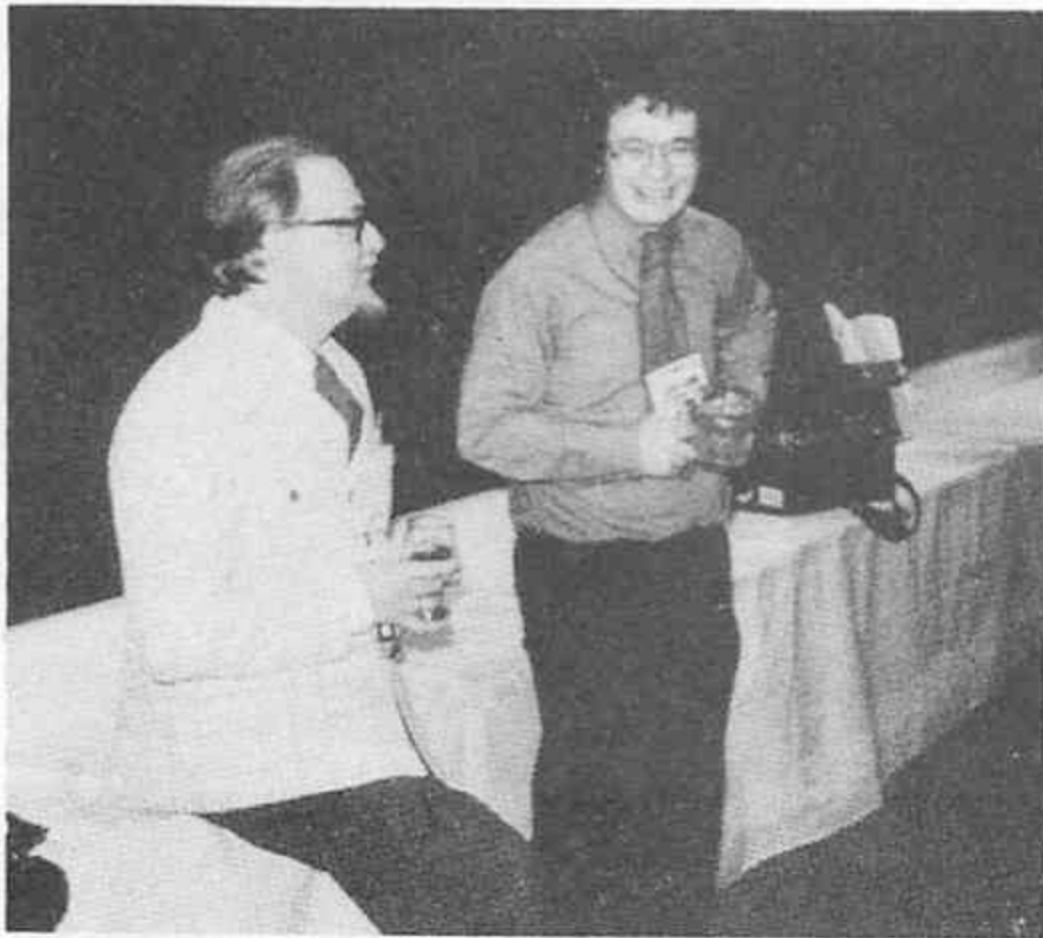


Eastercon 1980



Matrix

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The BSFA Newsletter

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Copy Deadlines

All contributions to be received by Friday, 13th June 1980 AT THE LATEST

Next mailing is scheduled for Saturday/Sunday, 28/29 June - anyone wishing to lend a hand is more than welcome. Please contact either Alan Dorey or John & Eve for details. Home phone no. for John & Eve is 01-640 1349.

AFTER THE GOLDRUSH

I am pleased to say that my worst fears for Albacon did not come to pass. In fact, as the front cover illustrates, most people really enjoyed themselves. I still have some very strong reservations about the organisational standards displayed by those in charge, but they were helped immensely by a good hotel with amenable staff (well, most of them). In addition, they had people like Jim Barker and Jimmy Robertson to help bail them out at the top end (literally since the Fan Room was on the tenth floor); Jimmy Robertson did a fantastic job with the Fan Room considering the disadvantages of size of room, site of room, distance from nearest bar. Well done, Jimmy. Thus, given the basics, most seasoned convention goers couldn't fail to enjoy themselves since they tend to make their own entertainment, but what did the first time attendee think? Would anybody like to let me know?

That's enough about Albacon, I'll leave the revelations to Jim Barker, who knows far more about the event behind the scenes than I do.

Followers of the Captive will have to wait a couple of months for his next adventures as Jim Barker is rather exhausted (to say the least) after his recent exertions.

I'm going to take up some space in this editorial to ask for some help from the membership on a couple of BSFA projects. Much has been said recently about our proposed regular meetings to be held somewhere in London - from the response Eve has received on the questionnaires, it would appear to be best to hold the meetings once a month, but not always on the same day of the week. At the AGM Eve suggested that we arrange the meeting on a certain date of the month, thus hopefully allowing people who have other commitments on a particular evening of the week, to make the BSFA meetings at some time, at least. This seemed to have the general agreement of the AGM, how do you feel about this arrangement?

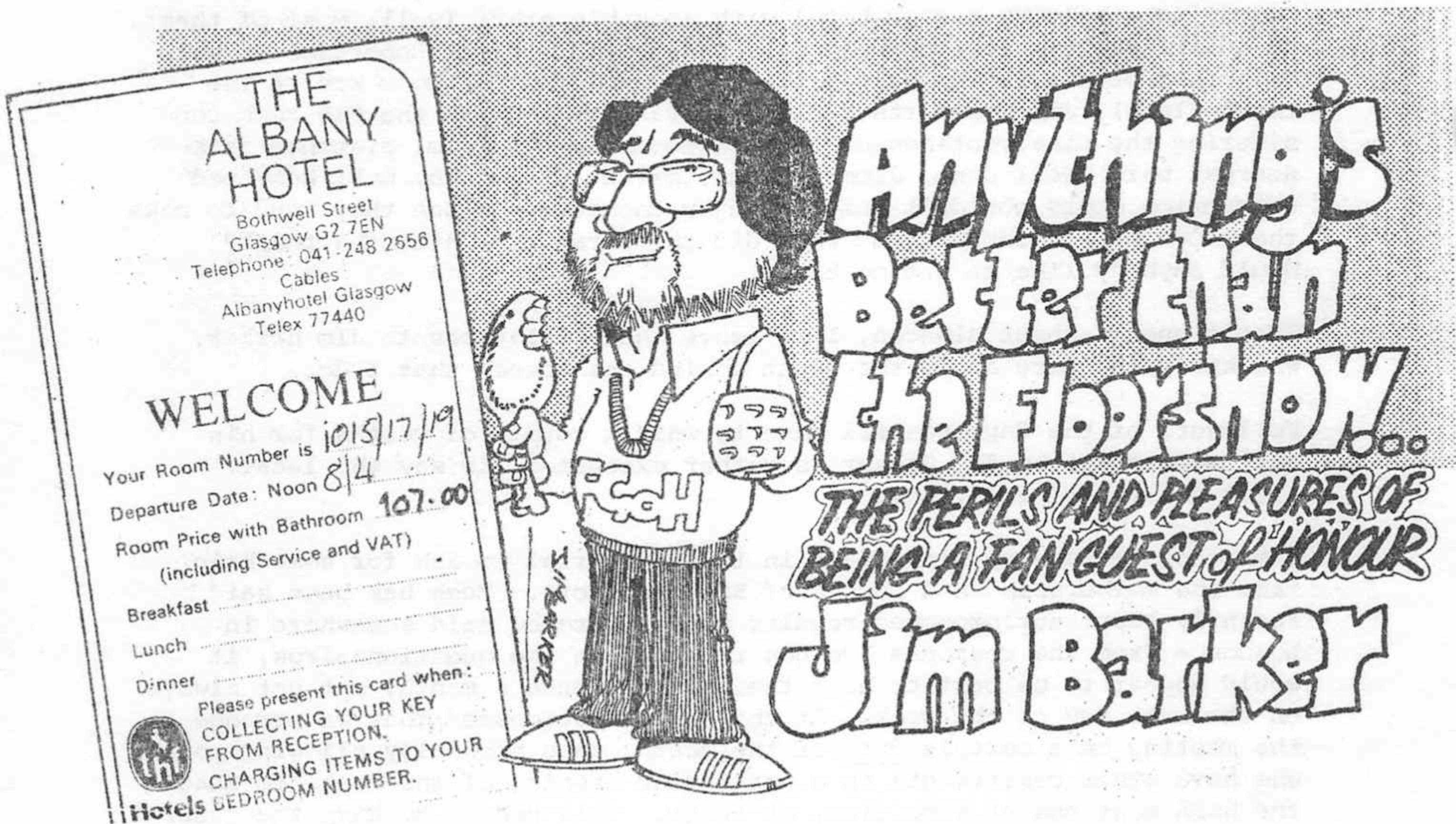
Since we've decided to meet in London (it seems fairly logical to use our capital city as members passing through will know when they can drop in) we really need a suitable meeting place. At present Eve is looking into this matter, although we have nowhere particular in mind. We do feel that somewhere central would be most convenient, so those of you who know somewhere that might fit the bill, please contact us. A room in a pub is the type of thing we're looking for. The second area in which we would like the membership's help is in the format of the meetings. A formal programme with guest speakers would be ideal, but might involve the Association in too much expense, as well as the organisers in a great deal of work. A totally informal meeting in a pub somewhere would only be a rival to the well-established 'One Tun' meetings and if you don't go to those, then you're unlikely to come to the BSFA's equivalent. So really, the BSFA must steer a mid-course, attempting a combination of the two. Given the limited resources the BSFA could give this project (no flying over American authors), have any of you any ideas of the sort of topics that you would like discussed?

Finally, all this is great as an idea, but it requires somebody to organize. Is there anybody out there who is willing to take on the task?

Well, that's enough from me for this issue. See you next time!

John Harvey

 * Ever on the lookout for fresh angles on convention reporting, I called Jim *
 * Barker some time ago and made him promise to give us the inside gen on *
 * being Fan Guest of Honour at this year's Eastercon, ALBACON. *
 * *****



You never know what surprises the postman is going to bring you in the morning; just over a year ago I received an innocent looking letter whose contents were to involve me in more work than I'd like to remember. It was from the Glasgow Bob Shaw saying, "On behalf of the 1980 Eastercon committee, we'd like to invite you to be Fan Guest of Honour...". Since Bob has been known to indulge in the odd practical joke or two I was skeptical at first but later in the day he phoned and confirmed that ALBACON was a genuine bid. What could I say except "Yes", and thereby sealed my fate.

Firstly, I figured it was going to be difficult enough persuading English fans to make the journey up to Scotland without adding Glasgow's (undeserved) reputation. "Why not move to Edinburgh?" I was over-ruled, but I have since been told that Edinburgh was considered, but rejected for a number of reasons, one of which was that none of the Glasgow group were willing to travel to Edinburgh to organize the convention! Secondly, in order to overcome English fans' prejudices I felt they needed a pro guest of honour who could be a big draw. Out of the list they provided me (Keith Roberts, John Sladek and Colin Kapp) I picked Roberts, but was again over-ruled. This is not to slight Colin Kapp who turned out to be a great guy, but I felt Roberts would be a bigger name, but it would appear that many of the Glasgow fans are secret Unorthodox Engineering fans.

Comes YORCON. Already rumours are flying and, as anticipated, many of the English fans are violently opposed to coming to Glasgow.

"It's too far."

"I can't afford the journey."

"I'm not going near Glasgow, it's too dangerous!"

Being committed, I answered the arguments as best I could. It looked like the bidding session was going to be fun, especially with a rival bid by D West.

Having managed only an hour's sleep the night before the bidding I walked into the hall on auto-pilot and before I knew what had happened WE'D WON THE BID! Hell, now I had to go through with it. For the rest of the convention I was greatly disturbed at the number of fannish fans who were determined not to come to Glasgow. It looked like I was going to be sitting in the ALBACON fan room talking to myself. For the first time I considered stepping down as fan GoH; my closest friends are fannish fans and if none of them wanted to come and see me being Fan GoH, then I didn't see much point in my actually being one. I felt very much as if I were in the no-man's land between two warring armies, having friends on both sides and not wanting any casualties. So I did what any sensible person would do, I crawled into a foxhole and let them fight it out.

Happily the various "Alternate Eastercon" ideas that had been mooted died a death and there followed a period of calm during the preparations for SEACON. From time to time the problem did surface, though, with everyone seeming to direct their questions and problems at me rather than the committee. I shall always treasure the memory of one conversation with Ian Williams who was plainly worried about Glasgow's reputation for violence. "Don't worry Ian, the Albany is literally five minutes' walk from Central Station." "Yes, but will I get mugged on the way there?" (And, in the event, he did turn up by taxi...)

Time passed. SEACON came and went. I was shown around the Albany and was told I was sharing a penthouse suite with Colin Kapp. Oh, very good! Ha, ha. What? You actually mean it?... In general I thought it was a good hotel, although I had some disagreements over room allocation for certain sections ("The Fan Room's WHERE??") but I was willing to be persuaded and usually was.

Things started getting really hairy for me at the beginning of January. I'd agreed to do a "Captive Slideshow" with fans reading the script as part of the main programme, so I started plotting and drawing. By that time I was also up to the eyes with my TAFF campaign and was helping Jimmy Robertson organise the Fan Room. In addition I was churning out my usual complement of artwork for fanzines. I think I can fairly say I was busy. I'd got the script finished for the slideshow and started the illos at the beginning of February. (It's interesting that February is traditionally my busiest period; this year it was 120 colour cartoons, last year it was the illos for Best of the Bushel and the year before it was cartoons for the SF Yearbook.) All this time I was in touch with Jimmy Robertson about the fan room. I'm afraid that I more or less coerced Jimmy into doing the job and he now seemed to be fighting a rearguard action against members of the committee - at one time it appeared that the fannish reaction



to ALBACON had soured relations between the committee and fandom and there might not be a fan room at all. I helped Jimmy out as much as I could with contacts etc, but the job of programming was totally Jimmy's (and a great job he did too, but more of that later).

I'm not particularly proud of the next incident since I acted totally out of character, but I think it needs to be told. Over one weekend I was phoning round my fannish fan friends to see who was coming and would be willing to appear on panels. Most of those who were coming said they'd be glad to help; a few would have been willing but couldn't make the convention for some reason. Virtually all of them had had second thoughts about coming because they felt that the convention was being mismanaged and again and again I heard stories of no confirmation of bookings being received, no notification of registration, no Progress Reports, or only PRL. The last straw was a 45-minute conversation with Rog Peyton. Now Rog is a more experienced con organiser than myself and the Glasgow group put together and when he says he's unhappy with the way a convention is being handled, I listen. I blew up.

(An aside here; I suspect that most people won't know that I have a very dark side to my character. I'm a depressive and the slightest thing can start off a mood of deep, dark depression. Leave me alone and it'll wear off, but prod me and I tend to explode. With each successive phone call I'd been sliding deeper into a depressive fit and this call to Rog pushed me over the edge.)

I got on the phone to Bob Shaw and laid into him, and he gave as good as he got. Unfortunately, the fact that I was shouting and swearing (no, it doesn't sound like me, does it) got in the way of what I was trying to say. My only excuse is that I desperately wanted the convention to be a success and it appeared that having overcome the early resistance, the committee were doing their best to deliberately provoke hostilities.

In the meantime, however, the fan room was coming on in leaps and bounds. This was around the time of Sandy Brown's letter to Ansible and none of the Trouts were speaking to him, and because Jimmy was a friend of his, I suspect he was taking some stick too. There was the occasion when Bob told me that the committee had seen Jimmy's provisional programme, weren't too happy with it and "he was going to be talked to." I honestly couldn't see anything wrong with it and several more experienced fans like Rob Jackson and Ian Williams thought it was fine. It wasn't solidly programmed from dawn till dusk, but then neither Jimmy nor myself felt that necessary for a good fan room. We felt there ought to be time for people to come and look at the displays and get talking.

At this point, fate intervened in the shape of a strike at the newspaper I work for. I was called out in sympathy and found myself with an extra week's paid holiday. So naturally I went home and finished off all the outstanding bits for the slideshow, the Blankety Blank panel I was organising, the fanroom displays, my joint TAFF fanzine with Dave Langford, etc, etc. Did I hell! I fled down to England for a few days to stay first with Harry Bell, then with Eve and John Harvey. Then, I came back and waded in. The next three weeks were a blur of cartooning, phoning, organising, typing, drawing, photocopying. When I looked up it was Wednesday 2nd April. The convention was starting next day!

Dawn broke next day and I was up bright and early heading for the station. Every Eastercon I've been to entailed between three and eight hours' travel, so it felt very weird to be in Glasgow after twenty minutes. On arrival at the Albany I went in search of friendly faces and was immediately press-ganged into signwriting posters. The previous day the Albany had been host to an underwear exhibition and I found some of their publicity material, in particular a poster of a lady in her underwear. This was doctored to read "Boob Shaw welcomes you to ALBRACON!" I dotted around helping to set up until Jimmy arrived and then we adjourned to set up the fan room. Jimmy and Ed Buckley

had prepared a huge map showing the fannish centres of Britain and I'd prepared a display of writing and drawing of currently active fans as well as a display of my own work. The ulterior motive behind this was that OMNI planned to use the fan room area for a press conference on Friday and I was hoping there might be some talent scouts. The evening was spent drinking the bar dry. Well, perhaps not, but they certainly ran out of clean glasses and the barmaids were getting decidedly ratty towards the end of the evening. I wondered how well they'd last the weekend. On the way to bed I finally met Colin Kapp. I'd been wondering how he felt about sharing a suite with a looney like me; perhaps he didn't know me very well, because he was very nice indeed.

Friday morning was spent saying hello over a pint to the various new arrivals. I'd wangled an invite to the OMNI party for Dave Langford and myself. When we got there the place was full of reporters, TV cameras and tape recorders. We were a bit overwhelmed till we realised that they were all there to interview Patrick Moore... not us. Dave and I got our own back by slipping TAFF ballots into the free copies of OMNI which were lying around. I was totally ignored by Patrick Moore, but when you've been ignored by Superman, you get used to that type of thing. The free lunch was good though.



Having swept up all the drunk reporters, Jimmy and I got the room ready for our first programme item and the convention began. Item 1: "An Introduction to Fandom" - since there were no neofans present we wound up an hour early. Back to the Bar. Item 2: Dave Langford discoursed on "Mice I have Known", a reading from his article in our joint TAFF fanzine Taff-Ddu (copies available from Dave or me for 75p, proceeds to TAFF). Next came the committee's welcome where I tried to live up to my reputation by escaping before I was introduced. Most of the audience followed my example and went out to eat, thereby missing the Jim White Chat Show, on which Colin and I bumbled inanely for an hour. After that I just had time to grab something in the hotel restaurant before we flung open the fan room doors for a party which went on till five, when Jimmy and I kicked out the last of the stragglers and poker players. It looked like it was going to be a good convention.

Saturday morning - fan room auction interspersed with visits to the bar. At lunch time I took Harry Bell and Paul Kincaid on a tour of central Glasgow. To their relief we weren't mugged, saw only one drunk - Rangers and Celtic must have been playing away that day. Next Dave and I were to be interviewed by Eve Harvey about TAFF and I think we successfully reduced the situation to utter chaos. Take Mike Parkinson's interview with Emu, cross it with his interview with Miss Piggy, multiply by ten and you're halfway there. It's hard to describe what we got up to, since it was all spur of the moment stuff. Eve says she'll never forget one incident when Dave filled a rubber mouse (why we had that on the table is too long a story) with someone's gin and tonic and squirting it all over me. I retaliated by covering his head with a towel and pouring orange juice over him. That give you an idea of the rest of the interview? The next item



was the Blankety Blank panel. This was my own baby and I was very pleased it went down so well. It was played just like the TV version with me as a substitute Terry Wogan, complete with microphone. It went off without a hitch, though Ian Williams did his best to misunderstand the rules; perhaps in revenge for the number of Ian Williams jokes I'd slipped into the questions. I certainly enjoyed it and I'd love to do it again at another con (hint, hint). After that came the banquet which is one of the prices you have to pay for being FGoH. The food was OK, the service was OK, even the quote card ideas were passable. What was intolerable was the floorshow which was a dance version of "The Five Faces of Red Sonja". I'd seen a report on an American version of this - a play about five different versions of the comic character, but this version turned out to be a twenty-minute dance (sort of Young Generation meets Conan) and I was bored to tears after five minutes. A quote

card passed to the top table summed the whole event up. It depicted Martian tripods devastating Glasgow and a wee drunk pointing to them, to which someone had added the caption, "Oh well... anything's better than the floorshow".

After kicking out a few filksingers, we started up the second fan room party. I'd agreed to let the BSFA use my suite for a party and we planned to move over there after the fan room had died down. Unfortunately, some spotty herbert from the hotel came up to complain and we had to close down early. This resulted in about sixty people crammed into the livingroom area of my suite - far more than either I or the BSFA had anticipated. I was afraid that some damage would be done and sure enough, some Swedish fan sat on a glass-topped table and went through it!

After only a few hours' sleep, I went down to breakfast next morning on autopilot, sneaking past the maid who was about to confront the debris of the room party. It was then that I realised that the slideshow was looming and I still had a lot to do for it. It was panic time. I missed most things on the programme that morning and afternoon as I frantically attempted to make some order of everything. I want to say a big Thank You to Eve Harvey and Keith Freeman who were of great help that afternoon and stopped me from doing something nasty to myself as the deadline approached.

Comes six o'clock in the main con hall, the slideshow is due in five minutes and I'm not looking forward to it. We haven't had time for a proper run through and I'm convinced it's going to be a disaster. Oh well, grit my teeth and here goes. Hey, it's not so bad... people seem to be enjoying it... they're actually laughing... and then I went into hyperdrive. A good deal of credit belongs to Bob Shaw who was voicing the part of Number Two and who did a superb job. He bungled the tape for the beginning and end, which to be fair was easily done, but the whole thing went off very well. I had innumerable comments saying how much people had enjoyed it afterwards. I even got a request to borrow it for another convention.

By this time, the effects of all the late nights were starting to catch up with me. I seemed to be appearing on a panel or quiz, chairing a panel or doing something else for the convention every five minutes. I needed a rest and so disappeared into the hotel restaurant, taking Eve and John Harvey with me for camouflage. But even that didn't last as long as I'd have liked since

I had to appear as a judge of the fancy dress. Having escaped from a second showing of the dreaded floorshow, we started a game of charades in the fan room. Feeling evil, I gave Dave Langford an eleven-word film title to mime; he retaliated by giving me a nineteen-word book title. I was still acting it out when a bunch of Swedes came along and told us they'd been promised the room for a party and turfed us all out, so we all trooped along to the YORCON II room party and a good time was had by all.

Monday morning started with the Call My Bluff session in the fan room followed by an auction. Around lunchtime people started to drift away - there's nothing quite so sad as a convention on the point of splitting up. It was made worse for me by the fact that I was staying behind and had to say goodbye to all my friends. For me it had been a thoroughly enjoyable weekend; I'd never worked so hard in my life but I'd had a great time. And now it was ending... To try and extend it as long as possible I decided to go to the station with Kev Smith and the Harveys and see them off. I don't think they realised how much I wanted to buy a ticket and go with them. As I trudged back to the hotel I felt the lowest I'd been all weekend. Happily, events lifted me right out of it.

There was a girl called Linda (I never did find out her second name) who had turned up on the Friday and ended up working her guts out as a gopher. For some reason Bob had shouted at her on Monday morning and she was plotting her revenge. At six that evening, Bob stepped out from chairing the business meeting. In the hotel foyer he was grabbed by six burly men (one of them being me), dragged through the hotel, out the side entrance and into the street. There, watched by about 100 attendees, he was tied to a lamppost and read a list of his crimes. These ranged from abusing gophers to using up air allocated to more deserving forms of life, like insects. Linda then poured a vat of black vegetable dye over him... at that point Bob made his first escape bid and headed for the Clyde for sanctuary. Happily, he was caught and the second part of his sentence carried out which entailed a fire hose. Now, there were several people present with cameras and I know that one guy captured the whole thing on video tape, so look out for it turning up at NOVACON.

After that, the remaining time at the convention was an anticlimax. Steve Miller and Linda wanted to crash on my floor that night, so as Colin Kapp had left Steve and I slept in his room and Linda had mine. What I didn't know was that Linda phoned reception for an alarm call, obviously giving them my room number, thus making my reputation throughout the hotel. No wonder I got funny looks when I checked out next morning!

POST CONVENTION IMPRESSIONS

It's Sunday, April 13th as I type this. Over the past week I've been sorting out my impressions of ALBACON for this article. I should emphasise that any opinions I've stated are mine alone. It seems to me that ALBACON is going to be a major talking point in fandom over the next few months (as it already has been recently in Gross Encounters, Ansible and Matrix), so I suppose I should get my tuppence-worth in now.

I feel that ALBACON was a very good convention. I'll admit that with the friction apparent between Bob and certain sections of fandom (including myself at one point) I was half expecting something along the lines of MANCON - a view expressed to me several times over the past months. It's all to Bob's credit then that he proved all us doomsayers wrong and produced a very enjoyable convention. Even hard-bitten critics like Alan Dorey were heard to

say they'd enjoyed it and I think anyone who stayed away deliberately out of pique missed a very good time. Where I don't think Bob and his committee can escape criticism is in the area of Progress Reports, booking reservations and confirmations and other pre-con administration. Quite a few people I know just didn't get more that PRL and there was far too long a gap between those PR's that did arrive. Further, it should never be the case that someone like John Brunner has to contact the Head Office of the hotel chain to make sure his hotel room was booked.

One very disappointing factor for me was the lack of authors. Apart from the FAIRCON crowd of Bob Shaw, Jim White, Chris Boyce, Don Malcolm and GCH Colin Kapp, the only writer to bother coming was John Brunner. What happened to the rest? Where were Ken Bulmer, Chris Priest, Rob Holdstock, Chris Evans, Anne McCaffrey, Harry Harrison, to name just a few of the regular attendees? You have Scots fans as well you know.

I had no complaints about the hotel, but then I was getting all my bills paid for me. I'd like to know how the Albany compares to other hotels in the way of rooms, prices etc. Bob tells me that the cheap ale and pub grub went down really well; I wouldn't know since I was forced to eat in the hotel restaurant most of the time (honest! I was forced to do it, honest!).

One thing I'm very pleased to say got unanimous praise was the fan room. Jimmy Robertson worked his guts out to arrange the programme and I think he did a fantastic job. He deserves much praise. I'll leave comment on the main programme to those who actually saw it, apart from the things I was actually on I never got around to seeing any items... OK, enough from me, let's hear what you think.

Last minute notice. Clearing up the fan room, I discovered a pile of fanzines, early Speculations and Erb-Doms which had been donated for auction. These are rather valuable and I've now got them at home for safekeeping. Would someone like to get in touch with me and tell me what to do with them?



FANWORLD

Life On Mars

So I come back from ALBACON, go to bed with 'flu for two days, stagger to my feet on the third, then collapse on a cushion in front of the fire with a cup of milky tea and a small bundle of fanzines to read. Taking a sip of the pallid liquid, I reach out a feeble hand for the first zine. It has a putrid yellow cover which almost makes me feel sick again. I have to gaze at the pastel brown of the tea for a while to recover. Then, screwing up my eyes, I steel myself for a second glance.

There is an eye staring back at me. For one panic-stricken moment I think I'm looking into a mirror. That must have been a bad attack of 'flu, I think, to leave me bright yellow, with spaceships for eyebrows and MATRIX 28 written all over my forehead. I think of phoning up the doctor -

"Doctor, doctor, you've got to help me. I think I'm turning into a BSFA publication."

"I see. Which particular one? Vector? Focus? Paperback Holocaust?"

"I think it's Matrix"

"Ah, Matrix. Yes, well things might be worse. Vector is rather more serious, while Paperback Sacrifice is a terrible thing..."

"But what do I do about it? I don't want to be duplicated and mailed out to six hundred members."

"Seven hundred" says the doctor, "you haven't been paying attention to Alan Dorey, have you? But don't worry, there's a simple antidote. All you have to do is take off a little time every two months and write a LIFE ON MARS column."

"But... but... what do I write about?"

"Just produce an interesting, informative article about groups of people who get drunk and fall over in various parts of the British Isles. You know the sort of thing..."

"Well, when do I start?"

"Just look inside your jacket."

"Eh?"

"Do as I say."

So I look inside my jacket and there's page two. 'MATRIX', it says, 'the BSFA newsletter'.

"Look at the bottom" says the doctor, "No, I mean the bottom of your jacket. There, you see, just below the label saying MADE IN HONG KONG."

"At the latest" I read.

"And what does it say before that?"

"Friday, 18th April 1980."

"That's right."

"At the latest, Friday 18th April?"

"I'll make out a prescription for ten sheets of A4 paper. That should last you a couple of columns..."

This is where I start to come round. It's not a mirror I'm holding after all; it's a copy of Matrix 28 which has insinuated itself into this bunch of fan-zines from ALBACON, and there's the deadline for issue 29 on the second page - 18th April. That's next Friday! Why, and it only seems like yesterday...

I abandon all thoughts of a recuperative read and make a grab for my LIFE ON MARS file. Several hastily scrawled letters tumble out of it and scatter themselves amongst the dirty plates, empty cans of Sam Smiths and oozing bottles of ketchup which already litter my living-room floor. I make an attempt to gather them up again, placing them into some sort of order. Let's see... Paul Kincaid? No, I can't mention him again. Nigel Clark? Used all his stuff. This looks more promising - the Leicester Group. Now, that seems to ring a bell.

Rolling up my trouser-leg in order to refer to page 12 of the last Matrix, I see that I promised more details of the Leicester group next time. This being next time, it seems as good a place to start as any...

THE LEICESTER SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

Here in the more sensible part of the LIFE ON MARS column, you may run across the occasional useful fact like 'The Leicester Group meet on the first Friday of each month at the BLACK SWAN, Belgrave Gate. 7-15 for 7-3'.

Here are some more...

At each meeting, there's a talk or some other event. Previous evenings have seen talks on astronomy, UFOs, the Tolkien Society, the H G Wells Society, Machine Intelligence, Black Holes and Bookselling. Recent events have included a Beer & Skittles evening and a talk by Peter Weston, the Chairman of last year's World Convention in Brighton. Visitors to the group are very welcome, especially from other SF groups and anyone in the area is welcome to come and meet the group's members. They usually have a drink at the house of the membership secretary Janet Hunt after the meeting, which gives people a chance for a chat with the speakers.

The membership fee is £1-50, which pays for the organisation of the group and keeps members up to date by means of information sheets. When facilities are available, there's a monthly newsletter. Members are charged 50p to attend an event, non-members 75p; this charge covers speakers expenses and room hire.

Attendance is usually about 15 to 20 people. There was a group fanzine called ETHERIAL SKIE which seems to have 'faded away' but Janet does a STAR TREK fiction zine called COMPUTER PLAYBACK and another member produces a zine called MEGELLAN.

If you're interested in the group, or want more information, contact Janet Hunt at 54 Foxhunter Drive, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5FE. Thanks for writing, Janet.

Now, while I'm in the mood to be a mine of information, let's turn to the other group of which I promised more details...

THE QUEEN MARY COLLEGE (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON) SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY SOCIETY

The person to contact for this group is Paul Dembina of 29 Howcroft Crescent, Finchley, London N3 1PA. They've been in existence for about three years and were started by Paul's predecessor whom he graphically describes as 'a Lithuanian addicted to distilled potatoes'. (The only distilled potatoes I've tried were the ones served up by Vector editor Mike Dickinson. He would cheerfully present his visitors with a glass of insipid-looking white wine, adding quite truthfully just as they were taking an exploratory sip that 'it captures the essence of the potato - it tastes of the earth... and dead things.')

The Queen Mary group recently organised a successful SF quiz and show occasional films, of which the most successful so far has been JABBERWOCKY. They have about forty members, of which about ten are actually active. There are tentative plans for a fanzine, to be produced in conjunction with another active group at the college, The Ancient Illuminated Seers of Baravia. The Seers, it seems, are led by a Grand Wizard called Steve and hold sun worship on the roof of the college chapel (sounds like the Bingley group).

Thanks for the information Paul. HMMMMMM... I wonder what Queen Mary would have thought of such strange goings on. I think we ought to look at Norwich, home of Nicholas Parsons and other wholesome, reassuring things like...

THE NORWICH SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

The Secretary, G Warminger, writes -

In the beginning was Norwich SF Club and it was named Discovery. It was a pleasantly informal club with discussions every fortnight but alas Apathy set in, key members left and it more or less disintegrated. (Sounds like my body after ALBACON - S.O.)

From its entrails was born Breakaway, more of a chocolate biscuit than an SF club. The hope was to produce a lively, enthusiastic group committed to the furtherment of SF discussion. The arranged meeting-place was the ADAM & EVE pub in Norwich (one of the smallest pubs in the universe). Then came the nomadic period - Breakaway managed to hold meetings at a large percentage of the 300 billion pubs in Norwich until the Louis Marchesi was found. The Louis M is where we meet today. It's a nice pub with nice bar staff (the landlord has one of our Breakaway T-shirts) and we have a large room to ourselves on Wednesdays, the only drawback being Grotneys Instant Beers.

In the past, Breakaway has been on the box and twice in local papers; one of these was just a photograph with the legend underneath, "A group of semi-interlectuals discussing science fiction" or, as it was later translated, "a bunch of half-wits wasting time".

At the present time, meetings have become even less formal than they were before, although a programme has been worked out until June. Talks are given or discussions started by members. As for guest speakers, it seems that authors etc are not prepared to travel the vast distances across the semi-desolate plains of East Anglia to visit us. But in the past we've had Beach Parties, SF Treasure Hunts (round pubs), and Broads Trips (with lots of alcohol). We hope to continue with these in the future, and our latest

idea is to go UFO-spotting on a local range of hills dressed in berets, long rain-coats and glasses, with silly voices, prayer batteries (ever ready), maybe a barbecue and of course booze.

Subs are 20p on attendance but newcomers do not pay for four weeks. Our zines are SFEAR, an amateur fiction magazine and our clubzine ONCEZINE, which due to lack of enthusiasm and no printing facilities has for the time being been shelved.

This year's big event - we are organising a mini-con called ANGLICON at the University of East Anglia. Guests are Ian Watson and Brian Stableford; the dates are 5-7 September. For info on the NSFG or ANGLICON, write to me, G Warming, at 72 Linacre Avenue, Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk, NR7 8PG.

Thanks G

And now, after all this time, the unbelievable has happened. There I was last issue, adding a listless P.S. - 'Anyone know of a club in Bolton?' and lo and behold! I get a response. It almost makes me think my existence is justified. Here's Benard Earp with the goods...

BOLTON

Last year, a few of us formed a splinter group in Bolton from the MaD (Manchester) group. The original few were your 'umble scribe, Laurence Deane, Steev Higgins and the Barlow brothers Paul and Chris. We did drag in sundry mates and girlfriends and at one stage planned on putting out our own zine (CRAZY EDDIE) but after SEACON all the others drifted off to various colleges and I was involved in the formation of a new Film Society in town, as well as being involved deeply with the local Little Theatre.

We have tentative plans to re-group this summer, when both the theatre and films are in their slack season. Can anyone who wants to meet up either contact me at my home address (21 Moorfield Grove, Tonge Moor, Bolton, Greater Manchester, BL2 2LQ) or come down to the Bolton Little Theatre (tel 24469) on most Monday nights after 8 p.m. Laurence is now recruited into the stage crew while I am the incredibly handsome guy propping the bar up, wearing of course my BSFA and ELMER T HACK badges.

Oh yes, if anyone does want to become a member we still have a little ceremony. They have to eat some of our club snack. Steev Higgins was late at the meeting where we settled that - as he wandered in he was greeted with out-stretched bags. "Have some of this, Steev."

"What is it?"

"Don't ask. Just eat."

Eat he did - well he put a couple of bits into his mouth before mumbling

"Go on, what is it?"

"Pork Scratchings" (crisp fried bacon rind).

At which Steev promptly vomited into the ashtray.

Just shows you can't take a lad anywhere.

On second thoughts, you'd better not let slip any of the above as we don't want to put off all our prospective new members.

Whoops! Sorry, too late I guess. But don't worry too much Bernard. Although Pork Scratchings have always struck me as the unacceptable face of optimum resource utilisation (work that one out), Steev Higgins is really prone to vomiting with such frequency that it's impossible to pin down the cause to anything in particular. When he comes to Leeds these days, we just hand him a brown paper bag and make him sit at the opposite end of the room.

Anyway, thanks for the info Bernard. I hope you get some response.

SALISBURY

I've heard from Roger Wittington, who wants to start a group in Salisbury. If you're interested, write to him at 91 Milford Hill, Salisbury, Wilts. Good luck Roger.

ADDENDUM

Before you start scurrying for your atlas to check where Addendum is (or for that matter, browsing through your record collection to find out who recorded it - Santana, perhaps, or John McLaughlin?) let me warn you that this is where I make a few corrections to last issue's comprehensive, indispensable, definitive guide to fan groups.

You see, having undertaken the epic ascent to the ALBACON fan room and left my sherpa guides lying in a corner, burnt to a crisp by the shafts of lightning which sprang out of the lift-buttons, I was chuffed to see that Jimmy Robertson had stuck parts of my club listing on the wall for the education of all and sundry who happened to be passing by. What was less encouraging was the list of amendments he'd made to some of the entries. Since some of you won't have made that gruelling climb, I'd better place my trust in Jimmy and pass on the details...

CAMBRIDGE

The society meets on Thursday evenings at the Horse & Groom, King Street. (After all, who ever heard of a horse wearing a crown?)

ST ALBANS

This lot are just called STAFFEN, not The Staffen Group, and Mic Rogers's full address is 'Pohutukawas', 22 Campfield Road, St Albans, Herts. (No prizes for guessing which bit I missed out.)

KEELE

The person to contact at Keele is now John Wilkes, c/o the University Union. In passing, don't forget about the Keele convention UNICON, 4-7 July with Harry Harrison, Peter Roberts and other guests. £2-50 supporting/£5 attending memberships to PO Box 92, Derby, DE1 1AP.

And that brings us up to date and accurate (I hope).

COLCHESTER

I've just received a letter from Alex Stewart of 11A Beverley Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NG, who is looking for a group in his area. Any takers? If anybody lives near Alex, why not get in touch with him and, who knows?, you may get a group started if there isn't one around already. Speaking of which... maybe it's about time I set down a few thoughts on starting a group - watch for such words of wisdom in the next couple of issues. If you've recently started a group yourself and can offer some hints, then please write in - all advice is gratefully accepted. The address is at the end of the column.

EXETER UNIVERSITY GROUP

Whilst searching for the elusive BSFA Council meeting at ALBACON, I ran across a table full of the Exeter University Group (plus Dave Langford, who was in between nose bleeds and also looking for the meeting) and they gave me a copy of their new zine EXOSPHERE, which I haven't had time to read properly yet but seems to be above average for a clubzine - nice cartoons. Keep it up, Exeter! By the way, didn't you promise to write me something for this column? (Heh, he. Sometimes I'm so subtle). I don't know their address, but if you want to get in touch with them, try the University Union.

THIS IS THE END

(Which shouldn't be too much of a problem for APOCALYPSE NOW fans). Guess what? Here I am late on Wednesday night, trying to get this thing finished so I can send it off tomorrow, I haven't had any time for sleep, food or even drink for three days, and I've run out of 10p pieces for the meter so I'm working by the light of my fingers (which are still charged up from the ALBACON lifts - ask Alan Dorey). But I've got rid of the flu and I don't look like the last edition of Matrix any more! Pretty good, eh? Maybe I'll try this cure again next time - try and be there. You might even be in it if you drop me a line. The address is 13A Cardigan Road, Headingley, Leeds 6. Hope to hear from you.

Simon Ounsley

Rob Jackson's regular look at recent fanzines and other allied publications, this issue covering things received during February and March 1980. Address to which fanzines etc. should be sent for review: 8 Lavender Rd., West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT19 9EB.

On The Carpet

Abbreviations and symbols used:

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

The Usual Available for trade (exchange) with other fanzines, letter of comment, or contribution of written or artistic material. Prices are listed if the editor gives one; if no price is given, write and tell the editor you're interested.

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

SMALL PRESS PUBLICATIONS

S* Foundation 18 (edited by Malcolm Edwards for the Science Fiction Foundation, North East London Polytechnic, Longbridge Rd., Dagenham, Essex RM8 2AS; £4.00 in U.K. or £4.50 or \$10.00 overseas for 3 issues; A5 RL; 112pp.) Foundation is continuing, despite the suspension of the post of Administrator of the Foundation itself; and Malcolm Edwards is still going to edit it. It's the most literate, scholarly magazine about SF and fantasy that I receive. Gene Wolfe has a good article on the imperfect protection that rational thinking (as promulgated, supposedly, by SF) gives against the march of beastly instinct; he, and most other contributors, are better at writing simple sentences than John Clute, who, though a fascinating critic, does write too many 128-word sentences, like the last full one on p. 63. Also, the sub rates are printed the wrong way round — the individual rates are actually cheaper than the institutional ones. Enclosed with this issue is a pamphlet from an American university press advertising their line of critical works on SF. Gosh — respectability.

S* Locus 230, 231 (Charles N. Brown, PO Box 3938, San Francisco, CA 94119, USA; in UK send £9.50 for 12 or £17.50 for 24 issues airmail or £6.00 for 12 or £11.00 for 24 issues seamail to Chris Atkinson, 28 Duckett Rd., London N4 1BN; cheques payable to A.C. Atkinson; USQ RL; 24pp. each.) Full of facts and info about the SF publishing field in the States. No. 230 features the summary of the field's output in 1979, with details of how many books each publisher put out and an absorbing list of recommended items. No. 231 has Norman Spinrad saying US publishers should buy more translated European SF, and Charles Platt outlining the possibility of writing and correcting your novels on a word processor.

S* Science Fiction Review 34 (Richard E. Geis, PO Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211, USA; in UK, send £ equivalent of \$13.00 to Wm. Dawson & Sons, Cannon House, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5EE for an 8-issue sub; USQ RL; 64pp.) Packed with readable middlebrow goodies about SF, as usual. A profile of Harlan Ellison by Charles Platt which I found fair, complimentary and insightful, and interviews with Donald A. Wollheim and Charles Sheffield who has some very cutting things to say about the US scientific hierarchy which ring very true. (Dick Geis also says nice things about Elmer T. Hack, the Complete BoSh books and Jim Barker. Got more taste than some of you thought?)

F* Warhoon 28 (Richard Bergeron, 1 West 72nd St., New York, NY 10023, USA; \$25.00, no trades; USQ D+L, hardback, perfect-bound with gold embossed cover; 632pp! — yes, that's right, six hundred and thirty-two pages.) In the fifties and sixties there was a catchphrase in fannish fandom, especially in Britain — "Walt Willis is Ghod." Unless you were around at the time or have read some of Willis's writings since, you won't

know why; but at the time he inspired quite unparalleled admiration which he resisted with characteristic modesty. Now comes this — er, fanzine, fourteen years after Willis ceased to be really active. The existence of this quite unique and wonderful volume is a magnificent testament to that admiration.

Bergeron has been putting together this volume for twelve years, which shows his amazing loyalty. Ample evidence of the reason for that loyalty can be found in the writing within. Here is most of the fanwriting Willis ever did in a twenty-year career, along with a few pieces by other people about him — and the writing is almost uniformly brilliant. John Harvey wouldn't let me have 30 pages of Matrix to print a few short excerpts in, so you'll have to put up with less, chosen by opening the book at random. First, I find a spoof ad for a fanzine devoted entirely to egoboo ((ego-boost)), Booful:

"Among BNFs, 85% were observed to fling petulantly to the floor a fanzine in which they were not referred to. 53% burst into tears. 1% committed suicide. Proxyboo Ltd., ever eager to serve their public's slightest wish, have therefore decided to publish a fanzine devoted entirely to egoboo. Booful will consist entirely of enthusiastic and unstinted praise of its subscribers..." We could still do with this, 25 years later.

Or: "Just to be awkward, my bus doesn't pull in where it's supposed to, but sneaks guiltily round the corner and deposits me in a side street, as if it was ashamed to let the other buses see what it was reduced to carrying." On a heavy suitcase: "Tidal waves flooded three Irish coastal towns when I took it aboard the ship." On a goldfish given a bigger home: "Edna sighed happily. 'See, he's better already,' she said. 'The psychiatrist was right. Look at the colour coming back into his scales.' — 'So that's what he meant by a guilt complex,' said Harry."

There are equally good bits on almost every page. He has a terrible predilection for puns; there must be a couple of thousand in this volume. (He says his grandfather was a printer, and he merely reverted to type.) But there are serious passages, some of burning, passionate conviction like the argument against nuclear war on pp.305-8 which brilliantly demolishes blind patriotism of the type exemplified in Starship Troopers and contains the following: "In other words the Antarans will have learned what we are learning, that the only way of survival and progress for intelligent creatures is co-operation with other intelligent creatures. If they find us as Heinlein wants us, organising our whole society for hate and violence, they'll write us off as perverted lunatics and that's what we would be."

The whole book is beautifully printed ((Dick Bergeron duplicated most of it himself)) and bound. Don't just let me quote it out of context at you; get a copy of it if you can, and read the best fan writer there has yet been. ((Sorry to go overboard a bit; but you can see why...))

FANZINES

United Kingdom

& (Ampersand) 1 (Andy Sawyer, 59 Mallory Rd., Birkenhead, Merseyside L42 6QR; 12p stamp or the usual; A4 D; 16pp.) Easygoing personalzine largely consisting of Hitch-Hiker worship, but more level-headed than much I've seen written on that subject; it ~~includes a warning~~ to Douglas Adams not to be "taken over by the marketing men."

N* Ansible 6,7 (Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave., Reading, Berks. RG2 7PW; 4/50p in Europe, 3/\$1 NA and Africa, 5/\$1 Australia, plus credit for news or certain trades ((newszines)); Q RL/D; 4pp. each.) Mostly cheerful British fannish news about people getting drunk in Leeds, having babies, failing to sell novels and so on: "Chris Chivers was recently killed on Blake's 7, but not thoroughly enough." Also the inevitable storm-in-a-teacup which newszines always seem to get: some stuff from Sandy Brown and Bob (FOKT) Shaw about Scots cons with much unnecessary overstatement on both sides. Stomp on it, Dave.

Cidereal Times 9 (Allen Boyd-Newton, c/o 42 Church Lane, Bicknoller, Via Taunton, Somerset; 30p by post or the usual; A4 D; 28pp.) Fairly typical clubzine, quite literate and well-produced, with typical contents — reviews, interviews and a polemical open letter from Jerry Maier telling us what rubbish SF is. Thinks we don't know, does he? One boob: the interview is described as being with "Brian Stapleford." Try Stableford.

S* Drilkjis 5 (Dave Langford ((address above)) & Kev Smith, 10 Cleves Ct., St. Mark's Hill, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 4PS; 50p or the usual; A4 RL; 20pp.) A really classy fanzine. Chris Priest's Novacon GoH speech pleading for real openmindedness in SF; a very literate debate from the same con on whether characterisation is necessary for good SF, with well-chosen debaters and many flashes of humour; an excellent Peter Nicholls Seacon report; a mind-boggling Rob Hansen front cover; and a funny back cover strip rapidly drawn by Phil Foglio at Seacon telling us where Jim Barker artwork really comes from.

Fledgeling (un-numbered, but no. 3 if my memory serves me right; Andy Firth, 185 Osborne Rd., Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 3JT; the usual; QD; 42pp.) The strangest Gannet fanzine yet. More comprehensible than the first two Fledgelings, but there are still lots of outre references and plain madness, including puns: "I'll be dammed if I read your zine. — J. Edgar Hoover." being one of the easier ones; also binary page numbering, and lots of illos of clanky robots doing silly things. There are two sensible bits; you get 50 points if you find them both. The frustrating thing is, Andy is so intelligent he could do a very lively sercon zine if he concentrated on communicating instead of obscuring.

Gannetscrapbook 7 (Andy Firth, see above; next issue's editor Ian Williams, 6 Greta Tce., Chester Rd., Sunderland SR4 7RD; the usual; Q D; 34pp.) Fannish groupzine, more comprehensible than Fledgeling. Very clever cover by Harry Bell ripping off the silly logo for a TV show which also has a 7 in the title. The best writing, as usual with the Gannets nowadays, is by Kev Williams about bits of madness during an Irish holiday; there are also two pages of puns excruciatingly wrung out by Mary Long and Neil Hepple.

Grok? 8 (UMIST SF & Fantasy Soc., Students' Union, PO Box 88, Sackville St., Manchester M60 1QD; 35p or the usual; A4 I; 50pp.) Society zine full of amateur fiction, illustrations the best of which reminds me of Pearl & Dean's cinema ad titles, and small reviews. They have trouble spelling at times — Peter "Western" instead of Weston; "critism" instead of criticism; and, most oddly, "far esteem agent" instead of "Far Eastern agent". The contents page refers to Peter Weston's Andromeda 3 anthology as a "fanzine"; whether intentional or not, that's wrong. They also have terrible printing, but at least they apologise for that.

Ocelot 2 (Graham James, 12 Fearnville Tce., Oakwood, Leeds LS3 3DU, & Simon Ounsley, 13A Cardigan Rd., Headingley, Leeds 6; 15p. in stamps or the usual; A4 X; 38pp.) The editors express disquiet at parts of this fanzine being out-of-date on publication, which was just before Seacon; then they give me a copy seven months later. It's fairly fannish, the way Simon feels at the end of his article, Ocelog. Also quite literate.

Periphery 2 (Jeff Suter, 18 Norton Close, Southwick, Fareham, Hants. PO17 6HD; the usual; A4 D; 16pp.) A fair amount of pessimism about having the Tories in power, and criticism of the (now aborted) half-hearted attempt to restrict attendance at Novacon 10 on the grounds that such restriction is elitist. Scariest in its way, though, is Jeff's report of the reaction of an acquaintance who'd read some critical comments in Periphery 1 about another acquaintance of Jeff's and wouldn't believe it wasn't about him. Other than that, though, quite a cheerful personalzine!

Small Mammal 38, 39 (Martin Easterbrook, 191 The Heights, Northolt, Middlesex; free at the One Tun; A4 D; 2pp, each.) Mininewsline. Good snippets.

F* Taff-Ddu (Twll-Ddu 17) (Dave Langford & Jim Barker, c/o 22 Northumberland Ave., Reading, Berks. RG2 7PW; 60p. (profits to TAFF): not available for the usual; A4D/L; 30pp.) Why is it that whenever Dave Langford or Jim Barker publish something I end up burbling on to myself, you lot, and anyone who'll listen about how good it is? Now, to support their respective candidatures for TAFF, they've produced this joint fanzine with rigorously fair division of space and superb work by both: articles and artwork by both (there's even a Jim Barker article illustrated by Dave Langford). Subjects covered include mice, the curry trots, white hunters, weight loss ("I worked out that I could have 9½ lb. of boiled cabbage for lunch"), and auctorial clerihews ("Marion Zimmer Bradley/'s fan club doesn't do badly/Since founded and urged to carry on/By Zimmer Bradley (Marion) ") plus a brilliant 6-page Captive strip, written by Dave, in which Jim's attempted escape is via TAFF candidacy. You all should have this — it's in A Good Cause as well as tremendously funny.

P* Waldo 5 (Eric Bentcliffe, 17 Riverside Cres., Holmes Chapel, Cheshire CW4 7NR; editorial whim only; A4 D; 22pp.) Personalzine with a long Seacon-report: he found it an enjoyable con, and his report's enjoyable too: he's a practised and witty writer, given to puns. And other forms of wit: "...one of the Scottish Pipers was attacked by a marauding band of Trekkies who thought he was mistreating a tribble." He asks wonderingly why I wanted carpenters during the con. The answer's rather boring: we needed to assemble screens for the Fancy Dress preparation room.

North America & Canada

Debris 5 (John Boston, 225 Baltic St., Brooklyn, NY 11201, USA; SSAE or "virtually anything else of interest or value" including publishable material; USQ L; 6pp.) Fanzine of newspaper clippings. All sorts of oddities are reported, mainly scientific this time. Not quite as funny as last time.

The Diagonal Relationship 12 (Arthur Hlavaty, 250 Coligni Ave., New Rochelle, NY 10801, USA; \$1 or the usual; USQ RL; 16pp.) The philosophical fanzine. This issue is devoted to a long retrospective of rock from the Fifties and Sixties counterculture — e.g. a graffitus: "No Left Turn Unstoned." Slightly overwritten and not as sharp as previous issues, but still with a lot of insight.

DNQ 27 (Victoria Vayne, PO Box 156 Stn. D, Toronto, Ontario M6P 3J8, Canada, & Taral, 1812-415 Willowdale Ave., Ontario M2N 5B4, Canada; 4/£1.00 cash plus 1 for 1 trades; USQ D; 14pp.) Pleasant zine full of minor fannish news & gossip. Less stuff of Cosmic Significance this issue; most important is some stuff about the FAAn Awards — but Victoria has more to say in a separate fanzine (see below). Best thing was a little flyer asking for nominations in categories like "Most Self-Pitying Fan" and "Most Bland Fan." Hmmm. Any ideas?

G* Holier Than Thou 5 (Marty Cantor, 5263 Riverton Ave. #1, North Hollywood, CA 91601, USA; \$1 or the usual; USQ D; 54pp.) This is one of a disappearing species, the large American genzine, and as such deserves encouragement; too many Americans are retreating into APAs now. It's well-produced with a typical mix of articles about girlfriends, jobs etc. (as usual, perhaps too much compiling and not enough editing), and fair artwork, the best of which is some of Alex Gilliland's typically wacky work, e.g. a redneck with a "Stop Nuclear Power" placard who's explaining it: "They ought to use uranium for bombs like God intended!"

I Have Quite A Lot To Say (Victoria Vayne (address above); 20¢ and a self-addressed 4" x 9" envelope; USQ D; 6pp.) Limited circulation fanzine full of good suggestions on the FAAn Awards, including doing away with voting fees and replacing it by voluntary contributions from cons etc. Her suggestions would certainly help make the awards more international.

Love Makes The World Go Awry 1 (Fran Skene, 207 West 21st. Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 2E4, Canada; editorial whim; USQ L; 4pp.) Accurate title for a cathartic letter-substitute.

G* The Monthly Monthly 4, 5, 6 (The Gang of Four, c/o Robert Runte, 10957-88 Ave., Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 0Y9; \$9/year or the usual — two copies of your fanzine; USQ D; 18pp. each.) This is still living up to its title, and is proving to be well worth getting — literate, lively, and tightly edited to keep to the weight limit. (The Post Office has its uses sometimes.) Good art and production: no. 6 has a notably tasteless Dave Vereschagin cover, a cartoon strip of a cat being drowned. The other contents are sharp book reviews by Doug Barbour and others, film reviews by Bill Beard who also broadcasts the same reviews over the local radio station, and fannish commentary. One issue has a page-filler which resurrects an old fannish tradition by saying "Yngvi is still a louse." I found that strangely reassuring, even if it'll be incomprehensible to most.

Resolution 4 (Jackie Causgrove, 3650 Newton St. #15, Torrance, CA 90505, USA; the usual or editorial whim; USQ D; 34pp.) Wordy but enjoyable personalzine; lengthy letters, lengthy fanzine reviews, and an article by Dave Locke, with whom Jackie's living and who's a funny writer, better at editing his ideas than most. Quite a lot of stuff about cons, Hugos, and whether fandom is really a way of life. Best if you know some of the people involved already.

Fast & Loose 3, 4 (Alan Bostick, 5022 9th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98105, USA; editorial whim or to "anyone who asks for it nicely"; USQ D; 6pp., 4pp.) Personalzine with little snippets including brief letters on past issues. No. 3 has an amusing, paranoid little beginning about people ganging up on him to ask when the next issue's coming out. I know how he feels.

SF Echo 26 (Ed Connor, 1805 N. Gale, Peoria, IL 61604, USA; \$1, 6/\$5 or the usual; 7" x 8½" D; 76pp.) Much delayed due to illness, this contains some dated material (a review of Goblin's Grotto 2 which appeared in October 1975?). Largely sercon material (about Gene Wolfe, plus book reviews and locs), but it also features Walt Liebscher's Gaga of the Sods, which is what it sounds like — moonerised Sporse nyths.

G* Whole Fanzine Catalog 13 (Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Rd. #207, Detroit, MI 48219, USA; 50¢ or 4/\$2 seamail or \$1 airmail, or 3-for-1 trade; USQ D; 20pp.) Wideranging fanzine of reviews like these. If you like these reviews and want to know about more US zines, get this.

Other Countries

N* Chunder! vol. 3 nos. 10, 11, 12 (John Foyster, GPO Box 4039, Melbourne, Vic. 3001, Australia; 10 for Aus. \$2 or trade or contributions; A4 D; 16pp, 20pp, 4pp.) Aussie newszine with good conreports (one on Seacon) letters and occasional fanzine reviews. They discovered a good way of raising money at one Aussie con — the auctioneer, who hated Marmite, had to bid not to eat a Marmite sandwich and the audience outbid him and made him eat it.

SF Commentary 58 (Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Vic. 3001, Australia; A\$10 for 10 or some of the usual; USQ RL; 16pp.) The mixture as before; intense, extended discussion of SF, typeset now so you can't get out of reading it on the grounds that it is illegible, with a few highspots of excitement; George Turner demolishes Delany's Triton, and there is discussion of the first novel published specifically in Australia by Penguin, David Ireland's Woman of the Future. There are also chatty fannish bits in Bruce's editorial.

MAILBAG

I was rather pleased at the response my remarks on TVSF produced, too many I'm afraid to print here so I'll just have to pick a few which sum up your thoughts on what we see on the little square box.

ALEX STEWART, 11A Beverley Road, Colchester, Essex

Your paragraph in Matrix 28 about SF on television was very interesting, but like most of the comment on this subject it seemed to miss the point. Undeniably most of the SF on television is awful: but only when viewed as SF. The important point is that we are talking about a television production, which changes the rules. You ask what advice should be given to the producer of a new Science Fiction series, and I regret to say that, from a purely commercial standpoint, mine would be as follows:

- (1) Go for the flashiest effects work you can afford; this is what captures a mass audience. If it has something to do with the plot, fine, but this is not essential.
- (2) Cast American actors in at least some of the leading roles. This will boost your chances of big international sales.
- (3) Make it on film, for the same reason. But this pushes your costs up to the point where you can't break even in the domestic British market.
- (4) Have lots of mechandisable hardware - spaceships, handguns, etc. And a distinctive logo, which stands out on the boxes.
- (5) Your stories should be as simple as possible. A mass audience will neither know nor care about the conventions of written SF, and your episodes need to be understood easily when dubbed into Japanese or Spanish.
- (6) Never hire a real science fiction writer. He'll only turn in something you can't use.

Though not an exhaustive list, these are the major guidelines for a successful science fiction series. Space: 1999, to take an example at random, adhered to these principles and was a tremendous success. (It sold in over ninety countries and made a fortune).

When television does get some of it right, as in Blake's Seven for instance, it can often be more by default than design. For a low budget imposes its own limitations, and the rules for a limited audience series are different:

- (1) Effects are still very important. But as you can't achieve all that you'd like to, the lack of visuals has to be overcome by careful scripting. Usually, as a bonus, this results in better drama. (Compare, for instance, an attack on the Liberator with an assault on Moonbase Alpha. Tight directing and a few lines of dialogue - "Nine plasma bolts launched and running," "Force wall activated," - create far more audience involvement than a meaningless display of pyrotechnics.)
- (2) Limit your cast. As well as being desirable from the budget angle, this also pays dividends in believability, audience involvement, and character development. Most of the "three hundred men and women" on Moonbase Alpha, or the four hundred-odd aboard the Enterprise, might just as well not have been there. And by constantly putting themselves in danger, with so many people to delegate to, both Kirk and Koenig showed themselves totally unsuited to command. Blake and Avon, on the other hand, are forced to take their own risks by being the only hands available. (By the same token, of course, Servelan should delegate more; but you don't pay one of your cast a retainer for thirteen episodes then hardly use her.)
- (3) Use a serial or semi-serial format. This allows your characters to develop (Vila is a far more rounded personality than Dr McCoy, for example), and allows the introduction of overall themes for several episodes. (Gathering Blake's original crew, his search for Star One, etc.) This also enables your characters to learn from experience, and makes them more vulnerable; the seven can make mistakes, or even die. A normal series format precludes this, however. Episodes need to be repeatable in any order, so the basic situation remains static. Our heroes can never be harmed or defeated, and Alpha or the Enterprise must always be left intact for the following week.
- (4) Don't over-reach yourself. Blake's Seven was originally intended as a "good comic strip", a level it outgrew as the series progressed. If it's a good idea, it will grow by itself.
- (5) Hire some real science fiction writers, and give them their heads. But bear in mind they may turn in some highly polished work which is radically different from the 'house style'. And try to keep a relatively small group of writers contributing the bulk of the scripts.

Anthology series, of course, can be far wider ranging than series drama. The golden rule here is to hire good writers, preferably with an SF background, and a good script editor who understands SF.

***** *Well, that makes a good start and covers many of the points other people made. Here's some further ideas from;*

HUSSAIN R MOHAMED, 64 Stanthorpe Road, London SW16

I think the answer to your editorial question is you do not stop TV science fiction programmes being cliched. Not unless you personally intend to go out there and write and sell your own scripts battling all the while against the usual mercenary odds. We are 'experts'? How so and to what extent? If Dr Who is flippant - and I believe it generally is - does that matter? I would have thought that the series, with its inevitable ups and downs, was doing a pretty good job as far as TV entertainment goes after all the actual audience of the programme is hardly likely to be one that is so familiar with SF conventions that it would instantly recognize and understand FTL without having someone explain it. I would hazard the guess that its wide popularity with a general audience is mainly due to the very wide range of story backgrounds - from outright 'distant worlds' SF to contemporary tales with just an edge of fantasy. Perhaps it is also the absence of scientific concepts which need to be explained in detail before the story is comprehensible. The flippancy in the Doctor's nonsense science seems to make the series more accessible to people than if it were serious extrapolation - at least according to my friends who count not SF amongst their habits.

Dr Who is in any case only one of a million ways of presenting the genre. Blakes 5th trying so very hard to be a better ST and not succeeding too well, is another, and demonstrates only too clearly my feeling that speculative TV SF is dead from word one if the writer had no real interest in that type of exposition. All the good fan-will in the world will not make decent SF on screens great and small if the SF writers are not there. Those who want to write SF will, in print or otherwise, and if they make a good job of it we will all remember years hence (Out of the Unknown?). Everybody remembers 'City On the Edge Of Forever' bastardized as it was. Gene Rodenbury's strenuous efforts to the contrary, the only ST episodes worth a damn were those penned by such as Sturgeon, Ellison etc. And they would have given us the stuff anyway, even if the series had never existed.

All the fan activity managed in the end... ST-TMP (not forgetting a little help from Paramount of course). I have to confess I liked the film, may the gods forgive me. Nevertheless it was not at all what it should have been considering the time and money invested. It failed because there was no-one with a really good story who cared enough to go out to the wilds of Hollywood and bludgeon someone into producing it. Perhaps they thought it was more trouble than it was worth. If I was in a room with this hypothetical TV SF writer I doubt if I would bother to explain what I personally hoped a good TV SF series should be. If he was unable to explain to me what he thought it should be I can't see that my words would make much difference. It is folly to believe that the BSFA could be a pressure group aimed at forcing the producers to raise their standards. A sudden deluge of complimentary letters on the occasion of a good piece of TV SF might conceivably have some effect in the long run but endless pontification from afar by 'experts' will have the result it has always had - none. Forget the advice to producers, directors, writers or whomever - 1% of the population takes advice and then usually gets it wrong. Concentrate on criticism of the results. The good writers will probably get their stuff put out somewhere sometime someplace and we will have our OOTU's and our Outer Limits, pieces of ST and the odd Quatermass. As I said, if you want to up the standards then send the Beeb a script - and keep it up. No other way has ever really worked.

***** *I never imagined the BSFA being a pressure group, picketing the BBC TV Centre after every bad edition of Blake's 7. The original idea was to generate some positive suggestions from a consumer's point of view.*

ROGER WADDINGTON, 4 Commercial Street, Norton, Malton, North Yorkshire

My excuse this time, on the subject of TV and science fiction, and my personal opinion, is that TV SF is as good as it ever can be; which opinion I would also have held writing about the time of OUT OF THE UNKNOWN, the time of THE OUTER LIMITS, or even at the time of TOM CORBETT, SPACE CADET if they'd imported it then! Oh, there may be better and better special effects, treatments that hold more closely to the original story in the case of translations to the small screen, and that are more attuned to the sf dram; but let's not forget that the impact of sf comes as much from the imagination of the reader as that of the writer; and why so much televised sf has been treated with scorn and/or welcomed with joy is that imagination runs on different lines for each of us... So pity the poor, well-meaning producer who wants to try and please all of us, with the series that he thinks will put sf firmly on the stage! Too, can all those much vaunted special effects (thinking especially of BATTLESTAR: GALACTICA) have as great an effect on the smaller screen, even a 26-inch one?

No, what I would like to see (especially in these days of austerity on the Beeb and elsewhere) is for the TV producers to give up the idea of trying to bring sf to the screen, with costly sets and special treatments, and hand it back to the only medium that can give it that extra

impact, that extra dimension, more than the printed page... Of course, I'm referring to radio! There was the Hitchhikers Guide, but even before that there was the Journey into Space saga, the Lost Planet series, and even the Dan Dare serial in the Eagle show on Radio Luxembourg; and we didn't need to see the spacesuits, the rockets, the aliens to know what they looked like, or be caught up in the story; all we, and they, needed was the power of our imagination. And I think it would do a lot more for sf than pressuring the TV producers, if we could get a series back before a radio audience!

So, briefly (for the vote) we may all have ideas for the best sf on TV, but what's good for us might not necessarily be best for the mass audience and the viewing figures that the TV companies need; and indeed, we cannot change things... If that helps!

***** I think we will have to leave the subject of TV SF there before it takes over the whole letter column. In the last issue Alan Dorey raised the idea of increasing the membership fees to £10 per year, here's how some of you reacted.

NIC HOWARD, 5 Grays Lane, Downley, High Wycombe, Bucks
Alan Dorey's Sermon From The Mount made interesting reading. It's good to know someone seems to care. (He certainly is not an asshole.) I agree with him that his second solution to the BSFA's problems of cost is the best. Each mailing would still be superb value at £1.66! And I would still pay a new rate of 10 hard-earned quid!

What John says about the ALBACON PRs is true: they're not much, and they're nothing when compared to those of YORCON a year ago. YORCON's excellent PRs showed good organisation- and, as YORCON was my first con, this allayed the "fears" I had. I don't think it would have been so had ALBACON been my first.

***** But, of course, there's the other point of view...

MARK GREENER, 2 White Hart Close, Buntingford, Herts
To put up the dues to £10 would distract the number of coming in and more people would not renew. I know that if the dues were put up I would not be able to rejoin until after I have finished my 'A' levels. I am also against a quarterly mailing for two reasons; firstly I look forward to my mailing and to lose two mailings a year... well, it would be too much, I might start reading Perry Rhodan (not even you would drive someone to that, would you)? Secondly, this too may detract from members joining. The solution is to me simple. Put ads in the prozines and what about the comixzines/rockzines? Starburst and Ad Astra both reach a large audience and to take out a 1/4 page ad in one or both would not drain the coffers too much. What about taking an ad out in the D.W.A.S., newsletter which reaches a larger membership than the BSFA has?

***** Expansion of the number of members is something that has raised some doubts with some members.

PAUL SMITH, 23 Sunnymead, Bridgwater, Somerset
Firstly, it seems that most people wish the BSFA to expand. I can understand this if it is for purely economic reasons, but I feel that over-expansion might ruin the association. Until about two months ago I had never heard of the BSFA and to get in touch with it I had to write several letters. Although this is costly, I think it is a good thing because only truly dedicated SF nuts (like me) persevere. If the BSFA is more widely publicised I feel that it might become more commercialised.

GWYNFOR JONES, 34 Bryn Gwynt, Almwch Port, Anglesey, Gwynedd, North Wales
I find it mildly exasperating this continual emphasis on attracting a deluge of new members for the BSFA. The constant need to publicise and peddle the advantages of membership to the media. Surely, if you are providing such an excellent service then the question of publicity wouldn't arise; reputation and word of mouth would be enough to entice new members? Why the hard sell, are you marketing a product or a service? It seems to me as though you are over-reacting in your zeal to procure new souls from the wilderness!

Why the need to expand the service? I would have thought that Vector, Matrix, Focus, Paperback Parlour and to cope with the demands of any fan? But, since I am on the subject of diversification could someone elaborate on the workings of the new tape library? I've failed to register any information on the mechanics of the operation of the service, all I know is that Keith Walker is running the library but that's about all.

I would like to read other members' views on any proposed increase in the membership fee. Should the BSFA retain its present format and curtail any expansionist schemes? Would this lead to a more stable membership fee, stable that is in relation to the soaring cost of raw materials and postage? I must admit that I was rather apprehensive on reading about the £10 membership fee!

***** Both letters make good food for thought, do we want the BSFA to expand? Perhaps you'd let me know.

In the last issue we printed a letter from Jeff Suter in which he defended his attitude towards fanzines. Of course it brought reaction and of course there are two points of view....

HELEN MCNABB, 47 Harding Close, Boverton

I agree with Jeff Suter. I cannot grasp the idea of fandom not having anything to do with SF. Why bother? They might as well label themselves the Mills and Boon Literary Appreciation Society. Is "Fandom" an enclosed society like a Benedictine monastery with rigid rules? If so, I think I'll leave and become a Franciscan. Surely half the value in SF is its supposed lack of rigidity? It's flexibility and freedom from bigotry? It sometimes does not appear so in the BSFA letters and articles.

This leads me nicely to my next point. The BSFA. A vocal minority, or maybe majority, I don't know, are very rude about many cherished authors. One gets the impression that anyone who reads Asimov, Heinlein, McCaffrey, and so on is beyond the pale. I think that is unfair and unnecessarily limiting. I like a lot of those books. I first read the Foundation series at about ten years' old and I still enjoy re-reading them. Some of Heinlein's books are rubbish, and I think one of the worst is "Stranger in a Strange Land" (when I want to be preached to I will read sermons, not a novel) but some, e.g. (she says, preparing to duck the garbage) "Starship Troopers" is good. It's thought out and gives a valid viewpoint, whether you are pro or anti warfare. I am not pro-war, nor do I desire to be a soldier, but many do and it is a legitimate exploration. Surely the BSFA is wide enough to admit the differences. Perry Rhodan enthusiasts are unlikely to join anyway, but within sensible limits I do not think one's taste should be dictated by others. I like lots of types of books, so do other people. It's healthy so why not enjoy it?

CYRIL SIMSA, 18 Muswell Avenue, London N10 2EG

Jeff Suter: although it is true that SF was initially the *raison d'être* of fandom, that does not mean that SF is the only subject worthy of a fan's attention. Your analogy with Abba does not hold up on inspection: SF is a written artform, whereas Abba practice a performing art. When Abba fans gather together in the presence of their heroes, they are there for a performance and (as you rightly point out) it would be stupid of the fans to spend a concert chattering amongst each other. SF, on the other hand, is usually a very much more private artform: it is best appreciated when the reader is alone and undisturbed reading their book. When SF fans gather together into fandom, they are thus participating in a separate activity, only vaguely related to the artform they admire. Fandom, although initially meant as a forum for discussion on SF, in practice is autonomous, existing alongside SF and being very much a social entity as well as a discursive one.

If SF was to vaporise all of a sudden overnight, I'm sure that fandom would persist, and that it would manage to find some other subject(s) to discuss.

The other letter that attracted my attention was the snippet from Steve Ince asking how to get hold of fanzines: Steve, just simply write and ask. You've no idea quite how chuffed it makes a faneditor feel when somebody notices them. Faneditors are human, too, you know, and most of them don't bite.

P.S. Can I be the first to say that the debate on Bakshi and LOTR is boring me to tears?

***** *If SF were to vapourise all of a sudden overnight, I am sure that fandom would die out. Not immediately of course, but as fandom is a dynamic body, with people joining and leaving all the time, the influx of fresh people would be stemmed. The SF element is a binding force, a common interest which does not have to be at the surface of all its activities, thus fans call themselves SF fans and will not let that limit the scope of their fanzines or activities at conventions and other social events. There is a little more on LOTR but we'll leave that until later.*

Now more on the subject of fandom and fanzines. Rob Jackson's reviews appear to have produced mixed reactions; here's a couple of typical ones.

STEVE B INCE, 5 Otterburn Street, Hessle Road, Hull, HU3 5HE

Another interesting issue of Matrix. Although, there are a couple of things that could be improved. Firstly, there is the Fanzine Revues which really do seem to be getting out of hand and only repeat what has already been said about the magazines before. Secondly, was the article by Dave Langford really in the right place? I enjoyed reading it for what it was, but it really seemed to be begging its place in your pages.

I would now like to move onto something else and talk about a new magazine that is coming out shortly. Called Caprice it is a magazine that is devoted to the new movement in the arts called Capricism. It is not a spoof or a fanzine, but a proper magazine. But having said that, I must go on to say that it is starting from very small beginnings and contributors will not be paid at first, but it is soon hoped that all of this will change. Caprice is a very experimental magazine and is an opening for anything new and original. This includes poetry and artwork. Artwork will be reproduced the same size up to A4 and should be line. All contributions should be accompanied by a stamped s.a.e. (of course). The editorial address is: 2 Bucks Avenue, Watford Heath, Herts, WD1 4AS.

Issue 1 of Caprice is not yet out, but it should be soon.

***** *Was Dave Langford's piece in the right place? I think so (obviously or I would not have printed it), one of the features of Matrix is that we can and should print unusual items that will be of interest to BSFA members. Matrix is the most free of the publications and I want to keep it that way.*

WILLIAM BAINS, Flat 13 G Tocil, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL
'On the Carpet' provides an excellent and much needed brief review service without which many BSFA members would never know what was available in the fanzine world until years after the zines had collapsed.

Paul Oldroyd's review of *Strek* was unnecessarily harsh: the film promised to be true to the original series, and was. So? Like *Star Wars*, it was a film fulfilling its mission to explore... er... to provide fairly light entertainment, unlike *SW*, with the background of the TV series to fit in. The inevitable result was another bigger and better *Strek* episode. And I object to the idea that, just because mysticism was ultra-fashionable among the now nearly-extinct hippies, it should be regarded as dead with them. Gravity was the rage of the scientific world 230 years ago after its first mathematical description, but everyone didn't start levitating as soon as Sir Isaac died.

But I admit, hardly the filmmaking revolution of the century.

Roy Gray's letter on meeting the authors. I would agree, if I thought more authors actually wanted to talk to fen. But at Seacon I (yes, I!) was talking to someone who knew someone who... Jerry Pournelle. Said doctor was dragged into conversation. Gasp, chance to talk to the Great Man, methinks. The subject matter was biology of aliens, but within minutes it was not. Pournelle had leapt onto a hobby horse about what he had done at NASA testing how far they could distort the human metabolism before it broke, and was away. I tried to interject a couple of times, mentioning that that was not what we had been talking about when he joined in. Then it occurred to me that perhaps he did not give a damn what we had been talking about, but just wanted to promulgate the image of Pournelle the Scientist. Curiously this was just at the bottom of the stairs in the main foyer. Far from seeking him out fen could hardly get past the man without getting something autographed. I may be being unfair, but (taking this case, anyway, and I know all professional attendees were not like this kind gentleman) how many authors were there for the fandom, and how many for PR?

***** *Poor(?) old Jerry Pournelle seems to be getting quite a panning from BSFA members, doesn't anybody like him?*

You Locers will keep drifting off the point I'm trying to get you to discuss, I'm sure Steve Green will behave!

STEVE GREEN, 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, W Midlands

Rob's criticism of *Closer to the Edge* and its like as inward-looking and generally cliquish is probably well-founded (I find it a little hard to approach the argument objectively), but with *CttE* specifically, its failure to act as a fan forum certainly wasn't through lack of trying. I began the zine with just one aim: to publish a soapbox, and one that would stand in the limbo between sf and comics fandom (and a pretty uninhabited limbo it is, too; ask Andy Sawyer or Dave Harwood sometime...). As it is, I have to assume it wasn't successful, and I certainly shan't rush into a similar set-up again without rethinking the basic formula, but what counts is that there was enough interest to get as far as issue 5, and the credit for that lies with the people who contributed. The reason that sf fanzines (and, I regret to say, the glossier of the comics fanzines) often appear to be very clique-fostering is that these people are often the only ones who bother to even send you a loc. There are fans and fans, some are little more than enthusiasts who occasionally like to read about sf rather than just read sf (and don't think I'm knocking them, after all they never asked for more involvement and they aren't going to get it - it's the apathetic lot who have the time and the opportunity to get deeper into fandom but who are prepared to sit back while their subscribed-to zine mailings get smaller and smaller, until one day there's nowt in the post, that get up my metaphorical nose (well, makes a change from Roman...)), and others - like Alan Dorey or Joe Nicholas or... I guess you can fill in half a dozen of your own - who contribute or loc or just laugh into their pint whatever you send them. Trouble is, they're very much in the minority, and until that's changed, cliques will remain the order of the day. Unless, of course, anyone cares to convince me differently...

***** *Perhaps a little fatalistic but I feel that there is a large element of truth in your comments and they lead neatly into a letter on neofandom....*

ASHLEY WALKER, River Bend, 22 Forsail Road, Yarm-on-Tees, Cleveland

I have now received my third mailing from the BSFA and have come to the conclusion that I must be a neofan, although I certainly do not feel like one. I have been reading and illustrating SF for years but I still enjoy reading almost all of it including fantasy. I have been reading

for so long that I (like all good neofans, buy anything with a flashy cover and SF on the spine) have come across authors such as J G Ballard, Philip K Dick etc - damn good writers but I don't recall having enjoyed their books more than, say, those of E C Tubb or Edmund Cooper. "Oh Drokk! he really is a neofan." I hear you say. Sure, I can tell the difference between literary writers and non-literary writers but I can also tell the difference between strawberry and raspberry yogurt too.

Now that I think I have established in your mind that I am indeed a neofan, I would like to say on my and otherneofans' behalf that some of us resent being called NEOfans and being talked about as if we were naive idiots.

Having said that I think that the BSFA publications are of a high standard and I generally end up reading them all from cover to cover. I also get Omni but I usually only end up reading about one quarter of that. Paperback Parlour is the only publication which I don't care for too much, especially after being called a mug for buying "The Word for World is Forest" by Ursula K LeGuin for 95p.

As I like to think I am an artist, I have been interested in the comments on art in M26 and M28. It seems clear to me that Mr Ince is one of those persons who has been conditioned into thinking that unless a picture is framed and hung in an art gallery it is not Art. Does he not realize that all the great artists also "used paints, inks etc to accomplish a certain job." Sorry but I think Mr Ince's opinion is merely a result of bias against commerciality.

***** *Please don't be brow beaten by the 'interlectual knowalls' who do appear to be telling us what to read; their opinion is just that and not necessarily more valid than yours.*

DAVE JACKSON, 270 Thornaby Road, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland

The response to Steve Ince's assertion in M26 that "anything that appears on a book cover cannot be described as art but is simply an illustration" was interesting. I fail to see why Steve believes his labels for anything should matter to anyone else.

If his first statement were true, would this mean in his judgement that the cover illustration on a book about Michelangelo would no longer be art? Is the Cistine Chapel ceiling not to be considered art because it merely illustrates a book?

Steve poses the question whether taking care painting his bedroom wall amounts to creating art. It really depends on his intention and ability; Leonardo could make quite a nice job of walls, The Last Supper being a notable example. I agree that "true art must have a feeling toward it and that feeling is the most important feature." But any attempt to exclude this feeling ('art') from illustration by definition is a non-starter.

Paul Dembina argued in favour of the value of reviews on the grounds that by relying solely on an enthusiastic cover blurb he purchased The Pawns of Null-A, which he found "a load of rubbish" Oh, hard luck! Reviews can be just as misleading. I have bought novels which I consider rubbish by acting on a reviewer's recommendations. In the 'Consumer's Guide to the SF of A E van Vogt' which appeared in the one-off SF Digest, The Players of Null-A (previously published as Pawns) is rated in six categories by nine reviewers from 'Masterpiece'(2), 'Very Good'(4), 'Good'(2), 'Mediocre'(1), 'Bad'(1), to 'Atrocious'(1)! In the final analysis, value judgements are simply a matter of personal opinion.

***** *Let's break some new ground.*

JANICE H ARTER, 7 Danbers, Up Holland, Skelmersdale, Lancs WN8 0DB

I'd like to pose a question, which needless to say isn't the Question (albeit some people might see the answer as 42 - some people will see anything come closing time). The question is - why does there seem to be such a sharp distinction between science fiction and fantasy/horror/occult (however you choose - assuming you do choose - to term it) that my friends in the "vampire" societies I belong to - with a few exceptions - profess a complete lack of interest in and even aversion to science fiction (but zoom off faster than a speeding bullet to see "Superman", "Alien", etc and what the hell is "Frankenstein" if it isn't sf?) while "serious" science fiction fans have been known to turn up their noses at the mention of a supernatural story? Myself, I've always been interested in and enjoyed both genres (or aspects of the same genre) and find this exclusivity very puzzling. Also, why do Conan and LOTR qualify for inclusion in SF-orientated publications whereas vampries, werewolves and their kin (I'd back, say, Dracula's scientific knowledge against Conan's anyway) would, one feels, be regarded as anathema. In an article on SEACON for a fantasy publication I contributed to, I endeavoured to point out to my fellows that their claim not to like SF does not hold up under examination, and I would be interested to know what the attitude of staunch sf fans towards supernatural fantasy is - and how they account for it. (I'd refer to it all as speculative fiction but then you'd assume I read Ellison...)

***** Personally I don't think SF fans do shun all Fantasy/Horror/Occult, only some of it. What they shun is just their personal choice and no more significant than the SF they ignore.

I said we'd return to the LOTR bit.....

WILLIAM T GOODALL, The Beeches, Deveron Road, Huntly AB5 5DU

A few points about Joe Nicholas's LoC in M28:- in the first paragraph Joe slags Bakshi's landscapes for not being English enough, giving as grounds for this that Tolkien had the English landscapes of his childhood in mind when writing LOTR. In the last paragraph of his LoC he asserts that it is 'arrogance' for anyone to criticise the film for not being true to Tolkien's conception. That is a contradiction. Something has to go, and I think the fault lies in the argument in the last paragraph. I've extracted this argument, and laid it out in an orderly form below:-

- (1) Everyone has their own conception of Tolkien's Middle Earth.
- (2) No-one knows that Tolkien's own original conception was.
- (3) Every different conception of Middle Earth is equally valid.
- (4) Bakshi's conception of Middle Earth is valid.

There's a lot wrong with the argument:-

(a) (3) doesn't follow from (1) and (2) - even if nobody knows what Tolkien's conception was, people whose conception is closest to Tolkien's (though nobody knows it) surely have the most objectively valid conception?

(b) Premise (2) doesn't stand up. Granted no-one knows exactly what Tolkien's conception was, but a close reading of the text will give you a very good idea of it.

Surely the intentions of the author in respect of the book set limits on the reasonable interpretation of the book. A great many people seem to feel that Bakshi's version of LOTR is outside these limits; and in that respect the film is a failure.

***** Perhaps the LOTR discussion has just about finished, or is there more to it?

Now for tape fans, here's some news from Keith Walker.

KEITH WALKER, 2 Daisy Bank, Lancaster LA1 3JW

I don't usually have much time for lozng these days but a couple of points in the latest Matrix aroused my attention. Firstly the Tape Library. I've written to Alan and suggested this should be tape exchange. This will place us clearly within the Copyright Laws and also allow us to offer material which otherwise wouldn't be possible because of copyright restrictions. I gather from the offers of tapes you've already had that an exchange service wouldn't penalise those wanting to use the service. The mention by Alan? of lectures for hire would still of course be possible as this material would be, I presume, material for which we would have copyright clearance, i.e. the speaker would have already given permission for the talk to be used for the purpose already mentioned.

NFFF. I was European Agent, but no longer. Roger Waddington has taken over this and although I'm his second string it would seem better for him to plug the NF. I will be their Teaching SF Activity head cook and bottle washer and as Secretary of the Teaching SF Soc. this seems more useful and to our mutual advantage.

***** Keith mentioned the N3F (National Fantasy Fan Federation) so it seems fitting to finish with a letter from one of its Directors.

HARRY ANDRUSCHAK, 6933 N Rosemead Blvd No 31, San Gabriel, CA 91775, USA

I received Matrix 27 today, and all the rest of the mailing. Quite an impressive bundle. I notice my mailing envelope was marked in ballpoint 34, but otherwise no stamp. I wonder how it got through the combined post office of two countries? As this is the first zine of the BSFA I have received, I am not too qualified to comment on the on-going discussion about the purposes and aims of the BSFA. Nor about introducing neos to fandom. You see, I am one of the five Directors of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, and we are going through very much the same problems you are. By the way, although Greg Hills and I are both on the Board of Directors, neither of us speaks for the NFFF. Don Franson is president, and even he is under the control of the Board, who can over-ride his actions. Only the full Directorate speaks for the NFFF, by majority vote and published in our Official Organ. All our opinions are just that ... ours, not the NFFF. OK?

OK, I do agree that there should be more contact between the two organizations if for no other reason than to improve relations. I notice Jim Darroch's comment in the lettercol. Well, you should see some of the things being written about British Fandom in the USA fanzines and apazines. Obviously Both Sides of the Atlantic seem to have a few differences. I do have a column in TNFF, our official organ, and I'll use it to plug the BSFA. Hopefully we can get Keith Walker or somebody to do something about NFFF for Matrix:

I must admit, overall, that the BSFA seems to be the healthier organization. There may be a reason for this. How recent is this attempt to be the way for neos to be introduced into fandom? Although the NFFF was founded in 1940, it wasn't until the 50's that this became a primary function. Hardening of the arteries seems to have set in that we now have this club of 200-300 ignored by most of USA fandom. All agree we do a good job... but they do not renew or rejoin. If the BSFA feels that there is a need for an organization to introduce neos to the ins and outs of fandom ((and I do, or why would I be a Director of the NFFF)) I hope they don't go overboard and make it the Primary Function of the group. I think that may have been the biggest problem of the NFFF, and one not easy to correct. ((Again, this is personal opinion, and in no way reflects the view of many Neffers on the subject.))

Otherwise, I am very happy to be a new member of this club. I was especially impressed by Vector, nothing in the NFFF comes close to it. Indeed, there are few sercon zines of this quality in the USA. And Paperback Parlour strikes me as another good idea that the NFFF might imitate. The Directory is also useful. And of course the fanzine listings and reviews. I find this sort of thing most interesting, since I will be publishing the first issue of my new genzine Intermediate Vector Bosons soon. Could you, or any good BSFA writer, be interested in doing an article on the BSFA especially written for USA fans?? Not a formal form essay, but one intended for the USA fanzine audience. I hope you will think about it.

You may inform Stephen Ramsden that the USA can too make royal blunders with the film programme equal to or better than SEACON. At NORTHAMERICON, held the weekend after SEACON, occurred the most inept Film Programme ever to disgrace a large scale convention. Ask a member of the concom.

WAHF

(We Also Heard From)

Tom Jones, Andy Sawyer, Rich Phillpot,
Chris Jones and Phil James.

EVE'S ALBACON

POSTSCRIPT



News

The Story So Far...

You may be relieved to know that this column is going to be somewhat shorter than usual. However, those that voice their approval in too vocal a manner will be dealt with in an unpleasant fashion, such as being forced to read and learn the columns I've written over the last year. A suitable three hour examination can then be arranged. The size constraint has been placed because of the large amount of extra material we've got to cram into this issue of Matrix following the AGM in Glasgow at the beginning of April, so I trust you'll all bear with it. G

The accounts for 1979 (as yet subject to audit) are included with this issue, and with next issue there will be the minutes of the AGM, so I won't pontificate at length about the results of the AGM. One change has been made to the BSFA council inasmuch as Chis Umpleby has been replaced as Treasurer by Janice Maule. I'd like to offer my thanks for Chris's services in the past, and to welcome Janice to the sweatshop. Attendance at the bi-monthly mailing sessions is of course compulsory...

The litho fund is now progressing very well, having reached a total of some £240 prior to the AGM. This has since been swollen by some further £90 which we gained from the thrilling BSFA auction at ALBACON, and so that you can see we really do mean to do something with this money, you'll be able to see a list of costings and other alternatives in the next issue of Matrix. Keith Walker, of the British Fantasy Society, suggested at the AGM that the BSFA should enter into some form of sharing scheme with the BFS over a litho machine, both organisations contributing similar funds of money. I've asked Keith to get the powers that be in the BFS to present a formal declaration of intent in this matter, and with luck, it should also be published in the next Matrix.

Along the Road...

Well, it's been just over a year since I took over from Tom Jones as Chairman of the BSFA, and even if I do say so myself, some progress since then has been made. The opportunity is now at hand to build on the solid foundations that have been laid in the last twelve months, and I'd like to ask for a really solid commitment from all members of the council in the year ahead. Whilst it is unrealistic to be too ambitious with our plans, I'd just like to make a few suggestions as to the targets we can reach this year; then in a year's time, you can all enjoy yourselves by shooting me down in flames, burning effigies of me in the streets, writing to 'That's Life' or re-electing me for a further session of torture. So what are the targets?

- (1) A membership of 1000 by December 31st 1980.
- (2) Regular monthly BSFA meetings at a venue in London.
- (3) Some sort of concrete progress being made towards a permanent HQ.
- (4) The holding of a BSFA conference before the next AGM.
- (5) The purchase of a litho machine, or some such valuable piece of equipment.
- (6) The issue of further special publications.

I feel confident that the BSFA can make that big leap forward from a mere 'hand to mouth' existence within the next twelve months, and I'd like to

commit resources to this aim. Of course, this will not jeopardise in any fashion the present function of the BSFA, so do not fear for your regular bi-monthly mailings! They will be maintained, and the improved standard of the magazines will not only be continued, but improved upon. There are some major plans in the offing with regard to Vector and Focus, but I won't go into detail here. Like they say in all the TV ads... "Coming Real Soon Now!". Vector itself will be celebrating its 100th issue at the end of the year, and I'm sure you'll appreciate the extra-special issue that's being put together. Several surprises can be guaranteed, and the celebration of this important milestone will not be forgotten.

That's about it. We've made a start, and I've tried to outline some of the aims of the BSFA in the future. Further elaborations will be included in the next issue of Matrix, and any enquiries or suggestions will be more than welcomed by myself, or John & Eve Harvey here at Matrix. And, now since I'm at the backend of this issue (for a change) I'll be able to find out just how many folk actually read all the way through each issue. BSFA questionnaire? Nah... this system is far more subtle, cheaper and altogether practical.

Alan Dorey

NEWS OF THE SF WORLD

Substantiated Publishing News

Our 'Unsubstantiated Publishing News' section in Matrix 28 brought forth irate response from a couple of the publishers mentioned. We've reprinted their letters, in full, below.

John Hitchin, Publicity Director, Penguin Books:

"I happen to be a member of your Association and so I received a copy of Matrix and was astonished to read your piece about this company, which passes on to your readers a set of totally unfounded rumours about our publishing activity. We have certainly cut back some aspects of our publication programme but this does not include Science Fiction and we have absolutely no intention of faltering in our desire to extend the range of good SF in our list. We are not, nor do we intend to be, major publishers of the genre, but nevertheless feel that it is right and proper for it to be represented in our programme of new books.

We have just published Isidore Haiblum's INTERWORLD, and we are about to reissue Yevgeny Zamyatin's WE in our SF series. June sees the publication of Pohl and Williamson major work THE STARCHILD TRILOGY, and later in the year, we reissue Saberhagen and Robert Sheckley. Jack Chalker's Well World series starts coming out from us in 1981, which was when we always intended to do it and we hope to make the first book for the series MIDNIGHT AT THE WELL OF SOULS, available at the end of January. We are also planning to publish several titles by Lem in 1981 and we have a specially commissioned READER'S GUIDE TO SCIENCE FICTION coming during the course of the year.

Your purist readers may not be interested, but we also have some interesting books in related areas. Walter Wangerin's THE BOOK OF THE DUN COW was hailed in America as a major work of fantasy and that will be out in paperback from us next year and I am sure that many of your readers will be interested in the monumental work GODEL, ESCHER, BACH, which we publish in Penguin non-fiction in the autumn of this year.

In conclusion I would like to affirm that we have every intention of going on with SF and reissuing it wherever possible. Our worldwide sales of the genre certainly justify our doing so but of course we are not exactly helped

in our task by the kind of adverse publicity which the BSFA journals choose to give us. I do hope the record can be set straight."

Dorothy Houghton, Editorial Director, Magnum Books

"I was surprised to discover in Matrix 28, that we are cutting back on our SF list, so I went to check our schedules. In 1979 we published 11 new titles and reprinted 3 novels, in 1980 we will be publishing 10 new SF and fantasy titles and reprinting about 6 titles from the back list and in 1981, we will be publishing 12 SF titles, including novels by such authors as Thomas Disch, Philip K Dick, C J Cherryh and Joan Vinge, as well as exciting newcomers such as Diane Duane.

As you can see we are in fact slightly increasing our SF list."

Thank you to both Penguin and Magnum for correcting the mis-information. It's very pleasing to hear tales of doom and gloom refuted.

A further correction is in order and this time to the news that newly founded Virgin Books were to reprint unexpurgated, retranslations from the French of Philip Jose Farmer's Lord of the Trees and The Mad Goblin. Virgin's Managing Director, Maxim Jakubowski promptly corrected that error.

"Like every patient BSFA member, I got my recent mailing, but was surprised to see on page 9 of Matrix a piece of news entitled "True Facts" pertaining to Virgin Books, which unfortunately happens to be completely untrue. Can I put it on the record that there are no plans to reprint the two Farmer titles in question and even if we were to do so, we would certainly not be re-translating from the French - a practice which I would find distasteful to say the least. I feel this misunderstanding has arisen because of the fact that Virgin will be reprinting various old Essex House erotica titles.

I would like this to be put on records as it could cause some embarrassment."

Our apologies to those publishers concerned and thanks again for the opportunity to correct the errors.

Forthcoming Books

Very much as expected Gollancz have rescheduled their publishing list for 1980. Well, nobody surely expected seven SF titles from them in June! Here is their revised list for the remainder of the year

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| May 8 | Transfigurations - Michael Bishop |
| May 22 | Constellations: Stories of the Future - a young adult anthology edited by Malcolm Edwards |
| June 19 | The Snail on the Slope - Arkady and Boris Strugatsky |
| July 3 | The Gardens of Delight - a fantasy novel by Ian Watson
The Ringworld Engineers - Larry Niven |
| July 31 | Beyond the Blue Event Horizon - Frederick Pohl
Molly Zero - Keith Roberts |
| August 28 | The Dreamers - James Gunn
Lord Valentine's Castle - Robert Silverberg |
| October 9 | Timescape - Gregory Benford
Best SF of the Year 9 - an anthology edited by Terry Carr |

October 23 Threshold - a fantasy by Ursula K LeGuin

From Sidgwick in May

The Avatar - Poul Anderson

The Time of the 4th Horseman - Chelsea Quin Yarbro

Leviathan's Deep - Jaygee Carr

From Faber

April Courts of Chaos - Roger Zelazny

May Capella's Golden Eyes - Christopher Evans' (co-editor of Focus)
first novel. Note that the byline has been changed from C D Evans.

Severn House

May Star Trek: the motion picture - Gene Rodenberry

Harper and Row

June Nebula Winners 13 edited by S R Delaney

New paperback titles include:

Arthur Clarke	Foundations of Paradise (Pan, April)
Bob Shaw	Vertigo (Pan, April)
Christopher Priest	An Infinite Summer (Pan, May)
Brian Aldiss	Enemies of the System (Panther, April)
S R Delany	Driftglass (Panther, April)
James Blish	Get out of my sky (Panther April)
Ursula K LeGuin	The eyes of the heron (Panther, June)
Frederick Pohl	Jem (Panther, July)
Frank Herbert	The Jesus Incident (Futura, May)
John Wyndham	Web (Penguin, May)
Pohl/Williamson	Starchild trilogy (Penguin, May)
Norman Spinrad	The World Between (Arrow, June)

TOP TEN SF

A new feature in the news section is this top ten listing. We hope to be able to include it on a regular basis and gather information from various book sellers. This issue's list was kindly compiled from the sales figures for March at Roger Peyton's Andromeda Bookshop, Summer Row, Birmingham.

Paperbacks

1. Dr Who and the stones of blood
2. Bug Wars - Robert Asprey
3. Best of Eric Frank Russell
4. Han Solo's Revenge - Brian Dailey
5. Future History - E C Carnell
6. St Camber - Catherine Kurtz
7. Devil World (Star Trek) - Eckland
8. Convergent Series - Larry Niven
9. White Dragon - Anne McCaffrey
10. Best of Jack Williamson

Hardbacks

1. Number of the Beast - Robert Heinlein
2. Unorthodox Engineers - Colin Kapp
3. Luck Machine - E C Tubb
4. Matilda's Stepchildren - A Bertram Chandler
5. Death Wears a White Face - E C Tubb

(A short note from Eve, she apologises in advance for any spelling mistakes in the above, but explains that the titles were dictated over the phone.)

BSFA AWARD

As many of you will already realise, this year's BSFA Award winners were announced at ABACON. For the first time ever members of Eastercon were eligible to vote, increasing the significance of the results considerably. This year's winners were as follows:

Novel	- The Unlimited Dream Company by J G Ballard (Jonathan Cape)
Short Story	- Palely Loitering by Christopher Priest (F & SF)
Media Award	- The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy - record
Artist	- Jim Burns

It is hoped to be able to organise an award presentation dinner later in the year at which all the winners will be present.

BSFA TAPE EXCHANGE SERVICE

As you will have noticed from this issue's letter column, Keith Walker has proposed that the tape service should be organised on an exchange basis. As Keith says, "This will place us clearly within the Copyright Laws and also allow us to offer material which otherwise wouldn't be possible because of copyright restrictions." If you are interested in this new service please contact Keith, and if you would like to send a blank cassette, he will return it with an introduction to the service. Please remember to include return postage. Keith's address is:
2 Daisy Bank, Lancaster, LA1 3JW.

FILM MEDIA NEWS

Okay, sci-fi lovers, you've only got yourself to blame. The second BATTLESTAR GALACTICA movie GALACTICA: THE CYLON INVASION is due to appear in the cinemas towards the end of May with a London release date to be set. As before, this will be a couple of the telly segments cobbled together to film length. You have been warned.

Meanwhile, though the original series was axed in the States, Glen Larson has just surfaced with GALACTICA 1980. This is the pilot for a proposed series in which the Galactica finally finds Earth (yawn). It's set thirty years after the first series and the only person retained from the original show is Lorne Green as Adama. Apparently all the other characters were wiped out in the intervening years. The new plot involves the Galacticans' attempts to settle on Earth. However, since our present day technology is too primitive for them, they decide to update it by travelling back in time and tampering with our evolution. Then, when they come back to the future (our present) we'll be advanced enough for them to live with us comfortably. Things go wrong when a renegade scientist decides to update Germany's technology during WWII... No doubt it'll turn up on our cinema screens at some time or other.

There's a character in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (showing in London from May 20) called Yoda. They're being very secretive about what he is but it's known that he's designed, created and acted by Frank Oz... Miss Piggy and Fozzie of the Muppets.

BRILLO PLAGIARISM

A plagiarism suit has been taken out by Harlan Ellison and Ben Bova against ABC-TV and Paramount Pictures. They are alleging that the short story Brillo and a teleplay written by Bova and Ellison were plagiarized in the pilot film and eight episodes of the TV prog. FUTURE COP. The original collaboration appeared in August 1970 Analog whilst the pilot film for FUTURE COP was shown in 1973.

SNAIL WITHDRAWN

You will recall from the above forthcoming books section that June sees the publication of Arkady and Boris Strugatsky's The Snail on the Slope by Gollancz. Its publishers in the USA, Bantam, however, recalled all their copies within a week of publication! Bantam's reasons for this are that the cover carried an inaccuracy and felt it should be withdrawn until corrected out of concern for the authors. The blurb on the cover states that the authors "are now in disfavour with the Soviet government for the bold, outspoken ideas expressed in this novel."

ANALOG SOLD

Conde Nast have sold Analog to the publishers of Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine, Davis Publications for an undisclosed amount. The sale has been under discussion for two years. Stanley Schmidt, the current editor of the zine with move with it.

The cover price of both IASFM and Analog is to be increased to \$1.50 with the next issue

TAFF RESULTS

Now that you all know what TAFF is and who were this year's candidates from the ballot form distributed with the last mailing, I expect you want to know the winners.

Well, our TAFF representative is to be:-

DAVID LANGFORD

Whilst the exact figures are never released I understand that it was a very close run race on this side of the atlantic whilst Dave emerged a clear favourite in the USA.

Jim Barker, however, is not being put off by not winning and is expected to visit Noreascon (the 1980 Worldcon in Boston) anyway. Plans are already afoot to launch the BAT fund (Barker Atlantic Transfer)!

CONVENTIONS

Yorcon II

Narrowly beating the rival Rockon 81 bid, Yorcon II at the Leeds Dragonara is to be the 1981 Eastercon. Many of the BSFA stalwarts are involved in its organisation; Mike Dickinson is chairman and the committee include Alan Dorey and Simon Ounsley. Guest of Honour is Ian Watson and the Fan Guest of Honour is David Langford. Dates for your diary are April 17 - 20 1981. Supporting membership is £3, attending £6. Write to Graham James, 12 Fearnville Terrace, Oakwood, Leeds LS8 3DU.

Unicon 80

A small convention at Keele University offering a pleasant weekend at a reasonable price. Dates are July 4-7 and membership is £4.50 up to June 14, £5 thereafter. Contact Unicon 80 at Keele University, Keele, Staffordshire.

Anglicon

Yet another mini-convention to be held at a university. This time the University of East Anglia (Norwich), dates 5-7 September. Guest speakers include Ian Watson and Brian Stableford. The registration fee of £20 includes two nights bed and breakfast. Contact Alan Marshall at 1 Trendall Road, Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8BT.

Fourth National SF Convention in Poland

This will take place in Krakow between September 16 -21 1980. The National Convention is organized every year by the Polish National Science Fiction and Fantasy Fan Club. This year's Guests of Honour are: Britain - John

Brunner and Bob Shaw, France - Claude Avice, Pierre Barbet and Gerard Klein, a group of writers from the Soviet Union, German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria and Rumania. Anyone interested should write to Wiktor Bukato, PO Box 983, 00-950 Warsaw, Poland.

Won't Get Fooled Again ?

THE BLACK HOLE

Directed by Gary Netson, starring Maximilian Schell, Anthony Perkins, Robert Forster, Joseph Bottoms and Yvette Mimieux as well as Ernest Borgnine, a Walt Disney Production.

The Black Hole is Walt Disney's long-awaited, secrecy-shrouded contribution to the recent boom in sci-fi films. As such, it will bring lots of pleasure to two different groups of people - those who will willingly suspend their disbelief (as opposed to having it suspended for them by the efforts of the director) and thoroughly enjoy a typical Walt Disney adventure story; and a much smaller band of people who will gain most entertainment from, gurgling quietly to themselves, sliding slowly from their seats as scientific absurdity follows plot cliché across the star-speckled screen.

Most of the audience - adults, children and the Von Daniken fans enjoyed it and seemed not to notice (or care about) the film's flaws. Personally I belong to the second group - as I've been told many times .

Don't let my prejudices put you off, this film succeeds in its chosen context. It is a good example of a Walt Disney adventure film aimed at the parents of boisterous children who like to pack them off to "the Pictures" for a quiet holiday afternoon. I just think that the audience deserve a better standard of accuracy, at least, if not also of the writing. The case for tightening standards has been put before, many, many times.

The plot can be summarised as Swiss Family Robinson Meet Captain Nemo & Friends At Their Neighbourhood Black Hole - a mixed dish with a side-order of red-herrings doused in Frankenstein's Old Trouble (in the shape of the robot Maximilliam who does for those he takes a dislike to, what the Kenwood Mixer did for Kermit the Frog). The film is funny in parts (which comes as a relief after seeing Star Trek) but the humour is, as in most Walt Disney wildlife programmes, typically anthropomorphic (so don't expect to see anything new on man-robot relationships).

Ultimately the regulation-issue mad scientist and his mile-long spaceship the USS Cygnus seem to share a similar fate to that of Captain Nemo - this is probably due to the resemblance the black hole has to a cosmic plughole. (Think what a great navigation aid it would make - if it rotates counter-clockwise then you're in the northern galactic hemisphere, or is it the other way round?) Apart from the Hole itself, the effects are very good - better than those in Star Trek - The Motion Picture, it's refreshing to see such densely populated star fields used as background. (It makes films look so... parochial)

Still, I think Mark Gorton, of New Scientist, hit the nail on the head when he wrote that its greatest flaw is that it appears to have been (deliberately?) designed as a launching vehicle for a whole industry of money-spinning toys, rather than as a film.

Phil James

Miscellany Corner

MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD

WANTED - "Philip K Dick - Electric Shepherd" edited by Bruce Gillespie, published by Morstrillia Press, Melbourne. Any edition, any condition will do. Please contact Peter Holdsworth at 6 Ruskin Grove, Deighton, Huddersfield, Yorkshire HD2 1HR.

WANTED - Issue No 2 of Nebula SF Magazine. Anybody willing to sell a copy please contact R A Worrall, 63 Smitherway, Bugbrooke, Northants.

WANTED - To satisfy personal obsessions: rotten British paperbacks of the 50's - Scion, Curtis Warren, Hamilton, Tit-Bits etc. Good prices paid. Will also pay 30p (plus postage) for any Badger book in decent condition. No need to write first; just send them to Malcolm Edwards, 28 Duckett Road, London N4 1DN.

WANTED - Long fiction/Experimental fiction for 'if and when' type zine to be called "Self Abused, But Still Standing!" Length to be anything over 3 1/2 to 4,000 words, although no definite limit exists. Please no Space Opera!

WANTED - Short fiction for "In Defiance of Medical Opinion". (Poetry also accepted).

WANTED - Frank Herbert's 'Destination: Void'. Any condition, UK or US edition, reasonable price paid.

For all the above contact J A Connor, c/o Silden House, Chediston Rd, Wissett, Nr Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 0NF.

Alfred Vejchar, A-1100 Vienna, Pernerstorferg 13/1/11, Austria is interested in receiving information about all conventions in and outside Europe. He is not only a fan and a convention attendee, but also writes for four leading sf-magazines in German speaking countries (joint circulation 250,000 copies)

and is thus interested in obtaining information for these magazines. All convention information will be gratefully received at the above address.

SF fans visiting beautiful Vienna on the not very blue Danube can meet Viennese fandom every Saturday at 6 p.m. in "SFGW, A-1030 Vienna, Dapontegasse 9/3. It's a small shop hired by the SFGW for their weekly meetings; films, slide shows, talks every week since 1956! Either write in advance or just turn up.

BOOK DEALERS

This is an occasional section intended to bring smaller book sources to your attention. If members know of any suitable entries please let us know.

Greg Pickersgill, 7A Lawrence Road, South Ealing, London W4.
Mainly second-hand paperbacks and magazines. Send SAE for latest list.

Malcolm Edwards and Chris Atkinson, 28 Duckett Road, London N4 1BN.
Latest list covers second-hand hardbacks although paperbacks also sold.
Want lists welcome. SAE appreciated for list.

COMPETITION

Firstly the answers to last issue's teasers.

Michael Ashley's anagrams rearranged to give:
Authors - Kate Wilhelm, Michael Bishop and Henry Kuttner
Novels - The Moon is a Harsh Mistress (Robert Heinlein), Dandelion Wine (Ray Bradbury), The Malacia Tapestry (Brian Aldiss)
Short Stories - Sex Pirates of the Blood Asteroid (David Langford)
Houston, Houston do you read (James Tiptree Jr)
The Marching Morons (Henry Kutner)

Mark Greener's problem gave you - The Rocky Horror Picture Show

Winners were June Laverick and Chris Lewis.

Now for this issue's problem and even I don't know the answer yet!

Puzzle for Xenologists: Dave Langford
Five very different beings dwelt on a lonely world. Each kept a different pet, including a giraffe, a stag-beetle and a thousand-limbed Thuban Thingy.

"Now," said the Earthling, "for our annual all-round exchange of pets. About bloody time too - I'm sick of turds falling on me from a great height."

"Same here," said Yngvi.

"I insist, as always, on a pet with more legs than my current one," said Unprn'ncbl apologetically.

"You Denebians are all the same," remarked Wentletrap, momentarily forgetting that Unprn'ncbl wasn't a Denebian. "At least my pet is bigger than Yngvi's," he added mysteriously.

"The Capellan interrupted: 'What will Unprn'ncbl do when the more-legs requirement can no longer be fulfilled?'"

Unprn'cbl muttered, evasively, "The problem doesn't arise yet."

Vektredita said and did nothing, in a significant way. There was a pause. "We've changed around three times now, yet none of us has had the same pet twice," said the Arcturan with typical eidetic memory and tedious pedantry.

"Then perhaps I'll get the Thuban Thingy at last," Yngvi responded. "Such a cleanly beast - unlike those Capellans and Denebians."

Amid uproar and cries of "Yngvi is a louse!" the petswapping took place and the Arcturan received the Denebian's pet. The Detelgeusan noted that the beetle's new owner appeared next to the herring's old one in the world's small but comprehensive telephone directory.

All the pets had their full complement of limbs. Who had the albatross before the swap, and where did Xanthopsia come from?

Let me know how far you get, even if you cannot complete it.

THIS ISSUE'S COVER

Photographs - John Harvey

Those present are from top left hand corner down to bottom right:-
Colin Kapp giving his guest of honour speech; Sandy Brown; David Langford, Eve Harvey and Jim Barker during their 'infamous' chat show; at the BSFA desk is Micky Poland with Graham James whispering secret YORCON II plans to Dave Langford; fan room organiser, Jimmy Robertson; deep in discussion in the bar are Sadie and Bob Shaw with Pam Bulmer; John Brunner and the other Bob Shaw share a joke during a programme item; Lionel Fanthorpe is dressed as a dragon for this fancy dress entry (I'm afraid I can't name the ladies!); at the banquet Bob Shaw receives the Doc Weir award from last year's winner, Roger Peyton; standing in the bar are Dave Langford, Linda Hutchinson, Eve Harvey, William Goodall, John Williams and Rob Carter; Jim Barker poses next to the cartoon of himself; finally the audience at a programme item and I don't recognize anybody here!

I think that Langford person wins with the most mentions (3 in all). Why aren't I on any of them?

APOLOGIES FROM EVE

Two sets of apologies, in fact; firstly lack of space, and the continual dribble of answers, has made me decide to leave the final analysis of the questionnaire until next issue. Then, I promise, I'll draft the article first, not type it directly onto stencil - that way it might make a bit more sense! Secondly, at the AGM I did promise to print the complete comparative cost breakdowns of the various alternative off-set litho equipment we could buy. At that meeting Chuck Partington offered to help me out with some figures since he knows much more about printing than me, so I'll delay the listing until I receive his suggestions.

See you next time!

THIS MAILING

You should find the following in your envelope this time:

Matrix 29
Vector 97
Paperback Inferno Vol 3 No 5
Amendment List 2
Minutes of AGM 1979
Accounts for the year ended 31 December 1979 (unaudited)

Hope you enjoy it.

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

TAFF VOTING FIGURES

The actual voting figures for the TAFF Ballot were as follows:
Langford 83, Barker 38, Hold over Funds 2, with, as mentioned earlier,
Barker and Langford being neck-and-neck on English votes, but the Americans
swayed it.

HUGO AWARD NOMINATIONS 1980

The main categories for the above are as follows:

NOVEL: The Fountains of Paradise (Arthur C Clarke), Harpist in the Wind
(Patricia A McKillip), Jem (Frederick Pohl), On Wings of Song (Thomas
M Disch), Titan (John Varley).

NOVELLA: 'The Battle of the Abaco Reefs' (Hilbert Schenck), 'Enemy Mine' (Barry
B Longyear), 'Ker-Plop' (Ted Reynolds), 'The Moon Goddess and the Son'
(Donald Kingsbury), 'Songhouse' (Orson Scott Card)

DRAMATIC PRESENTATION: Alien, The Black Hole, The Muppet Movie, Star Trek -
The Motion Picture, Time After Time

PROFESSIONAL EDITOR: James Baen, Ben Bova, Edward L Ferman, Stanley Schmidt,
George H Scithers

FANZINE: File 770, Janus, Locus, Science Fiction Review, Thrust

FANWRITER: Richard E Geis, Mike Glyer, Arthur D Klavaty, Dave Langford, Bob Shaw

FANARTIST: Alexis Gilliland, Jeanne Gomoll, Joan Hanke-Woods, Victoria
Poyser, Bill Rotsler, Stu Shiffman

Thanks for the above stop press items go to Dave Langford, since we
lifted these from Ansible 9, and he lifted the information from.....?
(Well, actually the Hugo nominations came from the Noreascon Press Release
Number 15)