orcs, First Blood Book Three*
(Victor Gollancz June TPB £9.99 304p)

NOIP Stan Nicholls *Legion of Thunder*
(Millennium Jun PB £6.99)

Will McCarthy *The Collapsium*
(Victor Gollancz May HB/TPB 16.99/£10.99 352pp)
Far Future hard SF from the author of *Bloom*.

NOIP Will McCarthy *Bloom*
(Millennium May PB £6.99)

Lois McMaster Bujold *A Civil Campaign*
(Earthlight May PB £6.99)

John Meany *Paradox*
(Bantam TP June £9.99 528 pp)

#Frederick Pohl *Man Plus*
(Millennium MW May PB £6.99)

Mickey Zucher Reichert *The Flightless Falcon*
(Victor Gollancz Jun HB/TPB £16.99/9.99 384pp)

NOIP Mickey Zucher Reichert & Jennifer Wingert *Spirit Fox*
(Millennium May PB £6.99)

Kim Stanley Robinson *Short Sharp Shock*
(Voyager June PB £4.99)
Surreal novel adapted from the novella in the collection *Down and Out in the Year 2000*.

Rudy Rucker *Saucer Wisdom*
(Earthlight Jun PB £5.99)

Martin Scott *Thraxas and the Elvish Isles*
(Orbit PB June £5.99 256pp)

Bruce Sterling *Distraction*
(Millennium Jun PB £6.99)

Lawrence Whalley *The Ageing Brain*
(Weidenfeld Science Jun HB £214.99 196pp)

David Weber *On Basilisk Station*
(Earthlight Jun PB £5.99)

BSFA Awards

Colin Hill rounds up the latest news

There is not a lot to say about the 1999 BSFA Awards at this point. By the time you read this the winner will have been announced, but as I write this the ceremony is still three weeks away! So I will use this as an opportunity to cover some bits and pieces.

Firstly, I have had an enquiry about the list of nominations for the 1999 awards. Someone had nominated something quite late in the day and was slightly confused as to why it did not appear on the list. The simple answer is, of course, that I did not print the complete list of nominations when I announced the shortlist in the previous issue of Matrix. As this appears to have been a bit confusing, below I reproduce the total list of nominations for the 1999 BSFA Award.

Best Novel

Children of God - Mary Doria Russell
The Bones of Time - Kathleen Ann Goonan
Headlong - Simon Ings
ThiGMOO - Eugene Byrne
Factoring Humanity - Robert J. Sawyer
The Astrological Diary of God - Bo Fowler
The Sky Road - Ken MacLeod
Distraction - Bruce Sterling
A Deepness in the Sky - Vernor Vinge
Terenesia - Greg Egan
Silver Screen - Justina Robson
Sea Dragon Heir - Storm Constantine
Time - Stephen Baxter
Metal Fatigue - Sean Williams
The Naked God - Peter F. Hamilton
Penumbra - Eric Brown
Cryptonomicon - Neal Stephenson
Darwin's Radio - Greg Bear
Violent Stars - Phyllis Gottlieb
Shrine of Stars - Paul J. McAuley
The Trigger - Arthur C. Clarke & Michael Kube-McDowell
The Amber Citadel - Freda Warrington
The Vintner's Luck - Elizabeth Knox

Best Short Fiction

'The Gateway of Eternity' - Brian Stableford (*Interzone* 139/140)
 'Gorillagram' - Tony Ballantyne

(*Interzone* 139)
 'Hunting the Slarque' - Eric Brown (*Interzone* 141)
 'Angelmakers' - Paul di Filippo (*Interzone* 141)
 'The Volvax Immersion' - Tom Arden (*Interzone* 143)
 'Malignos' - Richard Calder (*Interzone* 144)
 'The Lady Macbeth Blues' - Stephen Dedman (*Interzone* 148)
 'Stormy Weather' - Peter Friend (*Interzone* 146)
 'Border Guards' - Greg Egan (*Interzone* 148)
 'Naming the Dead' - Paul McAuley (*Interzone* 149)
 'Living History' - Jennifer Swift (*Interzone* 140)
 'The Feet of God' - Rudy Kzemberg (*Interzone* 141)
 'White Dog' - Maya Kathryn Bohnhoff (*Interzone* 142)
 'The Jest of Yig' - Don Webb (*Interzone* 143)
 'Dream Blue Murder' - Dominic Green (*Interzone* 145)
 'Angel Down, Sussex' - Kim Newman (*Interzone* 149)
 'Nightside' - Liz Williams (*The Third Alternative* 20)
 'The Collector of Hands' - Sten Westgard (*The Third Alternative* 18)
 'Bakuva Dreams' - Paul Park (*Interzone* 149)

Best Artwork

Cover Matrix 136 - Colin Odell
 The Dream Archipelago - Jim Burns (cover of *The Dream Archipelago* by Christopher Priest)
 Darwinia - Jim Burns (Cover of *Darwinia* by Robert Charles Wilson)
 The Gateway of Eternity - SMS (Cover of *Interzone* 140)
 Cover of Banana Wings 14 - Colin Odell
 The Sky-Green Blues - Dominic Harman (Cover of *Interzone* 142)
 Dreaming Down Under - Nick Stathopoulos (Cover of *Interzone* 146)
 Chi - Bob Warner (Cover of *Chi* by Alexander Beshner)
 Prospero's Children - Alan Lee (Cover of *Prospero's Children* by Jan Seigel)
 Silver Screen - Steve Stone (Cover of *Silver Screen* by Justina Robson)

Cover *Interzone* 139 - Dominic Harman
 Angel Down, Sussex - Dominic Harman (Cover of *Interzone* 149)
 The Naked God - Jim Burns (Cover of *The Naked God* by Peter F. Hamilton)

The 2000 BSFA Awards

You can now start nominating for the 2000 BSFA Awards. Firstly, a reminder of the rules for nomination:

Nominations for any of the categories can be sent at any time during the year. Please remember that it is the items with the most nominations on the closing date for submissions that will be shortlisted. So if you want something to appear on the shortlist then nominate it **even if it is already in the list of nominations**.

The eligibility rules are as follows:

Best Novel. First published in the UK in the calendar year 2000.

Best Short Fiction. First appearance in the calendar year 2000, irrespective of country of origin (thus stories in non-UK magazines and original anthologies are eligible).

Best Artwork. First appearance in the calendar year 2000.

I do not yet know the closing date for nominations, but as soon as I do I will let you know. Still, you have plenty of time yet so please start sending the nominations in. Remember if you are not sure if something qualifies, send me the nomination anyway and I will check.

So, to start the running:

Current Nominations

Best Novel

Revelation Space - Alastair Reynolds.

PULPitations: Glenda Pringle on the old and the new

Over the years, the advertisements in genre magazines have provided a continuous source of amusement for me. Leafing back through some examples from the 1940s and 1950s, I came across such gems as taxidermy correspondence courses for Norman Bates wannabes who could, somewhat alarming, learn how to "mount birds at home" (the ad was in an American publication, but still!) I also puzzled over how such a worthy institution as the LaSalle Extension University can teach you the finer arts of welding in the comfort of your own home. I was pleased to see that Charles Atlas was helping all those poor young men who'd had the unpleasant experience of having sand kicked in their faces to become a man in just seven days. And, freed from truss slavery by a miracle rupture cure, one could also shrink one's haemorrhoids, and, thusly re-invigorated, buy the little woman something a bit racy from the Frederick's of Hollywood catalogue. It is noteworthy, but not to my mind surprising, that these ads were aimed almost exclusively at men.

Put into context, a lot of these ads make some kind of cockeyed sense. Many of the magazines I'm referring to (e.g. SF, mystery and sundry men's magazines) were passed around an audience that was predominantly male, providing escapist entertainment for those serving in the military far from home in war zones around the world. And, although one could argue that they probably still can serve such a purpose, the degree of uncertainty as to what the post-war world will have in store is not so great these days. When draftee GI Joe or Tommy returned home and took up his old job down the mines, he was a changed man in a changing world. The post-war boom in the West brought with it higher personal expectations. Through, for example, correspondence course ads, Joe or Tommy were offered opportunities to emerge from the mines and become junior executives on Madison Avenue or in the City. In other words, the chance to fulfil a dream of self-advancement that probably originated in a muddy foxhole.

I don't think I've seen a correspondence

course ad for many, many years and I get the impression that there are far more women readers of SF magazines these days. Modern genre magazine ads more often than not enjoin us to buy the latest wonderful gadget, collectable item, or computer game. However, every now and then I still see vestiges of the old days. We're still offered acne and bad breath cures, as well as being told that gorgeous, beautiful, etc., etc. Russian, Asian, etc., etc. ladies want to meet us. (Mind you, I'm not quite sure why these ladies would want to meet me...) Bearing in mind that one SF magazine editor has recently pointed out that his subscriber/readership base is predominantly made up of baby boomers, the cynic in me can't help but notice that many advertisers are obviously still of the opinion that SF fans are spotty, halitosis-ridden, sexually frustrated, teenaged male anoraks. Isn't it comforting to all you baby boomers out there that some things never change?

It's always good to see a new SF magazine launched. Such a brave endeavour helps to reinforce my belief that there's life in the old genre yet. Therefore, I was pleased to receive the first issue of *Spectrum SF*. I was even more pleased to behold it's size – a nice "paperback" that I can hold in my hand without getting cramp and it doesn't keep dipping into the bath water when I'm having a nice long soak either. Elegant in its simplicity, it has a plain white cover with a nice colour spectrum motif and one is not bombarded with illustrations or adverts (although, I dare say that the publishers would like to see more of the latter for purely financial reasons). I also liked The Archive, which is a review/news section covering books, films, magazines, TV and the Web which, it is promised, will be expanded in future issues.

I found the content mixed, but it is only the first issue after all. I suspect my failure to like the first part of the serialisation of four-times BSFA award winner Keith Roberts' *Kiteworld* novel was more to do with my own personal likes and dislikes than any failure in Mr

Roberts' exemplary writing. I have no doubt that it will keep *Kiteworld* fans coming back for more. As for Charles Stross's "Bear Trap", any story that opens with the line "I was six hours away from landfill on Burgundy when my share portfolio tried to kill me" can't be all bad and, in the end, is an entertaining look at financial dealings on the far-future futures market. A young girl's mental talents make her a pawn in a dangerous game in "Mind's Eye" by Keith Brooke and Eric Brown (perennial favourites of mine from *Interzone*) and Garry Kilworth's "Bonza Tiger" shows that it's not a good idea to mistreat your pets – no matter how small they are. Finally, Alastair Reynolds' "Great Wall of Mars" is a jolly exciting space adventure.

All in all, a very promising start. Subscriptions are available for £14 for 4 issues, £24 for 8 issues from: Spectrum Publishing, P O Box 10308, Aberdeen, AB11 6ZR, UK; email mail@spectrumpublishing.com; website www.spectrumpublishing.com. (NB Unsolicited manuscripts not being accepted at present.)

I would like to finish by mentioning an American magazine entitled *Indigenous Fiction*. A mixture of fiction from such worthies as Mike O'Driscoll, Stepan Chapman, Mark Rich, and Steve Beai among others; poetry; and some stunning artwork, it is a rather classy publication which fans of *The Third Alternative* might find enjoyable. Subscriptions are \$11 for 2 issues and are available from IF Publishing, P O Box 2078, Redmond, WA 98073, USA.

Magazines for review, including small press, should be sent to Glenda Pringle, 22 Mead Way, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 2BJ; email: chris@kidlington66.freemove.co.uk.

Fanzines: a guide for the perplexed

Greg Pickersgill on the current 'zine scene

There are more science fiction fanzines presently being published than detailed here, but virtually no-one gets or even hears of them all. And that's not even counting the dedicated specialist fanzines devoted to TV shows, films, gaming, role-playing, and so endlessly on. All these listed are produced by people who are in the first instance sf fans (that is, sf readers and enthusiasts, though that may not be immediately obvious from the content of their fanzines sometimes!), are generally available and can be had for an SAE, some stamps or a small amount of cash. Cash is Highly Recommended if you're requesting something from another country, as it helps to cover postage costs. They are also all worth getting (yeah, ok, it's only my opinion...) -- and the fan-edited listed may well be producing other fanzines as well as those cited. This is a personal list, based entirely on fanzines I actually receive, and admittedly has very likely obvious omissions, but it ought to be of use to anyone unfamiliar with the sf-fanzine field as some information is better than none at all.

It's a natural fact that once you start getting fanzines you will find out about more of them, and if you become a participating reader (by sending letters of comment or other material) you will as if by magic begin to receive more, so consider this as simply a start-line. And please note that Participating Readers are the ones fanzine editors want -- they are in general not enthusiastic about a passive consumer readership. I haven't made any specific recommendations, or even indicated the general content of any fanzine (though none of these are gaming, media, or single-topic fanzines related to any TV show or film), as the best course is to get a bundle of stuff and form your own opinions. You'll certainly find out soon enough what other peoples' opinions are from fanzine reviews and lettercolumns. Just get them all -- the outlay would be little more than the price of a couple of paperbacks, and might just open up a new and truly wonderful world to you.

PLEASE NOTE I have made virtually no effort to include e-zines (distributed primarily by e-mail or on the web) herein. It isn't the prejudice of an old and tired

printed-paper fan - I just haven't been conscientiously looking for them. Pure sloth and idleness I'm afraid. PLEASE DO pass on to me any and all useful information, so I can both read them myself and include them on this list.

ANSIBLE

DAVE LANGFORD, 94 LONDON ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE, RG1 5AU, U.K.

BANANA WINGS

CLAIRE BRIALEY & MARK PLUMMER, 26 NORTHAMPTON ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY, CR0 7HA, U.K.

BARMAID

YVONNE ROWSE, EVERGREEN, HALLS FARM LANE, TRIMPLEY, WORCS., DY12 1NP, U.K.

BENTO

DAVID LEVINE & KATE YULE, 1905 S.E. 43RD AVENUE, PORTLAND, OR 97215, USA

BOB

IAN SORENSON, 7 WOODSIDE WALK, HAMILTON, ML3 7HY, SCOTLAND

DEROGATORY REFERENCE

ARTHUR D HLAVATY, 206 VALENTINE STREET, YONKERS, NY 10704, USA

EMERALD CITY

CHERYL MORGAN (E-ZINE!-YAY, INTO THE 21ST C!) - WWW.EMCIT.COM

ERG

TERRY JEEVES, 56 RED SCAR DRIVE, SCARBOROUGH, YO12 5RQ, U.K.

FILE 770

MIKE GLYER, PO BOX 1056, SIERRA MADRE, CA 91025, USA

IDEA

GERI SULLIVAN, 3444 BLAISDELL AVENUE, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55408-4315, USA

INTERNATIONAL

REVOLUTIONARY GARDENER

JUDITH HANNA AND JOSEPH NICHOLAS, 15 JANSONS ROAD, TOTTENHAM, LONDON N15 4JU, U.K.

IT GOES ON THE SHELF

NED BROOKS, 4817 DEAN LANE, LILBURN, GA 30047-4720, USA

KNARLEY KNEWS

HENRY WELCH, 1525 16TH AVENUE, GRAFTON, WI 53024-2017, USA

METAPHYSICAL REVIEW/SF

COMMENTARY
BRUCE GILLESPIE, 59 KEELE STREET, COLLINGWOOD, VIC 3066, AUSTRALIA

MIMOSA

DICK AND NICKI LYNCH, PO BOX 3120, GAITHERSBURG, MD 20885, USA

NO AWARD

MARTY CANTOR, 11825 GILMORE STREET # 105, NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA 91606, USA

OPUNTIA

DALE SPEIRS, PO BOX 6830, CALGARY, ALBERTA, T2P 2E7, CANADA

OUTWORLDS

BILL BOWERS, 4651 GLENWAY AVENUE, CINCINNATI, OH 45238-4503, USA

PLOKTA

ALISON SCOTT, 24 ST MARYS ROAD, WALTHAMSTOW, LONDON, E17 9RG, U.K.

QUASIQUOTE

SANDRA BOND, 46 STIRLING ROAD, LONDON N22 5BP, U.K.

QUIPU

VICKI ROSENZWEIG, 33 INDIAN ROAD, 6-R, NEW YORK, NY 10034 USA.

RELUCTANT FAMULUS

TOM SADLER, 422 WESTMAPLE

AVENUE, ADRIAN, MICHIGAN
49221, USA

SKUG

GARY MATTINGLY, 7501 HONEY
COURT, DUBLIN, CA 94568, USA

SNUFKIN'S BUM

MAUREEN KINCAID SPELLER, 60
BOURNEMOUTH ROAD,
FOLKESTONE, KENT, CT19 5AZ,
U.K.

SQUIB

VICTOR GONZALEZ, 905 N.E. 45TH
STREET #106, SEATTLE, WA 98105,
USA

THUNDERBOX

STEVE GREEN, 33 SCOTT ROAD,
OLTON, SOLIHULL, WEST
MIDLANDS, B92 7LQ, U.K.

THYME

ALAN STEWART, PO BOX 222,
WORLD TRADE CENTRE, VIC 3005,
AUSTRALIA

TRAPDOOR

ROBERT LICHTMAN, PO BOX 30,
GLEN ELLEN, CA 95442, USA

TWINK

E. B. FROHNET, 4725 DORSEY HALL
DRIVE, BOX # A-700, ELICOTT
CITY, MD 21042, USA

VISIONS OF PARADISE

ROBERT SABELLA, 24 CEDAR
MANOR COURT, BUDD LAKE, NJ
07828-1023, U.S.A.

VOJO DE VIVO

MICHAEL J LOWREY, SUNRISE
BOOK AND SOFTWARE REVIEWS,
1847 N. 2d STREET, MILWAUKEE, WI
53212-376, USA

WIDENING GYRE

ULRIKA O'BRIEN, 123 MELODY
LANE #C, COSTA MESA, CA 92627,
USA

All of the fanzines listed above are *established* - that is they have each published several issues, and it is reasonable to assume that future issues will appear. However, as producing a fanzine is a for-love activity dependent on both disposable cash and time publishing schedules can be notoriously erratic, so do not necessarily expect a current issue by return of post. Most fanzine editors have available back issues, though, and you will

almost certainly get one or more to tide you over until the next new product.

THE GETTING OF FANZINES

Once upon a time, when fanzine reviews appeared regularly in news-and-reviews magazines you would often see 'The Usual' appended to a particular fanzine's details. This means the editor will send at least one sample issue on receipt of a SAE. If you are a UK resident asking for a UK fanzine please make this an A4 envelope with at least a 40p stamp - most fanzines are heavier than normal letter post rates. Alternatively just send a few loose stamps - they're always needed and will make a good impression at least. Try either version with fanzines listed here. This of course won't work with fanzines based in any country other than the one you live in. Do not use International Reply Coupons, they are too fiddly to bother with; get to a currency-exchange (or any bank and many post offices) and get a bundle of one- and five-dollar US notes. They are more or less universal fan-currency and sending \$5 to any overseas fan editor in any country will get you on the mailing list (probably airmail) immediately.

After getting a sample you'll remain on the mailing list for a while but you *will* be dropped if you do not respond, and the best response is interesting and publishable letters. Fanzines are interactive, they are not produced at considerable cost in time and money to be sent out to a silent audience. Participation is vital. Your involvement is worth more than money.

If you find yourself on a mailing list for a fanzine you don't like, please tell the producer to delete you; fanzines are produced for Love, and producing and mailing a copy can cost up to £2 (\$3), so do the editor the courtesy of telling them that they're wasting their money in your case. Hopefully however every fanzine you receive will be a tiny joy.

MEMORY HOLE, as well as being a cataloguing and bibliographic project for fanzines, operates a Fanzine Recycling wing. A sample bundle of sf fanzines can be had for £5 which covers postage and a small contribution to cover the costs of collecting the fanzines in the first place. It's helpful to indicate whether you want recent or older issues, UK, US, or Australasian, or a general bundle. Or whatever. E-mail or write for more

information, or see the website. Big fun.

GREG PICKERSGILL

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This piece first appeared on The Memory Hole's website.

Author News

Tyneside author Chaz Brenchley recently launched the second volume in his Outremer series to a large and enthusiastic audience at Waterstone's bookshop in Newcastle. *The Feast of the Shadow* continues the story begun in *The Tower of the King's Daughter*, set in an alternative Palestine shortly after the First Crusade.

After a difficult year in which he parted company with both his publisher and his agent, Brenchley talked about the problems of writing across genres. Best known for his work in the field of horror, many of his novels are essentially crime thrillers. His novels have therefore often ended up being spread across several sections in bookshops, lessening their commercial impact. "I just tell stories", he said. "Bookshops can't quite cope with that".

Brenchley confessed to being an ill-disciplined writer, relying on deadlines to force him to finish projects, which currently include film-scripts and a serial-killer novel. "I'm not a nine-to-five writer, but I've never had a nine-to-five job either", he said.

Originally inspired by a map of the Krak des Chevaliers region (now in Syria) found while browsing, the Outremer series was conceived by the time Brenchley had arrived home. "Fantasy comes in chunks", he said, and, with what was planned as a four book series now curtailed to three, the last volume of Outremer look likely to be very fat indeed. See the Outremer website at: www.outremer.co.uk

Simon Morden

Eoscon III - an evening on New York time, in the comfort of my own home

Just after Christmas, I had an e-mail from my US publisher, would I be interested in taking part in their next convention, *EosCon III*? At once I wondered if I could possibly abandon home and family, housework, and cooking to be jetted off to a hotel, waited on hand and foot and generally pampered? It took me the proverbial New York minute to decide I would. Then I read to the end of the line to discover this was to be an on-line convention, run via Cybertown's chat rooms. Oh well, I thought, transatlantic flying can be such a pain, what with the jet lag and everything. So, back to reality. Well, I'd done an on-line interview with MSN which went with a swing, so I was happy to say yes. Then I went to borrow my elder son's globe to try and work out the time difference between the Cotswolds and New York. Realising this would mean the event was running from 9.00 pm to 1.00 am GMT, I decided I had to find some way of staying alert that wouldn't necessitate frequent trips to the loo... Chocolate covered espresso beans were my solution; caffeine without liquid.

In a startling departure for all things IT, a rehearsal was set up ahead of time, to make sure everyone could get on-line and communicate with each other. I found this a bit stressed, because the process proved to require those sideways leaps of logic that IT experts find so easy and those of us less technically minded can miss. But once we were all in, everything was a lot simpler than I expected. It was also nice to get a brief introduction to those American authors I was going to be on a panel with, Dave Duncan, Dennis Jones and Anne McCaffrey.

So Saturday arrived, I logged on well ahead of time and sat at my PC with the chocolate covered espresso beans and a few notes on World Building, the panel I'd been invited for. It took a while for everyone to get organised but things were soon flowing nicely. As a panellist, it's certainly more difficult interacting with people you don't know when you can't see them, read their body language, make eye contact and so on. It was readily apparent the best sessions were with people who know each other in reality. I was certainly on the panel that had most people looking in, 60-plus at it's height whereas the others had between 20 and 30. I'm certain that's down to Anne McCaffrey's presence but I'm glad to get the exposure on

her coat tails.

I stayed on for the whole event, largely out of curiosity. The panels got smoother as the event went on and everyone got more used to what they were doing. The expertise of the moderators was definitely an important factor. Not only did they do the obvious things like keeping the crazies out and stopping background chat but when I was sitting in the audience, as it were, I twice sent in a question only to see it pop up at once virtually word for word but from someone else. But they do need folk to ask intelligent questions - no change there from a live-action session! Speaking now as a reader, one of the things I have always got from seeing authors speak is a good idea of whether or not I'll like their stuff. This seemed to apply just as well over the Net; there are a couple of authors new to me who I'll be looking out for now. One major plus as a viewer rather than a participant was being able to slide out of one 'room' when the discussion got a little bogged down and see what was going on in the other strand. When two interesting panels ran side by side at the end of the evening, I had just about got familiar enough with the whole thing to keep an eye on both simultaneously. Not something one can do in real life, without causing major disruption and potential offence!

It would seem to be an immutable law of nature that every author or group thereof gets asked 'how do you get your names?' The answer in every case seems to be from all manner of sources and that all authors keep endless lists of them.

All in all, it was an interesting experience and not nearly as difficult as it might have seemed. I'd certainly do it again, especially given what was said about the extent to which US SF/Fantasy fans are very net-aware and keen on on-line reader discussion groups and so forth. It was also useful for me as a UK writer to have the chance to get feedback from US fans and for them to get some idea of me. Yes, in theory, it would be very nice to be jetted off to New York, but there's no denying it would take some organising round the kids, school, my husband's work and all the associated complications of real life. Cost is an issue, as long as we in the UK are still paying for local calls, unlike the US, but off-peak with BT, with your ISP registered as your best friend it's only 1p a minute so staying off for the full four hours will only cost me £2.50 or so, which is not exactly horrendous. That's one major advantage of the time difference - and I spent more than that on the chocolate covered espresso beans!

Juliet E. McKenna

Obituaries

John D. Rickett

Well-known and much-loved fan John D. Rickett died peacefully in his sleep on the night of 26th/27th February. He was 63.

Mark Plummer reports: Although a life-long reader of sf, John only came to fandom in his fifties after an international banking career, and he cheerfully rejoiced in the self-applied label of "The Oldest Neo in Fandom". He was an occasional contributor to fanzines, as well as participating in several APAs, and was a regular convention attendee where, as an accomplished public speaker, he was much in demand as a moderator for programme items. In 1998 he was Guest of Honour - a post traditionally decided by lot - at Corflu in Leeds and gave a fine 'after dinner' speech. He chaired a number of BSFA AGMs, and his fulsome support and encouragement to the committee and staff of the Association were greatly appreciated and will be much missed.

In 1995 he wrote the following, as part of an introduction in the *Acnestis* APA: "Once I'd started [reading sf], I never stopped. And never will. Image of hoary old steampunk to the last, Gitanne in one hand, large glass of whisky in the other, *Earthman*, *Come Home* in the other (this is an sfnal APA, isn't it?), riding the solar winds into the welcoming dark."

Sture Lönnstrand

Very belatedly, writes *John-Henri Holmberg*, I learned of the death on September 30th last year of Sture Lönnstrand. He was 80 years old and for a long time had had virtually no contacts with either fandom or the publishing field in Sweden. Yet, he was the first modern Swedish sf author, the first in this country to write consciously in the mainstream of English-language sf, and the first Swedish writer to identify himself publicly as a science fiction writer. He can also very reasonably be identified as the main instigator of Swedish fandom.

Catherine Crook de Camp

SFWA News has just announced the death of Catherine Crook de Camp, wife, business manager and occasional collaborator with husband L. Sprague de Camp, who died on the 9th of April, aged 92.

INTERNUT EXPLOITER

Untangling the World Wide Web with Avril A. Brown

Here's a roundup of what's cool on the internet

Just in case you'd forgotten...



[members.aol.com/
tamaranth](http://members.aol.com/tamaranth)

Check out our (award-winning!) site



www.herebedragons.co.uk/bfs

Check out our friends at the British Fantasy Society

andre-norton.org

www.andre-norton.org

Devoted to the popular and prolific genre author, the site includes a thorough bibliography and articles on how to find, collect and store her books. Also covers the famous *Witch World* books.

high hallack

Genre Writers' Research and Reference Library

[www.andre-norton.org/highhallack/
index.htm](http://www.andre-norton.org/highhallack/index.htm)

Set up by Andre Norton as a resource specifically for the genre author, the library's stacks include SF, fantasy, horror, gothic, mystery, romance and western.



www.mzbf.com

Home of the late Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine. Covers both the author and the magazine, complete with the usual bibliographies. Does have extensive info on the biggies - *Mists of Avalon* and the *Darkover* sequence.

Gollancz

www.gollancz.co.uk

A rather funky little site from Terry Pratchett's (among others) publisher. Liked the on-line catalogue - they've managed to include a synopsis of the book, as well as covers. Worth checking out.

THE X FILES

www.fox.com/thexfiles

The official site, complete with the obligatory episode guide, cast bios and big promos for the Fox Network. Graphically intense, bit lightweight on info, but nicely done all the same.

Harry Potter

www.angelfire.com/wi/harrypotter/

Maybe not the best designed site in the world, but kind of cute all the same. The spelling isn't wonderful either, but the author's enthusiasm for the children's publishing sensation really shines through.

DOT.COM Madness finally strikes!!

Apparently even Her Maj. has succumbed. She has seen her modest (?) £100,000 investment in GETMAPPING.COM realise a profit of £1.2m. And all this from yet another web company that's yet to make a tangible profit. Whatcha wanna bet the DOT.COM bubble bursts next year?? (*looks like it may be happening already! - ed.*)

And finally...



<http://www.roe.ac.uk/>

A great site for the astronomically inclined. Includes a link to the pages of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh, as well as the University of Edinburgh's Institute for Astronomy and the SuperCOSMOS Sky Surveys.

Avril A Brown is a civil servant. Allegedly

More news

Vurt on stage

Jeff Noon's *Vurt* transfers to the stage in 'The Theatre Remix' at the Contact Theatre, Manchester from 17th May - 10th June. Tickets £5. Contact Tel 0161 274 0600. www.contact-theatre.org.uk for more details.

The Ray Gibberd Fund

Rog Peyton writes:

Ray Gibberd has been an integral part of Andromeda Bookshop for over 20 years. He has been a director for over five years.

At the end of 1998 he was diagnosed with a brain tumour and was operated on immediately. The tumour returned at the end of 1999 and another operation was performed in January. He is now extremely weak and has lost his short-term memory.

He now needs a course of chemotherapy that is only available from America but the NHS will not fund it because of its high cost - £1,600 per month for 6-8 months. His immediate family have put up the money for the first three months.

We at Andromeda are starting 'The Ray Gibberd Fund' and we're looking at ways of raising further funds through raffles, auctions, etc.

What we need are donations of cash, books, proofs, first editions, artwork, manuscripts, etc. - even remainder books that we can raffle by the bagload in fact, anything we can sell, auction or raffle. With your generous support we know we can raise the money so badly needed.

All donations should be addressed to The Ray Gibberd Fund, c/o Andromeda Bookshop, 2-5 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, B1 1LT.

There will be a Ray Gibberd Day at Andromeda sometime late May or early June

when we will be auctioning and raffling rare books, artwork, etc. Please send an s.a.e. if you want to be notified of this event

Free-entry writing competition

Manchester Literary & Philosophical Society are running a short story writing competition on the theme of life and times in the 20th or 21st centuries (or spanning both). One entry per competitor. Entries should be approximately 5000 words in length. A poem (special theme) can also be entered for a Millennium literary prize. A prize, unstated, will be awarded and winners will be published in the Society's *Memoirs*.

Closing date is 30th June 2000. Entries to Mrs Heather Bradshaw, Administrative Secretary, Manchester Literary & Philosophical Society.

More details and entry form from her at:

man.litphil@virgin.net



Belfast Science Fiction Group

Alternate Fridays 8.30pm at the Monaco Bar, Rosemary St. Belfast. Contact Eugene Doherty 01232 208405 tinman@technologist.com

Birmingham: Brum SF Group

Second Friday of the month on the second floor of the Britannia Hotel, New St. Membership is £15/year. Contact Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarks Lane, Willenhall, W. Midlands WV13 1HX. bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk

Forthcoming guests:

12th May 2000: Andy Salmon will deliver a talk entitled "From Kazakhstan to the Stars" (what Baikonur Cosmodrome is like to visit).

9th June 2000: John Jarrold, editor of the Earthlight line of books and *Matrix* columnist (!), will be speaking to the Group.

14th July 2000: Andy Lound from the Planetary Society will be speaking to the Group.

Cambridge SF Group

Second Monday of the month in The Cambridge Blue, Gwydir St, Cambridge.

Cardiff SF Group

First Tuesday on the month 7.30pm in Wellington's Café Bar, 42 The Hayes, Cardiff.

Colchester SF/F/Horror Group

Third Saturday of the month at 12.30pm in The Playhouse pub, St John's Street. Contact Des Lewis 01255 812119.

Glasgow SF/F Writers' Circle

Second and fourth Thursdays at 8pm at Borders bookstore. Contact Gary Gibson at Borders or garygibson@skiffy.freeserve.co.uk

Hull SF Group (*note change)

Second and Fourth Tuesdays, 8.30 to 10.30pm at The New Clarence, Charles Street, Hull (from Jan 2000) Contact Ian and Julie on 01482 447953, or Dave and Estelle on 01482 444291, or see: <http://www.mjckeh.demon.co.uk/hullsf.htm>

Leeds Alternative Writers

Second Saturday at 2pm in central Leeds. For venues and details contact Ian on 0113 266 9259 or Sean 0113 293 6780.

London BSFA meetings

Fourth Wednesday of the month (except December) from 7pm at the Florence Nightingale ("Dead Nurse"), Waterloo/ Westminster tube. Check Anible for details and guests, or organiser Paul Hood on 0181 333 6670 paul@auden.demon.co.uk

Forthcoming guests:

24th May 2000 – Roger Levy, talking about his debut novel, *Reckless Sleep*.

28th June 2000 – China Miéville, discussing his new novel *Perdido Street Station*.

London Circle

First Thursdays at the Florence Nightingale (see above) from around 5pm.

Manchester: FONT (*note change)

FONT meets on the second and fourth Thurs of the month at The Goose on Piccadilly from about 8.30 onwards. Contact Mike Don on 0161 226 2980.

North Oxford.

Last Thursday of the month at The Plough, Wolvercote from 7.30pm. Irregular and just starting, so contact Steve and Vikki on 01865 371734 or peverel@aol.com for details.

Peterborough SF Group

First Wednesdays at the Bluebell Inn, Dogsthorpe and third Wednesdays in the Great Northern Hotel, opposite station Contact Pete on 01733 370542.

Portsmouth/South Hants SF Group

Second and fourth Tuesdays at the Magpie, Fratton Road, Portsmouth.

Reading SF Group

Each Monday from 9pm at the Hop Leaf, Southampton St. Reading.

Southampton: Solent Green (NEW ENTRY)

Every third Thursday, 7pm, at The Duke of Wellington, Bugle St. Contact Matt 01703 577113 werkhaus@tcp.co.uk

International

The South African Science Fiction Society is looking to make contact with SF fans/organisations in the UK. If you're interested in receiving recent copies of the SASF's clubzine *Probe*, please send an A5 SAE with 39p stamp to Nick Wood, 22 Victoria Road, Mill Hill, London, NW7 4SB or e-mail him at, NikWood@compuserve.com.

Members' Noticeboard

Peter Winnington, Mervyn Peake's biographer and bibliographer, and editor of *Peake Studies*, needs to borrow a tape of the recent BBC digital broadcasts *Boy in Darkness* and *The Making of Gormenghast*. He's wondering if any BSFA member could help. If you can, please contact him at the address below:

G. Peter Winnington
Les 3 Chasseurs
1413 Orzens
Switzerland
phone: +41 21 88 777 21
fax: +41 21 887 79 76
or e-mail:
100031.3620@compuserve.com

Forthcoming Conventions & Events

21 May 2000

Tenth Peterborough Fantasy Fair
The Cresset Exhibition Centre, Bretton, Peterborough, Cambs. 10.30am – 4.30pm. Demonstrations of role-playing and wargames, plus sales tables. Guest appearances by fantasy and comic authors. To book stalls, and for further information, contact Bruce King 5, Arran Close, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 7QP.

May 26-29 2000

Plokta.Con
Holiday Inn, Leicester. Guest of Honour: Ken MacLeod. £20 registration (children £10) to 15th May, £30 at door. Further info from 3 York Street, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH, or plokta.con@plokta.com.

18 June – 28 July 2000

Clarion West Writers Workshop
Seattle, Washington. Teachers to include: John Crowley & Paul Park (team teaching), Geoff Ryman, Candas Jane Dorsey, Pat Murphy, David Hartwell & Carol Emshwiller. Deadline for applications is 1 April 2000 (only 17 places). Contact Clarion West, 340 Fifteenth Avenue East, Suite 350, Seattle, WA 98112, USA; www.sff.net/clarionwest

30 June – 2 July 2000

Aliens Stole My Handbag!
Shepperton Moat House Hotel, Shepperton, Surrey. Literary humour & SF. Guest of Honour: Robert Rankin. Membership £25, £27.50 on the door. Contact Aliens Stole My Handbag, c/o Stefan Lancaster (UK Agent), 16 Dulverton Road, Ruislip Manor, Middlesex, HA4 9AD; aliensstolemyhandbag@lostcarpark.com; www.lostcarpark.com/aliensstolemyhandbag

27-31 July 2000

2000 Millennium Hand & Shrimp (3rd Discworld Convention)
CANCELLED. For refunds contact PO Box 189, Patchway, Bristol, BS32 8YE.

Replaced by...

28-30 July 2000

Clarecraft Event
Warren Farm, Wetherden, Suffolk. Guests of Honour: Terry Pratchett & S. Briggs, more TBA. £5 registration, in advance only. Contact The Collectors' Guild, Unit 1a, Woolpit Business Park, Woolpit, Suffolk, IP30 9UP.

28-30 July 2000

ESE European Smoffing Event
Darmstadt, Germany. Contact European Conventions, Fiona Anderson, 129 Colegrave Road, Stratford, London, E15 1EA; fiona@intersec.demon.co.uk

2-6 August 2000

Eurocon 2000
Tricity (Gdansk, etc.) Poland. Guests of Honour: Kir Bulychev, Walter Jon Williams. Membership \$30 to 30 May 2000, \$35 at door. Contact Krzysztof Papierkowski, Chłopska 7/107, 80-362 Gdansk-Przymorze, Poland; papier@gkf.3misato.pl. UK agent: Bridget Wilkinson, Ground Floor Flat, 8 West Avenue Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 9SE; bjw@cix.co.uk

18-20 August 2000

Lexicon (Unicon 2000)
St. Hilda's College, Oxford. Guest of Honour: Philip Pullman. Membership £28 reg, £15 student/unwaged, £18/day. Contact 18 Letchworth Avenue, Bedford, Middlesex, TW14 9RY.

8-10 September 2000

FantasyCon XXIV
Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. Guests of Honour: Storm Constantine, Stan Nicholls. Membership £50 to 31 July 2000, then £55. Contact howe@which.net

21-22 October 2000

Octocon 2000
Royal Dublin Hotel, O'Connell Street, Dublin. Guest of Honour: Michael Marshall Smith. For post-Eastercon membership rates contact Dave Lally, 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX.

26-29 October 2000

World Fantasy Convention
Omni Bayfront Hotel, Corpus Christi, Texas. Guests of Honour: K. W. Jeter, John Crowley. Membership: ask for latest details. Contact WFC 2000, Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755, USA; fduartejr@aol.com

10-12 November 2000

Novacon 30
Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham. Guest of Honour: Christopher Priest; Special Guest: Rog Peyton; Guest Artist: David A. Hardy. Attending membership £32.00, £35.00 on the door. Hotel booking forms now available. Contact Steve Lawson, Registrations, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ

29 December 2000 – 1 January 2001

Hogmanaycon
Central Hotel, Glasgow. Guests of Honour: Spider & Jeanne Robinson, Sydney Jordan, Archie Roy, Vince Docherty, Oscar Schwighofer. Membership £35. Contact Hogmanaycon, c/o 26 Avonbank Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2PA; john@gelsalba.demon.co.uk; www.members.tripod.co.uk/Chris_Boyce/conpage.htm

13-16 April 2001

Paragon: Eastercon'01
Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. Guests of Honour: Stephen Baxter, Lisanne Norman, Michael Scott Rohan. Membership £25 advance, then more. Contact Paragon, c/o S. Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ; members.paragon@keepsake-web.co.uk; www.keepsake-web.co.uk/paragon

28-29 July 2001

ConStruction (con-running)
Somewhere in UK. Contact ConStruction, 136 Kendal Way, Cambridge, CB4 1LT, Con_Struction@lycosmail.com; members.xoom.com/con_struct/

30 August – 2 September 2001

Millennium Philcon/Worldcon 59
Pennsylvania Convention Center & Philadelphia Marriott, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Guests of Honour: Greg Bear, Stephen Youll, Gardner Dozois, George Scithers. Toastmaster: Esther Friesner. Membership currently \$145, but check for latest rates. Contact Philcon, Box 310, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006, USA; phil2001@netaxs.com; www.netaxs.com/phil2001

29 August – 2 September 2002

ConJosé (60th Worldcon)
San José, California. Guests of Honour: Vernor Vinge, David Cherry, Bjo & David Trimble, Ferdinand Feghouth. Registration \$100 to 31 May 2000. Contact P O Box 61363, Sunnyvale, CA 94088, USA; UK Agents 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, RG30 2RP.

Please send any notifications and corrections for forthcoming conventions/events to the editorial address.

JO's Timewasters Matrix Competition 143

Competition 142 - Devil's Dictionary

Resulted in a mixed bag which included these gems:-

PROGRESS - deliberate acceleration of entropy

HEREDITARY PEER - one whose family has amassed centuries of experience in guiding the country's well-being, and who is accordingly debarred from government (Theo Ross)

BONK - regular rhythm of a bed-frame against the wall when sexual activities are in progress (Lesley Hatch)

E-MAIL - postal correspondence received by Yorkshire people.

DATABASE - pile of old printouts on which printouts are piled

INTERFACE - soixante-neuf (Jack Smith)

FEMINISM - symptom of not wearing tight corsets

FRIENDLY FIRE - tactic for diverting attention from civilian casualties

SUPERMARKET - shop where the number of cashiers drops as soon as you walk in

and the winner is:

CAMCORDER - method of capturing the moments immediately following the high points of your life (Wayne Stamford)

Well done, Wayne - the prize is on its way.

Competition 143

The following numbers represent the name of a British author and six of his works. Each number always stands for the same letter, e.g. 17 = V. G,J,M,Q,W, X are not represented. Writer and titles, please, or code only for lazybones.

Work One: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 / 4, 6, 7, 3, 8, 8

Work Two: 1, 3, 6, 6, 3, 9, 5 / 10, 11, 4, 2 / 8, 12, 2, 11, 11

Work Three: 13, 2, 10, 12, 14, 9, 15, 9, 3, 13

Work Four: 2, 11, 12, 9, 2, 14 / 9, 5 / 12, 2, 9, 1, 4, 1, 3, 6, 3, 14, 10 / 4

Work Five: 4 / 8, 9, 6, 7, 3, 11, 2 / 11, 2, 11, 13, 14

Work Six: 14, 16, 11 / 8, 4, 6, 3, 17, 4 / 14, 2, 11, 11

Work Seven: 18, 2, 4, 5, 19, 11, 5, 8, 14, 11, 3, 5 / 20, 5, 1, 9, 20, 5, 7

Answers to:

John Ollis, 49 Leighton Road, Corby, Northants, NN18 0SD

Competition News

The TTA Literary Prizes

The TTA Literary Prizes operate under the auspices of TTA Press, but the TTA editorial staff will take no part in the judging procedure. The competition is not restricted to the type of material that appears in *The Third Alternative* and entries are not being considered for publication in that magazine. Peter Tennant will act as the Prize Administrator.

Prizes: There is a first prize of £1,000, a runner up prize of £500 and five second runner up prizes of £100 each.

Eligibility: There is no official entry form, and writers may enter as often as they wish provided each individual story is accompanied by an entry fee of £5/US\$8. Cheques (including dollar checks), postal orders, etc. should be payable to "The TTA Literary Prizes".

Stories will be considered within the categories of Science Fiction, Horror, Fantasy, Slipstream and Cross-Genre fiction.

Entries must be no longer than 6,000 words in length and must be original work in English which has not been previously published in any form. Entries must not be under consideration for any other competitions, under current consideration for publication or currently awaiting publication.

Stories must be typed double spaced on single sheets of A4 paper. The title page must carry the entrant's name, address and a contact telephone number and/or e-mail

address. The title of the story must appear on each subsequent page, but no other author details must be shown. Pages must be clearly numbered.

Entries should be sent to the Prize Administrator at 9 Henry Cross Close, Shipham, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 7LQ, Great Britain, and must be received by the closing date of 31st December 2000. Proof of posting will not be declared proof of receipt.

Manuscripts cannot be returned, so please retain a copy for your records. Stories should be accompanied by a stamped self-addressed postcard if acknowledgement of safe receipt is required (postcard plus International Reply Coupon in the case of entries from overseas).

Entries failing to comply with these criteria will not be considered.

Judging: A shortlist of stories will be forwarded by the Prize Administrator to an independent panel of judges who will make the final decision. The membership of the judging panel will be confirmed at a later date, but will consist of a professional author, a publisher's representative and a literary agent. The judges' decisions are final and TTA Press will not enter into any discussion regarding them.

Winners: Details of the winning entries will be announced in the March 2001 issue of *The Third Alternative* magazine, published on the TTA website and elsewhere. A full list of winners can also be obtained by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope to the editorial address: TTA Press, 5 Martins Lane, Witcham, Ely, Cambs., CB6 2LB, Great Britain (email: ttapress@aol.com; website: www.tta-press.freewire.co.uk).

Note: TTA Press are the publishers of the magazines *The Third Alternative*, *Crimewave* and *Zene*. For more details of these publications please visit our website (address as above).

Credits issue 143

Matrix 143 was edited and produced by **Andrew Seaman**, fuelled by Fuller's & Young's beers and The Macallan, Talisker & Highland Park whiskies (hic!).

Thanks again to all contributing editors and the newhounds of the BSFA (you know who you are). Special thanks to Roger Robinson of Becon Publications for supplying our cover photo.

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