

**In space no-one can  
hear you say**



**Merry Christmas**  
*(or even Happy New Year!)*



# MATRIX 27

THE BSFA NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER/JANUARY 1980

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## COPY DEADLINE

All contributions to be received by Friday, 22nd February 1980

## Editorial

Whilst the world is busy being "Janus" at the beginning of a new decade the BSFA machine is swinging into action to bring you another dynamic mailing (even bigger than normal by all accounts - still you cannot say we don't give you plenty of raw materials for paper aeroplanes). I suppose I ought to do my duty and do a retrospective 'fandom in the seventies' and a crystal ball gazing 'the shape of fans to come' (same as before I suppose). Well I'm not - well not much anyway!

It was on the way back from Novacon that a few ideas struck me on the way fandom has changed since 1969 (not that Eve & I know much of fandom before 1974 and our first convention). You see Novacon's 10 birthday is next year that means that for the first 20 plus years of its existence British fandom survived on one convention a year. Now whether you are a convention goer or not it cannot be denied that they are the life giver of 'active' fandom. No wonder then that in 1958 the BSFA was set up to bring new fans into fandom as the numbers of convention attendees was decreasing. In many ways Novacon has become a stable reference point in the convention calendar. As Eastercon shuffles around the country and changes organisers like the weather, Novacon has maintained a stable landmark throughout the seventies. Never brilliant, but never dire, one can always rely on Novacon to be an enjoyable weekend. It is this I am sure that has aided the growth of fandom in the seventies and significantly changed its character.

I expected Seacon to provide a pointer to the 80's and it certainly did. One of the perennial problems which has cropped up since the year dot (about 1930!) in fandom is the 'how do I get into fandom' dilemma faced by every neofan. (It's still going on as the letter pages of this fanzine testify.) Everybody has to find their own solution to the question but Seacon presented a new answer. Because of its size, attendance-wise it was five times as big as Eastercon, the day-to-day running a significant organisational headache. As an aide in this, an army of gofers (go-for-this-go-for-that) was enlisted and thus a large number of new (or newish) faces were introduced to the organisation and organisers of Seacon. Not everybody could use this route of course, but it became a significant stepping stone for many new fans at Seacon. Now this might appear a once and for all opening but I'm sure that many of the organisational lessons learnt by Seacon will be passed on. The use of gofers is certainly one which appears to be catching on as Novacon bore witness. In fact I heard that Polycon - organised a couple of months ago at the Hatfield Polytechnic - copied most of the Seacon organisational structure.

Further advantages to the introduction of new fans at the bottom end of convention organisation is that the con committees of the 80's are serving an apprenticeship. Badly run events could well be avoided by committees with experience and as attendances increase this will become increasingly important.

Enough of these reflections, time alone will show us what changes are to be. One thing is certain though, most people appear to appreciate the efforts of Alan Dorey & Co in bringing new aims and objectives to the BSFA I'm sure it will become a very different organisation in the 80's than its 70's image.

Alan's news pages carry the information that Keith Walker is to organise a tape service for the BSFA. Thanks to those of you who have written to me about your own tape. I'll be passing your letters onto Keith shortly.

A thought has just occurred to me that this is the first issue of our second year of editorship - in fan jargon our annish - yeah, I hate that term. It makes me wonder though, have we really achieved all we set out to do with Matrix? Obviously the answer is no, but I like to think we've done a substantial proportion. There are still niggly things like the rushed way in which each issue tends to be put together (and I don't just mean the collation and stapling). Just to side-track myself a bit, if you find yourself with a blank page in any Matrix drop me a line and I'll do my best to send you the correct one - of course I need to know the page number!

Back to the soul-searching. The last minute editing I'm sure gives an immediacy to Matrix but I always feel that issues are never planned, they just happen. Other things which I always feel dissatisfied about are the problems I have with getting the minor features going and keeping them going. The question & answer page, for instance, is something I enjoyed running but exists only when people have queries, so please write in with your questions. I have promised a reviews section, but it has never materialised due to lack of copy. So if there is anything you'd like to write on in about 500 words - film, magazine, play, TV show, radio etc, etc - please send them in. Anybody want to review Ad Astra to date? I know a few of you sent in reviews but they were out of date before I could use them or about topics I felt unhappy about. I still cannot bring myself to print record reviews - a blind spot? All

As you will see, the promised questionnaire is included in this mailing. Please fill it in and return it - don't forget there're five £5 book tokens as prizes to the first out of the hat (wastepaper bin!) As we receive completed forms we will number them and then put all the numbers in a hat - no, we won't be putting all the right answers in a hat, wrong programme!

Well, that's about it for this issue. As you will see at the end of the letters column we have a new style of competition. This was submitted by a Matrix reader and we hope you like it. If anyone else has any suggestion for another competition? The old adage that variety is the spice of life still holds true. The Matrix crossword hasn't died a death it will appear in the near future. When a good quiz arrives in the post, as this one did, you can't look a gift horse in the mouth can you?

One final thing, let me recommend a book to you all. Published late last year, it is "The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction" - chief editor Peter Nicholls. Whilst appearing expensive at £15 (well in fact, it is expensive) it does represent a mine of information on sf and related topics. So if you've any book tokens left over from christmas, then get a copy. My one reservation with it, as with any encyclopaedic work, is that parts are already out of date. Not that that makes the information inaccurate, just incomplete, but it does mention the BSFA at least! However, it really begs for an annual addendum volume. I doubt if we shall see one, though, which is a pity.

Well, that really is the end for this issue. Just let me wish you all a belated happy new year and I'll be back in Matrix 28.

John Harvey



\*\*\*\*\*  
 \*Steev Higgins contributes the 'in-depth' fanzine reviews to this issue. \*  
 \*His article has much to say on the art of fanzine production and thus we\*  
 \*have elevated it to lead article status. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

## The Light Pours Out Of Me

It's been a long time since the Matrix in-depth fanzine review column last burst into the nation's homes and swept the country with a tidal wave of controversy. Far too long really, considering that the Matrix column is the biggest platform for propagandising on the subject of fanzines in British fandom, and any original, creative form requires a decent body of criticism, and an opportunity like this should not be wasted.

The real problem, though, is that of 800 members, perhaps a hundred really understand what a fanzine is. It's the idea that a fanzine is a thing with a *raison d'être* independant of SF which is not only the basis of fannish fanzines, but also implicit in, and gives rise to fanzine reviewing. And most of you reading this have yet, if ever, to realize this.

The purpose of this column is to spread the word. Which is not to suggest that you're all ignorant savages. But the fact remains that few fanzines circulations above a quarter that of Matrix, and the BSFA, as a gateway to fandom, should be prepared to present the whole of fandom, warts and all, to those not yet initiated into its ways. So in effect the column should, indirectly through actual reviews and the attitude of the reviewer, and directly by commenting on the general trends demonstrated by particular fanzines, prepare new readers for what lies in store in their first fanzine. At the same time this is anything but a beginners course in fanzine recognition. Only prolonged exposure to both the zines and the people involved allows real understanding, and once achieved it is a fairly intuitive thing. You know what a fanzine is and should be, and it's difficult to pin down in words. Thus a first fanzine is a hit or miss affair.

Jeff Suter, despite having learned lessons from some exposure to fans and a number of prior attempts to produce his zine, still has a lot to learn. But whilst his obvious willingness to learn and his deference to a social circle in which he is not yet established is admirable, I can't help feeling that his insistent, humble requests for 'constructive criticism' throughout Periphery 1, and in covering letters and actual comments at Novacon, do not bode unequivocally well. For one thing, entering fandom is not a matter of learning to be a fan, but of finding out if fandom suits you. Suter must have a personality of his own, and neither should nor could change it now. And if he isn't the sort of person that fits into fandom, then it would be stupid not to find somewhere where he does instead.

It's easy to believe in the ideal of constructive criticism, which so many faneds walk in with. There's no such thing - all criticism should be negative, because when a critic tries to tell his subject how to 'do

it right' then he may be destroying something far more important than a single fanzine; that is, the editor's whole talent. It's only by finding his own way over problems that he can do his own zine and make an original contribution. The most important thing is being able to decide whether criticism is relevant.

Alex Pillai, more perhaps by luck than good judgment, seems to have struck a better balance. His Tertiary Syphilis 1 avoids the conreps and derivative fanzine reviews which it is too easy to mistake for 'fannish' writing, if only because he has had insufficient contact with either cons or fanzines. Instead he writes about things which interest him, and in that way begins to come across as an individual. And that's what matters, personalities - what fans are really interested in is each other.

Brian Aldiss once described receiving fanzines as being akin to receiving letters, and managed to sum up in that the essence of the fanzine's appeal. Once you get to the point where you read so much SF, and have so many friends in the same position, that it becomes part of everyday life, as taken for granted as TV or food, the fanzine has become, to introduce a note of pretentiousness, a medium of socialization, a way of maintaining friendships, and of communicating. What that implies is that fanzines are a different thing entirely from books and magazines. In writing a fanzine or fanzine article you're addressing an audience of a hundred to a hundred and fifty people, almost all of whom you know, if not in person, then by correspondence of some form. You're not talking to some faceless mass; you know you are not only certain of some response, possibly even verbal, and also just who is going to read you. It's a fact which influences the nature of fannish humour very strongly, making it satirical to the point of insult, vicious and unashamedly incestuous. It's the sort of humour you go in for with your friends, put into print because you know it is your friends who are to read it. This is what both Periphery and TS lack - ironically in the latter case in that the source of its strength is also its weakness - since neither Pillai nor Suter really know who they're talking to; and though it's impossible to pin down in what ways it shows, it's there nevertheless.

The root of the impulse to produce fanzines is the need to say something. In Periphery Suter had a few observations on fandom to share, and Pillai has some personal opinions to state. The motive for Another Bloody Fanzine is something else again. Both Joseph Nicholas and Alan Dorey have had things to say for a long time, and never stinted to proclaim it from the hilltops, whether in the World's Most Regular Fanzine After Matrix (which Gross Encounters was until other projects got in the way) or a saturation barrage of outspoken locs. But the time came when it was decided that it was not enough to be voices crying in the wilderness, with the occasional sage nod from bloody spectators with no original thoughts of their own in their cretin-sized heads, and the rest must shift their arses. So they produced a whole fanzine in which everybody was to air their complaints and grievances.

The trouble is, as with most ambitious ideas, ABF 1 fell flat. Nobody, apparently, liked it, partly because after so much hype from the editors themselves for so long, everybody was expecting something more. One fault is that both Joe and Alan have a tendency to overwrite, and where it might have got them attention once, it's beginning to wear. Another is that they've exercised no editorship whatsoever, simply written their own pieces and stuck them all together. As someone else might say, that's known as collation. But the real problem is probably that few people are in the mood now for the style enshrined in ABF, after Seacon has drained all energy. All that's required is a bit of comfortable entertainment; nobody really wants any blood and vitriol any more. Instead we get the good-old-fashioned-fannishness of Kev Williams's and Harry Bell's Out of the Blue and Ian Maule's rapid and inconsequential Paranoids. But, "Oh,



no" everybody cries, "Out of the Blue was funny." And the trouble is, it is. It's witty, intelligent, literate, and demonstrates what a good fanzine ought to be. If we had more like it there'd be less to complain about. Is it then some variant of the protestant work ethic that leads me to favour the policy of ABF in seeking more than a pleasant laugh? Or is it sheer perverseness in trying to find a way of not accepting the majority view?

Perhaps it's my feeling that neither pair are really stretching themselves. Harry and Kev make the whole thing look so easy you can see yourself turning and twisting as if there were no gravity. And of course you know it takes real work to get that effect. But they've both been around long enough to have learned all the requisite skills. I can't shrug off the feeling that they could produce the same sort of thing for as long as it holds their interest; and if they settle for that, that won't be long.

In the same way Alan and Joe are doing what they've done well for so long that the rest of us have already begun to lose interest. The difference is that at least they want to change, and their attempt to liven things up are at least a step in the right direction. It'll take a combination of guts and sheer stupidity to stick to their guns and try again, but they've got plenty of both between them.

As I intimated, Seacon exhaustion may well be responsible for all the lethargy. One group not so strongly influenced by that is the so-called 'new generation' fans noted there, few of whom have been conspicuous by anything but their subsequent absence. The difficulty though is that most are too young either to have anything to say, or the wherewithal to say it (though the latter is less of a problem). For just that reason I spent a year producing little more than literary wanking and Ben Burr seems to be falling into the same trap. His Benzine 2 is so similar to its predecessor as to make the task of distinguishing the two quite difficult. And though he continually claims to want to do his 'own zine' the actual product seems to deny the sentiment, in that it consists largely of sercon and standard fannish material. Of course there's very little to give you any idea of what to do in a fanzine when first making the attempt, so the general result is normally a mishmash of what it appears a fanzine is supposed to consist of. Eventually, though, after a small emasculation by some fanzine reviewer or other and some very wet response you realise that the last thing that's wanted is imitation, and you're thrown back on your resources. At which point comes the real test. Do you have something of your own to offer?

We're coming back round to the beginning again now, (which you'd have noticed if you'd been paying attention just then) and what we find is another reason for producing a fanzine, the false reason, which is basically an impulse to join in the game. It's too easy to walk in and think "Fandom's about doing fanzines, sounds like fun, let's have a go." But it isn't sufficient to justify the effort of paying out for stencils, paper, duplication and postage, struggling to get words and ideas into a coherent form, and then going out and doing it all again. The usual result is that when the flak starts coming in, all you can do is simply bow down and obey its dictates, because, after all, you're trying to do a fanzine, and these guys know what one is.

But the trouble is, there is no formula for the production of a fanzine. The fanzine itself has to come from inside you; the alternative is to have the nebulous desire to do a fanzine and take the actual form from somewhere else.

Fandom never hides its objections when what is being said is not being said well, but it more often signals disinterest because the writer himself is not committed than because it finds a really heartfelt piece uninteresting. The trouble with Benzine is that there is a strain of individuality which would like to get out, in Ben's interest in anarchy and punk, which simply gets masked in articles about sci-fi which really haven't anything like the passion and concern to warrant being written in the first place. So if you really do want to do a fanzine, don't. Wait until you've got a fanzine that wants to be written. And in the meantime, read plenty of others, so you've got a good idea how to go about it when the time comes. With any luck this column might have given you some idea of that mysterious attitude which is the basis for reading fanzines at all, in which case it isn't that it's acted as some sort of literary 'Which?' report, telling you which fanzines you're likely to enjoy, but rather it's given you sufficient 'feel' to be able to go to Doc Jackson's comprehensive listing with some idea of what is likely to be interesting.

Anyway, a year has passed since the first of these columns, and the season of goodwill has rolled around yet again. Knowing my predecessors, I have no doubt that under the circumstances they will all join in my final, festive greeting, and join me in wishing on behalf of the Matrix fanzine column, a merry Christmas to all our victims.

Steev Higgins

#### PERIPHERY 1

Jeff Shuter, 18 Norton Close, Southwick, Fareham, Hants PO17 6HD  
Available for the usual (letter of comment, article, postage etc)

#### TERTIARY SYPHILIS 1

Alex Pillai, 32 Mingle Lane, Stapleford, Cambs CB2 5BG

#### ANOTHER BLOODY FANZINE

Alan Dorey and Joe Nicholas, c/o 20 Hermitage Woods Cres, St John's, Woking, Surrey. Available for the usual.

#### PARANOID

Ian & Janice Maule - not generally available.

#### OUT OF THE BLUE

Harry Bell & Kevin Williams, 9 Lincoln St, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE8 4EE  
Available for the usual (two copies of trades please).

#### BENZINE

Benjamin T Burr, 7 Egerton Drive, Greenwich, London SE10 8JS  
Available for the usual



# News

## BSFA EXPANSION PROBE - SHOCK QUIZ BY COMMITTEE

No doubt many other social commentators will be feeling duty bound to discuss in great detail all that the 1980s might hold for us. Others, of course, in dazzling bouts of originality will take a long-winded retrospective look at the 1970s saying that it wasn't really such a bad decade after all. Others will just sit down and watch Crossroads on TV wondering what all the fuss is about. Some might even read an SF novel and be wondering what's going to be happening in 1990, let alone 1980.

The BSFA will enter the 1980s with a renewed spirit; the present committee are working really well, and it is to them that I offer thanks for their hard work over the past year. And of course the membership - well, we've taken over 250 new people since Easter 1979, and even allowing for a certain degree of non-renewals, we appear to be holding on to a good proportion of our members. But, in order to maintain our membership, the BSFA has got to be continually evolving. Whilst we mustn't neglect long-term members, we must at all costs introduce new ideas and expand existing ones. There is a danger that we'll lose sight of what we're supposed to be doing. I have criticised the BSFA in the past for being in the apparent belief that producing piles of paper with each mailing is some kind of indicator as to their success at building up confidence. Well, certainly, if the quality of the material is good, why not send a lot of it out? This mailing sees several advertising fliers. Now whilst I know many people can do without these, they are important because they bring in extra revenue. This reduces the necessity to increase costs; we have decided to hold the membership rate at £6 for 1980, despite the threat of a new round of postal increases.

So what is there to look forward to in the months to come? Well, I'll give a quick run-down of what's going on at the moment and brief details of projects and ideas that are definitely scheduled for future dates. The Posters and Handbills I mentioned a couple of issues are ready now, so if any university, local group, bookshop or library is interested, drop a line to me and I'll forward a few copies. Publicity is a sure-fired way of building up the membership, and we have negotiated various deals with other interested parties; adverts are being swapped with some magazines, and publicity and promotion are being given to conventions in return for free BSFA advertising. But, why do we need new members? As I said last time, in order for us to create new projects, we need more money. A membership of 1,000 will bring in theoretically £6,000 a year. On present expenditure, which for the mailings alone, runs to some £3,500 a year, that leaves just over £2,500. Committee and council expenses have to be paid for. The services have to be paid for, and since we only have about 800 members, you can see that there is not too much leeway financially. These are, of course, very generalised figures. They don't take into account advertising revenue, sales of magazines and other miscellaneous income. But, with more members, the extra amount we need to spend on servicing those members is effectively reduced, and thus there is more money available to be put aside for such things as the occasional one-off booklet, etc.

Next month sees the second issue of FOCUS, which promises to be a very special issue. The current Vector, expanded for this post-christmas period to 52 pages, includes a major interview with J G Ballard and there's Richard Cowper's Yorcon talk too. The BSFA tape library has finally been revived, and an important announcement to that effect will be contained in the next Matrix. Suffice to say, at present, costs are being worked out, and there is going to be a new magazine devoted to the tape library, which will be administered on our behalf by Keith Walker of the British Fantasy Society. The information services have now been expanded, and as well as Roger Gilbert, you can now get in touch with Ian Maule at 5 Beaconsfield Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3HY. Please enclose a stamped s.a.e. and he will be more than pleased to help you out with any of your enquiries.

Another new project getting underway in time for Albacon, the 31st British Easter SF convention being held in Glasgow, is the production of a series of author profiles. These will be available as a double sided A4 sheet giving a brief biography of the author, followed by a bibliography of his works. These will be regularly updated, and if there is sufficient demand, the range of authors will be considerably expanded. These will supplement information held by the Information Service, and should be of great use to the new reader as well as those running groups.

Hopefully, in connection with the tape library, a series of BSFA talks will be prepared, enabling local groups to hire discussions and lectures which can be the starting point of informal meetings in their own locality. Further, should any local group like a member of the BSFA committee to come along to a local group meeting to provide information and give a talk on a range of subjects, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. The talk will be provided free, and a series of posters, handbills and sample mailings together with our publications, will be brought along for information and purchase. The only cost to the group will be travelling expenses and some form of overnight accommodation if necessary. University groups seeking new ways of spending their Union grants, look no further.

#### COMMITTEE QUIZ BSFA SHOCK EXPANSION PROBE

Before I move onto slightly more long term prospects, let me just update you on a few matters. With this mailing is the second issue of BSFA Media News, another of the recently started BSFA publications. The BSFA award is moving quite well at the moment, and the final ballots will be sent out with the next mailing at the end of February/beginning of March. The official date for receipt of nominations has now passed, but if you do have any forms still to send in, do so now to Mike Dickinson at Flat 7, 301 Chapeltown Road, Leeds LS7 3JT marking your envelopes "BSFA AWARD - URGENT".

Dave Wingrove, the previous editor of Vector, and one time BSFA membership secretary has resigned his place on the BSFA council. He is currently studying as a mature student at The University of Kent, and I'd just like to place on record the committee's appreciation for the work that he's done in the past for us.

The BSFA Litho Fund is progressing nicely at the moment, but let me first dispell any fears that the cash might be lost if our target figure of some £800 isn't met. Firstly, all the cash received has gone into a special deposit account where it is earning interest, and all the returned donation slips have been retained and the contribution of each member duly noted. Should we be in the unlikely position of not being able to reach our target, we shall return all monies. A further donation slip is enclosed with this mailing should anyone still have any cash left over from the festive



season. Ideas as to fund-raising schemes are being solicited at the moment and we hope to raise cash through auctions at future conventions. We have also acquired some old 1930s SF hardbacks which will be put up for sale shortly. And, Keith Freeman will shortly be selling off reading copies of the last year or two's Analog, F & SF, Galaxy, etc. If anybody does have any ideas as to how cash might be raised, please let us know - especially if you can offer assistance. The Litho Fund now stands at £172.20, and listed below are those who have generously contributed since the last mailing - to all those listed, our grateful thanks:

Simon P Ireland  
W Fletcher  
Gordon Johnson  
Ian R Bell  
Albert Vajda  
Andy Richards  
Chris Bailey  
Craig Harrison  
David V Lewis

Hugh Lowry  
Owen Carpanini  
Kevin Broxton  
Ian Wright  
Richard Moore  
Iain R Byers  
B Westwood  
Robert Carlysle  
R Earnshaw

Martin Tudor  
Chris Priest  
Peter J Kershaw  
Mr Baynham  
David Wingrove  
Tom Jones  
Sheila Robertson  
Raymond Scrase  
Stephen P Coffin

#### SHOCK QUIZ - BSFA PROBE EXPANSION COMMITTEE

I have been pleased with the response to my plea for information on members' feelings as to how the BSFA ought to progress in the future. Whilst not exactly being deluged with mail like some biblical climatological catastrophe (take your choice from raining frogs or Noah and his ark), there has been some genuine concern and interest shown by almost everyone. Sheila Robertson of Beeston, Nottingham is an example of the sort of member I was trying to reach with my urgent plea;

"I regret to say that I tend to be a reader rather than a writer, and whilst I have found many of the articles entertaining and thought provoking, this is the first time I have put pen to paper..."

A letter like this is worth a hundred from regular hacks who contribute the same old ideas - not that their letters are valueless, but for somebody new to take the trouble shows that something is happening. Sheila goes on to say:

"I agree that if we are to become better known, and I think we should - i.e., as a consultative body or as a clearing house for matters pertaining to SF - and the only way to get things moving towards this is to have paid assistance; then we should start looking round for someone. I'm not sure though how the money would be raised...."

In fact, the support for a paid member of staff has been encouraging. People do express a slight reticence over the problem of actual payment - and rightly so, we don't want to bleed the BSFA to death - but I feel that there are ways around that problem. For a start, the person could be responsible for the collating and posting of the mailings; ideally, they would need some form of contact with the membership secretary, and their income would be derived from the more actual cash they will receive. This will also ensure that they try to retain as many members as possible. Income from advertising, sales and other miscellaneous items will come in as usual, but none will pass to the paid member of staff. Secondly, perhaps the salaried staff member should not have any say in how the committee and council run the BSFA. Advice would be welcomed, but there would not then be the possibility of the paid member altering BSFA policy so as to elicit the greatest financial gain.

I'm convinced that the answer lies in better publicity, more members, a better service and most importantly, a strong committee with a sense of

direction and several goals in mind. It will be of little practical use if we get the members and the publicity if we haven't got the machinery to back it up. Memories of the 1974 Science Fiction Monthly debacle have not yet finally receded from memory.

Right, I'm sure that more will be said in later issues of Matrix, but you can rest assured that things are happening with the BSFA, and at present, we appear to be heading on the right course. Who knows, the SF conference planned for July (with the SF Foundation) and the Year Book (planned for late spring 1980) will be just the start of a whole host of new projects that the BSFA can get involved with. The establishment image of the BSFA must be removed, and perhaps then, the whole idea will be more acceptable.

I offer my apologies for a rather intense column this time around; next issue should be faintly amusing, so don't hold your breath.

PS The new BSFA information book, an expanded version I'm pleased to say, should be available with the next mailing - and the membership list is finally ready and will in all probability be distributed with this mailing.

ALAN DOREY

*And now news from the rest of the world, with thanks to Malcolm Edwards, Greg Hills and liberal lifting of items from Locus and Ansible.*

#### MAGAZINE SCENE

Plenty of action here, but of course it's all across the Atlantic.

Omni - Ben Bova (ex editor of Analog) now moves from fiction editor to the executive editor's position. New fiction editor is to be Robert Sheckley; it will be interesting to see the change of style he brings to the fiction content. Omni has just completed it's first full year of publication and despite its high (95p) cover price, appears to be going from strength to strength.

Prices Up - whilst mentioning high cover prices, this spring sees a rise in the cost of Analog, Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine and Fantasy and Science Fiction. All will have a cover price of \$1.50 - now what will that mean in real money? I guess 90p for F&SF, over £1 for Analog and 90p for Isaac Asimov's.

Galaxy Sold - the publisher of Galileo, Vincent McCaffrey, has reached a "handshake" agreement with Arnold Abramson, publisher of Galaxy on the sale of that magazine. McCaffrey will be executive editor of Galaxy as well as publisher, the actual editor has not been announced. The new editorial policy will be to "bring back the sixties or fifties in Galaxy". The new Galaxy will be aimed at a younger adventure-orientated market.

#### PEOPLE

Brian Aldiss has just returned from a three week visit of China as a guest of the Chinese Government's Friendship Association. He was one of a six-person group, a so-called Distinguished Persons Delegation - other members included Iris Murdoch and David Attenborough.

Robert Holdstock has just delivered a new 90,000 word novel "When Time Winds Blow" to his agent.

The Science Fiction Foundation, at the North East London Polytechnic, is to lose its Administrator, Malcolm Edwards, after April 30th this year. Malcolm is planning to go freelance and be a house-husband. A replacement for him is yet to be found.

Christopher Priest is working on a new novel, although at present he's saying no more about it! So watch this space.



J G Ballard has completed a new novel "Hello America". Originally this was planned to be an illustrated novel for Pierot but it grew beyond its original planned size, so now, no doubt, it will be published by Cape.

David Langford moves nearer to "prodom" with the sale of a novel (yet to be written!) to Arrow. His "Sex Pirates of the Blood Asteroids" recently appeared in Penthouse (so I'm reliably informed!).

A collaborative novel between Michael Bishop and Ian Watson is reportedly being finished at present. Not bad going as I understand they've never met. Another new novel due out soon comes from John Brunner. It will be published first in America, by Ballantine, and is titled "The Infinitive of Go".

Douglas Adams, author of the now famous "Hitch-Hikers Guide to the Galaxy" has resigned his job as script editor for Dr. Who. He is to go free-lance and no doubt concentrate on HHGTTG.

A change of address for Joseph Nicholas. After narrowly avoiding homelessness and a season ticket at the Sally Army, he has come to rest at Room 9, 94 St George's Square, Pimlico, London SW1.

Elmer T Hack retires! Yes, it's true. Elmer has finally packed up his typewriter and was last seen boarding a train for an undisclosed destination. His life-long friends Jim Barker and Chris Evans were deeply shocked by this departure. Let's hope we see him again somewhere soon.

#### THUMBS OUT

Talking of Douglas Adams reminds me that the new series of Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy will be broadcast as you receive this mailing. The whole series is being/was broadcast in the week beginning 21st January. Don't panic if you missed it, it is being repeated in the following weeks (and no doubt frequently through 1980). The Radio Times carried the news on its cover and has an article inside. There is a TV series projected but as yet nothing is definite; after that the musical, the pantomime (who said it already is one?) and the ice show?

The SF Theatre of Liverpool, under the direction of Ken Campbell, produced a stage adaptation of HHGTTG last year and are at present exploring ways of staging it again. Their current production is "The Third Policeman" by Flann O'Brien.

Fan club news for HH is that Joy Hibbert is organising "Hitchhikers Anonymous". Contact her at Knouchley, West Bank, Winster, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 2DQ for further details. (I'm sure an sae would be appreciated.)

#### PUBLISHING

The vast new Virgin books empire that everybody was taling about a few months ago has contracted rapidly (cold weather?) squeezing out David Pringle and leaving Maxim Jakubowski plus a few junior members of staff. Still, the venture seems to have stabilised recently and we may even see some books soon. The Science Fiction Book Club has lost the services of Paul Begg - shame as the books were getting better, if costing more.

#### BOOKS

New titles from the Gollancz 1980 list include D G Crompton's new novel "Assendancies" - his first novel in five years. It was due for January but is believed to be delayed due to last minute revisions. A new novel is due from Ursula K LeGuin in April. However, it's a historical novel called "Malafrena" and is not SF. April also sees publication of John Crowley's "Engine Summer." March sees a new novel from Frank Herbert "Priest of Psi" and may will see Ian Watson's "Garden of Delights" and Vanda McIntyre's "Fireflood".

In America Ursula K LeGuin's "The Beginning Place" will be published by Harper & Row

# Fanworld

## LIFE ON MARS EXCLUSIVE

### BEHIND THE LOCKED DOORS OF EDINBURGH FANDOM!

Yes, the LIFE ON MARS column takes you where no Englishman (or Welshman, or Irishman) has gone before: into the secret corridors of the Edinburgh Group. Hear about their latest plans for densely programmed galactic domination! See what Jim Barker wears beneath his kilt!

But not just yet. I'm saving the best bit for later, you see.

Meanwhile, you'll have to make do with the following communication from a small Yorkshire fishing village. Mind you, they also seem to have ambitious ideas, as their Club Liaison Officer (and I thought I was the only one!), Dave Harbud explains:

The Hull University SF Society was founded 3 years ago with the express objective of Universal domination by 1984. We are slightly behind schedule after the abortive coup d'etat of 1976 (it coincided with Dr Who and no one turned up), but we do have an extensive SF lending library and meetings every Monday evening in Hull University Union, just next to the bar. Our meetings are rather anarchic and topics include discussions of SF, technology, speculative theology, philosophy, Armageddon Staniforth's plans for the future of humanity, how far Big Dave can throw someone (with demonstration).... If you want to build your own nuclear device we can tell you how. We are involved in AARDVARK, the world's most cliqueish fanzine. Apply now for the party of the century. All welcome, not just students (I'm a computer programmer myself). If you want the title of Viceroy of Aldebaran, we'll sell it to you for a reasonable rate. Just drop into one of our meetings (say you're a guest of ours if you can't get in) or if you want more info contact me, Dave Harbud, at 36 Middleton Street, Springbank, Hull.

Thanks Dave. Keep the information coming.

From the same village, I've received a letter from Steve Ince about THE HULL AND RIVERWORLD APPRECIATION SOCIETY, which has a membership of one (himself). The letter was much appreciated Steve and would perhaps have received star billing, had not a similar spoof been perpetrated by Kev Smith et al in Matrix 22. Shame on you Steve, read your back issues! You'll have to do better than that if you want to get into this column. Meanwhile, keep trying and good luck with the novel that all of your members are writing.

A more successful correspondent is Nigel Clark, who becomes the first person to get mentions in two consecutive LIFE ON MARS columns (eat your heart out, Paul Kincaid!). Nigel writes of last time's mention (in which



he asked for information on university groups): "I've already filled in my UCCA form, so the whole thing's a bit academic." Ouch! Well done Nigel, you win this week's prize for the best unconscious (I think) pun. He even has something worthwhile to say this time: it seems he's started a small group in Stratford. The normally meet at the Garrick on Friday evenings. You can contact Nigel at 44 Shelley Road, Stratford-upon-Avon.

And now, a SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

Does anybody run, or want to start a group in Ilford? If so, please contact Simon Bayes at Flat Four, 10 Britannia Road, Ilford, Essex who is interested in joining/starting one.

Now we venture into Wales. By way of Keith Freeman, I've received some copies of a clubzine from Dick Downes of the Swansea SF Society; many thanks for them. The zine is a monthly litho affair called RED SHIFT and has a standard commensurate with its schedule. Full marks for enthusiasm, I suppose, but even the mighty and marvellous BSFA can only manage an issue every two months, so for a small local group isn't a monthly schedule rather over-ambitious, Dick, even if you do seem to have kept to it (for four issues, at least)? The fanzine is punctuated with jibes at the eleven-strong membership for not sending in enough material to fill up an issue every month, but nowhere is there any debate as to whether the monthly schedule is actually realistic.

The price tag on the latest issue is 25p, which seems a bit optimistic for sixteen pages, much of which is club news and only of interest to members. I hate to praise the Leeds University Group in public but they publish two zines, one of news which is distributed to members only and one with reviews, articles and fiction which they try (incessantly!) to sell to a wider audience. The latter zine appears three times a year, which seems to be a more realistic schedule. Think again, Swansea, before you burn yourself out in a holocaust of exploding, overworked typewriters!

RED SHIFT (no, I haven't finished with it yet!) includes some views which might best be described as unfashionable: "Sapphire and Steel" compared favourably to "Doctor Who" and a review which praises the "Lord of the Rings" film: "Ralph Bakshi, may your road go ever on!" If any of you want to go along and sort this lot out, contact Dick Downes at 56 Cefn-yr-Allt, aberdulais, Neath, West Glamorgan, SA10 8HE. Honest though, Dick, thanks for the zines. (Sigh! I don't suppose anyone will send me any in future).

But seriously... I would be interested in receiving other clubzines and, particularly, your comments on what I've said about them above and your own ideas of what should be in them (yes, that invitation does include the Swansea group). I don't see why a discussion of club fanzines should be outside the scope of this column.

Moving on at last, we come to the bit you've all been waiting for: the truth about the Edinburgh group. It seems they're not called FOBS after all. Read on...

#### FRIENDS OF ROBERT-THE-HACK (F.O.R.T.H.)

This is part of the evidence of the ongoing boost that sf is receiving in Scotland, due to the effort of a well-known West Coast group. There was a previous Edinburgh fan group, Efof, which collapsed after only a couple of years. We were formed a few weeks after Yorcon and after a few experimental meetings, the group found a suitable venue, as given below.

I would like to make one thing abundantly clear - we are not a sercon

group in any conceivable meaning of the term. At our weekly meetings, the main topics of conversation are 1) whose turn is it to go to the bar, 2) have we got enough time for another pint?

For the uninitiated, Robert-the-Hack is Elmer's Scottish brother recently introduced to Jim Barker. It may surprise people to learn that a lesser-known attraction of Edinburgh - the International Festival - seems to attract more attendees than our weekly bevvy sessions!! However, plans are in hand to focus the attention of the sf world on Edinburgh-on-Forth.

The above-mentioned festival gives us occasional opportunities to see premieres etc. of sf films. For example, it was possible to see the uncut version of "Death Race 2000" a few years ago; "A Boy and his Dog" was seen this year; we also saw the European premiere of "Alien", which was good for a laugh, at least.

The average attendance can be anything from 6-10 and our largest night boasted 15 folk, so, you can see that we already have a good base on which to work. I may add that we have these members virtually by word-of-mouth alone, as we have not really undertaken a serious poster campaign yet.

A further couple of points - we have a nucleus of 4 regular con attendees; Rockcon is a figment of the other Bob Shaw's imagination; all are exceptionally welcome; by virtue of the Edinburgh sf bookshop, it has been possible to meet several authors; we do not charge a membership fee, bar a pint.

F.O.R.T.H. meet every Tuesday from about 8 pm onwards in the Lounge Bar of the Abercraig Hotel, Picardy Place, Edinburgh (near railway and bus stations). The bar has Guinness, keg Belhaven, lager and Double Diamond. Only the Belhaven is drinkable and they can't pour a decent pint of Guinness.

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Many thanks to Jim Darrock for the above report. Yes, Jim, I'll see you at Al Bacon! Hmmm, Rockcon a figment of Bob Shaw's imagination, eh? Mind you, in a sense, every con's a figment of the imagination before it's actually happened, isn't it? And of course, even if it's not, that remark doesn't rule out any convention held in Edinburgh and NOT called Rockcon. And there again....

Oh, sorry. I was forgetting where I am. Don't worry, it's just paranoia, as we say in Leeds. Anyway, now it's time to think about plans in hand: next time, we may have a timely piece on the FOKT group (you remember, don't you Jimmy? In the bar at Novacon, you promised!) plus, for the benefit of new members, a summary of the groups that have been featured in Matrix over the last year or so. In the meantime, don't forget to write if you want a plug for your group or want to start/join one. The address is 13A Cardigan Road, Headingley, Leeds 6.

All of which would bring us to the end of this column, had a letter from another scottish group not appeared in the post this morning. This time it's from Aberdeen University Union SF Society, who can be contacted c/o Aberdeen University Union, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB9 1AW. Thanks to William Goodall for writing. The AUSFS would be interested in receiving "famous and infamous fanzines" and are intending to publish one of their own, RING PULL 1, in February. This will contain "book reviews, film reviews, humour, fiction, art, photographs, staples, ink, smudges..." for the usual or 50p. The group have been operating in earnest since October. They now have 21 members, film shows planned, a library and, perhaps most important of all, a large grant with a promise of more to subsidise a trip to Albacon. This really is the end. Happy New Year.

Simon Ounsley



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*\* Paul Kincaid is almost a regular contributor to the pages of Matrix \**  
*\* (we can't get rid of him! Sorry Paul, didn't mean it really). In \**  
*\* the past he has given us a personal view of being a fan as well as \**  
*\* a fanzine review column. This issue he turns his attention to that \**  
*\* infamous, annual gathering of the clan, entitled (in polite circles) \**  
*\* Novacon. \**  
 \*\*\*\*\*

### OBSERVATIONS ON A RARE SPECIES FOUND IN ITS UNNATURAL SURROUNDINGS

For those who may not have noticed, the first weekend in November was cold and damp and grey. Locked away for two days in the hot, sweaty, alcoholic environment of a modern hotel in cold, concrete Birmingham it's easy to see the real world, if it is seen at all, as no more than an intrusion in the vital world of fandom. Perhaps that's how it should be: the one time I left that artificial world during the course of the weekend was a none-too-happy experience.

It is better, so they say, to travel hopefully than to arrive. Fandom, it seems to me, has been travelling hopefully for the past year; Yorcon building up to Seacon, good atmosphere, rising numbers. But where were we travelling to? What would our arrival be like? Were we building ourselves up for a fall? Since Yorcon it has been evident that Albacon, for better or worse, is the destination; but Novacon is the last major station on the way. What we made of it, what it made of us, would be important.

I got to Birmingham earlier than expected, thanks to getting an afternoon off work. Fortunate, really, since the overwhelming impression left by the convention was how short it was. We've been spoiled, Yorcon was a very full four days, Seacon even longer; Friday evening to Sunday afternoon was an instant, over in a flash. We spent the weekend rushing, cramming as much as possible into two days, jumping in at the deep end.

So it was straight into the bar, glass after glass in hand, socialising like mad. That's one of the main reasons for convention-going, meeting up with far-flung friends; and there were a fair number of them about. Though here was one more of the differences, one of the ways, perhaps, in which Seacon had affected us. Familiar faces were missing, and a lot of new ones were about.

Now there are those who say that it is wrong to view fandom as an entity, it is, if anything, a dynamism. Change is its natural form, and so these differences were a fact of life that can only be accepted. I agree, but it is hard to divorce oneself from the subjective view that fandom is one's friends, and any reduction in this number is unwelcome. Not that I'm objecting to new faces, on a personal level I usually leave each convention with one or two more added to the list of acquaintances that will gradually metamorphose into friends. But this time it was different, the influx was too much, too sudden, presenting, purely by chance I'm sure, too solid a front. Perhaps I found their sheer number off-putting and retreated into the secure circle of my reliable friends. Perhaps their number meant that they found it easier to find friends and mix with those equally new. Either way, I came away from the convention without one new acquaintance.

Of course I'm making too much of it, projecting onto the real situation my anticipation of how things might develop. But Novacon is a harbinger of some such change, though it followed too soon on the heels of Seacon to provide any

real, solid evidence either way, the big test will be Albacon. No, Novacon was simply the first mirror of the effects of Seacon, and there are certainly enough irregularities on the surface to make any image unrepresentative. For a start Seacon itself distorts the picture - how many of those familiar faces were basent simply because Seacon had taken all their money, how many new faces were simply giving conventions a second chance, trying to find out what a less-atypical convention was like?

There were distortions, also, in the length of the convention, so that everything seemed just a little out of synch. Friday night just did not feel like the first night of a con. Perhaps because there was already so little convention left, perhaps because we started off with something like the University Challenge Quizz which is more normally a feature of some later day, but it felt wrong. And then, of course, there was all the drinking, as if to make up for lost time.

Which had the unfortunate effect that I spent Saturday morning prowling the streets of Birmingham in search of something resembling life. Goodness knows what I missed that morning, but by the time I got back the whole convention seemed to be revolving about the con hall. Was this one more hint of change? Certainly the programme was always a popular feature of any convention, after all it's why most of us start attending cons. But after a few cons the focus tends to shift to the bar, and this time even the bar flies seemed to be in the con hall. The serconisation of fannish fandom? The invidious effect of the welter of newcomers? Perhaps, but I doubt it. I think it was mainly due to the best and most inventive bit of programming I've seen in a good while.

For a start they had the advantage of Chris Priest as Guest of Honour. After a shaky start, his speech got down to a marvellous denunciation of all those who would deny that sf should strive for literary merit. Those of us who agreed with him considered it impassioned, well-argued, convincing; but even those who disagree could not deny that this was everything a GoH speech should be.

This was followed by a speech on very much the same subject. A debate, not a panel. An escape from the usual, lifeless format, to one in which it was far easier to introduce an element of humour. This is an escape route that has always been open to programme organisers, yet they have stuck to the panel, hidebound, uninspired, in which the only element of originality is what new title will be devised for the same old tired subjects, and in which the only interest is in seeing which panelist will run out of platitudes and oft-repeated anecdotes first. All praise, then, to a committee with just that spark of originality needed to make an easy-to-avoid programme item into an entertainment which is, after all, precisely what it should be.

The quiz, too, is worthy of considerable praise. It must have taken a fair bit of nerve to schedule a quiz that actually ran over the three days of the convention - if the first heat hadn't worked the rest would have been doomed before they even started. But the gamble paid off, helped by slick organisation including buzzers that worked and a chance to keep constant track of the score.

Both the quiz and the debate, of course, depended on the enthusiasm of participants who entered into the spirit of the thing - making serious points, going all out to win; but not losing sight of the fact that it was all in fun.

A curry, then back for the evening's festivities, the disco, the greatest spectator sport known to fandom. If one hadn't worked out already that fandom is composed of individualistic lunatics, then ten minutes watching the contortions on the dancefloor would be enough to convince anyone. There is an essay to be written on the subject sometime by a John Cleese of the pen, but for now I shall draw a veil of decency over Gerry Webb's mincing skips, Rob Hansen's puppet whose strings have somehow become crossed, Kev Smith's strange epileptic lurchings and



all the rest.

Then came the room party. I couldn't begin to guess how many of us there were crammed into that room, squeezed together on the beds, littering the floor, jammed in the doorway. Entry requirements were quite simple, in Alan Dorey's immortal words: "Got drink?" This did, at least, have the advantage of providing some very necessary lubrication, perhaps too much since things did get a little silly as time went on - Kev Smith becoming violent in defence of his nude lip, an impromptu abridgement of the Bible and the telephone directory, and an attempt to see how many drunks could stand on a bed (though nobody thought to ask how many of us could stand in the first place).

By now I, at least, was well and truly in the mood for a good con; only by now the con was just about over. The last morning of a convention is a mess of packing, coats and bags lying about all over the place, queueing to register for next time, drinks in a slowly emptying bar, hotel staff bustling around getting the place back to normal.

But there was to be one more twist in the tail of this many-legged beast. For some reason I missed the vote and the debate that preceded it, but I heard shortly afterwards that it had been decided to limit membership of the next Novacon. This momentous decision follows years of argument within fandom; at various times I've argued both for and against limitation, but I must in the end applaud the decision. What is this, the old-guard fighting a rear-guard action against the newcomers flooding in after Seacon? I don't think so, though I could be prejudiced since I suppose I'm one of the old-guard myself now. Didn't Seacon demonstrate that a large convention could be successful without swamping the fannish atmosphere? Yes, but it took years of organising and costly facilities. Judging from rumours I've heard about Albacon, there are those who consider size alone a virtue. This is not so, and Novacon was originally devised as a small, relaxed alternative to Eastercon, with less emphasis on programme, and more on a fannish atmosphere. But the recent proliferation of small fannish cons such as Silicon and Faancon, the halfway house is a niche that still needs to be filled. This year, by some miracle, Novacon managed to do just that, despite being larger than Eastercons were at the time of the first Novacon. But there is a very real danger that if it did grow much larger it would fall between two stools, being too large to get by on, or even generate, a relaxed atmosphere; yet lacking the organisation, time and facilities necessary to make a really large con successful.

Anyway, this isn't the place to repeat so familiar an argument, but it is one more indication that Novacon was a reflection of the effect of Seacon upon British fandom. How to assess this reflection, however, is something I do not pretend to know - time and Albacon will doubtless make it all much clearer.

In its constituent parts Novacon was an undoubted success, and of course I still enjoy every con I go to, since when I stop enjoying them will be when I stop going. As a whole, though, it was perhaps less successful; though this may just be because it was on a hiding to nothing anyway, providing so brief a sequel to the epic successes of Yorcon and Seacon.

PAUL KINCAID

Rob Jackson's regular review of fanzines and other SF-related small press publications, this issue covering items received in September, October and November 1979. Don't forget: if you would like your fanzine reviewed, send it direct to Rob at: 8 Lavender Rd., West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT19 9EB. While we'll try to mention everything received, considerations of space may force us to make occasional omissions. It is also our policy not to review sales catalogues or other explicitly commercial publications.

# On The Carpet

As there are three months' worth of fanzines in this column, there are even more listed this issue than last. To get them all in, I'm making full use of John and Eve Harvey's photo-reduction facility; thus the length of the fanzine listing may become off-putting unless you have a special interest in fanzines.

To get round this, I've decided to make it easier for you to spot the fanzines I think it would be particularly worth your while reading by marking them with an asterisk, plus a letter indicating the general style of the zine. (I should stress that this isn't necessarily an indication of how much I personally enjoyed the zine: I'm well aware that I enjoy certain types of zines while no longer being particularly stimulated by others. Inevitably my comments about a fanzine will be subjective to a certain extent, even though I do try to look at each fanzine to see whether it does what its editors wanted it to, not whether it does what I would have wanted it to.

A list of the symbols used is below.

Some people give frequency of publication when sending me details of their zines; but I don't usually list them, as I've been around in fanzine fandom long enough to know that plans go astray when people try to carry them out. Fanzines are a spare-time activity for most people, and many things interrupt ambitious production schedules (lack of money, technical problems, lack of money, mothers-in-law visiting, failure of contributors to keep promises, lack of money, getting a girl/boyfriend, being roped into organising a con, lack of money...). So it's only the very rare bird like Terry Jeeves who can publish really reliably. (Even Charles Brown has trouble keeping Locus on schedule, and Locus is his full-time job.)

That's why I don't list publication frequency: it's almost always "irregular".

Next time, I'll maybe make some general comments on fanzine standards. Should be fun.

## Abbreviations and symbols used:

- F\* Recommended fannish fanzine (i.e. about fans' personalities and social lives).
- G\* Recommended genzine (i.e. general zine, about a variety of subjects).
- N\* Recommended fannish newzine.
- P\* Recommended personazine (i.e. a largely editor-written fannish zine).
- S\* Recommended fanzine mainly about SF or fantasy.

The Usual Available for trade with other fanzines, letter of comment, or contribution of written or artistic material. Prices for single sample copies or subscriptions are quoted if these are given in the zine; postage is normally included in the quoted price. If no price is given, write and express interest.

Page sizes FC (foolscap): 13" x 8". A4: 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". USQ (U.S. quarto): 11" x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Q (quarto): 10" x 8". A5: 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ ".

Printing methods D: duplicated. L: photolithographed. X: Xeroxed (photocopied). R: reduced typesize (giving more words per page).

## SMALL PRESS PUBLICATIONS

Denvisions/Thin Air Wonder Stories 2 (Denver in '81 Committee, PO Box 11545, Denver, CO 80211, USA; for Denver in '81 presupposing members; 56pp.) Two back-to-back fanzines publicising the successful bid for the '81 Worldcon. Mixed contents; the Ellison interview is good, but the short story and the musical analysis of "The Wizard of Oz" I found more than a little irrelevant.

S\* Locus 224, 225, 226, 227 (Charles N. Brown, PO Box 3938, San Francisco, CA 94119, USA; \$9.55 per year airmail or £6.00 per year seairmail, payable to Locus Publications, sent to U.K. Agent, Chris Atkinson, 28 Duckett Rd., London N4 1BN; USQ RL; 20pp, 20pp, 24pp, & 20pp.) The reliable trade magazine of the SF scene in America, invaluable for professional news of SF markets and forthcoming books. Generally complimentary comments by Charles on Seacon (though wrongheaded on prices — he claims \$1.10 for a pear and \$17 for an LP!), with flashes of real fannishness showing through in the convention reports.



The Making of the Lesbian Horse (by Christopher Priest; published by Birmingham SF Group for Novacon 9; distributed free to members of Novacon 9, but write to Roger Peyton, 57 Summer Row, Birmingham B3 1JJ for details of other availability; A5 RL; 16pp.) Nicely produced small booklet to commemorate Chris's position as Guest of Honour at Novacon 9; it contains a piece about the writing of Inverted World, the way its title translates into French, plus a new alternative ending which still retains the original's cool ambiguity. Worth having if you enjoy his work.

Rigel 70 (Yves Vandezande, Tiense Vest, 61 bus 13, 3200 Kessel-Lo, Holland; 350, 650 or 900 fr. for 6, 12 or 18 issues; A4 RL; 40pp.) A smoothly produced semiprozine, goodlooking, with translated stories by Watson and Stableford and a Hyphen reprint by Bob Shaw; also book and film reviews and a long Season report — all in Dutch: "Ook was er nog de Fanroom met zijn eigen programma en bar." Who reads Dutch and can tell me what it all means?

S\* Science Fiction Review 32 (Richard E. Geis, PO Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211, USA; in UK, send sterling equivalent of \$13.00 to Wm. Dawson and Sons, Cannon House, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5EE for an eight issue (two year) subscription; USQ RL; 64pp.) The only fanzine two people work nearly fulltime on. It is a lot of work putting together and mailing 5,000 or so copies of this. It features many editor-written reviews and comments, with a few big-name columns and interviews. Well worth getting; little short of compulsive reading, even though it's settling into a rather comfortable rut now, somehow slightly less lively than it used to be. Geis is no dry academic as a critic; he believes in straight talking and looks for entertainment.

S\* Starship 36 (Andrew Porter, PO Box 4175, New York, NY 10017, USA; in UK, send £4.75 for a one-year (four issue) subscription to U.K. Agent, Ethel Lindsay, 69 Barry Rd., Carnoustie, Angus DD7 7QQ, Scotland; USQ RL, typeset; pp.) The Omni of the SF critical magazine world, Starship (formerly Algo!) features heavy advertising from publishers, quite superbly slick and professional layout and typesetting, regular columns by Frederik Pohl, Vincent DiFate and others writing on their fields of expertise, which is all very interesting and commendable; but somehow the passion and depth of intellectual commitment are slightly lacking, and the whole is slightly less than the sum of its parts. It's still about the best there is, though.

## FANZINES

### Great Britain

Amanita 1 (Cyril Simsa, 18 Muswell Ave., London N10 2EG; the usual; A4 D; 16pp.) Weird fanzine about mushrooms, kohlrabi, hippopotami, and The Tiger's Bride by Angela Carter. In the accompanying letter he apologised to me for forgetting to include his address in the fanzine — but it still means I've got to find the letter if I want to reply!

N\* Ansible 2/3, 4 (Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave., Reading, Berks. RG2 7PW; contributions, newszine trades, or 4 for 50p, 3 for \$1 US, or 5 for \$1 Aus.; QD; 12pp, 4pp.) No. 2/3 is a giant Season issue with 20 reports and comments on the convention — anecdotal, mildly critical, or highly complimentary. Issue 4 is a more normal one, with an obituary of Dr. Christopher Evans (the Mighty Micro one, not the "Half-Life" one), con reports, changes of address, and a miscellany of news under the sometimes appropriate title "Infinitely Improbable". Informative; good writing; cheap at the price.

S\* Arena SF 9 (Geoff Rippington, 6 Rutland Gdns., Birchington, Kent; 50p of 3 for £1.40; US & Canada — \$1 per copy airmail; no other availability given, but I expect the usual rules apply; A5 RL; 44pp.) Increasingly serious and intellectual zine of SF discussion. This issue concentrates in depth on Australian SF and the works of Robert Holdstock, which is typical of the zine. Supported by the South East Arts Association, it matches Vector in intellect (and at times in dryness of tone).

Astron 3 (Steven Green, 33 Scott Rd., Olton, Solihull, Birmingham B92 7LQ; 30p incl. post; A4 D; 28pp.) Published in late '78, but I only got this at Novacon 9. One of those season fanzines with big-name contributors' articles (often reprinted) assembled with much effort but prevented from being much of a forum for real discussion by infrequency and a jaded editorial which doesn't excite response. Also, the subjects covered somehow don't match; there's a solitary article about a comix artist among pieces by Brunner, Shaw and Richard Evans (interviews reprinted from the Futura Newsletter).

Checkpoint 99, 100 (Peter Roberts, 18 Westwood, Cofton, Starcross, Nr. Exeter, Devon; write to enquire of availability of back issues; Q D; 5pp, 6pp.) The final two issues of what has been an essential newszine for the British fannish fan, the banner of which has now passed to Dave Langford's Ansible. No. 99 contains a genial Season report, and no. 100 an index of past contents.

Cidereal Times 8 (Allen Boyd-Newton, The Gatehouse, Combe Florey, Nr. Taunton, Somerset; 30p, £2.10 for 6 (it's cheaper to get 6 individual copies!)) or the usual; A4 D; 28pp.) Mostly competent if uninspired club gazette with long reviews, poems etc. Spoilt by a crummy fanfiction serial and some hopelessly unrealistic comments on Eastercon finances. If Allen had tried running an Eastercon he would know just how uncertain both income and expenditure are until after the con (never mind a year in advance when membership rates



are set), and just how rare really suitable hotels are. He also castigates Skycon '78 for having paid £2,000 for function rooms when Eastercon '77 got theirs free, without knowing that in 1977 this money was paid to the hotel, but in the form of increased bedroom rates.

Closer to the Edge 5 (Steven Green, 33 Scott Rd., Olton, Solihull, Birmingham B92 7LQ; 10p stamp plus the usual, or another 10p stamp; A4 D; 6pp.) Mostly-locs issue of a review fanzine; various people rabbiting on with lists of basic SF reading, and comments on TV SF. A lot of comics fandom influences, though it's un-illustrated.

Cosmic Themes 20 (Tony Callow, 53 Rose Ave., Worcester WR4 9PX; 30p or 6 for £2; A5 D; 32pp.) This started off as an SF/fantasy plus occult/von Daniken book review zine with little evidence of contact with other SF fans; now it's getting more in line with SF fandom. There's an editorial excitedly anticipating Season, and the contents are almost SF and fantasy reviews with a few comic and SF fanzines looked at. Undemanding plot-summary-plus-star-rating reviewing style.

Erg 08 (Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Rd., Sheffield, S. Yorks S11 9FE; 4 for £1 or \$2; QD, but with a full colour NASA painting supplied by Harry Andruschak on the back; 28pp.) Very consistent unpretentious quarterly fanzine reflecting its editor's admirable (if unfashionable) technophilia in short articles on astronomy and allied subjects, plus 11 pages of brief reader's-guide reviews of 54 books. No agonised introspection on fandom here.

Fusion 1 (Ken Mann, 22 Pennethorne Rd., Peckham, London SE15; 50p or the usual; A4 D; 31pp.) Solidly-filled fiction fanzine. More literate than some; about equal to the early issues of Sfinx, for those with eight-year memories. Mainly longish fantasy stories full of necromancers, Old Kings and Northern Wastelands (don't say that — you'll put people off Glasgow for life!); but there's one dire short-short about malicious streetlamps. Pretentious sub-Ken Bulmer descriptions of the stories in the editorial, and an announcement that with the next issue in a year's time he hopes to go semi-pro. He's welcome to try, but most enterprises like this are stymied by lack of sales unless they can prove consistent worth to the reader — most readers prefer to spend their hard-earned and rapidly deflating pence on the plethora of pro SF there is around at the moment. That's where new writers really have to prove themselves. (Argument on this topic is hereby seconded to Focus.) Note: this isn't the same Fusion as Warwick St Society published.

HypoSpace 5 (Hatfield Polytechnic SF & FS, c/o Students' Union, Hatfield Polytechnic, PO Box 109, Hatfield, Herts; for club members; A4 D; 4pp.) Cheerfully cruddy clubzine with forthcoming events lists and so on. Hints of mild illiteracy in spellings like "alternativly" and "baited" as in "baited breath": that funny big book over there is a dictionary.

In Defiance of Medical Opinion 1 (Chuck Connor (R.O. Connor J.A.) & Aleck (Butch) Butcher, c/o Sildan House, Chediston Rd., Wissett, Nr. Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 0NF; available for the usual. I guess — it doesn't say; A4 D; 38pp.) Mainly editor-written fan fiction by two sailors on shore leave. They forgot to put their addresses in the zine (I got it from their covering letter) and they put full stops after questionmarks and exclamation marks, which (I point out to the few of you who don't already know) is wrong.

Licks 1 (Rob Hansen, 22 Llanthowy Rd., Newport, Gwent, Wales; the usual or request, I think; QD; 12pp.) A one-off trial issue of a fannish rock fanzine within SF fandom's orbit. No big-name chaser is Rob; the main content is an interesting interview with Graham Charnock on his rock experiences.

G\* Logo 5 (Kevin Easthope, 113 Abbey Rd., Erdington, Birmingham B23 7QQ; the usual; A4 D; 40pp.) Came with The Pickersgill Papers, a 10 page publication of a loc from Greg Pickersgill and Kevin's reply which is irrelevant and out of date now. Logo is superbly produced, a lesson to new faneds who just throw the thing together any old how, and he's got some good fannish material; it's a pity parts of it are out of date due to a delay in publication, and that the natural rebel in Kevin has put some established fans off him, as he can sometimes write quite interestingly himself too.

One-Off (nos. 6 & 7 or 7 & 8, I'm not sure; David Bridges, 130 Valley Rd., Meersbrook, Sheffield, S. Yorks S8 9GA; the usual; A4 D; 18pp., plus a free binliner to keep your comix in.) An uncharacteristically introspective issue from a normally lighthearted personal writer, looking back in part at his last fanzine, the very successful bike trip report A Ragged Trousered Pedalcyclist. The second of these two issues is a four-page pink quarto take-off of the Maules' Paranoid format. Covert flattery by imitation, but I'm not sure it isn't better than the original.

S\* Perihelion 5 (Steev Higgins, 18 St. Austell Ave., Tyldesley, Greater Manchester M29 7FY; 35p or £1 for 4; A4 D; 18pp.) British random's most disgustingly literate schoolboy publishing his college SF Society's magazine, and by getting outside contributors (Paul Kincaid, Simon Ounsley et al) for the first time, turning it into a very intelligent zine of SF criticism. Provocative & interesting article by Peter Relton concluding "science fiction is a narrow and diluted form of fantasy." Not as well produced or as long a zine as Arena, but critically at least as astute already.



Small Mammal 32, 33, 34 (Martin Easterbrook, 191 The Heights, Northolt, Middx; distributed free to attenders at the One Tun, Saffron Hill, London on the first Thursday of each month; A4 D; 4pp, 2pp, 2pp.) Newszine with forthcoming events in the London area and elsewhere and brief comments on items of current interest. Up to date; flashes of wit at times. If you send money for postage he might even send you copies monthly; I don't know.

Towel and Thumb 1 (Joy Hibbert, Knouchley, West Bank, Winster, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 2DQ; the usual, I expect (it doesn't say)); A4 D; 12pp.) Cruddily produced Hitch-Hiker's Guide fanzine. Cheerful what-I-did-on-my-holidays type con reports, plus mildly inventive but inane HHG-related attempts at humour, including 1½ pages of mathematical burble with the answer 42. Funny if you're easily amused; the original's best, of course.

Unison 1 (Lester Hannington & Joy Hibbert, Knouchley, West Bank, Winster, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 2DQ; 32p or the usual; A4 D; 28pp.) Very mixed contents about SF, non-SF books, and forthcoming cons. Incredibly haphazard layout; a book review and a poem are squished into the Fanzines Received column without even a line's gap, and without warning a couple of \*aaagh\* short stories are sprung on the reader. They spell baroque "baroc", and it doesn't say which editor writes what bit. Other than all this, the fanzine's quite fun!

#### North America & Canada

G\* Debris 3, 4 (John Boston, 225 Baltic St., Brooklyn, NY 11201, USA; the usual, incl. SSAE and publishable newspaper clippings; USQ L; 6pp, 4pp.) Very amusing and unusual fanzine of newspaper clippings on the madnnesses of American life: "Clear Heads Dept.: At hearings in Sacramento on 'clothing optional' beaches, a number of 'Bible-reading Christians' opposed the proposal on the grounds that 'if God wanted humans to go naked, he wouldn't have given them clothes.'" Amazing.

N\* DNQ 22 (Victoria Vayne & Taral, PO Box 156, Stn. D, Toronto, Ont. M6P 3J8, Canada; 5 for US\$2, or 2-for-1 trades if you send your zine to both editors; USQ D; 10pp.) The smaller-scope North American fanzish newszine, more interested in fanzines than cons. Discussion of the FAAn Awards this issue, and a funny piece by Eric Mayer about how he scared his little brother with Nameless Horrors that probably didn't eat the cat.

N\* File 770 15, 16 (Mike Glycer, 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar, CA 91342, USA; US\$2 for 4 issues, with extra issues of news or contributions; USQ D; 24pp, 18pp.) Two much better issues of America's top zine for fan news. No. 15 has awards and brief comments from Seacon, and Victoria Vayne being sensible about what sort of person should win TAFF; no. 16 has a good series of Seacon reports (except for Ian Maule's rather too generalised xenophobia), and a sensible letter from Victoria Poyser on how lucrative U.S. con art shows can help rather than hinder fanzine art.

Gypsy 1 (Joyce Scrivner, 2523 15th Ave. S, Minneapolis, MN 55404, USA; editorial whim or the usual, "but try the unusual, I like interesting things"; USQ D; 11pp.) Small personalzine detailing the vicissitudes of Joyce's move from Philadelphia. Must set a record for the number of bracketed editorial interjections in Denny Lien's piece.

S\* Janus 15 (Janice Bogstad & Jeanne Gomoll, c/o SF3, Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701, USA; \$1.75 or \$7 for 4 issues, accepted locs, contributions or trades; USQ RL; 52pp.) Superbly laid out and extremely well illustrated genzine with largely feminist concerns. Book and film reviews, interviews (usually with authors whose work reflects feminist thinking), conreports and other items of sometimes good but often variable quality, not all relevant to British readers. Jeanne Gomoll is becoming a very good artist.

Kickshaw 2 (Clifford R. Wind, #206, 308 Summit E., Seattle, WA 98102, USA; the usual, or "tips on the training of pet carrots"; USQ D; 36pp.) Pleasant, literate genzine. Reviews by Jon Gustafson & Doug Barbour, Denys Howard on being a temp, and Loren MacGregor on no longer needing a TV: "I can predict what television's going to do. Maybe I was just more gullible in the 50s, more receptive to utter nonsense. But maybe it's that the men and women who pioneered in television were more willing to surprise each other, and so more able to surprise the rest of us."

Lan's Lantern 9 (George J. Laskowski Jr., 47 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013, USA; \$1.50 or the usual; USQ RL; 44pp.) Special Jack Williamson issue, entirely about him. Has a bibliography. Layout and artwork very uninspired, and the contents are embarrassingly sycophantic, even if there are tributes by big names from Asimov, Bova, Haldeman to Wolfe among many others. A brain-numbing fanzine; Jack Williamson is, I think, too nice a guy to be anything other than embarrassed by all this.

Mad Scientist's Digest 6 (Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Eart Rd, #207, Detroit, MI 48219, USA; \$1 or the usual; USQ D; 30pp.) Typical genzine, unremarkable except for two items of special British interest. Mary Long (previously Reed/Legg) reminiscing on the Globe, and Ian Williams's second set of notorious capsule pen-pictures of British fans. (Another boob this issue: he describes Kev Williams but entirely forgets his major claim to fame as Seacon '79's Operations Manager.)

G\* The Monthly Monthly 1,2 (c/o Robert Runte, 10957-86 Ave., Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 0Y9; 75¢, \$9/year, or the usual (2 copies of your fanzine)); USQ D; 22pp, 18pp.) Four people are co-publishing this and editing it by rota, so they can afford to publish a fair-sized genzine every month. It's very neatly produced and has a promising mix of sensible fan-ish and serious articles and good art; if they keep it up it could become a valuable forum. Collage-type covers with interesting graphics.

F\* Mota 30 (Terry Hughes, 606 N. Jefferson St., Arlington, VA 22205, USA; the usual; USQ D; 20pp.) A slightly lacklustre issue of this normally very amusing fan-ish fanzine; produced in a bit of a rush, I guess, because it had to be ready for the editor's trip to Europe as winner of the Transatlantic Fan Fund — an honour which indicates how highly he and his fanzine are thought of.

Nebulousfan 9 (David Thayer, 7209 DeVille Drive, Ft. Worth, TX 76118, USA; \$1 or the usual; USQ RX; 20pp.) Improving, innocuous genzine. Fair art, though nothing text-related. Good article by Larry Walz on coming into fandom via SF academia; he finds no real barrier: "... readers and writers become a large, happy, brawling family."

Phiz 9 (Bruce Townley, 2323 Sibley St., Alexandria, VA 22311, USA; for APA-50 & editorial whim only; USQ ditto; Spp.) Loony personalzine. A half-page Shakespeare joke ends "You can't make a Hamlet without breaking eggs." Yuk!

Photron 13 (Allan Beatty, PO Box 1040, Ames, IA 50010, USA; 40p (cash!) or 4 IRC's or the usual; half-USQ RL; 40pp.) Revival of a zine last published in 1976. Pleasant if bland; various people briefly discussing their personal choice of favourite fantasy books, other articles, and (goshwot, a four page Steve Sneyd poem. Redeemed somewhat by some amusing "Sweetness and Light Fanzine Reviews", which list what is not wrong with the zines — I must try this.

G\* Rune 56,57 (Lee Pelton & Carol Kennedy, 2726 Girard Ave. S., #101, Minneapolis, MN 55408, USA; the usual, or £1.50 per year to U.K. Agent, Dave Piper, 7 Cranley Drive, Ruislip, Middx. HA4 6BZ; USQ D; 40pp, 40pp.) When Fred Haskell gave up Rune (the Minneapolis group's clubzine) it slipped back from its former high level for a while, but it's now getting back to the standard it reached under Fred's editorship. This group cultivate a mad sense of humour along with a genuine interest in SF's development, and it shows in the zine. Poul Anderson reminisces evocatively about his and Gordon Dickson's younger days in Minneapolis, and there are some interesting if incomplete ideas from Carol Kennedy dividing people into Leaders, Followers and Loners. Also Theodore Sturgeon's Goli speech at Minicon 15.

SF & F Journal 90 (Don Miller, 12315 Judson Rd., Wheaton, MD 20906, USA; \$1.75 or 3 for \$6.00, supplements sent free to those mentioned; USQ D; 66pp, supplements 10pp, 22pp, 10pp and 10pp.) Much delayed due to illness, the incredibly meticulous listings in the supplements mention fanzines I produced in 1976. The main zine contains a huge pile of sensible but dull book reviews; the best part is an Alexis Gilliland article about our future of robots, labour shortages, the ozone layer, and the coming end of civilisation. Inspiring stuff.

Starling 37 (Hank Luttrell, 20th Century Books, 2619 Monroe St., Madison, WI 53711, USA; \$1.50, \$5.00 for 4, or contributions; USQ RL; 32pp.) Over a year since the last issue of this longestablished fanzine about SF and "the whole spectrum of popular art and media," it has undergone a sea-change and is now smoothly offset in the same style as Janus, though the sort of contents aren't much changed: articles on jazz (by Ted White), underground comics, and U.S. stand-up comedians. A bit of a mish-mash, really. Silly cover with a clown showing some kids a balloon in a very odd position.

P\* Xenolith 2 (Bill Bowers, PO Box 3157, Cincinnati, OH 45201, USA; US\$1.50 or editorial whim; USQ RL; 36pp.) Theoretically a genzine, this in fact contains intensely personal material from and about Bill's friends (and not-friends). Bill was Fan Guest of Honour at the 1978 Worldcon; if you want to know the welter of good and bad feelings he went through as a result, read this. Beautifully produced with superb art, as usual from Bill (who, of course, set new standards of visual quality with his previous big fanzine Outworlds).

#### Other Countries

Ariel 2 (Marc Ortlieb, 70 Hamblynn Rd., Elizabeth Downs, SA 5113, Australia; the usual; A4 D; 24pp.) Cleanly produced but otherwise uninspired genzine, redeemed by a seven-line do-it-yourself Convention Gossip Report: "At the time they were ..... but later in the ..... they were seen to ..... but before a photo could be taken they ....."

F\* Bunchy Watches Fanzines 1 (Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 103, Brunswick, Vic. 3056, Australia; trade, decent loc or \$1Aus; A4 D; 20pp.) A new venture from a very experienced fan, this is almost entirely fanzine reviews from a fan-ish viewpoint; very perceptive and detailed without being malicious.



Chunder! vol. 3, nos. 7, 8, 9 (John Foyster, GPO Box 4039, Melbourne, Vic. 3001, Australia; \$2Aus for 10, or contributions; A4 D; 20pp, 20pp, 14pp.) The Australian fannish newszine, by the winner of GUFF (the Get Up-and-over Fan Fund, which paid for him to attend Seacon). Fairly verbose but lively conreports and fanzine reviews dominate these issues, though occasionally there is even some news. I'm looking forward to what he has to say on Seacon.

Intercom 1 (Marciano Giuseppe, Via Starrabba 22, 90126 Villagrazia (Palermo), Italy; 350 lire per issue, 1000 lire for the 3 1979 issues, or 4000 lire for 1980; 22 x 16 cm RX; 20pp.) "Newszine di science fiction", it says here, and with phrases like "E poi ecco Peter Weston, il 'boss' dell' organizzazioni" in its Seacon report who am I to disagree? It looks quite fannish as well as having SF content: worth it if you speak Italian.

S\* Noumenon 30, 31, 32 (Brian Thurogood, Wilma Rd., Ostend, Waiheke Island, Hauraki Gulf, New Zealand; £4 for 10 issues seamail or £7.50 for 10 issues airmail: send money to UK Agent, Keith Walker, 2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore Rd., Lancaster, Lancs, or the usual; 10" x 7½" RL typeset; pp. 20pp, 26pp.) For someone in New Zealand, which you might expect to be rather out of the way, Brian produces an incredibly lively, informative, up-to-date, and regular fanzine. He aims to produce 10 issues a year, and is keeping it up superbly at the moment. Book, film and art reviews, articles about records and wargames, and fanzine reviews like this make up most of the contents. There is a steadily increasing number of NZ fans, and they have just the first in a new national series of conventions — it's all go down there.

Q 36 A (Marc Ortlieb, 70 Hamblynn Rd., Elizabeth Downs, SA 5113, Australia; the usual; A4 D; 34pp.) Largely full of forced humour, e.g. the six-page editor-written fannish parody in very sub-Shakespearean blank verse and the piece on targs in SF; but there are some slightly less dull sercon locs on whether Anne McCaffrey is feminist enough.

SF Commentary 54, 55½ (Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Vic. 3001, Australia; \$5Aus. for 5, or the equivalent in £, or some of the usual, I expect; A4D; 30pp, and Q D; 8pp.) No. 54 is a rather going-through-the-motions issue of this sometimes very intellectually stimulating criticism zine; it contains Brian Aldiss and Roger Zelazny's contributions as GoH's at an Australian con in 1978, but it took ages to publish. Bruce's mind is on other things, as no. 55½ revealed: it's Bruce's report of his wedding, and it radiates happiness. I enjoyed it far more than no. 54.

The West of Minster's Library 1 (Marc Ortlieb, 70 Hamblynn Rd., Elizabeth Downs, SA 5113, Australia, for APES and trade; A4 D; 6pp.) Small fanzine reviewzine; fairly sensible, but little more detail than this.

The Wheels Adfentures 33 (Anders Bellis & Ahrvid Engholm, c/o Vanadisvågen 13, 113 46 Stockholm, Sweden; 1.25 skr per issue, or trade; A4 D; 10pp, with 8pp and 2pp enclosures.) More cheerful but very muddled Swedish fannish rubbish, with the bright spot of a literate John-Henri Holmberg article about Forry Ackerman, who was GoH at a local con. Other good things? — well, the staples are a nice copper colour...

Zelook 3, 4 (Forlaget Bactrianus, Solliveien 37, N1370 Asker, Norway; the usual; A4 D; 14pp, 10pp.) Cheerful chat on books and zines read. He criticises another fanned for not having his address in his zine, yet his own address is nowhere to be found in his own zine — it was on the wrapper, which many people throw away!

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# Mailbag

Here's our second experiment with a reduced typeface (all the way through this time!). Greg Hills suggests we should use double column layout in this reduced type but my typist assures me that this would waste too much space, what do you think?

Anyway, straight into some contentious material from a stalwart 'sercon' Scottish fan.

JIM DARROCH, 21 Corslet Road, Currie, Midlothian

Suprised, John, to read that you thought highly of the TIME OUT OF MIND prog. on Seacon. While I did enjoy it, the image given of a con was of a very sober-sided affair, with interminable lectures by pros. I can see how the programme had to be made this way, so as to remain interesting to the non-con-going viewer watching it, but it is a shame that it came out so straight. It's interesting, but have you ever wondered why we will watch most tv programmes on sf and yet miss the actual proponents of the art at cons. I mean, at Seacon I saw Clarke once - as I walked past him in a corridor - having missed all his talks etc. I would never have imagined myself as a non-programme-going fan (NB: not a fannish fan); strange.

Eve, I agree with your comments re SFWA etc wholeheartedly. In fact, I too became a bit pissed off at the amazing tendency of the American authors to totally vanish off the face of Brighton for almost the entire con (with the notable exception of R A Lafferty!). Your story concerning Pournelle is most disconcerting and it makes it even more astounding that he was seen to be wandering around the Metropole on Monday night complaining that the American dead-dog "party" did not have anything to drink (free booze, in other words). I don't know if this is the place to say this, but I am definitely of the opinion that British sf can do without the "snobbish" attitude displayed by the likes of Brunner or (surely) Moorcock. It is a source of great delight to me that most British writers are such bloody nice people, especially Aldiss, Priest and Ian Watson, ad infinitum.

What can be done with the Americans. If it must be known, I wasn't very much taken by the American fans either, sorry.

The couple of responses to my loc concerning YORCON are interesting. I don't really see that a heavily programmed con is not for neos. All I can do is reiterate my previous comments, viz: 1) cons without a programme are all very well, but do not help the neo, i.e. fans don't walk around looking for a lonesome looking neo-type just so that they can say "hi - come over and talk to us, bla bla bla", they don't. So the assumption that a low-key programme is going to give the neo time to mix is nonsense - he/she is going to be wishing all the time that he is trying to mis "I wish there was something on the programme that I could watch". The point is, that most regular con-goers are too involved in their own circle to be bothered talking to 'strangers' - indeed, surely this is why the term "neo" is used in such a purely derogatory way: those people not in a circle are newies and as such to be frowned upon. Will someone please explain to me why so many fans love to think of themselves as God's gift to humanity? Do these elitists think that because they've been in fandom for a relatively long time, that they invented it and are entitled to sole possession of conventions? It has always struck me as a mark of gross stupidity that some so-called fans do not read sf (I know that a lot of joking goes on, but some "fans" know bugger all about sf, so surely THEY are the neos!). 2) What's the objection to reasonably programmed cons - oh, I see - they cost money. Sorry.

\*\*\*\*\* Phew, there must be some of you "fannish fans" out there willing to answer that lot! Since we've made our views only too clear throughout the rest of this issue, and past issues, we'll let someone else have the pleasure of replying.

Now, staying with the neo-fan "problem".

RICH PHILPOTT, 12 GLENBROOK SOUTH, ENFIELD

Helen McNabb's comments on the "Alienation of the Neofan" are so true, the utter hate garbage from various quarters and the jargonese are enough to make you puke! Let's try and keep up the comment and the criticism without the personal back-stabbing.

On the question of the amount of physical work to do, such as stuffing envelopes (especially when the membership reaches 2/3000!) how about having a few people dotted around the country to receive bulk deliveries and they could then sort and post to individuals. First of all of course you would need to split the whole country into regions and have a person(s) in each. I volunteer for London and the South-East!



I say to the SFWA members' attitude and behaviour, if what Eve has said is typical - get stuffed! Next time perhaps we won't have to go to the effort of inviting them (and paying for the privilege?).

\*\*\*\*\* The 'how do I get into fandom' problem is one that has beset new fans since the year dot. Everybody 'in' fandom now has gone through it so it can be done. Your distribution ideas are worth thinking about - I expect Keith Freeman will have something to say, but at first glance it would seem more expensive to send each mailing out twice (once in bulk, and then individually) and also it would require sorting.

Eve's comments on certain SF authors' attitudes brought quite a wide response.

MICHAEL ASHLEY, 86 St James Road, Mitcham, Surrey

I thoroughly agree with you about the attitude of some American pros, especially Jerry Pournelle, whose name cropped up a couple of times in your article "To Meet or not to Meet." His demands reminded me of another incident at Seacon. The "Meet the Celebrities" fiasco (Throw a hat over a famous SF personality and Win a Prize!) was followed by a disco. Of course, this didn't suit Jerry Pournelle who was complaining loudly that the "Meet the Celebrities" party was too short, claiming that more people wanted his autograph than they did a disco. The person who had to put up with these hysterical ravings was Bob Shaw who did his best to placate Pournelle, Arthur C Clarke and a few fans also came to the foyer where Pournelle was arguing, and, naturally enough, an impromptu signing session took place. Clarke and Shaw were friendly and talkative, but Pournelle left after a few minutes. Perhaps this was because not one person had asked for his autograph?

Anyway, what the above hopefully illustrates is that Jerry Pournelle is an exception rather than the rule. I noted that it was he who demanded on the behalf of the SFWA for a suite. I wonder what the other SFWA members think of Pournelle?

\*\*\*\*\* Now some reaction from a non-member (send round C+ boys!)

ALLEN BOYD-NEWTON, Luckyard Farm Cottage, Wheddon Cross, Via Minehead, Smt.

As you probably know, I started and have been involved in the running of our local Fan Group, one of the members does belong to the BSFA and he showed me a copy of Matrix 26 and Eve's article 'To Meet or not...' caught my attention. She did raise some valid points and most of us realise how hard she worked in the Fan Room during Seacon - though nobody forced her to do so - the remark that I take exception to occurred about three quarters of the way through the article. I sympathise to some extent with her saying authors' personalities can put her off their books, there's one or two writers whose books I'd enjoyed before I met them, which was just as well or I might never have got round to reading them and denied myself the pleasure of reading some good books. Yes, it is a valid point, though one should be more open minded and accept books on their own merit. No, what I really objected to was a rather unfair attack on John Brunner, why have people in British Fandom such a down on him? Eve is by no means his only detractor, but to use a throw away remark with nothing to back it up is rather naughty, I've never understood this attitude towards John, who is a fine writer and has helped us, his local fan group. Next time Eve wants to have a go at him perhaps she will give some reasons, it is unfair to attack an author's attitudes without saying what they are, almost as if it is something everyone knows and recognizes, which I, for one, don't. As co-editor of the BSFA's Matrix Eve should know a little of its past (BSFA, not Matrix). Well, I think I'm right in saying that John was one of the most enthusiastic Chairmen you've ever had, not only did he attend convention Business meetings - he insisted on chairing them, ask Keith Freeman, he was vice-chairman at the time. Well, that's my gripe and I hope some of it gets into the local of Matrix - even if I'm not a BSFA member....

\*\*\*\*\* I think I had better leave that one to Eve. "Thanks, John, now before I begin, I had better point out that I'm typing this after a good alcoholic lunch at work - so please allow a certain amount of leniency. Well, you are partially right, Allen, I should have explained the basis for my dislike of John Brunner, but as it's a personal opinion and I wasn't trying to persuade other people to dislike him, I hadn't thought it necessary. I'm not sure how many conventions you've been to, but my dislike has built up over the years since 1974 when I first really noticed him at a con. With so many people watching him, John seems to put on an act, he appears to despise us mere readers. This was confirmed when we were attempting to organise the 1978 Eastercon bid. At the Novacon in 1976 Simone Walsh was going around trying to collect supporting signatures for our bid in the following year and she approached John Brunner. His reply was "That's a bit fannish isn't it?" and walked off. Well, if he didn't want to get involved in convention organisation because he's now a pro, I could have understood, but to make such a derogatory statement, without any qualification, and then walk away in contempt, seems to me a little high-handed. It is difficult to enumerate the other occasions, because as I said to begin with, it's a personal dislike. He just appears to feel himself superior, never really talking to us plebs. Many authors who are friends of mine say he is quite nice when you get him on his own, but he definitely puts on an

act when in front of his 'public', and I personally dislike anyone who cannot be themselves, no matter what the occasion. I could go on for hours, but as I said to begin with, my dislike is purely personal and I wasn't trying to persuade other people to dislike John Brunner. I'm not exactly coherent at the moment, but believe me, if John Brunner would come up to me and prove otherwise, I would gladly change my opinion of him." (Eve)

GREG HILLS, PO Box 770, Wanganui, New Zealand

Comment on American authors made interesting chewing. I'm not sure I like the tone of xenophobia creeping into it ("of course, our writers would never do that"), but that does not mar the basic point you made. This sort of snobbishness seems omni-present in all of human society - including fandom itself. BNFs and WKF's (the latter more than the former, probably because of feelings of insecurity and inferiority) and common or garden fans (these most of all) tend to sneer with little or no justification at neofan. As a result, neofan has become a dirty word. "Have you heard the latest neofan's blooper?"

Thus instead of a really healthy attitude of mutual friendship and aid, the true atmosphere of fandom has become one of a homeostatic internecine war. (Big words, and I haven't got my dictionary. Damn.) Fans entering are subjected to a battery of contempt and indifference. Many of them promptly drop out again. The ones who stay are the same bickering sort that the fans already in fandom are, and so it goes. Eventually a few fans may break into print. These fans, raised in the backbiting, class-ridden world of fandom, naturally are the sort to feel that as people whose words are considered to be worth money, they are above the common muck and deserve all sorts of concessions and honours. And when a few such fans gain control of an organisation such as SFWA - as they will always tend to - that organisation provides the perfect fulcrum on which they can exert Pressure. Just like a Union.

I'm glad the SEACON committee did not give in to the extent of handing out free food & drink to the visitors; however, in my opinion, they should not even have given them a free suite. Absolute maximum concession should have been reduced rate. Look, the fact that Worldcons held in the U.S. give the authors free suites has no bearing anywhere else. If the U.S. fan are so cowed as to do that, let them. But it is a fetish that should be kept in the U.S. and not taken as reason to demand the same outside of the U.S. If the con committee sees its way clear to offer such a suite to visitors that's fine; but demands should be met with refusals.

Alan Dorey is an asshole. I don't normally make statements that strong about people, especially not for print; but when I see someone telling us how we should be setting out to do Great Things in such a patently fatuous way, I just have to sneer. As you probably know, I am one of the people in N3F who are trying to get that cranky, inert lump of fannish talent into motion. And one of the biggest impediments to progress is the stupid...the stupid...assholes (my vocab fails me) who sit around and knee-jerk mumble "Oh yes, we must do something, mumble, gurggle, we really ought to get someone to do blah blab snurkle what are you all sitting round for?"

Alan Dorey's piece sounded exactly like these people.

Look, there is only one bloody way to Get Things Done in fandom - and that is to go out and either do or organise them yourself. Alan has taken the first step - he is on the BSFA committee. Fine. But that position means that he is one of the people who should be doing the doings; not sitting around in the Matrix newscol and rumbling irritably at people's apathy.

N3F has an Agent network that is world-wide. We have agents in the U.S., Britain, Poland, NZ, Australia, South Africa. The network is not yet fully operative, but we have the bones of it. We have the bones because someone actually went out and asked fans if they would do it. They didn't say 'do you want to do it?' and then leave the person on their own. They asked 'please do it' and kept them fed with info and pep until that person started moving. In case you are interested, the British Agents for N3F are Keith Walker (of Fanzine Fanatique infame) and Roger Waddington. They can take £ for N3F membership and pass them on. No currency fiddles... Anyway, N3F has this network, is that the end of it? Oh, no! It required constant communication and persuasion to keep it ticking over until we get organised enough to use it right. If we just let things be, it will soon collapse.

And so we come to BSFA. The only way for the BSFA to achieve anything is if it takes positive steps, with the people wanting action actually doing the work. And once a project is begun, the person instigating it must stick with it in order to keep it on the right path. No, don't ask me to help. I'm only active in BSFA to the extent of locating the zines and maybe soon using a couple of the services. I'm over-extended as is, in NZ, Australia and the US. If I took on BSFA work as well, I'd just muff the lot. One thing I can do, though, is try acting as liaison between N3F and BSFA. There cannot be enough ties between these two clubs. I am running for N3F Director this year, though I do not yet know whether I will win or lose. If I win, I will see to it that BSFA promotion material sent to N3F is distributed with its zines and at Cons; if BSFA will do the vice versa. You all enjoyed SEACON, didn't you? A freer access to US fandom could well help you have more such, more often... and N3F is an access route

\*\*\*\*\* Boy, words fail us! If you feel that Alan Dorey is a person who is all mouth and no work then you obviously haven't been reading your Matrix recently. In fact, we are all more worried that he is doing so much he'll burn himself out.



I think you might have a good point on N3F, perhaps their British agent would like to tell us more, how about it Keith? Alan's plans for the future of the BSFA have given others food for thought, besides Greg.

STEVE B INCE, 5 Otterburn Street, Hessle Road, Hull

I read with great interest the article by Alan Dorey on the future of the BSFA. I agree with much of what he said and I would like to put forward my own ideas or extensions of his.

It strikes me that an increase in the membership should be as swift as possible as a gradual increase would not supply the initial money to start on new ventures. Perhaps one way of doing this would be to make the BSFA more attractive to members of local clubs by offering to help with events or jointly run events with them. Perhaps other people can come up with other schemes.

Paying someone to oversee the production of magazines is all very well (and will be linked with my earlier point of a swift rise in memberships) but you still have the problems of stuffing envelopes. Perhaps as a science fiction group we could develop a device to attach to a monkey's brain to raise his intelligence enough to stuff envelopes. Feeding it bananas should be cheaper than paying someone. But seriously, stuffing 2,000 envelopes would be very boring.

The relationship for the BSFA with publishers/radio/TV should be that the people thinking of doing a TV programme, say, could ask for our advice or ask how they could get in contact with certain people who might give the start they want. Perhaps there could even be a consultant attached to the BSFA for TV/radio who could point out such and such a set is ridiculous because.....

The point about employing the person to see to the magazines is a good one and because this will not take up the whole of the two months between mailings his position could also cover the establishing of contacts with the libraries and so forth that was mentioned. Also, better contact with local and university groups would be a good thing. Con committees could, through the BSFA, reach a wider audience. If the BSFA could work out some way to get large groups into cons at slightly reduced prices this would be a better thing, too. Some ideas of mine which are perhaps a bit much: the BSFA could set up its own publishing company (perhaps as a subsid. of another, major company) for books and magazines that wouldn't normally come to the fore. If Focus is doing as well as people suggest (I personally thought it was very good) perhaps this could be developed into a fully professional magazine.

I wish Alan Dorey every success with his plans and stand behind him. I will do anything I can to help revitalise the BSFA.

ANDY HOBBS, Riverlyn House, Havering Lane, Notts

Alan Dorey is a very amusing writer at times and I found his bit in M25 very readable. However, I very much doubt whether I would have been as interested in it if I had read it in M20 - my first mailing and my first tentative step into fandom, a realm of existence I had no previous knowledge of. Alan, our revered chairman, presents a picture of total disinterest in science fiction per se and for a complete neo (no, I'm not: I went to Seacon! Gosh wow. Don't print this bit) this could be, to say the least, rather disconcerting. OK, he presents a few items of news about the BSFA in his piece, he asks for comment and criticism about the mailings and generally does all the things a chairman should when addressing his minions. In this case I don't think that using the word minions is wrong - Alan seems to be presenting himself as a very tongue in cheek (or aloof, depending on your degree of 'neohood') chairman.

I don't think that the chairman should be straight-jacketed into writing serious and meaningful tracts for the membership. However, new readers and members will expect to find a certain affinity with their chairman; to the extent that they can at least relate to him because he is a fellow science fiction reader. Alan just does not convey this impression at all. Naughty.

WILLIAM RAINS, Flat 13 G Tocil, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL

Future of the BSFA. If the organisation is to expand, or even to survive at its current level times of managerial shortage or, God forbid, total incompetence, some form of paid help is vital. This applies especially to the mailing which is not only the lifeblood of the corporate existence of the BSFA as a group but also drains aforesaid blood from the poor wretches who have to put it together (I gather from hearsay). A paid employee (most are) requires money. Even if it is only temporarily employed or is shared with (say) the SF foundation money is still required. So far, I gather, the finances of the BSFA are too small to contemplate money on this scale without feeling weak in the spine of the account books. Ergo more members. Ah, can't have more members until... This is known as the Bloody Taxes Paradox, because when it occurs in business it is usually blamed on high rates of taxation.

The way to get round it is to stay still, or even regress to a membership of 450 or so. Those who felt lost with me at Seacon might ponder just what a BSFA with a 3000 strong membership would be

like, and I think we should get some sort of idea as to whether such a behemoth of fannish organisation is possible or desirable. Given that it is, just asking for suggestions is a fruitless way of seeking a route there. Far better is to put suggestions and have them shot down by helpful idiots who write 'No, my idea (which I have had since 1977 but did not want to trouble you with) is far better than yours because...'. An open ended cry for help requires positive action, seldom forthcoming. Many closed ended suggestions covering the same ground elicit negative criticism in vast amounts (even, you will be amazed to hear, in the placid letter columns of the BSFA) into which some helpful comments leak purely by accident. Could we therefore have our resident expert company secretaries, librarians, publishers etc. to name a completely random few suggest ways their own little patch could help the birth pangs of the Bigger Science Fiction Association for us peasants to be rude about. My suggestion is that we, that is you, think seriously about either restricting new membership or putting the mailing on a quarterly basis until we sorted out where we are going, let alone how we are going to get there, as otherwise clouds of steam will begin to burst from committorial ears as they collapse from overwork.

I am glad to see that Matrix is at last taking Dr Who seriously. Many other TVSF programs are badly maligned by the SF community. The question 'Does Captain Kirk suffer severe constipation' (for who has ever seen him relieving himself? And he is never content to stay still on that bridge very long) and 'How much magnesium goes into the alloys making up the basic infrastructure of the Liberator?' (viz the showers of sparks whenever it goes wrong) are seldom asked in fandom and I think this situation should be altered. Let's face it. They should never be asked. Personally I think some members of fandom would be more interested in a homosexual Mr Baker than Dr Who.

ANDY SAWYER, 59 Mallory Rd, Birkenhead, Merseyside L42

Alan Dorey is making the right noises as chairman and I wish him luck. Before publishers come to the BSFA for advice or information, they have to be aware of us and hopefully Dave Langford's Press Releases will increase this awareness. (As a personal note, I was recently asked for some information on SF by a children's book publisher and took the opportunity there to mention the BSFA). I've always been dubious about a paid 'administrator' and I still think there are problems but to keep the present healthy impetus Alan talks about going something must be done, and the alternatives offer equal if not more problems. Perhaps if someone was paid to co-ordinate the BSFA and look after equipment - such as the litho machine, if that is obtained - the Committee would have more control and something could be done about items which "disappear". I would suggest that the Committee prepare a proper report on the alternatives, financial and otherwise, facing us, and present it in the near future to be discussed in Matrix.

Paperback Parlcour was an improvement over the previous issue which surprised me because I got an impression which I never thought I'd get from something with Joe Nicholas at the helm - that he wasn't quite sure what to do with it. I do think that it is still not up to the standard of Phil Stephensen-Payne's editions; Phil attempted to list as completely as possible new SF paperbacks, with at least a few words on each: Joe is going for more lengthy reviews with consequently a long list of "books received" at the end. If a book deserves half a page or more of comment review it instead (or as well) in Vector. At the moment we are getting neither in-depth reviews or succinct 'capsule' reviews. PP should aim consistently for the latter.

(Having been critical I must admit that I thought Dave Langford's review of the Leiber books to be a perfect example of a short review which manages to make relevant general statements about the genre and the author and then go on to make particular critical comments in the light of those generalities in the space of three short paragraphs. Other reviewers, please take note!)

An interesting and varied letter column. I'm in favour of the reduction, if you can manage it. I see Alan Marshall is still actually watching Dr Who - "while eating my tea" indeed! For what it's worth, "The Pooh Perplex" - the book I assume Alan refers to is funny because the Pooh books are so obviously good that a satire on literary analysis aimed at them is going to hit the target because, as the analysis is worthwhile, will come up with something worth reading because the purpose of criticism is to illuminate a text, sending up the process of analysis is going to increase the pleasure. It's when what is analysed is bad that we get



the kind of nit-picking questions Alan poses at the end of his first paragraph, because there's no stimulus for intellectual argument. Incidentally, I'd better point out, because it's not clear from the original quotation and it's context in Alan's letter whether he or Spider Robinson are actually aware of this, that "The Pooh Perplex" (if it is the book they mean and not something else entirely that I've not come across) is actually meant to be funny, "analysing" Pooh from various standpoints including Jungian, Marxist, and Freudian. As I've said, it wouldn't be such a strong joke if such analysis was totally irrelevant or if the Pooh books were third-rate hackwork and as such is totally alien to what Alan is anathemizing, which is second-rate nitpicking of third-rate works.

Having said that, I think it's self-evident that Dr Who sends itself up rotten and has done ever since Tom Baker appeared on the scene, and I'm surprised that Alan hasn't noticed more of this. It's gone through a stage a couple of years ago where it was trapped by its own conventions and someone seems to have realised that in such a case the only thing to do is to use those conventions and point them out, playing with them rather than using them as crutches. Or, in other words, camping the whole thing up!

A memo to Mary Gentle: I do know two people who thought LOTR was the best thing they'd ever seen. They are, however, seven and five years of age... with immense sadness, I've not been able to bring myself to see the film.

\*\*\*\*\* We'll come back to LOTR and Dr Who shortly, but for now here's some more reaction to Paperback Parlour.

GWYNFOR JONES, 34 Bryn Gwynt, Amhoch Port, Agnlesey, Gwynedd, Nth Wales

I couldn't agree less with Keith's feeling of 'disappointment' with the content of Paperback Parlour. Since when has it been the singular privilege of Vector to print dreary reviews? Why object to the gatecrashing of such a worthy cause? Though, someone must explain to me how to succeed in being both 'dreary' and 'clever' at the same time! Seventyfive percent (if not more) of the books reviewed in Vector have the dubious distinction of being ludicrously priced hardcovers. As I have stated before I cannot afford to gorge in this (what is for me) the exclusive end of the market catered for by Vector. My limited incursions into the land of the hardback has been to forage for the illusive 'coffee table' reference books on the genre someone mentioned in the last issue and the classics such as Foundation and Dune. The fact that the editor of Paperback Parlour does not like a certain novel I think is irrelevant, people buy books no matter what the critics say. I treat critics as informed signposts not as omnipotent, pedantic gods. I think that Paperback Parlour provides a very good service on the whole and I hope it will continue to do so for years to come.

\*\*\*\*\* Now for some criticism on Matrix.

PAUL DEMBINA, 29 Howcroft Cres, Finchley, London N3

Firstly, the cover, I didn't like it much. I really don't see the relevance of the Village People to Science Fiction, what with that and that message plastered over the top of the page, well it made me cringe a bit. You see, I like to read my mailing on the tube to college but goodness knows what people thought I was reading (perhaps Matrix the magazine of the British Singing Fags Association).

Another sore point with me is the continued waste of space given up to interminable lists of fanzines, it was much too long this issue. If you must have a fanzine section keep it down to a couple of pages only. Then you can review a few in depth so that at least you get an idea of what the fanzine is like. Otherwise it's a case of ploughing through the list and picking a name you like the look of (obviously this must be a factor involved in the naming of fanzines judging from some of the names).

Whatever happened to SF Media News. It seems to have left a gap that has not been filled i.e. not a single film review for a couple of mailings let alone other media events. I've been waiting for your opinion on "Alien", a film I thoroughly enjoyed. It was competently acted (you can't expect too much from people playing second fiddle to a hunk of flesh, teeth, and what can only be described as slime), excellently photographed (the best alien I've ever seen) and superbly edited. The tension was kept at breaking point by not allowing us to see too much of the creature.

Finally a plea from the heart, is this the end of Elmer T Hack? He isn't in the last Vector, I just help it's only with a small hangover from Season (drinking away his sorrow at not winning the Hugo with his novel "On the Run from Snogbroozian Comblebrackers").

\*\*\*\*\* Shame about the cover, we all thought it was a good laugh. Jim Baker was quite amused at "The British Singing Fags Association" - you could start a new trend! As to Media News it

should be in this mailing - I've missed it too.

CHRIS EVANS, 32 Balfern Grove, Chiswick, London W4

The short answer to Bill Bains's queries about our editorial policy regarding fiction for Focus (Letters, last issue) is that Rob and I are prepared to consider as open-mindedly as possible any manuscripts (of up to 5,000 words) which are sent to us. We try very hard not to be rude or curt in our replies to people who submit stories which we can't use; after all, it's only our opinion, and we don't claim to have a monopoly on wisdom. We will also try, wherever possible, to give reasons why we felt unable to do so. However, it's inevitable that most of our replies will be relatively short, since we are editors of a magazine seeking suitable material for publication, and not a "teach yourself to write" correspondence school" as Bill himself puts it. Neither Rob nor myself would presume the expertise for such a role, and in any case we don't have the time to write lengthy appraisals of every manuscript we receive since both of us are trying to pursue our own writing careers outside of editing Focus. We should have more to say on this subject in our editorial in the next issue of the magazine but there's no reason why anyone shouldn't submit work to us which they themselves believe in. Part of the avowed function of Focus is to showcase developing talent, and we'd be cutting our own throats if we adopted a sneering and snobbish attitude towards potential contributors.

One thing which is worth reiterating, though, is that contributions or queries requiring a personal response should be accompanied by an s.a.e. if return/reply is required. A number of people are forgetting this, and thus putting an additional strain on our already limited budget. In future, we won't be able to return material or reply to questions which don't have covering postage, since neither our pockets nor the Focus account is healthy enough for such extravagance.

Having said this, I'd still like to remind people to send us any general queries, criticisms or suggestions which they might have (covering postage wouldn't be needed for such questions which we could run in the mag). Although we're pleased by the generally positive response to the first issue, we're disappointed with the relatively small number of loc's we've received so far. Focus, like Matrix and Vector, is a service to BSFA members, and unless we get some constructive feedback (be it positive or negative) it's going to be difficult to judge whether we're providing the kind of articles and items which people want.

So don't just sit there - write!

\*\*\*\*\* Finally on the BSFA mailings -

DAVE ELLIS, 6 Talisman Walk, Saltcoats, Ayrshire

In response to Alan Yarwood's epistle in Matrix 25, from which I gather that he is not specifically too enamoured with Fantasy Trader and consequently would be well pleased to see it disappear from BSFA mailings; this raises some interesting (or not as the case may be) ideas on how to combat the BSFA's rising costs. Perhaps, somewhere on the mailing list, there is someone who intensely dislikes Matrix. There may also be someone who absolutely loathes Vector. Maybe, another detests Focus or finds Paperback Parlour Puerile. Therefore these publications could also be removed from the mailings, thus cutting expenditure (at a stroke) to a fraction of its present level. Now if we could just find somebody who really hates brown manilla envelopes....

Seriously though, I have another solution to your problem Alan. There is, as yet, no unalterable BSFA edict; no supreme directive; no unwritten eleventh commandment, to the effect that, thou shalt peruse all material sent out by the BSFA. In short, if you don't like it don't read it. There will be no major repercussions - I doubt if anyone will even come round to shove bamboo shoots up your toenails.

\*\*\*\*\* Now, as promised, more on the LOTR film.

ANTHONY DIVEY, 47 Ridley Ave, West Ealing, London W13

As a member of the BSFA for 2 years, I have at last been stirred out of my apathy by Mary Gentle's letter (M25) on Bakshi's 'Lord of the Rings'. OK so she didn't like it, fair enough, but I find most of her criticism unjustified.

Firstly, she complains that parts have been cut out and then means about it covering only the first half of the book. What does she want - the whole book condensed into two hours? To film a book in two parts is perfectly valid, as in Bondercluck's 'War and Peace' for example. To edit out the earlier adventures of the hobbits seems reasonable enough especially the rather unbelievable Bombadil (can you imagine how he'd come over?) Similarly the substitution for Glorfindel avoids the introduction of a redundant character whose contribution, as an individual, is negligible. Bakshi's job was to make a 'film of the book' not to recreate on celluloid each separate page of the text. The animation style itself is a personal thing, you either like it or you don't. However, I can't agree with all her criticisms. What did she expect the dwarves to



look like? They're supposed to be short with long beards aren't they? If anything Tolkein's descriptions come out of 'Snow White' and Bakshi was just following them. Tolkein's description of the Balrog is very vague and with so little to work on the Bakshi interpretation worked well enough. And, to be honest, the book does support the notion of camp elves. I'll agree with her on one point - the Ent was awful. I found the Black Riders quite sinister (apart from a passing resemblance to Richard III) and the 'rhyme and reason' was explained in the first five minutes - what was she doing then? The film doesn't specify 'this is a pteradactyl', sure it looks like one, but the book's description sounds like one.

Three other hardened LOTR readers were also impressed by the film, and yet all of us must have had different conceptions of the characters and events. I'll agree that the speed of the film could leave the uninitiated behind - nevertheless it is still visually impressive. To call the film 'rubbish' is scarcely an objective statement. It is a matter of taste. If anyone out there is thinking of seeing the film do so, you might even enjoy it providing you don't hold the book in the reverence that Ms Gentle appears to do.

Finally, I thought that Gollum, surely one of the toughest characters to put over ever created, was excellent. Jewish? Well, maybe he was. Who knows, in part II Sauron might turn out to be West Indian.

\*\*\*\*\* Well, I did ask if anybody had enjoyed it. Now back to the War of the Tardis.

MR. K YUEN, 23 Monmouth Ave, Sale, Cheshire

I enjoyed the Matrix Mailbag (26), especially Alan Marshall's letter disparaging the luckless Mark Greener. It is a great shame (and a damn nuisance) that the state of TV Science Fiction has regressed to its present and still falling level. Such stereotypes as Dr Who, (previously dealt with by A.M.) Blake's Seven (an occasionally interesting and original story-line usually squashed by embarrassing special effects. For example, it bodes ill when the control surfaces are operated by extremely sophisticated and advanced mechanical arms such as the device which illuminates my table) and Logan's Run, (the mere fact that this features an extremely good-looking girl flouncing around in skimpy clothes with practically nothing on underneath is not reason enough for me to watch it. I can assure you of that. (?) ) are but a few off the menu of pulp designed to feed the puerile fans who still wonder why Australians don't fall off the Earth and those nescient suppressives determined to give serious Science Fiction a bad name. An exception to this came in the guise of Quatermass, recently shown on the ITV network. A refreshingly original production. I hope there are more like it (Dream). Battlestar Galactica is opening here shortly, reputedly red-faced and squirming-in-armchair stuff. I reserve my opinion.

I realise that many readers would consider me dogmatic, perhaps excessively so and most would disagree with me strongly. Well, I'm not about to change my views but I will certainly listen to other people's.

\*\*\*\*\* What did anybody else think of the new Quatermass - I only saw one episode so I'd like to know what you thought of it. Another item I missed (twice - I'll be drummed out of the BSFA) was a recent play on Radio 4.

MIKE BRAIN, 2 Paddock Way, Higher Kinnerton, Chester

At last something has aroused my enthusiasm to write a LoC, and its about the play on Radio 4, broadcast on Monday 19th November. Who is this Steve Gallagher - has he written any novels or short stories with an SF theme, because his play "An alternative to Suicide" (not exactly an inspiring title) was very good. Naturally it appeared to contain concepts used by popular SF authors, and even some titles. Just to give you an idea, the plot contains sub-plots relating to Iron Star, Dark Star, Gateway, Collapsars, Singularity Travel, Clones, First Alien Contact, Mental Cyborgs (conditioning), Talking Computers, and Scoutships (wingmen).

The play had a "fast action" plot and good characterization, also the background music/effects was not obtrusive. I believe this is an author/playwright to watch out for, and if it's not too late, I'd like to include him in the nominations, along with the January 1979 episode of "Hitch Hicker's guide to the Galaxy" where Zaphod Beeblebrox is eaten by the Bugplatter beast of Traal, for the BSFA award. Any news of a new series of HHGTTG?

\*\*\*\*\* See the news section about HHGTTG. In M26 Steve Ince brought up the topic of artists vs illustrators, a graphic artist replies.

HUSSAIN R MOHAMMED, 64 Stanthorpe Road, London SW15

What does Mr Ince mean, "True art has to come from the artist..."? Where else would it come from? "This cannot apply to all book covers." Making what point? That illustration is not art because the artist is only doing it to earn money and has put none of 'himself' into it? What

utter nonsense. Is this by any chance yet another attempt to draw a firm line around some human endeavour so that it can be 'defined?' The graphic work attached is an example of the work I produce half-a-dozen or more times a week. Normally I only have a few fairs per piece which often leads to endless muttered curses, pointed snapping and the odd burst of paranoia. My charts and maps are illustrative - they are also art. For this reason. They are not meant to be profound, or didactic or analytical, just informative for the folks who read the articles. But, I do care how well they emerge from the heads-down-on-the-Letraset system. I worry that they aren't clear, that I put the capital city on the wrong side of the river, that - well I'm sure you get the idea. The care makes it art (of course it may well look as if I don't care, but if so it's bad workmanship, not attitude) not I think the purpose. Somebody stand up and tell me that Michael Whelan cared nothing at all about his cover for 'Fires of Azeroth'. (I shall die if himself hears that comment and says he didn't care!) Even crummy tunes is art if the composer was trying his best. Criticise his lack of style, impoverished imagination, lousy technique, whatever - but isn't it perfectly futile to argue is it art or is it not? As one or more famous SF authors have said on more than one occasion, there are easier ways of making a living than writing SF - or illustrating it, or making films based on it. I think 'Alien' is a large and pretty pile of cobbles. London Transport could with ease drive all their buses through it without touching the sides. But it has an abundance of fascinating moments. I'm certain the failure is due to their really not understanding what they were about. Take a quick look at the current issue of American Cinematographer and you'll see what I mean. Lotsa words, but what are they actually saying? They didn't know so they just kept talking. Even so it's art because a lot of exacting work went into it and definitely more than two people had some serious ideas to expound.

\*\*\*\*\* Finally, some thoughts on the value of sf criticism from:

DAVE WEBB, 136 Serpentine Court, Bletchley, Milton Keynes

What I take exception to are the various contributors to Vector and Matrix who accuse SF readers of reading all the crap that is put out by publishers. I fail to see how readers can distinguish the Good Stuff from the unmentionable unless they read it. Obviously even I don't go into my local W H Smiths and buy a glossy covered paperback titled (for example) "Ferry Rhodan No. 437 3/8 "The Squidgy Green Thing From The Unmentionable Moons of the Planet of Death". However I must admit to having purchased some pretty dire hackwork. A recent example, is that without knowing anything about the author I obtained a copy of Alan Dean Foster's "Icerigger". Having read what I can only describe as the most juvenile drivel ever to grace my bookshelf I am unlikely ever to read another book by Foster.

But hold on there! Even the best authors have times when their typewriters refuse to produce good literature. Is it fair to condemn an author after reading only one of his novels? However, having now read Vector 95 and Matrix 26 I have come across several uncomplimentary references which lead me to suspect that Mr Foster is not the most respected SF author around.

So perhaps the reader of SF should only buy what is recommended in reviews and articles. But then he is relying on the impartiality of the reviewer. Eve Harvey stated in "To Meet or Not to Meet" that her reading of a novel is affected by her knowledge of the author. I'm damn sure that any true fan would admit to having similar biases. In any case, no two people have the same tastes so I'm quite likely to enjoy a novel that has been gutted by a reviewer, or conversely hate something which is hailed as a masterpiece of SF. It's not even possible nowadays to rely on good literature from a book with "Hugo Award Winner" (or worse still "Hugo Award Winning Author") splurged across the front in GIANT gaudy letters. In my youth I was certain that all such books were worth savouring slowly and, sure enough, I was rewarded with such delights as "Dune" and "Left Hand of Darkness". However, of recent years nothing seems to have reached those heights. Okay, such novels as "The Forever War" and "The Gods' Themselves" were good fun at the time, but they don't live on in my memory like the aforementioned novels do. Having attended Seacon I can begin to understand why. It seems an odd system where because the Americans out-numbered everyone else 2:1 that the winners were the most popular writers in the USA at the moment. If it was published in Britain but not the other side of the Atlantic it didn't stand a snowball's chance in Hell. Furthermore it seems that most winners (and probably other American nominees) are producers of coffee-table books that everyone reads when first published, but has forgotten about a year or so later.

I did not vote in the Hugo Awards. This was because I had not read the works nominated (were they all freely available in Europe?) and could see little point in voting for my favourite authors. The awards are for the material nominated not because Anne McCaffery or Roger Zelazny has written some popular stuff in the past which I have enjoyed. Talking to other members of Seacon this seemed to be a common complaint. It seemed particularly sad that something like the superb "Hitch-Hikers' Guide" was beaten by a big budget movie like "Superman". The latter may have been great entertainment, but it was hardly great SF. In fact, I would hesitate in labelling it SF at all. Again it's a case of the "Film of the Moment" with all the special effects blowing the minds of highly susceptible Yanks. I look forward to seeing it on TV (probably at Christmas) in about five years' time.



# THE ONLY-JUST-MADE-IT BIT

Yes, I did say that was the last letter of this issue but two more have arrived since I wrote that, so let's squeeze them in. First here's Keith Freeman with some further comments on topics already raised.

KEITH FREEMAN, 269 Wykeham Road, Reading

Eve, obviously, took this opportunity to let off steam - though whether her article will have any effect is arguable. Jerry Pournelle, for one reason or another (maybe he's just loudest) appears to be the leader of the "fans should only adore me at a distance" brigade. He's said, publicly, that fans make no difference at all to his book sales... I feel it's rather funny, having heard that statement, that he should say, in the October issue of Analogy, that fandom could influence the American government and get them to spend more money on the space programme. How can "an organization containing 100,000 'hard-core' members... that has excellent monthly communications... has the ability to persuade over a million people to pay several dollars each to read its literature... holds annual conventions attracting thousands... several hundred informal newsletters" (his words) be lightly dismissed, by him, as having no effect whatsoever on his book sales?

Luckily, here, it seems that the majority of the authors are far friendlier towards fandom (and your list could be extended by a lot of other names, Eve). I used to see too much of Bob Shaw (but he's been on a diet this last couple of years). Indeed, I don't think there are any British SF authors (and several Americans who almost qualify as British, 'cos they attend so many of our conventions) who attend Cons who do not mix extensively and are (in my experience) very readily approachable.

Eve then goes off on a bit of a side-track... the problems of liking authors and liking (or not) their works. Apart from John Brunner's name entering the article here (and, possibly, to some people becoming attached to the 'non-approachable-authors' group - which is certainly wrong) I feel this whole point is another topic entirely. I am, luckily, completely uninfluenced by my knowledge of an author when I'm reading a book... other than my knowledge gained through his (her) books. That is to say whether I like (or otherwise) an author-in-the-flesh I am not influenced as to whether I like (or otherwise) their books. Could this situation arise in any other genre??

Alan's views on the future of the BSFA suffer from one slight fault - although full of valid points and comments it suffers from a lack of positive plans. Broad, sweeping, statements are very uplifting - but let's hear how he's going to increase the membership, how he's going to make the transition from the present mailing set-up to a professional one, howhe's going to turn the BSFA into a clearing house for news etc. We can all nod wisely and agree with his points of view but the crunch comes when turning them into reality.

Hugh Davies makes some valid points (he mentions my name, I mention his - thus are the pages of Matrix filled). I noticed his letter in Computing (as he says) and sent him some BSFA bumph. Do others do this (if not, why not??). Probable answer is that they haven't suitable bumph to send. Perhaps Alan could get a volunteer so that if people read letters (trade papers, general papers - hell, anywhere) they could send a card with the name/address on it and an envelope of recruiting material could be put into the post. Another advantage (I've just thought of) about a single volunteer doing this is that if several people notice something the recipient will only get one envelope of recruiting material! On this same subject I was at a book sale the other week and got talking to one of the organisers. He was, he said, very interested in SF but had had to sell his collection (wish I'd known about that!); I asked if he knew of the BSFA? Answer (as expected) was no! Well, after all we've only been going 20 odd years... Even more interesting was a thought I had - I'm sure he could have been persuaded to have a pile of BSFA bookmarks to give away... I'm equally sure other organisers of book-sales (even those not interested in SF) could also be easily persuaded - after all something given away is not going to hurt them is it? Any thoughts?

Peter Crowther makes a valid point on the 'value' of Vector, Focus, Matrix and their price tags. If I remember rightly the prices were calculated on the simple basis of it being more expensive to buy all the publications rather than becoming a member! So, I think, the value of the various publications must still be worked out on the basis of are they (all) worth £6 a year (and remember other services that £6 includes).

If Dave Lewis thinks the "'ole arguments about the cost of litho" is solved by buying a machine he's living in cloud-cuckoo-land, not Suffolk. No, perhaps he's right, the old arguments are solved - but a whole lot of new ones rear their ugly heads... cost of paper/ink/masters etc, cost of storing same (OR problems of cost versus warehousing etc), who's going to spend the time running the machine, collating, stapling, cost of repairs to machine and lots more....

\*\*\*\*\* On the price of Vector etc I really think it's a little foolish to put an inflated price on the cover in a rather short-sighted attempt to prove that the membership fee is value for money. This is especially so when Vector does not look 75p-worth and then loses outside sales. Members do get value for money and besides being a member of the BSFA is the only way to get a copy of this wonderful journal!

And finally, a letter which proved to me that a 'sense of wonder' still exists.

STEPHEN RAMSDEN, Skellow Mill, Carcroft, Nr Doncaster, South Yorks

I've been a dedicated SF fan for a number of years now, however until Seacon I've always been a 'loner', without any contact with SF organizations. Not - I may hastily add - through an unsociable nature on my part, but rather through a combination of an unsettled life style and a lack of finance.

Now as fate would have it, I happened, by an amazing coincidence (yes I've been doing too much hitch-hiking lately) to be in Brighton on the Saturday of Seacon week-end. Whilst wending my way back to British Rail, I noticed much to my astonishment, a poster advertising the World Science Fiction Convention of all things! ... NOW ... HERE!! Well, nuff said and I quickly found myself at the Metropole.

Here I was met with a maelstrom of people, all busy talking to, waiting for, coming from and going to places. The notice board caught my attention... Will Arthur Clarke please contact the Scandinavian film crew Room 218 - it didn't click for a moment... Arth... THE Arth... then... Bob Shaw please contact Larry Niven asap... Harry Harrison your wife has been ringing. All these fabled names. With beating heart I sought out a telephone and with trembling fingers dialled a close friend.

"Hello, Ian?" "Yeah, Steve?" "Look Ian what are you doing this week-end?" "er... nothing much, why?" "Have you got wheels?" "Well I'm doing some work on the car sometime this..." "Look can you get some wheels?" "OK, OK what's up?" "Right, go and get in your car, drive down to Brighton and meet me in the Metropole Hotel in... say 3 hours." How nice it is to have friends.

Well we both really enjoyed it, in spite of being on our lonesome and not getting involved with anybody. This was because Ian is not really an SF buff, despite having a predilection for Hitch-hikers guide, Dark Star and sucj-like. (Incidentally, why didn't Hitch-hikers guide win? Fix!!) As for me, well I was in a state of subdued awe - I was surreptitiously following people round with my mouth open, saying under my breath "Good God, that is actually Brian Aldiss... in person" etc, etc. In fact my attitude could well be described as falling half way between an extreme form of sacred reverence and a stubborn determination not to be the slightest bit impressed by anything (the 'I'mnotgointobeseendeadaskingforautographs syndrome').

Which brings me finally to say a few things about this convention, as seen by a neo-fan. Firstly let me say that overall I was most impressed with the size of the convention, and the range to be seen, and my sincere thanks go to all those people who made it possible. So much was going on that it was difficult to decide what to concentrate on, and indeed one needed some will-power not to go rushing madly from one thing to the next in an attempt to get everything in.

Secondly I was a little disappointed, if not to say ashamed in front of our American guests, in some of the organization. For instance, when the projector breaks down four times in the showing of 'Superman' (the Hugo award winning dramatic presentation as well), one may be forgiven for suspecting that the organization is rather more amateur than it ought to be, for a convention of this size; and this was by no means an isolated incident. Needless to say there were a few grumbles from our western friends that this sort of thing never happened 'back home', which made me blush a bit for shame.

Despite the fact that I enjoyed the con, I must agree with Andy Hobbs' letter in Matrix 26, in which he believes that a neofan has an easier time at a small con. Although on the programme side Seacon was great, and I'm really glad I didn't miss the art exhibition there, for the very same reason it was difficult for the beginner on the social side - firstly because there were so many of the rich and famous (the rich all those able to afford rooms and drinks - famous all those people I've been reading the last ten years... able to afford rooms and drinks...) and one was intimidated from starting conversations (Hi, I'm Steve Ramsden .. Yeah? .. ah, Steve..ah..Ramsden? Nah.. sorry, never heard of you...) Secondly, the British contingent seemed to have depleted numbers, and actually finding someone English (or even Welsh) wasn't too easy. Though in theory I ought to be just as happy talking to an American fan as to an English one, in reality I was wanting to have a chatter with somebody who knew a bit about British fandom and with whom I shared the same sort of cultural background. Anyhow I did have a talk with a few people in the fanroom but most people seemed busy and I felt strained. So maybe in the end it was just me being too shy, however it did cross my mind that there might be a place where one could meet other new fans and talk to somebody whose job was to deal with people with my problem. But nothing seemed to be geared up for this kind of thing.

So I think probably it is a better idea to go to a small con first; where you can meet people from your own area, and socialize in a more relaxed atmosphere, than to go to a big con where there is a lot more going on but you will most likely stick it out on your own..

\*\*\*\*\* There were one or two red faces on the committee regarding the projectors, considering they were using a reputable audio-visual firm things should have been much better. If you'd like to make the trek to Glasgow next Easter, then come up to Eve or I and say "hi, I'm Steve Ramsden" we at least will know who you are (I hope!).



# Miscellany Corner

## THE BSFA SPELLING BEE

(Compiled by Mark Bassett & Steve Knight)

Below you will find a list of nearly a hundred titles of famous sf novels and short stories. However, each contains a slight spelling error, for in every title one letter has been either altered or deleted.

If you go through the titles, in order, writing down the letters that should stand in place of the incorrect characters, you will generate a new set of titles, similarly misspelt. By repeating this procedure you will arrive at two misspelt titles. To win the competition, correct the spelling of the final two titles and send in the correctly spelt names together with their authors before the end of February.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Lard Leviathan; Pobble in the Sky; Fozzy Sapiens; S is for Rocket; Ocean on Tap; The Rudestaff; The Naked Hun; Projector; Galactic Petrol; The toads must roll.

Baldo; The Galactic Pet-Healer; Chicky;

Count Bras; Rite of Massage; The Sheep Lock up; Spanners live in vain; The Mating of Star Trek; The Synthetic Hen of Mars; The Black Clod; Dragon Pong; A Transatlantic Funnel, Hurrah!; Stan on Zanzibar; Martian Time-Slop; Boldfinger.

Mutant 59: The Elastic Eater; Rut of the Silent Planet; The Winds of Bimbo; Jock of Shadows; Alpha Alpha Boulevard; Tame Enough for Love; The Milkie.

The Martian Gay; The Bank of Oberon; The Draught; Six Nun Planet; Why?; Tim Stop!; Doc Ravage; Call Tim Lord; Imperial Darth; Pockets in Ursa Major; Plants for Sale.

The Plant Buyer; The 11:38; The Mole in God's Eye; The Dank Design; Report on Probability B.

The Poxly Intelligence; Big Jack Barron; She Demolished Man.

High Risk; The Gnome; SOS the Pope; The Wombs of Atuan; The Farthest Sore; A Lizard of Earthsea; White Fang Goes Ding!; Gay Matters; Lucifer's Hamper; Ron of the Tree.

The Sailer on the Seas of Pate; Urn; God Bless You, Mr Nosewater; The Chinese Gent; The Einstein Interjection; Burn with the Dead; The Nuns of Avalon; Boat Song; Overlap; Nice Tomorrows; Bring the Jubilee; The Sin of the Unicorn; The World Snuffler; Gravy Plane.

Where late the Sweet Birds Sank; The Court of Chaps; Dr Cat; The Ear of the Comet; Whipping Stan; Ax; The Groin Kings; To your Scattered Bogies go.

A Plague of Lemons; Dorsal; The Fall of the Towels; Dung.

A Ball of Moondust; Wogan's Run; Retch for the Stars; Ova.

Parson of Venus; Slave Girl of God; Hrolf Kraki's Sago; Black Eater; The Andromeda Train.

Good luck with that - you shouldn't find it too difficult but it's fun just reading the titles. Now you know how it works, we'll do a more difficult one next time (if someone wants to send us one? It can be the same format you know.)

#### MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD

This is your opportunity to advertise free in Matrix. Personal ads only though please, but anything you want to buy, sell, plug your fanzine, beg articles, information, anything.

\*\*\*\*\*

Fusion 1 is now available (see fanzine review column for details) and Fusion 2 is in preparation.

Anybody wishing to submit fiction or artwork for inclusion in issue 2 please send it to:

Ken Mann  
22 Pennethorne Road  
Peckham  
London SE15

Fusion will continue to cover a wide range of fiction and poetry. Although SF and fantasy will occasionally be included, Fusion has a bias away from these. Apart from this there is no restriction on the acceptable types of fiction.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bernard Earp would like to buy old issues of "The Broons" annual, published by D C Thomson (except the 1977 compilation). Years and prices please to Bernard M Earp, 21 Moorfield Grove, Tonge Moor, Bolton, Greater Manchester BL2 2LQ.

\*\*\*\*\*

Berkshire Weyr - Anne McCaffrey's UK Fan Club. You want to Impress a Dragon? Get in this queue. A Fire Lizard? Certainly, that queue over there. There will be a slight delay, I hope you won't mind the wait? We are having a little difficulty in getting the Bugs out of our Sublight drive for our Merchant ships before we can get over to Pern for the eggs. In the meantime why not join the Fanclub?

If you are interested in any of the above and want further information send a large (A4) stamped and self-addressed envelope with 20p for the newsletter to: Berkshire Weyrleader Lord A'John, 72 Fitzroy Crescent, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire RG5 4EX.

\*\*\*\*\*

Still available at special reduced prices to BSFA members are the Seacon fanroom special publications:  
The Enchanted Duplicator by Bob Shaw & Walt Willis (the classic 50's fandom novel) - 50p  
Mood 70 - an anthology of 70's fanwriting edited by Kevin Smith - £1.00  
Fanartist Scrapbook ed Eve Harvey - £1.00

Postage & Packing 30p for 1 item, 40p for 2 or more. Available from Eve Harvey at Matrix editorial address. Cheques made payable to Seacon '79 please.





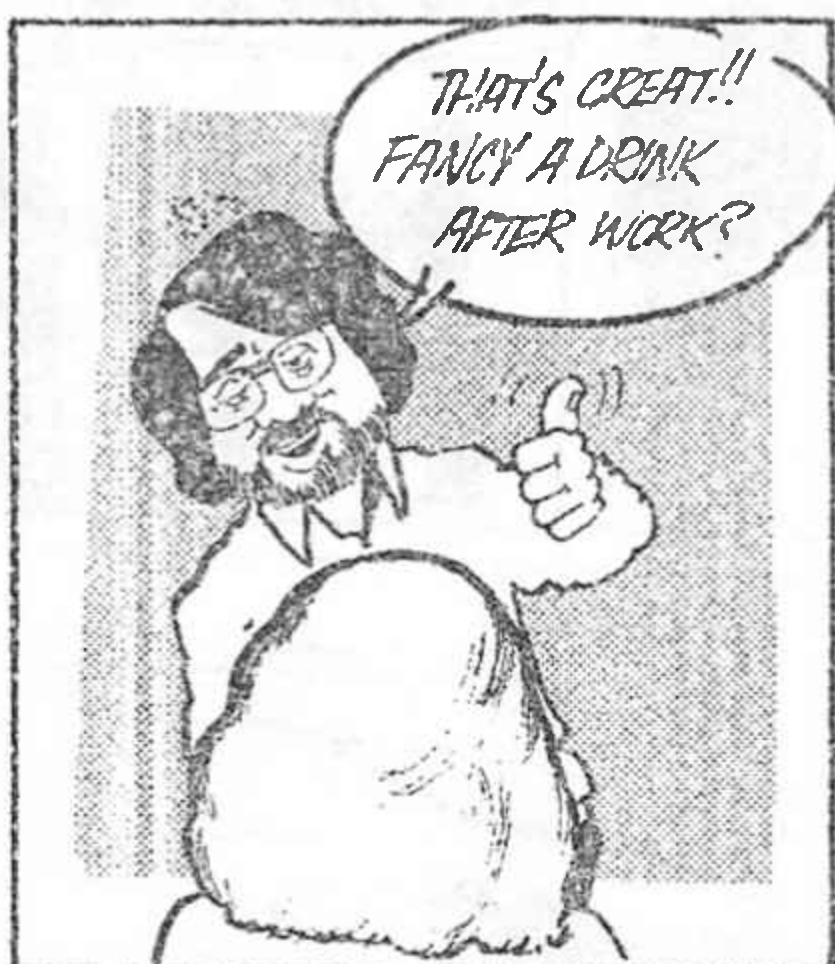
THE OFFICES OF 'THE DAILY MATRIX',  
NEWSPAPER OF THE ELITE...



...WHERE ONE STAFF MEMBER IS NOT  
EXACTLY HAPPY (so put it mildly!)  
MEET STAFF ARTIST BARK KENT...



HELLO, EVIE THE EDITOR'S  
SECRETARY, LOOKS AS FED  
UP AS I FEEL! THINK I'LL  
GO AND HAVE A CHAT



JINGS! THE  
EDITOR!!





# SHAZFAN

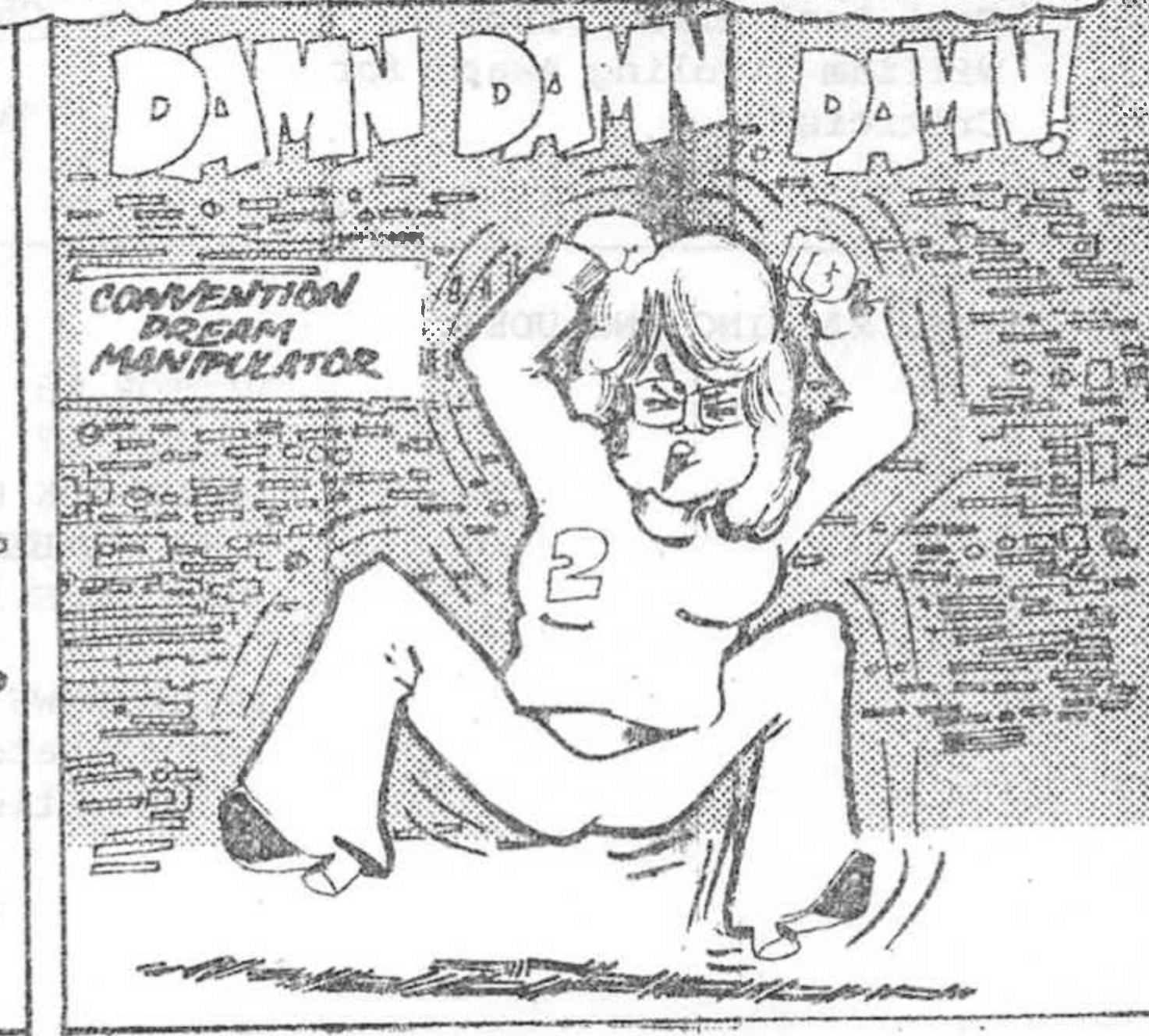
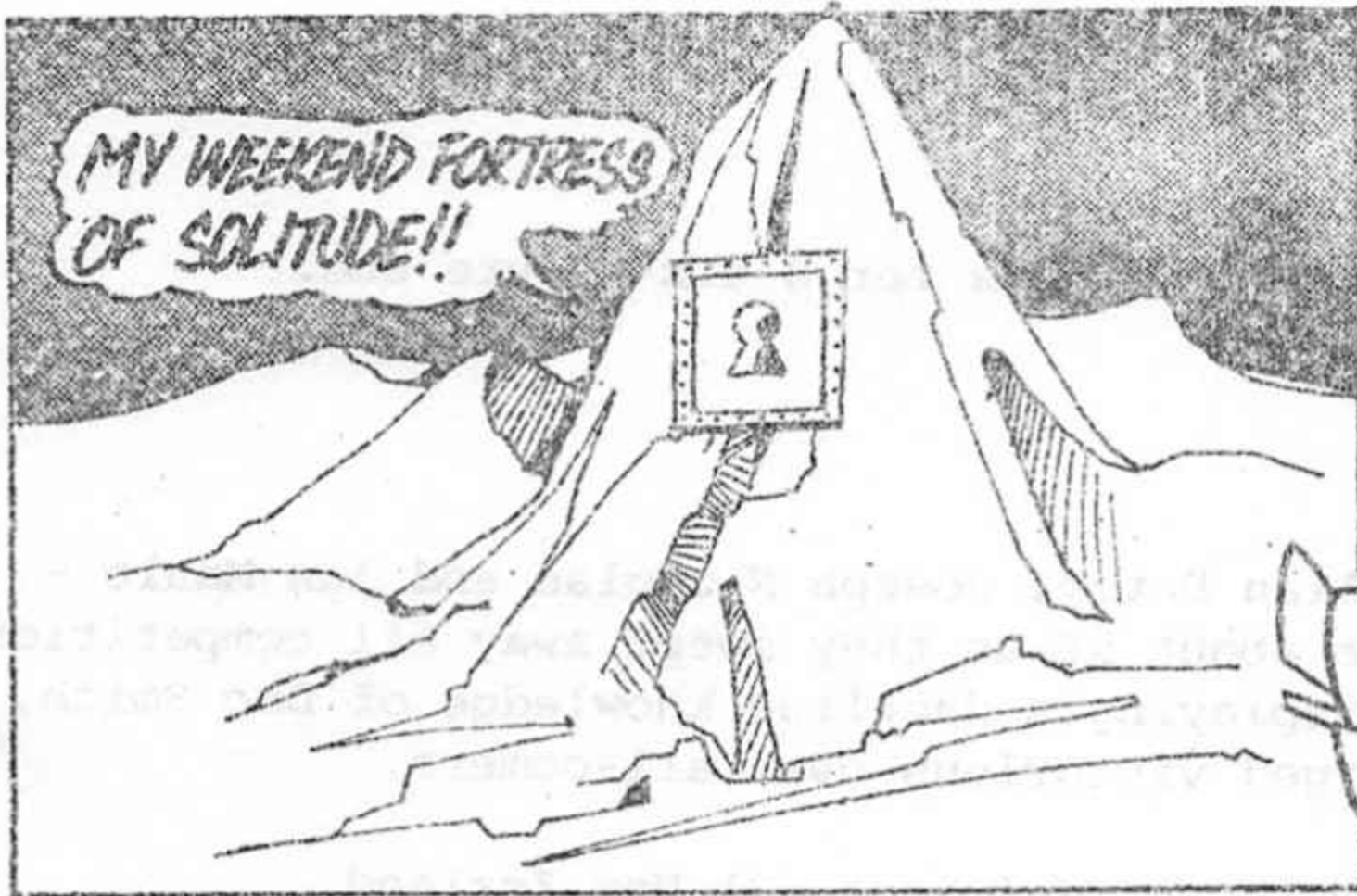


\*ON SAYING  
THE MAGIC WORD,  
BARK KENT IS  
TRANSFORMED INTO  
"SHAZFAN"  
THE LEGENDARY  
HERO WITH:

The wit of KEV SMITH  
The drawing ability of HARRY BELL  
The satiric mind of ALAN DOREY  
The money of ZAPHOD BEEBLEBROX  
The duplicating power of KEITH FREEMAN  
The drinking capacity of HARRY BELL  
The handbag of JOSEPH NICHOLAS







\*Thanks to KEV SMITH for plotting assist, and EVE E JOHN for letting me take liberties...



(Continued from Page 11)

in February. Bantam have bought the paperback rights for a six-figure sum.

#### CONVENTIONS (PAST & FUTURE)

NOVACON (See review in this issue.)

The Surrey Limpwrist - in the guise of Alan Dorey, Joseph Nicholas and Ian Maule - proved that fannish fans do know a little about sf as they swept away all competition to win the University Challenge quiz. Displaying a dazzling knowledge of Doc Smith, Tully Zetford and Perry Rhodan, they emerged victorious over all-comers.

WELLCON - 19th - 22nd October 1979 somewhere in (Wellington?) New Zealand. Greg Hills reports. It was held by all concerned to be an excellent and highly enjoyable event, and those attendees who had been to other cons all agreed it stood up very well in comparison. Ghughu, it even made a profit! There were around 100 attendees out of 120 registrations. All the events were very well organised and attended and everyone enjoyed at least some of them.

ALBACON - 1980 Eastercon, Albany Hotel, Glasgow. 4-7 April 1980. GoH Colin Kapp, Fan GoH Jim Barker. Membership details from Gerry Gillin, 9 Dunnotter Street, Ruchazie, Glasgow G33. News on the programme front reveals that Jim Barker plans a "Captive" slide show; from Bob (no relation) Shaw a space project talk; a BSFA room party (all members welcome) plus possible other items (and, of course, the AGM); another shock, horror, space probe talk by B. Shaw; a serious, scientific talk by Bob Shaw (the real one), a book room, art show, fan room and probably yet another talk on what's going up into space from Robert Shaw. See you there if you can afford the fare (or the hotel bill).

#### AWARDS

In this award-filled world here's some news of even more.

The Prometheus Award is given annually to the best science fiction novel of a "Libertarian character." This year's was presented at the Libertarian Party national convention in Los Angeles in September to F Paul Wilson for "Wheels within Wheels". The award is US\$ 2,500 in gold!

This year's winners were:

Best Australian Fiction	- Beloved Son by George Turner
Best International Fiction	- The White Dragon by Anne McCaffrey
Best Australian Fan Writer	- Marc Ortlieb
Best Australian Fanzine	- <u>Chunder!</u> ed. John Foyster
William Atheling Award for Criticism	- "Women & SF" by Susan Wood

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#### THIS MAILING INCLUDES:

VECTOR 96  
MATRIX 27  
PAPERBACK PARLOUR  
BSFA MEMBERSHIP LIST  
BSFA QUESTIONNAIRE

MEDIA NEWS and the information booklet have unfortunately been omitted due to production difficulties (maybe next time?).