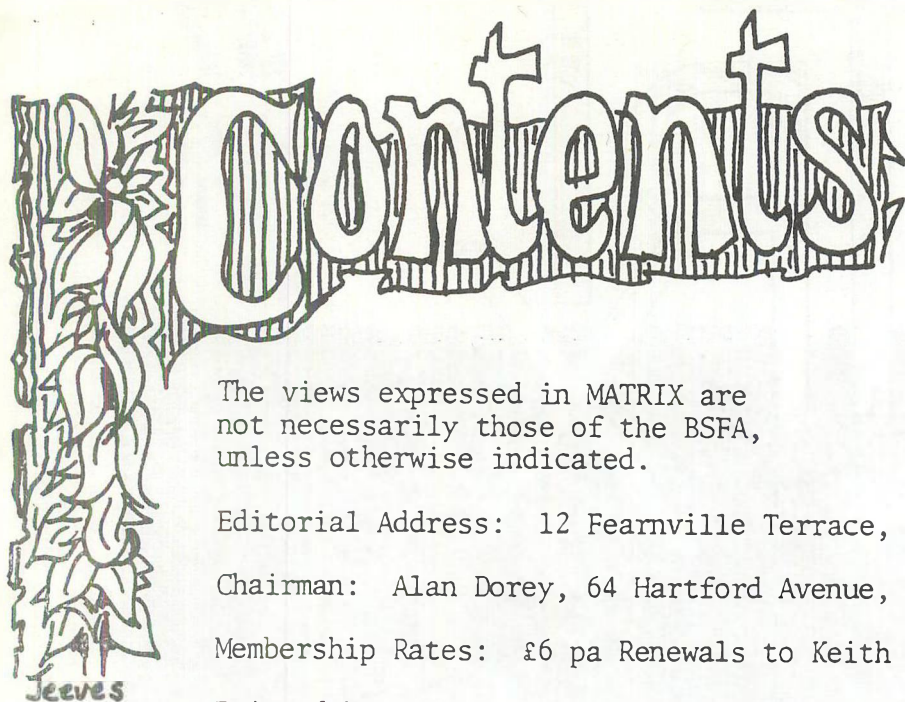


MATRIX

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Pete



MATRIX No 37

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1981

THE BSFA NEWSLETTER

EDITOR: GRAHAM JAMES

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HOW TO FIND YOUR FAVOURITE COLUMNS

PAGE

EDITORIAL	GRAHAM JAMES
BSFA ACCOUNTS 1980	JANICE MAULE
THE MYSTERIOUS WORLD OF BOB C. SHAW	BOB SHAW

3
4
5

FAN WORLD

LIFE ON MARS (THE CLUB SCENE)	STEVE GREEN
MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD	MEMBERS ONLY
DEEP CUTS (FANZINE REVIEWS)	SIMON OUNSLEY

11
13/17
14

NEWS SECTION

BEST SELLING PAPERBACKS	ROG PEYTON
FILM AND TV NEWS	SIMON BOSTOCK
FORTHCOMING BOOKS	JOSEPH NICHOLAS
FROM THE BOOK WORLD	JOSEPH NICHOLAS/THE EDITOR
OTHER NEWS	THE EDITOR
CONVENTION LISTINGS	THE EDITOR

18
19
20
20
20
21/24

REVIEWS

DEATHWATCH	MARTYN TAYLOR
ALTERED STATES	JOHN HOBSON
SATURN THREE	SIMON BOSTOCK

22
23
23

DAVE'S COMPETITION	DAVE LANGFORD
--------------------	---------------

25

BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME	LETTERS
---------------------------	---------

26

THE REAL NEWS COLUMN	ALAN DOREY
----------------------	------------

34/36

CREDITS: Art-work, illos, logos, cartoons; stains: PETE LYON: Cover; 5, 7, 10, 11 (cartoon); TERRY JEEVES: 2; PHIL PROBERT: 9; SIMON BOSTOCK: 11 (illo); JOHN KERR: 13, 18; JOHN DELL: 14, 15, 16 (2), 17; MICHAEL GOULD: 16 (1), 24, 28; D WEST: 26, 27, 30, 32.

EDITORIAL

ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN

One can write reams of wondrous prose and get no response - more often than not it's that one-line throw-away remark which causes members to rush to their typers demanding instant rebuttals and stating their views in no uncertain terms. Not that this is wholly the case with the present issue of MATRIX - but I sit here constructing my editorial with little knowledge of what either Joseph or Kev are filling the respective pages of INFERNO and VECTOR.

Should that bother me?

Maybe not, especially since they are in exactly the same position. On the other hand, there could be a case for liaison, even "guidelines" on what should be covered in the respective zines, in the event that they start to cover the same ground.

It seems absolutely ludicrous to even suggest the possibility that zines traditionally as far apart as MATRIX and VECTOR could even begin to cover similar areas. But one often gets an inkling that something is happening (... "but you don't know what it is...") - and right now my sense of self-preservation tells me that Kev is busy putting together a work on what should or should not be included in the columns of MATRIX and VECTOR. Whether or not this is true, it doesn't really matter since the subject does need an airing anyway.

Why? Well, to return to that point about 'one-line-throw-away-remarks', Kev has already mentioned, at the conclusion of the last VECTOR, that he had had to reject a contribution reviewing the film STALKER because such a review had already appeared in MATRIX; he added, or rather asked the question, "where should the dividing line between the two zines be drawn in matters such as media SF where there has been some overlap?"

A fair point, although I'm not exactly sure what he means by overlap (and what instances) since VECTOR has never carried Media reviews under Kev's reign, nor his immediate predecessors' come to that. MATRIX, under John and Eve, did feature the odd Media review, but when I came to the editorship I received a number of letters complaining that the BSFA ignored (or even looked down on...) Media fans - now, not being one to upset those fans (well, certain individuals

are a different matter) I started to include a few reviews of TV, Radio and Film SF and feature news items on these media. This seems to have been well received and has elicited a number of debates in the letter cols.

I find it difficult to see why I have to sit here arguing the point anyway; the function of VECTOR is quite clearly described on its caption-heading, namely, "The Critical Journal of the BSFA". By that, I take it that VECTOR's function is to present articles with sound, logical and well-argued critiques on authors, trends in SF, book reviews, etc etc. I don't see it as a general fanzine with open-ended contents, letters and articles on matters such as have been included recently on why people do or do not respond to magazines. Whatever its merits, this last item was clearly too general for VECTOR.

I assume that now Kev has Paul Kincaid as features editor, VECTOR will return to the inclusion of major critical articles as we have seen before from authors such as Chris Priest ('Outside the Whale').

Kev has embarked on a difficult, some say impossible, task in his Critical Standpoint series but he has raised many interesting and valid points; he has also improved the lay-out and presentation of VECTOR enormously: I hope that with his repeated calls for letters and his possible latest examination of the role of VECTOR, he doesn't lose sight of its purpose before becoming immersed in general members' debates which have been, and always will be, the province of MATRIX.

If the BSFA is to have a role in the science fiction world then we clearly need a serious SF Magazine which, in addition to being for consumption by members, is taken by the Specialist Book Dealers, Reviewers, Authors, and Publishers. Now, whilst I, and many members, enjoy the MATRIX letter cols, can you really see those aforementioned people taking VECTOR seriously if its columns are adorned by debates on what should or should not be included in the Magazine and letters from Ken Mann (with no disrespect intended) or why 'X' hates the PFMA; why 'B' left his brain at home before writing his last letter; and why 'C' couldn't tell a good SF book if it came up behind him and bit him in the leg....

So concludes the editorial; there's just enough space left to introduce this issue: and we introduce, for the first time, Steve Green with his clubs; Simon with his new reviewer's hat, and, as the major article - the return of Bob Shaw.

Graham James

BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION LTD.
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1980

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1980

	Note	1980 £	1979 £
INCOME			
Subscriptions		4,550	3,834
Publications		281	360
Advertisements		316	396
Litho Service		151	-
Magazine Chain		85	46
Duplicating Service		125	188
Badges		26	22
Interest		62	20
Sundry		266	180
		<u>5,842</u>	<u>5,046</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Publications	(2)	4,799	3,347
Magazine Chain		71	74
Duplicating Service		105	159
Badges		12	-
B.S.F.A. Award		60	-
Sundry		213	192
Administration			
Postage		160	125
Stationery		39	104
Registrar of Companies		20	20
Audit Fee		20	20
Miscellaneous		61	52
		<u>300</u>	<u>321</u>
London Meetings		69	-
Depreciation		136	79
		<u>5,765</u>	<u>4,172</u>
SURPLUS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE BEFORE TAXATION		77	874
Taxation	(4)	26	9
		<u>51</u>	<u>865</u>
SURPLUS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		51	865
ACCUMULATED FUND AT 1 JANUARY 1980		1,856	991
ACCUMULATED FUND AT 31 DECEMBER 1980		<u>£1,907</u>	<u>£1,856</u>

	Note	1980 £	1979 £
FIXED ASSETS			
	(5)	1,247	296
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stocks of Publications	(2)	268	250
Stocks of Badges	(3)	34	46
Debtors		50	-
Cash in hand and at bank		871	1,424
		<u>1,223</u>	<u>1,720</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors		492	115
Taxation		44	18
		<u>536</u>	<u>133</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		687	1,587
		<u>£1,934</u>	<u>£1,883</u>
REPRESENTED BY:			
MEMBERS' INTERESTS			
Accumulated Fund		1,907	1,856
AWARD FUNDS			
Dr. Weir Memorial Fund		15	15
British Fantasy Award		12	12
		<u>£1,934</u>	<u>£1,883</u>

THESE ACCOUNTS ARE SUBJECT TO AUDIT

THE NOTES ATTACHED FORM PART OF THESE ACCOUNTS

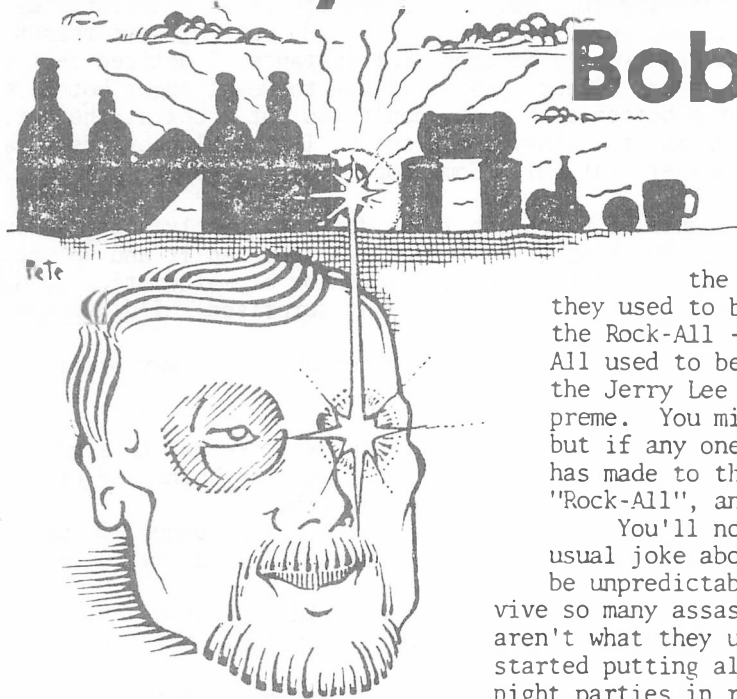
NOTES ON THE ACCOUNTS

- (1) ACCOUNTING POLICIES
- (a) Accounting convention.
The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention.
- (b) Depreciation.
The cost of the library and office equipment is written off by one-tenth of the net book value in each year.
- (c) Stocks.
Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.
- | | 1980
£ | 1979
£ |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| (2) PUBLICATIONS | | |
| Stocks at 1 January | 250 | 250 |
| Expenditure in the year | | |
| Printing | 3,540 | 2,563 |
| Postage | <u>1,277</u> | <u>784</u> |
| | 4,817 | 3,347 |
| | <u>5,067</u> | <u>3,597</u> |
| Stocks at 31 December | 268 | 250 |
| Charge for the year | <u>£4,799</u> | <u>£3,347</u> |

	1980 £	1979 £
(3) BADGES		
Stocks at 1 January	46	46
Stocks at 31 December	<u>34</u>	<u>46</u>
Charge for the year	<u>£12</u>	-
(4) TAXATION		
Corporation tax at 42% has been charged on the interest received.		
(5) FIXED ASSETS		
	Library	Office Equip. Award Total
	£	£ £ £
COST at 1 Jan. 1980	913	272 27 1,212
Add Litho Equipment		<u>1,087</u> - <u>1,087</u>
COST at 31 Dec. 1981	913	<u>1,359</u> 27 <u>2,299</u>
DEPRECIATION		
At 1 January	777	139 - 916
Charge for the year	<u>14</u>	<u>122</u> - <u>136</u>
At 31 December 1980	<u>791</u>	<u>261</u> - <u>1,052</u>
NET BOOK VALUE AT		
31 December 1980	<u>£122</u>	<u>£1,098</u> <u>£27</u> <u>£1,247</u>
NET BOOK VALUE AT		
31 December 1979	<u>£136</u>	<u>£133</u> <u>£27</u> <u>£296</u>

THESE ACCOUNTS ARE SUBJECT TO AUDIT

The Mysterious World of Bob C. Shaw



Well, it's nice to be back in Leeds again, and I think it's very good of you to risk coming to hear me before you eat lunch - even though

the eating facilities in Leeds are not what they used to be, not since my favourite restaurant - the Rock-All - passed under new management. The Rock-All used to be a smashing place - I can still taste the Jerry Lee Lewis Burgers and the Carl Perkins Supreme. You might think I'm joking about that place, but if any one ever asks you what contribution Leeds has made to the culinary arts, you just have to say "Rock-All", and they'll know exactly what you mean.

You'll notice that I didn't start off with my usual joke about last night's room parties. I like to be unpredictable - that's what enabled Hitler to survive so many assassination attempts - besides room parties aren't what they used to be. Convention committees have started putting all the fans known to throw noisy all-night parties in rooms far away from the ordinary hotel guests who want to get a good night's sleep - which spoils

the whole point of the thing. What pleasure is there in sitting up all night - shouting and yelling, smoking and drinking, wrecking your health - when you know you're not making the night hell for some poor sod in the next room?

When I look back over all the shindigs I've attended through the years of convention-going, the great moments, the treasured memories, are all of that abrupt, pleasurably guilty silence that follows the telephone's ringing or the authoritative pounding on the room door. Dead silence! Everybody stares at everybody else with looks of wild surmise - all except the host. He's looking a bit green as he goes to the door because he knows he has to face the hotel manager and maybe the SWAT squad from the local Rent-A-Fuzz.

Or, if it's the telephone, it always turns out that in the very next room there's a family composed, by some biological freak, of sickly one-week-old infants who'll die if they don't have utter quiet, and 103-year-old grannies who have come to the hotel specifically to expire in peace. The latter have been told by their relatives that the hotel is renowned for its tomb-like silence; they've come from all over the world in their bath chairs to savour that tomb-like silence - but they've come at Easter, and the management has installed them in between Greg Pickersgill and Ramblin' Jake!

The bit I always liked best was the way the host would return from the door or the phone making damping movements with his hands - like Claude Raines playing the organ in THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA - and plead with everybody to be quiet. We would all nod agreeement and give each other solemn warning glances, and the silence would last maybe another three seconds, then...blam! All hell broke loose! The strain of having been quiet and orderly for a minute or so in mid-convention had been too much for some people's nerves, and they were freaking out all over the place... screaming...using the beds as trampolines...demolishing the wardrobes... It was beautiful.

(It amuses me even more to think that I always told the Inland

Revenue that attending such events was a necessary expense against my income. "Discussions with editors and publishers about the latest trends in scientific fiction...")

There's one thing that still puzzles me. How did Claude Raines manage to get that organ down into the cave below the opera house without anybody noticing?



Enough of the preamble. You came along to hear me talk about the Mysterious World of Bob C. Shaw, not about mismanagement in convention hotels - although there's one other point I can't resist mentioning on that topic. When I'm staying in a hotel I always try to be as helpful as I can to the management, giving them little tips and suggestions and so forth, but for some reason they are not always properly appreciative. At last year's Novacon, for instance, I noticed that on the back of the plastic tab on my room key it said, "Please post this key to Royal Angus Hotel, etc." I went to the manager and said, "I've got a better idea - why don't you put a box at the porter's desk and get the guests to drop their keys in it as they check out?" That would obviously save a lot of time and postage, but was the manager grateful? Some hope! He looked at me as if I was stupid!

But let's get on with the talk. A couple of years ago I was driving quietly along a country road near Ulverston when there was a sudden knocking from my engine. I opened it and up popped my old friend Von Donegan, the German-Irish writer, researcher and inventor of mathematics by numbers.

"What are you doing in there?" I asked. Naturally enough I was surprised - I'd had the engine tuned only that morning.

"I was trying to hide in your boot," he said, "but I'd forgotten about the way British cars have the engine in the wrong end."

"Never mind that," I said. "What do you want with me?"

"Sssshhh!" he said furtively. "I want to see you in secret because I've got this great idea for a television series, and I'd like your help with it, and I don't want any other SF writers to see us together in case they muscle in on it. You know what they're like."

I nodded. When I first joined the SF-writing fraternity I felt I was a member of one big happy family - but then so was Lizzie Borden. "What sort of TV series?" I said, my interest quickening at the thought of money.

"One about all the wonderful unexplained mysteries around the world," he said. "I was thinking," he added coyly, "of calling it The Mysterious World of Von C. Donegan. How's that for a title?"

"Not bad," I conceded, "but not as good as The Mysterious World of Bob C. Shaw."

"No you don't, Shaw - I thought of it first," he yelped, climbing out of my engine compartment and painfully removing the dipstick from the unfortunate place where it had lodged. "I'm going to track down all kinds of famous mysteries and find the exotic explanations for them."

I blinked at him. "You mean mysteries like why Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine never gets sued under the Trade Descriptions Act?"

"Don't try to be funny," he gritted. (Every time I see a verb like gritted I try to couple it to one of those Swifties that were in vogue some years ago, but I can't seem to do it any more. I think I burned out some vital brain cells with my last and most fiendish one. It was supposed to be spoken by a woman - "He squeezed me so hard that every one of his fingers left a mark," she said tendentiously.)

"Well," I said to Von Donegan, "do you mean...?" (No, I won't do it. I was going to put in my annual joke about LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS, but now I really do think it's coming out soon. You know, I sold a story to Harlan for LDV in 1974. Last year I decided to enquire about it, so I wrote him a letter which began, 'Dear Harlan, I'm not an impatient person by nature, but I do think six years is rather a long time to await publication...' I sat back and waited for his reply, wondering what sort of apology he would make. He wrote to me and said, 'Dear Bob, Think yourself lucky - some of the writers who sold me stories for LDV have died in the meantime and will never see their stories in print...' The point was so neatly made that I felt quite euphoric for days afterwards.)

"I mean proper mysteries," Von Donegan went on. "Mysteries like the origin of the famous crystal skull - the Skull of Doom, they call it. If you search around the site of a famous mysterious discovery for long enough you can usually find ancient inscriptions or parchments, and I'm good at deciphering ancient writings, and I'll unlock the exotic secrets and link the mysteries with prehistoric visitors from other worlds and things like that, and I'll write more books about them and make a fortune... We'll make a fortune, that is - I'll pay you twice your usual rate."

"Twice my rate," I breathed. "That's great! I felt such a fool when I got the money for my last book - going around trying to buy one new sock. What made you choose me for this project?"

"Because, my boy," he said, turning on the charm, "you are the only SF writer around whose intellect compares with mine." That's Von Donegan for you - he has the sort of personality which causes a room to light up when he leaves it.

"Okay," I said. "Let's go for a drink and work out a plan of campaign."

He glanced around suspiciously. "I'm not sure about that - there might be other SF writers there who would spy on us. We've got to keep this idea secret."

I said, "Relax - the last SF writer to visit Ulverston was the incomparable Captain S.P. Meek, and that was in 1935."

"But there might be some that you wouldn't recognise. There are a lot of closet SF writers, you know."

"Closet SF writers," I chortled. "Are you by any chance referring to the great L. Ron Cupboard?"

"I think I'd better have a drink, after all," Von Donegan mumbled.

We went off to my local and I ordered two pints of traditional British real ale. When the real ale arrived it was absolutely flat, had no head whatsoever, was slightly sour and a bit cloudy, and into the bargain it was lukewarm...Perfect! Von Donegan didn't seem to appreciate it, however, so I took his pint off him and got him a Slimline Guinness instead, and we settled down to make our plans.

"We'll do all the British Mysteries first," Von Donegan said. "Then when I've deciphered all the ancient texts and worked out all the exotic answers, we'll spread abroad to places like Costa Rica - that's going to be the toughest one."

"Why's that?"

"Well, Costa Rica is absolutely covered with these mysterious giant stone balls, all of them perfectly round, but as far as I know it's one case where there are absolutely no ancient scripts or parchments to help me."

"Oh, I know why that is," I said airily.

Von Donegan looked interested. "You know why there are not old parchments?"

"Yes - it's because the stones are perfectly round," I said. "Several books I've read stated quite clearly that rolling stones gather no MSS."

A thoughtful expression appeared on Von Donegan's face. "I wonder," he said, "if Jerry Pournelle would be available for this project."

(It's against my policy to start explaining jokes, but that pun about no manuscripts - MSS, moss, get it? - is in a very interesting category, the purely typographical pun, which as far as I know was thought up by Walt Willis. An early example of his was, 'A Miss is as good as a Mlle.' M-L-L-E in print looks very like 'mile', you see. I've been trying for years to think up a similar one - now I'm not sure if it was worth all the effort.)

This weakness I have for word plays was always getting me into trouble back in the days when I was a columnist with the Belfast Telegraph. In Belfast the local aircraft factory is called Shorts, and I remember once I tried to get away with a spoof Diary item which said, "I can deny the rumour that Shorts' proposed take over of the Belfast tailoring firm of Francis Curley has been abandoned because of disagreements over a joint trading name." My editor stopped the item appearing and told me it was obscene. Huh! If he thought that one was obscene he should have seen the follow-up I had in mind about an amalgamation of Cunard and Air Lingus.

Anyway, Von Donegan and I set off on our travels that very afternoon to look at ancient figures carved in hillsides. "I think we'll go down to the West Country first," Von said. "There's the famous Rude Man down there that I want to see."

"But Peter Roberts mightn't be at home," I replied. "He might be working in his godfather's tin mine."

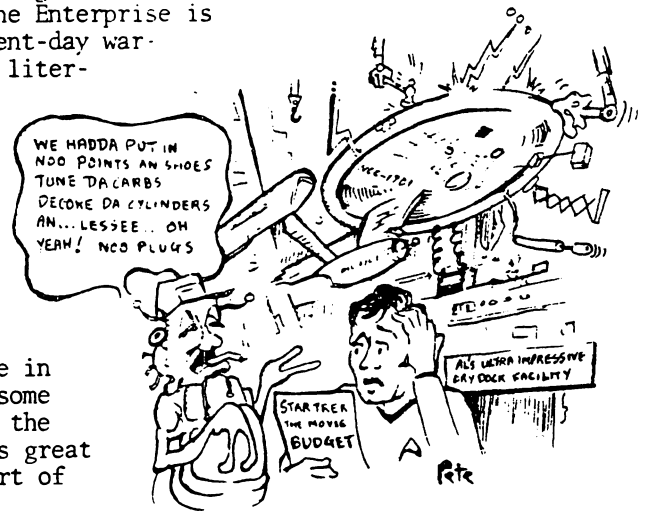
"I'm talking about the Rude Man of Cerne, you oaf," Von Donegan shouted. "Why don't you stick to your nasty cracks about Star Trek?"

Nasty cracks, I thought. About Star Trek? Me? Now, I'll admit that I used to make the odd snide little joke about some things in the Star Trek TV series, but seeing the Star Trek movie has completely changed my mind about the whole concept. I mean, there are things in that film that an ordinary SF writer would never have even thought of.

For instance, at the beginning of the movie the Enterprise is having a major overhaul - the equivalent of a present-day war-ship being in dry dock. A dry dock, of course, is literally a big box that they put a ship into so that they can separate it from the sea for the convenience of workers. With my lack of vision, if I had been in charge of that movie I would have thought: Let's see, now - there isn't any water in space, therefore we can dispense with the big box. I admit it! I'm afraid I would simply have had the Enterprise floating free in orbit, with work crews and machines moving around on the hull at will. But Gene Roddenberry, scornful of such mundane considerations, actually put the Enterprise in an orbiting dry dock! That notion alone deserves some kind of sci-fi award. Then, of course, there were the usual incredible special effects. I thought it was great the way the alien invader was concealed at the heart of a giant Slumberland mattress spring.

One of our drives south Von Donegan and I stopped at Minehead in Somerset for a rest and a chat about our plans. The name of the place rang a faint bell in my memory, producing a slight feeling of uneasiness, but I dismissed it as natural nerviness at being in on the ground floor of such a big TV project. That, of course, was a serious mistake. Anybody who knows anything about anything will tell you that when an innocent-looking word or place-name triggers faint bells or uneasy stirrings in the subconscious, you have reached a crucial point in the plot and that the author is trying, in his ham-fisted way, to put one over on you. The rules of that most ancient of wargames - author versus reader - demand that he has to play fair and plant a legitimate clue at a certain point in his narrative, but he's wetting himself with apprehension because he suspects that his intriguing central mystery is really pretty tame and obvious stuff, so he resorts to the famous uneasy stirring in the subconscious. It's all a bit pathetic, really.

No, I shouldn't have said that. I shouldn't even be making digs at Star Trek, because although a lot of SF is undoubtedly bad, the great thing about it is its ability to be different things to different people. I have friends in the SF microcosm, keen SF readers that I've been close to for decades, but I never read the books they read, and they never read the books I read. Science fiction isn't a solid lump, or if it is it's a conglomerate. I like to think of it as being like an opal...with lots of little coloured sparkly bits inside...and when you shift your viewpoint slightly you see a different set of sparkly bits, shining with different colours...



That's why we've all got to stick together...New Wavers and Old Wavers...Trekkies and academics...loving and helping each other...going into the future arm-in-arm...

Oh God, I can't go on...

But it is precisely this capacity which SF has to be different things to different people which leads to the great diversity of views about it. I was interested some time ago to read two extreme opinions encapsulated within a few pages of one book. The American writer, Reginald Bretnor, is a high crusader on behalf of science fiction, and a few years ago he edited a book about it, called SCIENCE FICTION: TODAY AND TOMORROW. The book was generally well received, but to Reginald Bretnor's probably justifiable horror a scathing attack was made on it - by a low-grade porn magazine! In a later book Bretnor quotes part of this unfavourable notice, and I think that both what the porn magazine said and his reaction to it are interesting. The magazine said:

"We can take SF too seriously. This is not Tolstoy. SF is written by people who want to entertain and make money. It's pulp writers, balding guys with bad teeth and three children, lost among the pod creatures of the planet Xenon. SF is forgettable, like toothpaste, like Johnny Nash. Quality seems to be random, nurtured almost solely by novelty. One good twist is all you need. Eternity is gravy... Can anybody read Olaf Stapledon without laughing? Doesn't Heinlein strike you (seriously now) as a writer for boys? Frank W. Dixon lives again. This ain't exactly the Renaissance, space freaks."

You'll note that the writer's ability to construct sentences was waning by the time he got near the end of this piece of literary criticism. And what is so forgettable about Johnny... ah...whatshisname?

Quite naturally, Reginald Bretnor was peeved by this review - he said it was the sort of drivel which might cause SF's future Tolstoys to go into ordinary literature, which he describes as "now-sterile fields of writing". A thing which intrigued me was that he took particular exception to the specification quoted for SF writers. He was annoyed by the suggestion that SF authors are pulp writers, losing hair and teeth, who have three children - but he seemed even more annoyed by the notion that SF writers want to entertain and make money.

Now, I'd be the last one to side with a porn magazine - but I write for the pulps; my forehead is a little higher than it used to be; I'm acquiring more fillings around my back teeth; I've got three children (I'm not sure what pornographers find reprehensible in that number of offspring, but I've got them); I want to entertain my readers; and I certainly want to make money. Admittedly, I've never been lost among the pod creatures on the planet Xenon - but six out of seven isn't bad, you know.

Obviously the truth about SF lies somewhere between the two extremes. It has lots of good qualities, but it isn't the unique super-literature that Reginald Bretnor claims, and all this is getting away from the subject of the talk...

Von Donegan was still worried about some other SF writer latching on to his great idea, so - for the sake of privacy - we went down to the beach and strolled along the water's edge as we talked. Several times I thought I heard a faint sound like the whirring of a tape recorder, and once when I glanced towards the water I thought I saw a submerged swimming figure clad in horn-rimmed spectacles, a brightly-flowered sarong and a wet suit emblazoned with the words "2001 RULES O.K." This gave me an uneasy stirring in my subconscious, but I dismissed it as a trick of reflected light. (That's another dead give-away - I've read stories in which a herd of charging dinosaurs could get dismissed as a trick of reflected light.)

Finally we got down to Cerne in the late evening and trudged off through a steady drizzle to have a look at the famous giant carved into the hillside. "My God," Von Donegan said enviously, "it's easy to see why he's called the Rude Man."

I nodded. "Yes. Just look at that cheeky expression on his face and the way he's waving his arms about all over the place."

Von Donegan gave me a queer look, produced a folding spade from his raincoat pocket and began to dig for ancient inscriptions. This operation was a notable failure - mainly because we were promptly arrested by a local bobby and run out of the county for defacing an historic monument.

"This is disgraceful," Von Donegan said. "What a way to treat scientific pioneers!"

"Yes," I said. "If John W. Campbell was alive today he'd be turning in his grave."

Von Donegan gave me a contemptuous stare. "That's the sort of remark that makes us Irish look stupid. Don't you see anything wrong with what you've just said?"

"Of course!" I said, slapping my forehead. "How stupid of me! I'd forgotten JWC was cremated."

Old Von Donegan was obviously disappointed at not getting his hands on any ancient inscriptions, but he pressed on bravely with the search for exotic answers to his mysteries. We were quite near Avebury and its stone circle, so we went there next and stood looking at it in the steady drizzle.

"I've been to dozens of stone circles," Von Donegan told me, "but I'm beginning to have doubts about their value to me."

"Why's that?"

"Well, there's always a principal stone, or key stone - in this case it's over there in that small wood."

"That must be the key stone copse," I murmured.

Von Donegan, pausing only to vomit, went on speaking. "Some researchers have lined these stones up with the rising sun on midsummer's day, so they think they have astronomical or religious significance, but I found they were using the wrong approach altogether. If you line the

stones up with the setting sun at the beginning of November - just at the time of the Novacon - you'll find they all point directly at the Andromeda Bookshop in Birmingham. Do you think Rog Peyton would have been unscrupulous enough to have set up all those circles just for the publicity?"

"Rog Peyton?" I said. "Unscrupulous? Seeking publicity? Never!"

"I'll take your word for it," Von Donegan replied. He produced his spade and began to dig for exotic inscriptions, but he had hardly got started when a local bobby came along and ran us out of the county for defacing an historic monument. Somewhat shaken by this, Von Donegan and I proceeded up to Scotland to have a look for the Loch Ness monster. Some serious researchers think they have disproved the existence of Nessie, by counting the number of fish in Loch Ness and pointing out that there aren't enough fish to provide food for a colony of monsters. The flaw in their argument is obvious - they're counting the number of fish that are left after the monsters have eaten their fill.

Von Donegan studied the Loch for a while in the steady drizzle, and then - apparently giving up the idea of digging for inscriptions - turned to an elderly haggis engraver who was standing nearby and said to him, "Have you seen any weird-looking creatures around here?"

"Certainly have," the old man said. "Only last week we had a visit from the Glasgow SF group."

"That's not what I mean," Von Donegan said dispiritedly. I was feeling quite sorry for him as we drove back down towards our next destination, Sutton Coldfield, where there had been reports of falls of frogs and small fish from the skies. There was a steady drizzle when we got there and this time Von Donegan didn't even want to get out of the car. He rolled down the window, bounced off the bottom edge of it and rolled down the rest of the door, then approached an elderly man who had been watching his performance with some amusement.

"I'd like your help, please," Von Donegan said.

"Did Rog Peyton send you?" the man said anxiously, backing away. "I'm not dragging any more of those big stones around the countryside."

"It's nothing like that," Von Donegan said. "I just want to know if you've seen any strange showers around here."

"Certainly have," the old man said. "Only last week we had a visit from the Glasgow SF group."

"This is getting pretty hopeless," Von Donegan said when he returned to the car. "There's only one thing that might save the programme as regards this country - UFO."

"I beg your pardon!"

"Unidentified flying objects, you oaf. Last month I set a trap for them, and I've just got word that my plan has worked."

I looked at Von Donegan with new concern for his mental health. "You set out to trap a flying saucer! How?"

"First of all," he said proudly, "I advertised for a middle-aged couple, countryfolk, with a combined IQ of not more than 83. That's the only sort of humans that alien astronauts will have any dealings with, you know."

"Have you," I said scathingly, "tried putting them in touch with the SPACE 1999 fan club?"

"Then I put the couple in a 1957 Morris Minor and got them to drive up and down remote country roads every night. That's the only sort of place that alien spaceships will land on, you know."

"Perhaps their road tax disks are out of date," I said sarcastically.

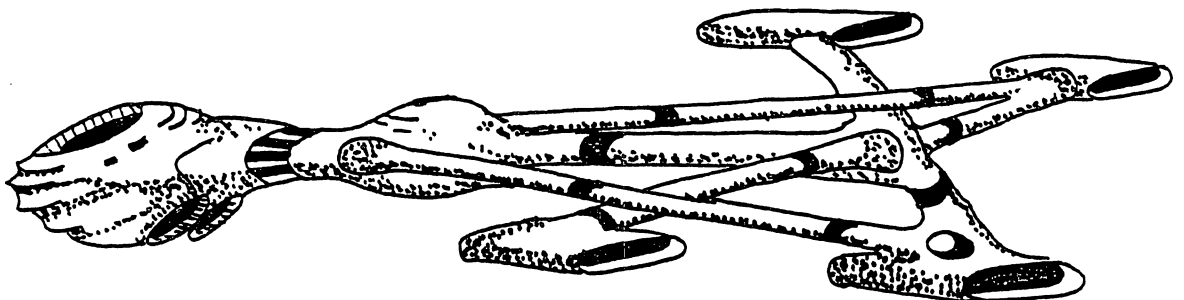
"I've just heard from Mr and Mrs Plinge down at Warminster. They've made contact, so I'm going down there to interview them, and I want you to take notes."

I shrugged and went along with him to the Plinge's cottage at Warminster, where we conducted the interview. The woman - as is usual in these cases - did all the talking.

"We was driving along the road when, all of a sudden, we was blinded by these terrible burning', searin' lights that shone right in our eyes," Mrs Plinge said. Von Donegan gestured imperiously at my notebook, so I wrote down: Couple unlucky enough to encounter Ken Slater's van at night.

"Suddenly," Mrs Plinge went on, "a mysterious force gripped our car and transported it into a nearby field." I wrote down: Poor old sticks skidded off road - that man Slater ought to be arrested.

"I was frightened near to death so I tried to drive away like fury, but a mysterious force field seemed to stop my engine," Mrs Plinge said. I wrote down: Silly old moo stalled the car.



Just to check out my theory, I said to her, "What gear were you in?"

She said, "Oh, just my cord jeans and that nice little sweater I got in..."

"Stay out of this, Shaw," Von Donegan snapped. "Go on, Mrs Plinge."

"Then I saw this tall unearthly figure coming towards me in the dark and it tried to force a strange looking book through the window," she said. I wrote down: Dave Langford STILL trying to flog 'War in 2080'!

"I managed to get the engine going again," she said, "but when I tried to drive off the car just sat there, all a-shudderin' and a-strainin'" I wrote down: Silly old moo spun back wheels in grass.

"Then the tall figure gave an unearthly cry and all of a sudden the car shot forward." I wrote down: Good! She ran over Langford's foot - serves the silly sod right!

Von Donegan and I retired to the nearest pub and I could see he was losing heart. "That wasn't too good," he commented miserably. "I'm never going to get any ancient inscriptions which unlock exotic mysteries this way. That settles it! We're going to the Himalayas to look for the Abominable Snowman."

A few days later there we were, leading a column of porters through the blinding snow of the Hindu Kush, with Von Donegan shouting orders in the local language. He turned to me and said, "What do you think of my Urdu?"

"It suits you," I replied. "I think you should keep it that way."

He shook his head impatiently. "I meant, what do you think of the way I'm handling these porters?"

"It's very good," I conceded grudgingly, "considering that, when we started off, they thought they only had to carry our bags out of King's Cross station."

"Quiet!" Von Donegan hissed. I was still trying to figure out how one hisses a word like "quiet" when we glimpsed this huge lumbering figure looming up through the curtains of snow.

"It's a Yeti," Von Donegan whispered, his voice quavering with excitement. "And it's making some kind of sound."

Just think of it - we're going to be the first people to hear the strange speech of the Abominable Snowman."

We held our breath and strained our ears as the giant figure lumbered past, and through the swirling snow we heard its faint unearthly cry, "Pork pies! Milk! Pork pies...."

"Good old Brian," I said admiringly. "He told me he was going to work his way to the Aussiecon, but this is doing it the hard way."

"Shut up, you fool," Von Donegan whimpered, and I could see he was near the end of his tether. "There's only one other way I can hope to get hold of an ancient inscription - and that's by finding another crystal skull, a Skull of Doom, in the Central American jungles. Let's go."

By the time our ship got near Central America he had recovered most of his former optimism about the proposed TV series, and was cheerfully planning his jungle expedition. "We'll need some of those big knives - kukris, you call them - for hacking our way through the jungle. I wonder where you get them."

"I've seen a catalogue of big knives," I said.

"I think it was called a kukri book."

"Shaw," he snarled, "if you don't cut that out I won't let you share in the excitement of finding a crystal Skull of Doom and unravelling its ancient inscription."

I apologised and in no time at all we were slashing our way through the Central American jungle. "This continuous hacking is wearing me down," Von Donegan complained.

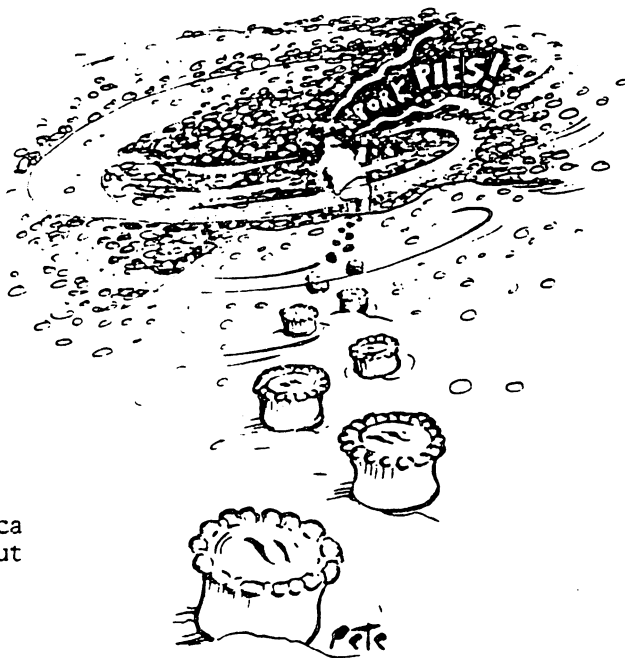
"It never bothered you before," I commented, but before he could reply we came to a small clearing at the edge of a river and he came to a standstill, his sensitive nostrils twitching.

"My enerring instinct tells me this is the place," he said. "We'll dig here." He set to work with his spade, and I've never seen anybody digging in so fast since I sat beside James White at the last Novacon banquet. Within a few minutes - much to my surprise - he came out of the excavation, brushing bits of earth off a crystal skull!

"This is it," he said in a trembling voice. "The biggest and most exotic mystery of them all. This Skull of Doom was probably brought here by ancient astronauts, or at the very least by voyagers from Atlantis. And I'm going to be the first to unlock its age-old secrets." His probing fingers encountered a little glass button at the back of the skull. Giving me a look of triumph he pressed the button.

As soon as he had done so, little illuminated arrows appeared inside the Skull of Doom and a recorded voice said, "Do you suffer from tense, nervous headaches? If so - take Anadin."

"Aaarrgh!" cried Von Donegan, his face a mask of disbelief.



At that instant we heard a splashing noise from the nearby stream and out crawled a tall figure wearing horn-rimmed glasses, a brightly-flowered sarong and a wet suit emblazoned with the words, "2001 RULES O.K."

He strode across the clearing, snatched the skull from Von Donegan's nerveless fingers, and said, "I wondered where I'd left that. I lost it during the commercials in my new TV series about all the unexplained mysteries of the world." Before we could speak, he had dived back into the water and was swimming away in the direction of Sri Lanka.

"Who was that?" Von Donegan quavered.

"I'm not sure," I said. "But I've just remembered that Arthur C. Clarke was born in Minehead. Do you think he goes back there for his holidays?"

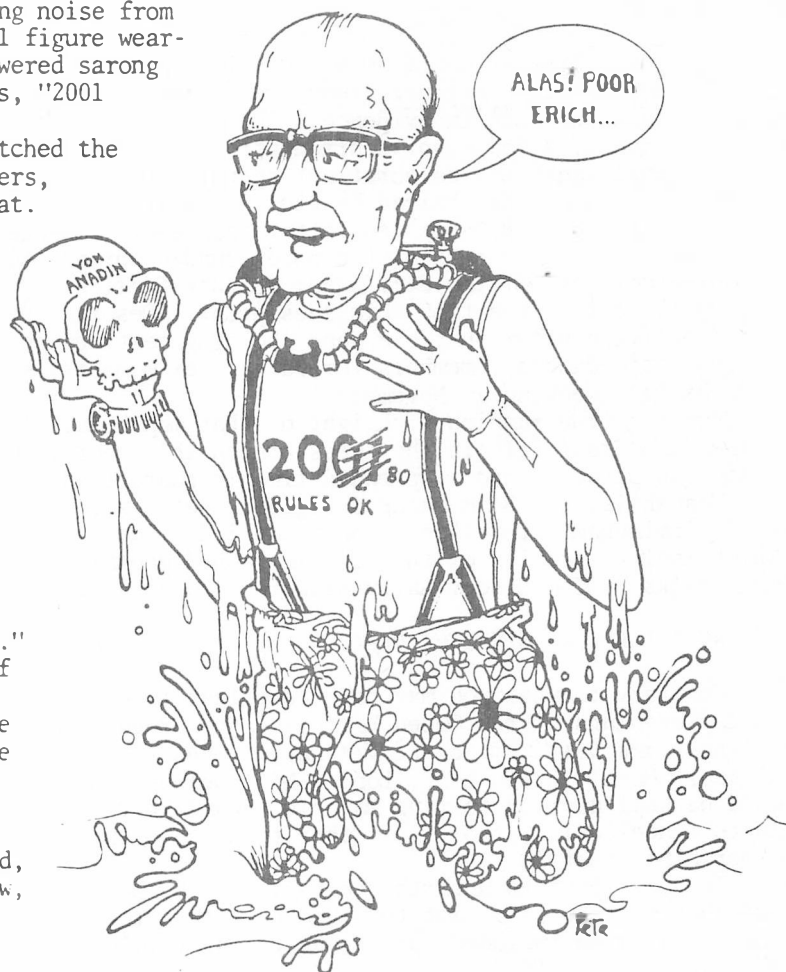
"I don't give a damn," Von Donegan said brokenly. "I'm quitting this TV lark and going back to writing my books." He too dived into the river and swam off in the direction of Dublin.

I was standing there, alone, in the jungle, wondering what to do, when there was a rustling in the undergrowth and out came David Attenborough carrying a TV camera.

"Boy, am I glad to see you," I said, falling into step beside him. "You know, this new series of yours about life on Earth is easily the best thing you've done since Brighton Rock."

For some reason he was unmoved by this flattery. Well, when I say he was unmoved - I mean he ran away through the jungle at top speed and left me standing there alone. There was only one thing for it - I dived into the river and swam off in the direction of Leeds.

And now I'm going out to the bar to shake the piranha fish out of my liberty bodice.....



HALF AT SEA CLARK



In true fannish tradition, this first edition of the post-Ounsley LIFE ON MARS is being written at the last possible moment in the least probable circumstances and, were it not for the massive effort made by my predecessor to establish this column's firm footing in fandom (for which, despite the curious anecdote last issue, I salute Simon and wish him the best in his new post as MATRIX fanzine reviewer), I doubt I'd ever have let Graham press-gang me into replacing him in the first place.

I'll dispense with the tedious formalities. More than any other regular feature in MATRIX, LIFE ON MARS depends almost completely on the co-operation of the BSFA's grass roots membership if it is to have any meaning. The network of SF clubs and societies in Britain provides an excellent entrance into fandom, but without adequate coverage in zines such as MATRIX it can never achieve its full potential. And although I intend to make personal investigation a feature of my term of office, it can't all be a one-way effort; the occasional news item, snippet of gossip or report on a memorable meeting would benefit both sides. The address for all correspondence (along with my office phone number) appears at the end of this column; the rest is up to you.

Appropriately, I gained my first real experience of the fannish way of life through a local club - the Birmingham Science Fiction Group, or Brum Group to its friends. Speaking of which...

TEN YEARS ON

The guest list at the *Brum Group's* long-awaited tenth anniversary party on June 27 (twentieth if you count the original group) read like a veritable who's who of fandom, with the usual NOVA CON stalwarts much in evidence. The emphasis was very much on the party atmosphere and, with the exception of a few minor confrontations between Royal Angus hotel staff and the more tired and emotional fans, the celebrations appeared to go off without a hitch, much to the credit of the BSFG sub-committee chaired by Pauline Morgan (whose husband Chris continues to edit a far more consistent *Brum Group* newsletter than ever I managed during my brief spell in the post).

Indeed, the only pessimistic note sounded during the weekend's festivities was the rumoured impending collapse of the *Birmingham Science Fiction Film Society*, a rumour which will have turned into solid fact by the time this sees print. Despite the consignment of the B.S.F.F.S. to financial oblivion after just one year (holding meetings on Sunday mornings can hardly have helped to boost attendances), members (or rather, ex-members) still plan to host FILMCON in Birmingham over the last weekend in November.

But the true fannish highlight of that month is, of course, NOVA CON 11, once again organised by the *Brum Group* (albeit the Leeds branch this year). Guest of honour is Bob Shaw (appearing in his fan persona) and a splendid time is guaranteed for all.

Meanwhile, the *Brum Group's* regular meetings continue to be held at the Ivy Bush in Hagley Road, Birmingham, at 7.45 p.m. on the third Friday of each month. Membership is £3.50 a year (which includes copies of the aforementioned monthly newsletter), and recent meetings have featured talks by Tom Disch, Garry Kilworth, Hugh Walters and Jack Cohen. Formal but fun.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT Dept.

Contrary to what you may have read last time around (nice one, Simon), the *Friends in Space* (Sunday evenings at the Queen Victoria, the Green, Ealing) have no connection whatsoever with the *Harringay and District Sci-Fi Discussion Group* (second and fourth Wednesday of the month at the Salisbury Hotel, Green Lane, London N4 - between Turnpike Lane station and Harringay Stadium); you'd be well advised to ring Malcolm Edwards on 01 340 9983 before paying a visit in case of last-minute cancellation, tho'...). Other than the overpowering fannish atmosphere and overlapping memberships, that is.

In an attempt to unearth the facts of the matter, your intrepid reporter braved a bus ride through the streets of riot-torn Southall to attend the July 5 FIS shindig, when the subjects under discussion included such mindbogglingly relevant philosophical questions as "Does Harry Bell really snore like a bulldozer?" and "Just why did Rob Holdstock shave all his pubic hair off in the bath - and what sensation was he told it'd improve?" Triffic stuff. ((Well, to be perfectly honest, I was actually in Ealing trying to avoid returning to Brum after the Dorey/James wedding celebrations of the previous night; like the Joe Jackson lyric, "What's the use of getting sober when you're gonna get drunk again..?"))

Regulars at both include Malcolm himself, Rob, Chris Atkinson, Roy (I never dropped that bottle, Boss) Kettle, Rob Hansen, Chris Evans and the Clan Pickersgill; new recruits are requested to make their presence known by making the FIS's secret sign (palm pressed against forehead). This is in fact a cunningly-conceived gullibility test and walking round a London pub with your palm on your forehead is a dead giveaway.

SULLIED F.O.R.T.H. SALLIES FORTH

The Edinburgh-based F.O.R.T.H. group celebrated its second birthday in June with a new venue, the Maltings Bar at the Royal British Hotel, East Princess Street (within staggering distance of Waverley station, useful information for those members wishing to engage in the ancient and honourable fannish ceremony of Falling Over).

And despite attempts to cover up the REAL reason for the *Friends Of Robert The Hack* vacating the back lounge of nearby Mather's by blaming the increasingly cramped conditions, this column can now reveal the astonishing facts - the allegedly rugged Northerners were forced out by the strength of the resident draught beer! "Man, the headaches," mutters a convalescent Jim Darroch, who can now be found drowning his disgrace in Belhaven real ale with fellow members on Tuesdays between 8 p.m. and Midnight.

And as if that isn't bad enough, Jim claims the third issue of the F.O.R.T.H. fanzine, RA BRIG (available from him at 21 Corslet Road, Currie, Midlothian) contains a "moving tribute" to the Royal Family. Good grief, what is Scottish fandom coming to..?

ANARCHY IN THE UK

Total informality is the name of the game at the capital's Southern Stars pub, third Tuesday of the month when the newly-formed *South East London Science Fiction Group* take residence. To reach the pub from New Cross tube station, turn right onto the A2, then take the left turning and walk for about three minutes up New Cross Road; full details from Peter Pinto on 01 691 2792.

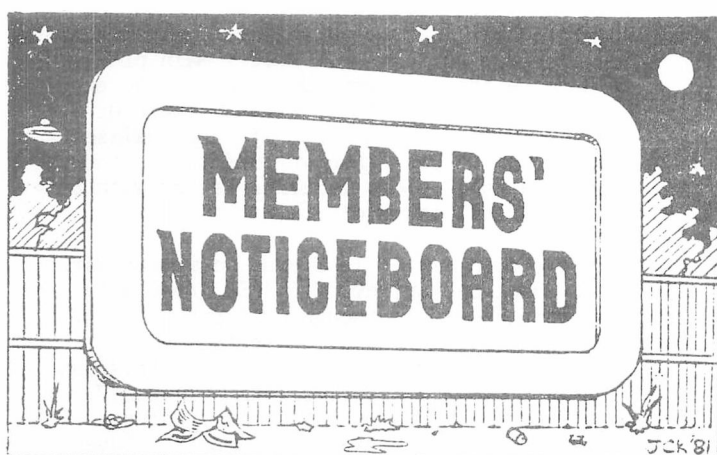
Meanwhile, the *Brum Group's* own informal alternative has dropped its façade of respectability and switched venues from Willie's Win Bar (next to *Brum Group* chairman Rog Peyton's Andromeda Bookshop, though far be it from me to suggest any ulterior motive in the original choice) to the immeasurably less ostentatious Gaiety, on the corner of Church Street and Barwick Street (near the Grand Hotel). Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month, early evening onwards.

And for those with nothing better to do on Tuesday nights than drive across Britain in search of fannish company, there's always the *Matlock Science Fiction Group*, which has recently dropped its formerly sober image to pioneer fannish fandom in Derbyshire with a smaller venue (alternate Tuesdays at the Boat House, Matlock) and a more informal atmosphere. Full details from group president Mandy Dakin at 68 Rutland Street, Matlock.

Returning to the Midlands, Geoff Boswell's *West Midlands Science Fiction Group* appears to be going from strength to strength, launching a series of film nights through the autumn (ALIEN, CAPRICORN ONE and BUCK ROGERS shorts among those scheduled) in addition to the group's regular meetings at the George & Dragon, Ryder Street, Wordsley, final Friday of each month. The WMSFG's fanzine EVENSTAR has now passed into the hands of ubiquitous Derbyshire fan Simon Bostock (in a bid to prevent the rag becoming too parochial, perhaps), but chairman Geoff has retained editorial control of the group newsletter LASERHEART and can be contacted at 59 Sorrel Walk, Stour View, Brierley Hill. Considering the rather infantile controversy over the group's alleged elitism reported last issue (arising out of a short article in the *Brum Group's* February newsletter and not the non-committal sentence it prompted in NASIBLE as previously reported), a fact-finding visit for this column may well be in order; watch this space.

And where would my first LIFE ON MARS be without an unbiased plug for the *Solihull SF Group*, which meets on the second Friday of each month at the Mason's Arms, High Street, Solihull, and recently published the first issue of its amazingly triffic newsless newsletter OVERMATTER (issue 2 should be available for a stamp from the address below by the time you read this). Beware of imitations: two newcomers at the May meeting were conned into spending fifty minutes discussing ufology with a group of locals who claimed to be the SSFG but were in fact a gang of rabid Von Daniken enthusiasts (shudder); you can recognise the real fans by the uninhibited demonstrations of Falling Over and the impromptu renditions of the dirty bits from NUMBER OF THE BEAST. Honourary members now include Rob Holdstock, Bob Shaw and Garry Kilworth (who claimed that the only BEAST quote he could recall was that involving the onomatopoeic nipples, but we admitted him regardless). Best group in the civilised universe (you didn't really think I'd remain unbiased, did you? Tut, tut...)

News, gossip and fivers to: 11 Fox Green Crescent, Birmingham, B27 7SD (Tel: 021 705 8215)



WILL ALL SUBSCRIBERS TO *EXTRO* please contact the new editorial address: Constellation Publications, 28 Moorcroft Drive, Burnage, Manchester M19 1H.

WANTED: First edition of Mary Shelley's book *FRANKENSTEIN*, volume 1, published in 1818. Contact Michael Hollander, Rare Books, P. O. Box 3678, San Rafael, Calif. 94902 USA.

WANTED: Giger's *NECRONOMICON*. Good price if in good condition. Contact Richard Kennaway, School of Computing Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich.

English Fan seeks contact with Fans from non-English speaking countries (e.g., Germany, France, Japan, Italy, etc.) to exchange

English/American magazines and paperbacks for foreign SF. All replies answered. Write to: J. Duncan, 3 Chestnut Close, Binstead, Ryde, Isle of Wight, PO33 3SQ, ENGLAND.

WANTED: Name and address of person in Huddersfield area who bought SF collection about 5 years ago. Please write to: Mr. J. Fairley, 45 Damems Rd, Keighley, West Yorkshire.

NIEKAS RIDES AGAIN! The fanzine of Gilbert & Sullivan and gostaks, of Tolkien and topography, of Creative Anachronisms and children's literature is back, with as many pages and as many contributors; one of which could be you! The ultimate fanzine is \$2.50 an issue, \$9.00 a year, from the English Agent: Roger Waddington, 4 Commercial Street, Norton, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 9ES.

WANTED: In readable and reasonable condition - *Bradbury, S is for Space* and *I Sing The Body Electric!* Reasonable price paid on request. Also, I would appreciate tapes (I'll supply the blanks) of Neil Sedaka, The Tra La Days Are Over, John Mayall, Hard Road, and Rolling Stones, Sticky Fingers. Finally, I am looking for a poet/songwriter to write a blues-type lament for my new book. Cash payment when the book is paid for. Anyone interested, please write me, and I'll describe book and reason for request. Dorothy Davies, 3 Cadels Row, Faringdon, Oxon, Faringdon 20384

DEEP

CUTS

SIMON
OUNSLEY

Somewhere in between taking on the job of MATRIX fanzine reviewer and actually writing this column, I wrote an introduction, setting down my reasons for doing it and the policy I was going to follow. Good as this introduction must have been, it has been lost. As I sit here at midnight and the deadline is passed, having just - I must admit, at the risk of blowing your minds by switching things back to front - written the last review, I can find the thing nowhere. I have found the rough draft of an article I wrote for the first edition of OCELOT, a packet of glucose tablets I took overland to Greece with me last year but never ate, and a tiny piece of paper bearing the telephone number of a girl I met at a party in 1979. But I can't find the introduction to the first DEEP CUTS column. Never mind. Next issue, or maybe the issue after that this column will have an introduction. Maybe it's safer that way - I can amend my grandiose intentions to take account of what I've actually produced, and so appear less silly.

For the moment, I shall make do with a few words about the title. It took me almost as long to think up as LIFE ON MARS did, and when I'd thought of it and collapsed in a heap under the weight of the inspiration, I remembered (or maybe I dreamt) that Alan Dorey had used it in an early GROSS ENCOUNTERS. Never mind. I don't care if he doesn't. Besides which, it happens to be the title of an album by the Strawbs which is perhaps the most brilliant totally neglected record ever made and if you all rush down to your record shops immediately you might get a hold of a deleted copy for £1.50 or something ludicrous. On second thoughts, you can read the reviews first - entertainment can come later.

This issue - fanzines received up to the end of June. Address to send to: 13A Cardigan Road, Headingley, LEEDS LS6 3AE. Now the secret codes - "the usual" means a zine is available for the following (I write, cribbing verbatim from Rob Jackson): trade with other fanzines, letter of comment, or contribution of written or artistic material. If available for money, the price is listed; if not, an initial sample copy is available free from most editors (if they've got copies left); just write politely and ask.

Page sizes: FC (foolscap) 13" by 8"; A4 11¾" by 8½"; Q (quarto) 10" by 8"; A5 8½ by 5½".

Printing methods: D duplicated; L lithographed; X xeroxed (photocopied); R reduced typeface.

ANSIBLE 18 (Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks. RG2 7PW; 6/£1 UK; 5/£1 Europe; 4/£1 elsewhere; Q RL/D; 8pp). Indispensable fanfanzine, this issue containing the results of the ANSIBLE/CHECKPOINT fan poll. Most decisive results were TWILL DDU first in the Best



British Fanzine category, with SECOND HAND WAVE a good second; Dave Langford way out in the lead as Best British Fanwriter; and Pete Lyon taking over as Best British Fanartist. Myself, I was really chuffed to come 5th = with D West as best fanwriter, till West pointed out that he hadn't actually written anything all year and next time the competition might be tougher. At least I'm running neck and neck with him at dominoes.

This issue also contains details of the Nebula and BSFA awards and the Hugo nominations, plus lots of other news and three reports on Yorcon 2, these by Chris Evans, D West and (last but by no means least mean) Kevin Smith. Just wait till I get a DOT to review, Smith.

CRAZY EDDIE (Kevin K Rattan, 23 Waingate Close, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancs. For 25p plus postage or trade; A4, produced by some mysterious process whose name I've forgotten but it's purple and makes your eyes ache. Any chance of improvement, lads? 28pp). Clubzine of the Bolton and District (BaD) Group. "The zine's contents are varied to reflect the varied interests of our members" says Kevin. In other words, like most clubzines, it contains a mish-mash of all manner of things from a film review to a crossword, from a piece of fiction to an article on SF wargames. Even so, the general standard is rather higher than in most clubzines. There's a long article by Steve Gallagher on SUPERMAN 2 which contains some interesting background info which may be well known to media fans but was new to me; another article by Steve on the disarmament vote at Yorcon 2; Bernard Earp on the history of the Bolton group; and (here's where I blow my fannish credibility) a reasonable piece of fan fiction from Burt Rowley. There's some bad pieces too but they tend to be the shorter ones. I suppose this is just luck, but judging from this issue, EDDIE's main problems seem to be the poor reproduction and the execrable artwork. They seem to be already aware of this, and have plans in hand, but if they realised the artwork was so bad, then why did they bother with it at all? Some fanzines get by with only the occasional ink blot....

DOT 10 (Kevin Smith, 10 Cleves Court, St Mark's Hill, Surbiton, Surrey, KT6 4PS. Available perhaps for the usual, though more probably for scandalous stories about convention accounts; Q D; 8pp). According to its editor, this fanzine is "more and also less than it seems". I partly agree with him. It's not of course a real conversation between Kevin Smith, Dave Langford, Ian Maule and John Harvey; it's an imaginary one, in which the views expressed by the participants bear no relation to their views in the real world, just as the Aussies being "already one up in the test series" could be nothing but a Smith fabrication itself. Neither does it really express Kevin's opinions about the state of fandom ("It's all very depressing") since he's deliberately left out of the reckoning two fanzines which came in the top five of the ANSIBLE/CHECKPOINT poll because they didn't fit in with the way he wanted to see things (or so he told me). What is it then? Is it an attempt to hark back to the fannish soul-searching and doom and despondancy of a year ago? Is it an attempt to demoralise all the new people who are trying to bring out decent fanzines by telling them it's all pointless and none of them are very good anyway? Is it, in fact, an attempt to start a new school of fanzine reviewing, in which the comments are shorter and less enlightening than ever before? ("tries hard", "self contradictory gibberish", "not great"). Dunno boss. It is funny though, and that's a blessing. Otherwise I'd be inclined to think it was of no use whatsoever.

ERG 75 (Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Road, Sheffield S11 9FE, South Yorkshire. Available for a letter of comment plus 30p in stamps, or by subscription (£1 or \$2 for two issues); Q D; 28pp incl. glossy back cover). Long-running technology-orientated fanzine, this issue containing the final part of Terry's U.S. trip report, William Bains on micro-computers, an article on robot factory workers, letters, a crossword, and lots of short book reviews including the only favourable review I've ever seen for Heinlein's NUMBER OF THE BEAST. Personally, I found the whole thing very boring but I don't suppose that will bother Terry. Must take him up on one point though - he wonders why we British don't build roads in straight lines like the Americans. Well the theory is that straight roads are so boring they drive motorists to sleep. Besides which, I've always found getting lost one of the most interesting things about our technological age.

EXPOSED (Ken Mann, 22 Pennethorne Road, London SE15 5TQ. Available - perhaps - for the unusual. A4 D (with xeroxed photo-montage front and rear) 6pp). I'm reminded of the joke which ends with the punch-line: "Put 'em on again, put 'em on again." This slim volume contains a piece of horrid fiction and an experimental poem.

HINDMOST 2 (Jon Wallace, 42 Dundee SF Society, 21 Charleston Street, Dundee. For the usual? A4 D 26pp). Another clubzine, with a letter column, the second part of an article on space drives and a couple of poems (one from famous Yorkshire person Andy Darlington, who gives me a lot of name-checks) but it's primarily an outlet for the group's fiction. Bob (FOKT) Shaw writes in the letter column: "I'm afraid I subscribe to the anti-amateur fiction school. Either the material is good enough to sell, or is junk. I fear that none of the material is good enough, at least in issue 1, to bring the barest reward!" Well, sorry about this people, but I found the second issue much the same. Since so many of you seem to be interested in writing, why don't you get down to something really useful and start a writing workshop amongst yourselves? If you could harden your hearts and get down to some constructive criticism of each others' work, I'm sure you'd find the results a lot more encouraging and useful than producing this zine and mailing it out to a lot of people who most likely won't like it and won't take the trouble to criticise either. To set the ball rolling, Jon Wallace's own main contribution is interminably long and filled with paragraphs like: "Under the manipulation of my marvelously dextrous digits, the dialling tone was converted into the ringing tone, and under someone else's touch, into a voice saying, 'Hello. Dr Lambeth's office.'" It took a few minutes to actually get to speak to the doctor himself, but when I did, he remembered me instantly." All of which adds nothing to the atmosphere or characterisation and advances the plot as far as "I phoned up Dr Lambeth, who remembered me at once." Someone who produces stuff like the above may still be a good writer someday, but he really ought to go away and practice a bit more before imposing it on a wider audience.

The only thing that really interested me in the zine was Jon's three-paragraph editorial. In the first two paragraphs, he puts forward the view that ideas are more important than style in SF - not an uncommon view, but doubtless written in reaction to the BSFA reviewers who may sometimes give the impression that it is. In the third paragraph, which doesn't seem to be linked to what has gone before, Jon extolls the virtues of SF, pointing out how important it is, since "our modern world is in a state of flux." "...and

this is the genre which is castigated as escapist!" he marvels. Hear hear! But why is it then, that despite the fact we're more or less living in tomorrow all the time, SF doesn't seem to be exerting much influence, except, that is, in the purely escapist STAR WARS sense of the word? Why is it still thought of as something which cranks read instead of a vitally important tool for helping us understand the future and, indeed, the present? That's a difficult question to answer of course, but as far as I'm concerned, part of the explanation is that the kind of blinkered attitude which Jon expresses in his first two paragraphs is so widely held. How can SF be anything but ghetto fiction if it's so badly written that only enthusiasts would ever want to read it? How can it be thought of as anything but escapist rubbish? I could go on (perhaps) but I really think the style versus ideas debate is a bit of a red herring anyway. The real trouble is that so much SF doesn't damn well possess either of them.

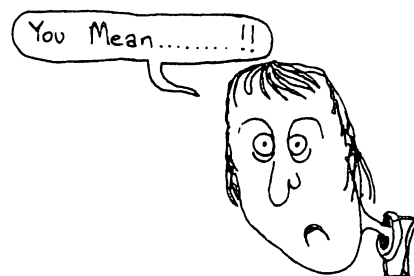
Jon takes the trouble to wish me luck in my new job as reviewer. Er (gulp) thanks Jon.

METAL DOG 2 (Stephen Mackey, 186 Peel Hall Rd, Wythenshawe, Manchester M22 5HD. The usual; A5 X; 26pp). Stephen is part of the plague of almost-fourteen-year-olds which has recently hit fandom. He is thirteen; the other half of the plague is Paul Turner, who's just turned fifteen. It should be interesting to compare Paul's upcoming zine with METAL DOG (could be another silly Collick/Higgins scenario, eh?) but for the moment (leaving Stephen to work out who the hell Collick and Higgins are, and what they have to do with him) I'll just say that METAL DOG is better than anything I could have done when I was thirteen. It contains book, fanzine, media and music reviews, a checklist of comics, a report on the UMIST WORLD OF SF CONVENTION, a few letters and a poem (all by Stephen).

Well, I could have done without the poem - I like my doom spiced with a bit of humour - but for that very reason I did like the front cover, which shows men with bowler hats and brolleys in various stages of disintegration. The reviews are quite well written; they're short and contain too much plot summary for my liking, but Stephen's comments are sensible enough and often very perceptive. I particularly like the idea of the 'nostalgia' column, in which Stephen review old stuff, e.g., THE BRITISH SF MAGAZINE 1954 ed. Vargo Statten: "the magazine's most appealing virtue is that it takes less than five minutes to read."

The UMIST con that Stephen attended must have been one of the PROJECT STARCRAFT try-outs. He doesn't say much about it except that it was "smaller than I imagined" which is probably what the organisers thought as well.

Apparently Stephen walks about with a rucksack covered in things like CND, Love, Hawkwind and Peace. Maybe the eighties will be a good decade after all.



OCELOT 5 (Simon Ounsley, 13A Cardigan Road, Headingley Leeds LS6 3AE and Graham James, 12 Fearnville Terrace, Oakwood Leeds LS8 3DU; the usual, incl. trade to both editors; A4 L; 20pp). Brilliant fanzine which includes Simon Ounsley on that wonderful Yorcon 2 convention; Michael Ashley on D West; D West on Michael Ashley and Alan Dorey and how it's difficult to tell them apart; Jenny Summerfield on Gerry Webb; and Graham James editing letters. Illustrations by D West. Probably the best fanzine this year.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that this review is no more objective than any of the others.

NAPALM IN THE MORNING 3 (Joseph Nicholas, Room 9, 94 St George's Square, Pimlico London SW1Y 3QY. Available, I expect, for the usual. A4 D; 12pp). The third issue of Joseph's fanzine was a vast improvement on the previous ones, I thought, with its excellent article on spaceflight, THE END OF THE DREAM. This issue is less ambitious; by Joseph's own admission it was put together at the last minute to take to Australia on his GUFF trip, so there's no main article as such, just a short (for Joseph) follow-up to the article about his civil service job (in issue two) and a lot of letters about whether or not spaceflight will continue and if it does, will that be a good thing or a bad thing?



"IT SAYS IT'LL ACCEPT ARBITRATION"

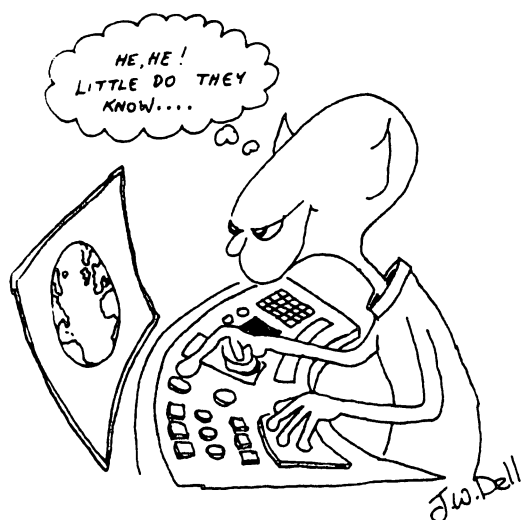
As usual with Joseph, it's all very serious stuff and I find myself wondering if he'd be better producing a genzine, so that he could sprinkle in a few humorous articles by other people as a bit of light relief. It was only a thought. Next issue will have the GUFF trip report anyway, so there may be a few kangaroo jokes.

JACKIE! (The Jacqueline Lichtenberg Appreciation Society. Availability - see below. A5 L R; 20pp). The best thing I can do is show you the covering letter: "Dear Simone (BASF Reviwperson), The COMMITTEE is delighted to en close a real advance copy of the notyet published JACKIE DOSIER which we hop you will say what you think of (or good things anyway) in your trifficly good column of MATRIX reviews which all JLAS members have red (this is not Communism it is sr-1) and often enjoyed for ages. We do not want just anybody to get hold of this importnat documet of course. We donT want just anybody knowing the COMMITTEE adress, because they might be subversives. So what we have done is, we have released a VERY FEW copys to Daev Langford whose adress is 22 Northumberland Avenue ReadingBerks RG2 7PW etc etc and anyone who wants can send him 50pence postfree for the JACKIE!)! dossier

which we en close hereunder. All incomes to TAFF? This is Really sincere. The COMITE hope you will be abel to give us a rially glowering review and tell peopul to buy it or we will take measures.@ Live Long & Prosper in Peace and Diversity for all of Time and Space without End, Yours etc, the Comitee."

So there you are. Whether you're a long-time supporter of the JLAS who would like the complete set of "all the famous braodsheets" or have never even heard of them, you're recommended to get a copy. Other wise the BASF may also take measures.

STUNT BOX (Ken Mann - address above under EXPOSED - A4 D; 4pp). Whoops! Missed out availability - well, probably for the usual I should think, but also ask for a copy of the fiction and poetry zine GAE BOLGA, for which this is the letter supplement. Contains letters with comments on the stuff in GAE BOLGA plus replies to Ken's brainteaser about where the title comes from. Will there be another supplement about where STUNT BOX comes from, I wonder?



U.S. FANZINES

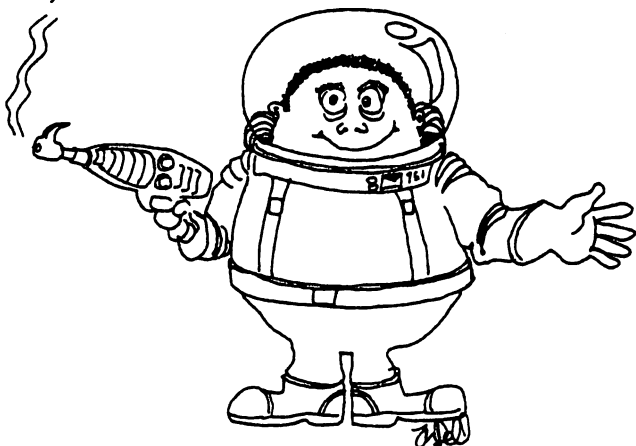
BLATANT 8 (Avedon Carol, 4409 Woodfield Road, Kensington, Maryland 20795 USA. Most likely for the usual; strange American size which is no doubt what Rob referred to as USQ, so here we go: USQ D; 12pp). Readable, mainly personalzine with Avedon writing short pieces on one of her college lecturers; the skimmed milk causing infant deaths in third world countries; King Fu; and other stuff. The most memorable piece was the one on whether exposure to good or bad art is most stimulating to the creative processes (not as bad as I've made it sound, honest). There's also an outside contribution from Alexis A. Gilliland, whom Avedon suspects is a right-winger. I think she's probably right.

INTERMEDIATE VECTOR BOSONS 3 (Harry Andruschak, Post Office Box 606, La Canada-Flintridge, California 91011, USA; For trade, \$1.50 in person or \$2.00 by mail or "the usual"; USQ D; 28pp). Lots of articles on APAs, two old articles by veteran fannish writer Charles Burbee, Robert Bloch writing in support of LA in '58 (!), A Bertram Chandler (rather more timely) in support of Australia in '83, and a review of a romantic novel, which turns out to be "catering for the juvenile mind" (surprise, surprise). I think Andy is a little bit over-obsessed with fannish history. I mean, Robert Bloch's article might have been mildly amusing in 1958 but today it seems about as interesting as a pint of flat beer left over from Festivicon. Similarly, the three articles on APA

history weren't exactly hot stuff. Myself, I think APAs are an awful idea so perhaps I'm biased, but the people writing Andy's articles seem to agree with me. Mark Verheiden says that 'members...usually realise, sooner or later, that their efforts are only being seen by 35 to 40 people and that the time and expense involved in reaching those 40 people can be prohibitive. When a member reaches that point, they either quit or put apa-hacking on the backburner, where for all intents in purposes it belongs.' Grammar aside, I agree. Here's Taral: "I can think of few exceptions to the view that all APAs are banal!" Well, I don't have enough experience of reading them to know whether that's true or not, but I'm very inclined to take his word for it. And until I'm convinced otherwise, I certainly don't want to read about the history of the damned things. I see from Andy's editorial that he's now given up his own APA activity, so perhaps we'll hear no more of them. Also, perhaps Andy will be able to devote more time to getting good stuff for IVB. There were only two things I found of any interest in this issue: the Burbee pieces (of which more below) and a comment in Andy's editorial: "I notice that the Bible, under the coy guise of 'Scientific Creationism', is to be taught in school biology classes as being 'equal' to Evolution. I can just see JPL having to give equal time to the Biblical notion that the Earth is Flat and the Sun moves round the Earth." Yes, and these born again biologists will probably turn into doctors who start treating us for 'possession by devils' etc.

Anyway, on to the Burbee articles: I was particularly interested in these because Andy, who always takes the time and trouble to look OCELOT, had compared our writing to his. Not favourably, I hasten to add. Well, on this showing, Burbee was neither bad nor brilliant. One thing for certain, he puts paid to the idea that British fans have some sort of monopoly on male chauvinism. One article is about a poll that Burbee held to find out which parts of a woman men like best; the other is about Burbee getting a penis infection. Put me off my Sunday lunch, that one did.

Before I move on, it's just occurred to me that a few of you won't know what an APA is. So here we go: it's short for "amateur publishing association" and it's a group of fans who contribute written material to a central mailing called an apa-zine, which is then sent out to all the members and to no-one else. Incestuous and elitist, isn't it?



And that's it for this issue. But don't miss the next exciting episode: "Geriatric Fandom Strikes Back". This has been a 'Mediocrity Against Talent' Production.

MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD continued: Simon Bostock (see letters for address) is still seeking members to join his APA, called APA-SF&F. This is a new quarterly apa. Many have already shown interest and take an alternate view to Mr Ounsley's above.

BACK ISSUES OF OMNI AVAILABLE: A number of back issues of OMNI science fiction magazine are available at 50p incl. postage and packing. Please write enclosing postal order or stamps stating the issues required (or write for details with SAE) to Box No. 1, c/o MATRIX editorial address.

FANZINES FROM ELSEWHERE (or to be honest, just from Holland)

A THIRD FOREIGN FANZINE (Roelof Goudriaan, Postbus 589, 8200 AN Lelystad, The Netherlands. For the usual or 4 issues for £2-20 (Europe), £5-20 (elsewhere) Pay by IMO, post-giro (NL-4113560) or cash; A5 LR; 32pp). Written entirely in English, this is an invaluable link between British and European fandoms. As Roelof says, "I've not been able to attain the so desired coherence and substantiality in this foreign fanzine" and the zine is a collection of all sorts of things: book reviews, a fanzine review supplement, lots of letters, fiction, cartoons and a supplement on Judge Dee by Roelof and Al Fitzpatrick. Nevertheless, most of it is readable enough and it's worth getting for the cover alone (by Marvano) which is a masterpiece. Hope to see more in the future from Roelof and perhaps give it a longer review. Just at this moment, it's the day before the MATRIX deadline and my brain doesn't seem to be able to attain coherence and substantiality. On to the last section...

SMALL PRESS (including fiction markets!)

BUCKETFULS OF IDEALISM/WHERE WHERE (Nobby Nils/Truthantic Productions, 34 Woodham Road, Bellingham London SE6; dunno, try writing and asking for it; A5; individually typed (!); 24 pp). This was forwarded to me by Ken Mann, who presumably thinks I know something about poetry or am prepared to pretend to. Well, this is a single-author collection of poetry which, according to passing English student Michael Ashley, is "very prosaic". When questioned further, he said that this mean Nils doesn't exhibit a poet's economy with words. And that will do fine for a review, I think, at least for those few of you who trust English students.

EXTR0 7 (Constellation Publications, 28 Moorcroft Drive, Burnage, Manchester M19 1WH; 60p this issue, 75p next; £7-50 for ten (including newszine SF NEWS); A4 L; 32pp). Editor Robert Allen may not like me including EXTR0 under "small press" since he has high hopes, which may well come to fruition, of expanding it into a large distribution magazine. Still, this gives me a chance to mention that EXTR0 pays for fiction and is intending in future to feature stories by at least two new authors in each issue. This present issue features only one story, an excellent piece by Chris Evans, along with a Chris Priest interview, a Robert Silverberg bibliography, a piece on Dr Who, some stuff on the occult, and lots of (mainly fairly short) reviews. Always good to see a new fiction market expanding; my main complaint is the inclusion of the occult material, which doesn't fit in with the SF content of the rest of the issue.

LOGOS 4 (Logos Magazine, PO Box 32, Dundee; 40p cover price, £2 subs for 4 issues A4 L; 24 pp). Thanks to Iain Byers for sending me a copy of this general fiction magazine, primarily memorable - I must admit - because it pays for contributions. The stuff in issue four includes two pieces which are vaguely classifiable as SF; most of it is formula material, more or less competently written but unexciting. Only one piece, THE PRISONER by Alison Cassidy, could be called in any way ambitious. Perhaps you can send them something better.



BEST SELLING PAPERBACKS IN THE UK: Rog Peyton
 FILM & TV NEWS: Simon Bostock
 FORTHCOMING BOOKS: Joseph Nicholas
 FROM THE BOOK WORLD: Joseph Nicholas/The Editor
 OTHER NEWS: The Editor
 CONVENTION NEWS & LISTINGS: The Editor
 NEWS SOURCE CREDITS: Locus, SF Chronicle, SF News, Starburst, D Langford

BEST SELLING PAPERBACKS IN THE UK:

MAY TOP TEN

	Last Month	Months on Chart
1 THE RINGWORLD ENGINEERS - Larry Niven (Futura £1.50/£1.75)	-	1
2 THE SNOW QUEEN - Joan Vinge (Futura £1.95)	-	1
3 MASTER OF THE FIVE MAGICS - Lyndon Hardy (Futura £1.50)	2	2
4 THE PRIESTS OF PSI - Frank Herbert (Futura £1.35)	-	1
5= WHEELWORLD - Harry Harrison (Granada £1.25)	10	3
5= GOLEM 100 - Alfred Bester (Pan £1.75)	-	3
7 THE SPACE MACHINE - Christopher Priest (Pan £1.50)	-	1
8 THE BEST OF ERIC FRANK RUSSELL (Futura 85p)	-	1
9 THE PRISONER: A DAY IN THE LIFE - Hank Stine (NEL £1.25)	6	2
10=THE OAK AND THE RAM - Michael Moorcock (Granada 95p)	-	1
10=THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SWINDLE - Michael Moorcock (Virgin £1.50)	-	1
10=SOMEWHERE IN TIME - Richard Matheson (Sphere £1.25)	7	4

The new number one came as no surprise at all. What surprised Futura was the quantities sold through general bookshops...it was out of print before publication day and many shops (including us) didn't receive any stocks at all. Fortunately we found wholesalers with stocks. An interesting point here for collectors - the first Futura printing was for the overseas market only and is actually mistitled RINGWORLD ENGINEERS, on cover and spine. The 2nd printing, for the UK market, carries the corrected THE RINGWORLD ENGINEERS and is priced again at £1.50. The rushed 3rd printing is increased to £1.75 but the credits page has not been altered and still claims to be 2nd printing instead of third.

The magnificent THE SNOW QUEEN came in second, despite an inappropriate cover and a fairly high price tag, while last month's No 2 drops a place this time. The new Herbert collection, unpublished in America, gave Futura the top four titles during May. Shows that at least one UK publisher knows what its doing.

Joint No 5s were both books which picked up sales after a drop in April, and No 7 was a reprint of one of our best-selling books of a few years ago. THE SPACE MACHINE now reappears with a cover which Pan must be congratulated for. I hope this book now gets the national sales it deserves.

A 2-year-old book makes a shock appearance at No 8 - one of our steadiest selling titles, THE BEST OF ERIC FRANK RUSSELL, has been out of stock with Futura for over 12 months, but they've finally got off their butts and imported more copies from America. Now if only they will do the same with all the other titles that are supposed to be available over here....

The second PRISONER book continues to sell steadily at No 9 while at No 10 we have no less than three books! Two Moorcock books - a reissue fantasy novel and a very borderline SF novel - tie with SOMEWHERE IN TIME which has now been in our Top Ten for 4 out of the last 5 months! Nice to know that quality can sell.

Note that NUMBER OF THE BEAST disappeared completely after only one month in the Ten - sales have dropped to virtually nil on this item.

JUNE TOP TEN

1 THE RINGWORLD ENGINEERS - Larry Niven (Futura £1.75)	1	2
2 THE SNOW QUEEN - Joan Vinge (Futura £1.95)	2	2
3 WHEELWORLD - Harry Harrison (Granada £1.25)	5	4
4= SONGMMASTER - Orson Scott Card (Futura £1.75)	-	1
4= ONE STEP FROM EARTH - Harry Harrison (Arrow £1.50)	-	1
6 MASTER OF THE FIVE MAGICS - Lyndon Hardy (Futura £1.50)	3	3
7= THE FACE - Jack Vance (Coronet £1.25)	-	1
7= HOMEWORLD - Harry Harrison (Granada £1.25)	-	2
9 WHO GOES HERE? - Bob Shaw (Pan 80p)	-	1
10=BLACK EASTER/DAY AFTER JUDGEMENT - James Blish (Arrow £1.50)	-	2
10=THE SPACE MACHINE - Christopher Priest (Pan £1.50)	7	2
10=STAINLESS STEEL RAT WANTS YOU - Harry Harrison (Sphere 95p)	-	1

The top two remained static this month though the number of copies sold was greatly reduced. WHEELWORLD continued to sell well and then picked up sales on the special Signing Session that ANDROMEDA held. A reissue of Harry Harrison's ONE STEP FROM EARTH sold extremely well, arriving in stock just a couple of days prior to the signing session.

Also at number 4, a new book selling remarkably well, is Orson Scott Card's SONGMMASTER. Sales are no doubt helped by a beautiful Bruce Pennington cover. Pity the book's a bummer!!

A good cover has also helped the Lyndon Hardy fantasy novel to stay in the Top Ten for three consecutive months. The 4th in the Demon Princes series - THE FACE - puts Jack Vance back in at No 7, sharing the honours with HOMEWORLD, one of last years best sellers, reappearing due to sales at the Signing Session. Also appearing after sales at the Signing Session are WHO GOES HERE?, THE SPACE MACHINE, and the 4th Stainless Steel Rat book. After dropping out of the Ten last month, BLACK EASTER/DAY AFTER JUDGEMENT silps back in at No 10.

All in all a strange month - nothing having blockbusting sales, but lots of old stock titles selling slightly better than normal resulting in an extremely good month - but then June is traditionally one of our best months.

(Top Ten figures supplied by courtesy of ANDROMEDA BOOK CO LTD, 57 Summer Row, Birmingham B3 1JJ)

FILM AND TELEVISION NEWS

The American release for the HEAVY METAL film based on various ideas from the magazine of the same title is all set for August, which means, of course, that by now hundreds of eager fans will probably be ripping people to bits in order to be the first to cross the cinema border-line. Various items of interest connected with the movie have floated my way... Columbia Pictures will be distributing it; although the budget is rumoured at being \$8 million, a subsequent \$6 million will help with the advertising; the animated flick will include pieces from Berni Wrightson (a Captain Sternn in the starring role), Richard Corben (brilliant artist, contributing to the anthology a few model sheets for his 'Den', adapted, I would suspect, from his artbook Neverwhere), Angus McKie (doing 'So Beautiful, So Dangerous' which came straight out of the magazine, modified this time, possibly) and Thomas Warkentin (never heard of him)... Dan O'Bannon, of ALIEN fame, seems to be doing a fair share of the work; the major story is a 25-minute fantasy and sword and sorcery piece entitled 'Taarna', the title summing up the main character; there will also be a high number of heavy rock bands to perform original music for the film (Black Sabbath, Blue Oyster Cult). Altogether, I think the film may do for animated SF films what STAR WARS did for sci-fantasy ones, don't you?

OUTLAND, to me, is an obvious rip-off of ALIEN (as was INSEMINOID, incidentally), just by reading the enticing sentence impressively positioned at the top of all tie-ins, 'Even in space - The ultimate enemy is man', a switch clicks in your brain and informs you that it really does seem similar to 'In space, no-one can hear you scream' which the Twentieth Century Fox folks used. The film stars ex-Bond star Sean Connery as some officer or other and Frances Sternhagen as a Dr Lazarus. At the time of writing I don't know the certificate, but it looks like being an 'X', unless a lot of that harmful stuff is surgically removed. HEAVY METAL magazine included an artist's drawings connected with the film, and it seems as if it were to be granted an 'A' or 'AA' certificate, the erotica would have to pipe down. ~~Hummm~~... All about a base on a moon of Jupiter, it seems.

ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE, June '81, carried an ad for a book of a film called DRAGONSLAYER, out from Disney I think, announcing it as a major production. "A Fantasy Novel Triumph of Unparalleled Magic, Suspense and Romance", it says of the book version. Interesting, eh? ... ANSIBLE states it doesn't know the Phil Dick novel that is being transformed into a film called BLADE RUNNER. Reliable info tells me that DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP? is the book in question, film to be a production of the Ladd Company. It will star Harrison Ford with a shaven head in the role of a cop involved in a murder, and is scheduled for a May '82 release. ALIEN man Ridley Scott will direct. Do wish more people would think of filming Dick books, perhaps the next will be FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID ? ... Misprint (fault of Linda, not me, though she probably couldn't decipher my handwriting)(*Difficult...Linda*): it is the Conan films, not Canon, which are rumoured to total five at the very least.

FORTHCOMING BOOKS

GOLLANCZ - Bob Shaw: THE CERES SOLUTION (July, £5.95); Ian Watson: DEATHHUNTER (October, £5.95); Terry Carr (ed.): BEST SF OF THE YEAR 10 (October, £7.95); Arthur C. Clarke (ed.): SF HALL OF FAME VOL 4 (November, £7.95; omnibus reprint of all the Nebula-winning short fiction from 1966 to 1971 inclusive).

GRANADA - Brian Aldiss: GALAXIES LIKE GRAINS OF SAND (August, price unknown); Ray Bradbury: THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES (August, price unknown) (both of these are reprints); Brian Aldiss: CRYPTO-ZOIC (August, price unknown - another reprint); Ian Watson: THE VERY SLOW TIME MACHINE (August, price unknown); Chelsea Quinn Yarbro: FALSE DAWN (September, price unknown); Brian Aldiss: EARTHWORKS (September, price unknown - another reprint); Harlan Ellison: THE TIME OF THE EYE and ALL THE SOUNDS OF FEAR (October, prices unknown - both reprints); Harry Harrison: STARWORLD (October, price unknown - 3rd in the "To The Stars" trilogy); Michael Moorcock: THE SWORD AND THE STALLION (November, price unknown - 3rd of the second "Corum" trilogy); Robert Stallman: THE ORPHAN (November, price unknown - 1st of the "Book Of The Beast" trilogy).

SPHERE - Gordon R. Dickson: MASTERS OF EVERON (August, price unknown); Poul Anderson: THE MER-MAN'S CHILDREN (October, price unknown).

PENGUIN - Robert Heinlein: CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY (July, £1.50); Garry Kilworth: SPLIT SECOND (July, £1.50); Stanislaw Lem: SOLARIS/THE CHAIN OF CHANCE/A PERFECT VACUUM (July, £3.50).

ORBIT - Roger Zelazny: ROADMARKS (July, £1.50).

FROM THE BOOK WORLD

Contrary to previous pessimistic reports, the SF Industry has been fairing well, with an average growth in sales of 10-12%. Although publishers such as Doubleday and Dell have, or are cutting back, others such as Holt are starting lines; Ace are re-expanding and Pinnacle is a new entry to the field.

Interesting when in the last few years a number of SF Magazines have folded, a number of new ventures have started. TWILIGHT ZONE has started monthly production; in the U.S. the first two issues are out, including stories by George R R Martin; Sheckley; Ellison and Ramsey Campbell in the first issue and Silverberg, Haldeman, Zelazny in the second. Davis publications plans a 3rd magazine in the U.S. - S.F. DIGEST (similar size to Asimov's and ANALOG); it will feature three 25,000 word condensations of full-length novels per issue, edited by Shawna McCarthy, managing editor of the aforementioned. Publication is planned for August with a print run of 100,000, published quarterly. There are strong rumours that OMNI is starting an all-SF magazine (probably due to the reported success of its "Best of Omni" S.F. Anthologies) and even stronger possibilities that a British SF Magazine will shortly be launched (watch this space....). Also planned is the rather strange (in terms of its plans), S.F. NOVELS due out in August. It will be a large format, bi-monthly magazine for the first three issues, then monthly. It will concentrate on publishing complete novels as serials (4-5 each issue); each story will be broken down to 2-3 installments, with no abridgements; Ian Watson and Michael Bishop's UNDER HEAVEN'S BRIDGE is scheduled for inclusion. Cover price will be \$1.95 and availability through subscriptions (contact SF Productions Inc, P.O. Box 2050, Salem OR 97308, USA) or specialist dealers.

Gene Wolf has two more novels to go in his "The Shadow of the Torture/Claw of the Conciliator" series: THE SWORD OF THE LICTOR and THE CITADEL OF THE OTTER. Vonda McIntyre's THE ENTROPHY EFFECT is to appear from Timescape, the first in their Star Trek novel programme. Also from Timescape in Spring '82 will be Chalker's THE IDENTITY MATRIX (no relation, I assume?). Poul Anderson's new novel is tentatively titled ORION SHALL RISE. Charles Sheffield's new non-fiction book EARTHWATCH was scheduled for July publication in this country, from Sigwick and Jackson. George Zebowski is completing STRANGER SUNS for Doubleday, the first novel in the Star Web Trilogy and is working on MIRROR OF MINDS, the third part of the Omega Point Trilogy. The ubiquitous and rich Carl Sagan has sold an outline SF novel, CONTACT (no prizes for guessing what this is about) for \$2 million, no less, to Simon and Schuster; his COSMOS has sold 600,000 in the states, at a cover price of \$20. Marion Zimmer Bradley has sold a giant new fantasy novel for \$60,000, aptly entitled MISTRESS OF MAGIC. Apparently it's about King Arthur,..... from the women's point of view! New titles scheduled from Dick include THE OWL IN DAYLIGHT (SF orientated) and BISHOP TIMOTHY MILLER (mainstream). And ... BSFA hero, ASIMOV, has signed a contract for, get this, a new novel in the Foundation Series; the working title is LIGHTENING ROD.

OTHER NEWS

→Strange goings on with Fred Pohl; he is going to Korea as the guest of Sun Myung Moon (of the Unification Church, or Moonies cult, whichever way you like to take it). →Former Fan, alright then, former, active-fan John Brosnan continues to set the pages of STARBURST alight with his hard-hitting reviews ... 'Mr Brosnan must have left his brain at home when he saw the film (CLOSE ENCOUNTERS) ...' writes a correspondent in the latest issue. →Geoff Boswell announces that he's left the BSFA because it's too expensive ... just after he'd obtained fame in this magazine as well... →Dark They Were Bookshop is going out of existence, as many London fans couldn't have failed to notice if they'd visited the shop recently. However, FORBIDDEN PLANET goes from strength to strength, having just opened an SF and Comics Bookshop in New York; it is supposedly the largest of its kind in North America... →Linda and I got married in Leeds on June 19th and had our "southern" wedding reception in London on July 4th along with fellow newlyweds Alan and Rochelle Dorey. Many fans attended, including some mean bastards who stole some drink at the end of the function. Thanks alot. Jeff Suter did an admirable job with the disco, as did Rochelle and Eve Harvey (and many others) with the food. Thanks to all those who came, especially for the wedding gifts. →Maxim Jakubowski has resigned as Virgin Books Managing Director on the grounds of 'taste', I presume. →Following his success at YORCON, John Collick is planning, with Paul Oldroyd, to shoot a video-film on location in Yorkshire; stars scheduled to appear are Chris (soon-to-be Oldroyd), D West, Ounsley and yours truly. →Gerry Webb announces that Jenny Summerfield is 33 and single. →Malcolm Edwards announces that his new fanzine TAPPEN was type-set on a borrowed word-processor. →Langford and Smith's DRLKJS should be out 'real soon now' complete with in-depth denunciations of various convention accounts (eagerly awaited this). →Tom Shippey, noted SF critic, and an ex-YORCON co-chairman, back from his spell with Harvard Univ. and continuing life as English Professor at Leeds Univ., has succeeded in persuading the authorities to run an SF option in the 3rd year English course; authors included in the reading list are Wells, Walter Miller, Ballard, Aldiss, Harrison, Le Guin, Brunner, Vonnegut and, even, Heinlein (full details next time around).

→George Lucas has turned in his Director's Guild of America and Writer's Guild of America cards and moved his entire operations to Marin County, north of San Francisco; he has made little secret over the years of his distaste for Hollywood. The last straw occurred over a dispute of the credit notices on THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. Director Irvin Kershner's name was listed at the end of the film; D.G.A. contracts specify that the director's name must appear in the credits at the beginning of a film. Lucas took some guff, even though Kershner supported Lucas and said he was treated excellently while they worked together. Shortly afterwards, Lucas began moving all of his operations out of Hollywood. Lucas can afford to thumb his nose at the Hollywood establishment; some estimate his personal-financial gain from STAR WARS at \$150 million, not counting subsidiary rights sales, the revenue from THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, etc. Lucasfilm Ltd. is rumoured to be worth more than half-a-billion; STAR WARS was set for nationwide USA re-release in April.

→The latest reports have Roddenberry out as the controlling producer of the new STAR TREK TV movie, studio executives reportedly unhappy over the massive cost of STAR TREK: THE MOVIE, guesstimated at over \$50 million. If Roddenberry isn't directly involved, the chance of a movie is greatly decreased; Leonard Nimoy has often said he will never reprise his role of Spock unless Roddenberry is in charge of production on the line.

→Finally, the BSFA Awards (see last issue) were given prominent and headline coverage in LOCUS, America's leading SF zine. Onward, Onward!

→LATE NEWS: From SF Chronicle, August '81 issue: "The Ben Bova story in the April '81 ANSIBLE has been confirmed, but SFC can't run the initial story without being sued - British libel laws are different. Ditto the Sagan rumours and the Donaldson/Del Rey apocrypha."

→Also recently arrived: AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS May/June '81 (possibly somewhat more honest dating than Andy Porter's for SFC). This contains forty-odd pictures of fans at cons and parties in Australia. Of these, just four are holding glasses. Of these, two are Joseph. (He also has the honour of being the only fan shown actually drinking, i.e., with glass to lips, anywhere in this vast photo parade!!!) Hail to the man who has truly upheld British Standards!

CONVENTION NEWS

BABEL-CON: 7-9 August: Well, if you didn't know by now, it's been CANCELLED; Committee problems beset this convention and eventually resulted in recently apptd Chairman, Phil Probert, resigning - down came Babel-con! For a fuller account, see letters column.

STUCON '81: 14-16 August 1981: For full details see last Matrix; still time to attend, maybe; Contact Denis Scheck, Falkenstr. 25, 7061 Berglen 4, West Germany.

BENELUXCON: 28-30 August 1981: Atlanta Hotel, Rotterdam, Holland. GoH Jack Vance, Kate Wilhelm and Fred Pohl. Membership is around £7.00; Hotel rates around £10 per person per night. Single ticket, London to Rotterdam by British Rail is 22. Further info Hans Van der Zee, Sneeuwgars 6, 3435 Dk Nieuwegein, Holland. This is a very popular convention held alternately between Holland and Belgium. It usually has an international programme, fannish and serious, items in English and other languages. The committee would very much like to welcome more English fans.

AUCCN '81 DeVere Hotel, Coventry. Strictly "STAR-TREK" convention. Attending membership £12.50 Details from 54 Foxhunter Drive, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5FE.

DENVENTION II: 3-7 September 1981. The World SF Convention at the Denver Hilton, Denver Colorado. No mail-in memberships now - and its \$55 at the door. GoH Clifford D. Simak and C L Moore. FGoH Rusty Hevelin. Info: Box 11545, Denver, CO 80211, USA.

ANGLICON 81: Informal minicon 4-6 September at the University of East Anglia. GoH: Ian Watson and John Sladek. Membership £24 including bed and breakfast. Contact Linda Campbell, 32 Gage Rd, Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk.

UNICON 2: 11-14 September 1981 at Keele University. GoH John Sladek, FGoH Alan Dorey. Memberships £5.50 Attending, £3.00 Supporting. Contact Chris Davenport, 'Bridge End' Shawbury, Shrewsbury Salop. Come and see your BSFA Chairman appearing as Fan GoH - but no further details (e.g., P.R.s) received.

NOVACON 11: 30 Oct-1 Nov at the Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham. GoH Bob Shaw (the real one). Supporting £2.50, Full £5.50. Room rates pretty good £10.50 sharing, £13.50 single, including VAT and Breaky. Chairman is Paul Oldroyd. The long-awaited PR2 is now out complete with Hotel Booking forms and wonderful article by yours truly. Also scheduled for the con is a video film shot entirely on location in Leeds by John Collick.

CYMRUCON: 14-15 November 1981. Central Hotel, Cardiff. Organised by Cardiff SF Group. Membership £2.00 Supporting, £5.00 Attending (£7.00 on the door). Usual Recipe con - films, debates, fancy dress, talks, etc; speakers include: Mike Ashley (The Elder), Lionel Fanthorpe, Chris Morgan, Stableford, Watson. Details (SAE) Naveed Khan, Room 16, Traherne Hall, Llwym-y-Grant Rd. Penylan, Cardiff CF3 7UX.

FILMCON 81: 27-29 November 1981 at the Grand Hotel, Brum. Memberships Supporting £6.00, Full £13.00, at the door £14.00 Organised by the Birmingham Science Fiction Film Society. Room rates are £10 per person (sharing), £12 (single), inc. VAT and Breaky. PR1 available. Further details 49 Humber Tower, Francis Street, Birmingham, West Midlands B7 4JX.

The recent spate of SF films have been mainly action based, little more than westerns on a galactic range, with little time for the philosophical introspections of so much contemporary European SF writing. It is, therefore, pleasantly surprising that Bertrand Tavernier should keep so faithfully to his source - D G Compton's 'The Unsleping Eye' - in DEATHWATCH. Perhaps the cosmopolitan complexion of the venture - the director is French, the production team Franco-German, the stars are German, American, French and Swedish, and the whole thing is filmed in Scotland - militated against the customary cavalier attitude of film-makers towards their written sources.

The film is set in some immediate future where medical science has abolished death, except by reason of old age or violence. It should not require a journalistic genius to deduce the audience potential of a television show that purported to show the real, live death of someone because of a disease. When it is discovered that Katherine Mortenhoe - a successful authoress of computer assisted novels - is about to die from just such a disease, the repulsive boss of MTV, Vincent Ferriman, seizes his opportunity. By chance (!) his best cameraman, Roddy, has just had his eyes replaced by television cameras. Being the sharp sort of businessman he is, Vincent adds Katherine to Roddy and comes up with a show that would have Jictar ratings at least as good as the second coming. He then makes Katherine the offer she cannot refuse, enough cash to keep her weakling second husband in luxury for the rest of his life. Katherine takes the money, gives it to hubby, and promptly heads for the hills leaving dear Vincent with gaping holes in the company bank balance and his schedules. Nothing daunted Vincent sends out his ace in the hole, Roddy, to track down Katherine and make the programme *al fresco*, without her knowledge. Being a resourceful chap, Roddy tracks down the thinly disguised Katherine and together they set off for the West of Scotland, heading towards the sea side retreat of her first husband, the enigmatic academic, Gerald Mortenhoe. (You can see how wet her second husband is, he does not mind her walking around with another man's name.) As they travel, Roddy and Katherine grow closer together, and all the while he is transmitting back material for the show. When he finally sees an episode of the show, by accident, in a pub, Roddy realises what he has done and 'blinds' himself in a fit of remorse. From then on the film becomes a race - can Katherine and Roddy reach the safe haven of Gerald's cottage before Vincent can find them?

Well, they do, and everyone lives happily ever after.

No, not quite everybody, but even the loathesome Vincent is not too badly done to. After all, he had his show. In the ending the film diverts from the book and is strangely unsatisfactory, considering the tautness of the rest. There is a suspicion that, having paid his fee, Tavernier felt that he had to get his money's worth from Max von Sydow, who plays Gerald. Not that von Sydow gives a bad performance. Far from it. He has returned to that benign yet distantly iron authority which will be familiar to anyone who remembers his work with Bergman. Anything further from Ming the Merciless is hard to imagine.

While von Sydow is the most distinguished member of the cast, he does not overshadow the others. Harry Dean Stanton plays Vincent with an awesome and awful reptilian cynicism, and actually gets to survive the whole film (for the first time in my memory). Harvey Keitel at last delivers the goods after so often frustrating expectations, turning Roddy into an amalgam of twitchy, alienated depression and aggressive euphoria - schizophrenia, in a word - which is a reasonable way for anyone to be if they know that they will never be able to sleep again, will have to take drugs constantly and will never have a single private moment for the rest of their life. Both of these performances would not look out of place in an American film, but in the performance of Romy Schneider as Katherine the European nature of the film shows through. She is a beautiful woman in her lush maturity, but twenty years too old and twenty-five pounds too heavy to fit into the Hollywood mould of female box-office material. Be that as it may, she gives a performance of startling veracity. We watch a real woman behaving as a real woman would to the imminence of an unexpected death. While the ending is something of an anti-climax, inevitably, if you can watch this film and not feel for and with this woman then there is something wrong with you. Both Schneider and Keitel seem to play off each other, compete for the acting honours. As a result they both give their most satisfying performances for some long time.

There is an odd dynamic harmony between the nature of the story and its treatment. The story is essentially a condemnation of the voyeurism of so much that passes for journalism today - our television companies seem to claim the right to be able to show anything at all in glorious, living colour - yet this film is firmly within the tradition of French film-making that is so personally intimate that it amounts to voyeurism itself. Truffaut and Pialat are the masters of the style, which is essentially urban and individually isolated - eschewing both the grand philosophical gestures of Godard and the pastoral lyricism of Renoir. DEATHWATCH is filmed in Glasgow, a city that is itself a complex metaphor of industrial urbanism with its gesturally grandiose centre and the solid, dusty Calvinist beauty of its semi-rural middle-class suburbs living cheek by jowl with the dereliction of Govan and the Borbals and the bitter aridity of the post-industrial wreckage that is Greenock and Clydebank. The mere setting casts a bright light on the acquisition of material possessions with the coin of the spiritual desolation of others that is at the heart of this film.

It is by no means a perfect film. Roddy gets himself involved in an up and downer with the West Glasgow polis, and walks away seemingly undamaged! Gerald is portrayed as some sort of polymath superman while Katherine's second husband is shown as a hand fluttering weakling who is apparently unable to prevent his accent regularly migrating over the Irish Sea. It seems improbable that she would leave Gerald for him. These points, along with a few others, are really only minor irritants, and should not detract from the enjoyment of a satisfying piece of cerebral SF.

It is, perhaps, typical of the contemporary cowardice of UK film distributors that this film will not have a nationwide release, while utter dross will be seen in every city, town and village. Maybe if there was some added sex and violence... Doubtless it all fits neatly into the picture of society that Compton and Tavernier have created. There are, so far unconfirmed, rumours of an autumn screening on BBC. If this comes to fruition then seize the chance when it comes. There will not be too many opportunities and this film really is too good to miss.

ALTERED STATES Reviewed by John A Hobson

Judging by some of the hostile flak directed at ALTERED STATES, Ken Russell has still not been forgiven for his introduction of fantasy to the social-realism-obsessed Brit film industry. However, two mid-term flops, LISZTOMANIA and VALENTION had made him a Hollywood outcast, and it was only when everyone else approached to make this film took one look at the script by Paddy Chayefsky and fled, that Russell was offered the movie. Characteristically, he showed Chayefsky the door after three days, but since the latter is still credited as scriptwriter under his real name, Russell's rescue of the film is miraculous. He has turned a possible stinker into the third good SF movie this year, to rank alongside STALKER and DEATHWATCH.

The plot is a mixture of Jekyll and Hyde meets Lionel Atwill in a sense-deprivation tank, and to work, Russell is asking the audience to suspend disbelief and accept the movie on its own terms. Thus we have budding genius Dr Eddie Jessup who believes that he would find contentment with his earthly lot if he could only tap the 'memories' of his atoms, on the assumption that they have been around since creation. It is when he discovers a mescaline drug used by a Mexican tribe (the worst bit in the film as these supposedly Toltec Indians look as if they escaped from Laramie) that he succeeds in regressing his mind, then his physical form, to a simian and finally the organic soup of creation.

The scientific absurdity of the premise means that Russell has to avoid a tongue-in-cheek approach otherwise the appearance of the simian and the finale would reduce the audience to laughter. They didn't when I viewed it, simply because the visual pyrotechnics are a pure treat that hold the film together. One particular sequence is the Hell of Hieronymous Bosch come to life, one of the most stunning pieces of imagination to grace any film this year.

If you enjoy visual experiences, then most Russell movies offer quality entertainment and although this is by no means his best, it provides a welcome respite from the deluge of Close Encounter With an Airfix Kit or Friday Night is Meat Chopper Night that currently masquerades as movies.

SATURN THREE Reviewed by Simon Bostock

Producer: Stanley Donen

The title SATURN THREE is not what you would call entrancing, even the name 'Titan' (the setting for the film) is more likely to ignite the viewer's imagination, so right from the word go I had an awful feeling deep down that this film would be yet another failure, discarded by even the SF media fans, let alone real SF buffs. I was correct to a certain degree: the film drifted around, invisible to even the very gullible, managing to meander past cinemas without a second consideration, only being recognised when re-released, and then because HAWK THE SLAYER was its companion on the billing. The fault does not exactly lie in the film itself, but rather due to the shoddy distributors assigned (though I searched high and low, peering into even the smallest crevices, I couldn't find mention of the movie anywhere) united with the partially nonexistent advertising. Menial reviews, TV coverage, tie-ins + weak dispersal = low attendance average.

With the second release, I did manage to find a cinema that, I assumed, had some sense, though this establishment lay seven miles away in suburban Nottingham. So it was that with little trepidation I set out, waiting in a queue for roughly an hour and then pushing and tugging in a vague attempt to find impure tranquility in the smallest of the smallest: Odeon 5, more a matchbox than a film room, thought I. The curtains parted, the film rolled.

Hector, we are told, is a Demigod, a 'thing' part organism and part machinery; a 'cyborg' (though from the outside only fractionally resembling human form) that is programmed initially by copying and registering every important movement its master makes, and thus, naturally, can and does imitate the same human emotions and confusions. This is all sounding like rejected ideas for Asimov's 'Laws of Robotics', God forbid. Anyhow, Benson (the robot's operator) has actually killed before and is, himself, imitating the captain scheduled to help the doomed scientist and his mate, so is mentally unstable. Well, you can guess what comes next. Benson proposes to go to bed with Alex (no, not what it seems; Alex is in reality Farrah Fawcett) and she refuses. Hector doesn't take too kindly to his master's lewd admiration and proves himself

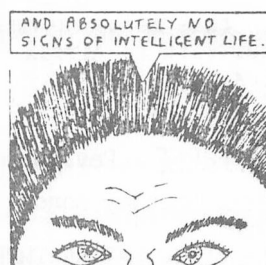
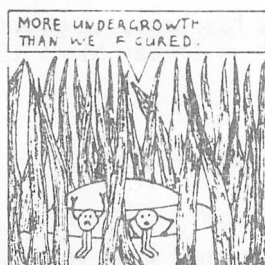
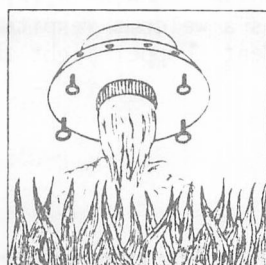
to Alex by tenaciously picking her up from the floor and bloodying her wrists spontaneously, later to rip Benson's arm out of its socket (Benson being played by Harvey Keitel). Put two and two together and the result is a bizarre tale full of action, starting rather plainly but progressing until fairly auspicious with Hector beginning to run amok, providing rare entertainment not evident in such films as THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK and its predecessor, both being rather devoid of action but being counterbalanced by effects and settings. The startling ending adds to this 'A' film's merits.

As an 'R' certificate (under 17s accompanied by an adult) in the USA, I made a conjecture that the story would be showcasing erotic scenes, and couples with the review in STARBURST my views only strengthened. As it turned out, I was correct in my assumption. For a large chunk of the film, Fawcett was romping about flimsily dressed. This I didn't object to, but when Kirk Douglas started getting into the act by picking an uncredited fight naked with Benson, it became irritating. There were also rather a lot of gory sequences, obviously reflecting on its American censorship, like the duo's pet dog being ruthlessly massacred by Hector's limitless strength, or Captain James being torn to bits in the opening minutes. This just goes to prove that the censors can make mistakes; little kids were watching the film with their parents, and I don't know what they thought of this form of entertainment. Perhaps they were all for it, or didn't comprehend said incidents?

The fact that Hector was more of a book-orientated robot and less of a humanoid type accelerates my inspections to prove that SATURN THREE is more of what SF stands for, more so than the majority of big-budgeted movies that bombard you from all directions, and perhaps the reason is that its own expenditure was utterly low. It was, however, biased slightly towards those folks who are out for lots and lots of thrills, and who would be more at home with eyes directed at a Western on TV. This was inevitable, of course. The robot's partly internal skeleton added to the realism of the object, as did the various appendages protruding from his metallic protection. Hector is the child of devisor Stuart Craig, an assistant on SUPERMAN: THE MOVIE, who confessed that his designs can be attributed to Leonardo da Vinci. Certain scenes, like when the robot began to play chess admirably (until he was checkmated, of course), were speeded up to (I suppose) conserve film and money and to decrease the odds against a bored spectator. Apparently this was accomplished due to Hector being an actual mechanism and not some fool inside a silver-coloured outfit, and problems stumbled upon to move the lump of metal were great.

Overall, the film is one of the best I've had the privilege to see for quite a while, and even though it seems I'm all praise, I must say it did have some flaws, albeit too trivial to discuss here. It was even better than HAWK THE SLAYER, a film which appeared to consist of nothing but nuns, warriors and the ilk; typical fantasy, raising my approbation not one iota.

A fresh, well camouflaged rip-off of both STAR WARS and ALIEN, blended in such a way that it's a potent but extremely enjoyable film, recommended strongly. Cheers, Lord Grade!



Convention Listings Continued.

MEDIACON 3: March 20, 1982. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Registration Attending £3.00 Supporting £1.50 (to Dec. 31), thereafter £5.00 or £2.50 respectively. Plus 3 9x4 SAEs for Progress Reports. Details Kathy Halsall, Star one, 45 Welby House, Haselville Rd. London N19. No details of Guests as yet, but events include Fancy Dress, Marvel Art feature. Proceeds from this con go to Charity; previous cons raised £150 for Hospital Equipment and £250 for MIND - a very worthwhile charity for organisation for Mental Health.

CHANNELCON: 9-12 April 1982, at the Metropole Hotel, Brighton. Attending Membership kept at £6.00 (£3.00 supporting) until 1 December 1981; thereafter it will rise. GsoH are John Sladek and Angela Carter - no fan GoH though. PRI now available revealing reduced room rates: £13.50 per night single; £12.50 double, including breakfast but not VAT. Details from Pat Charnock, 4 Fletcher Road, Chiswick, London. Chairman of the con is ex-MATRIX co-editor, Eve Harvey.

CHICON IV: 2-6 September 1982 in Chicago. The 1982 Worldcon. GoH Bertram Chandler and Kelly Freas. FGoH Lee Hoffman. Memberships now \$40 for attending, \$15 supporting. Rates go up. Info: Box A3120, Chicago, IL 60690, USA.

EASTERCON '85: Rumoured bids to date include Surrey, Leeds and Glasgow (not necessarily in order of preference!).

:: :: THE ONGOING MATRIX COMPETITION SITUATION :: :: :: :: DAVE LANGFORD :: ::

Competition M36 A large selection of appalling blurbs were devised and sent in.
'Rancid Blurbs' ALEX STEWART: The demons from space had enslaved the world, and only one man knew their terrifying secret (*Childhood's End*). PETER FINDLAY: Buggery inspires Moorcock to probe new depths (*Breakfast in the Ruins*). MALCOLM EDWARDS: As strong and intelligent as men, these were no ordinary women (*The Female Man*). BRENDON GORE: Space age frogs kidnap a planet, but the croak's on them (*Dosadi Experiment*). BRIAN ALDISS: They faced death gaily! Women loved them, but they cared only for their sergeant (*Starship Troopers*). ROELOF GOUDRIAAN: Her nipples twinkled in love for the past—but caused the lust of the living (*Earthwind*). ROBERT MUIR: A certain substance took him on the zaniest trip of his life (*The First Men in the Moon*). KEITH MARSLAND: How could he escape from the perfect prison? Easy, he'd swap minds with the guard (*Camp Concentration*). CHERRY WILDER: He spent a long, hard winter on the Unisex Planet... (*Left Hand of Darkness*). Lack of space excludes goodies from PETE LYON, IAN DAVIS and ANDREW SUTHERLAND.

My personal groanometer awarded the book token to MARGARET HALL: *A young woman's unrequited love makes her turn to transvestism and deception and almost leads to her death. But putting her first unhappy affair behind her, she finds true love at last.* (This, of course, describes *The Return of the King* by J.R.R. Tolkien.)

Rancid genuine blurbs came from BRIAN ALDISS, PHILL PROBERT, ANDREW SUTHERLAND, MARY GENTLE and intrepid ANDY RICHARDS, who wins the Subsidiary Prize with a long SFBC blurb for *The End of Eternity*: YOU TRAVELLED THROUGH TIME TO TASTE FORBIDDEN LOVE... but now you must murder her!!! (etc, etc) We won't dwell on just what prize Andy deserves for making me toil through pages of this. I'll think of something...

Also: a thrilling M35 entry from Vic Norris. Too late, too late.

Competition M37 A nice, straightforward sf/fantasy quiz—one point for each correct answer, maximum score 40. Do send in your answers, however few: even if you can only score two points, maybe no-one else can do so well...

1) Who went under the name of (a) Gyle Warweave; (b) Mr Underhill; (c) Gill Hunt; (d) Magnifico?

2) Which characters said these lines? (a) You are trapped in that bright moment where you learned your doom. (b) Madman! I tell you that she now stands without the door! (c) Hallowed be thy name, if a name thou hast and any desire to see it hallowed... (d) Monarchical institutions improve the manners.

3) Name (a) the third volume of Varley's trilogy; (b) the fourth of Asimov's; (c) the fourth of 'The Book of the New Sun'.

4) Which books were subtitled thus? (a) Pearls before Swine; (b) The Making of an Utopia; (c) The Enigmatic Speculum; (d) Being a True and Faithful Account of the Great Upheavals of 2037...

5) Answer these queries from fantasy novels: (a) What is the shore that fears the sea? (b) Who is called Sulva? (c) If you take your stand in Hamur's place/at edge of world and gate of space/what feeling creeps within your bone? (d) What did Mumbo Jumbo do with the fair-haired Nordic girl?

6) What's odd about (a) the Swinburne quotation in *Son of Man*? (b) the chapter-head quotes in *The Sheep Look Up*? (c) the chapters of *The Reefs of Earth*?

7) These SF/fantasy titles are by notables not usually considered as SF authors. Give all relevant names: (a) 'The Shadow and the Flash'; (b) *The Lunatic Republic*; (c) *Fear is the Same*; (d) 'The Finger of Stone'; (e) *The Great Wash*; (f) 'The De-fossilized Plum Pudding'.

8) Which award-winning SF novels begin thus? (a) What David most hated about the Sumner family dinners was the way everyone talked about him as if he were not there. (b) Some stories of terror and the supernatural start with a moonlit face at a diamond-paned window... (c) Chris Sole dressed quickly.

9) Which award-winning SF stories end thus? (a) The new Pontiff, I think, has begun his reign in an auspicious way. (b) I wanted to see Dorynne before I caught the train to Geneva. (c) And went up.

10) For the fannish: What fates were this year shared by (a) the *Matrix* editor and the BSFA chairman? (b) the *Vector* editor and Jim Barker? (c) the *Ansible* editor and Britain's SFWA representative?

Rush answers to Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave, READING, Berks, RG2 7PW. Deadline as for MATRIX 39—results in M39, with Something Else (not me) in M38. +



LETTERS

Hmmm, response rate up this time; I'm beginning to think that the volume of response depends not on the contents, but on some mysterious other factor - such as, maybe ... the moon ...? Could be. Anyway, the major comment-hook this time proved to be Joseph Nicholas - but before you shout "surprise, surprise!" let me tell you that members are now writing in, praising the man, defending him to the hilt ... now, where was I with that theory of the moon and its affects? Dorothy Davies' article started quite a number of you thinking and Alan's Appeal about FOCUS caused floods of support for the continuation of a fiction-zine; more about that later. Ripples and reactions to 'Life on the Dole' also continue to evoke much response ... what was it said that concluded the article back in April? ... Oh yes ... "just what will eventually develop, I'm not sure. It could be riots, I don't know. But you are creating a mob. At the moment, it's a very, very apathetic mob, but that's at the moment." OK, then, on with the show:-

HUSSAIN R MOHAMED
64 STANTHORPE ROAD
LONDON SW16

"MATRIX - a truly interactive medium for the Eighties." The lettercolumn alone is worth the price of admission. So - for Christakes belt up or you will lose Mr Rosenblum's six-year loyalty. I think it's high time you repeated yourself. Once again, for the folks in the back row, tell us what you think the function of an editor is/should be. Perhaps it is not to cater to the every whim and prejudice of the readership. Perhaps it is to impart information, to entertain, explore, invigorate and possibly even to infuriate. But perhaps I have misunderstood your purpose. Is the basis of Mr Rosenblum's complaint that he dislikes the attitudes expressed by James Parker? If so, fair enough. He is entitled to his opinion. But is he also saying that BSFA members cannot use the forum of their own publication to air their views unless said views conform to some theoretical standard of what is appropriate to an 'SF' publication? Surely he jests! If 'Letters' is indeed a forum, then it is also (in the immortal words of OED) a "...place of public discussion." And that implies disparate views of the world. Much of the pleasure I get from our lettercolumn is in reading the often vigorous debates provoked by the fact that we all believe differently one from another. Sorry - you can do your worst but I steadfastly refuse to discontinue my membership. And another thing! It seems the gratuitous sneers insulting Mr Nicholas are to continue. Pity so few BSFA members (apparently) can see what the gentleman is really about - that he is (and I can see he is not completely alone in his lunacy) trying with all the guns at his disposal to convince us that critical standards do matter, that much SF really is awful and that in no way are 'ideas' the exclusive property of SF. So he is intemperate. So what? At least he is not manacled to rule and convention. No, I don't always agree with him but then it is up to me to promote if I can an effective counter-argument. Nothing is sacred (well, Mozart maybe, but that's another story...) there are no taboos and the burden of proof is with the 'classics' and their authors. Let us therefore assail cherished beliefs and test the solubility of their foundations. Print and be damned to the consequences!

Tempting, very tempting. Do I take that as an open invitation? Move now on the Nicholas/Taylor exchanges:-

MARTYN TAYLOR
5 KIMPTON ROAD
CAMBERWELL
LONDON SE 5 7EA

My oh my, I certainly seem to have rattled the bars on Joseph's cage, don't I. All good clean fun, I suppose, so I will not say anything about his deliberate misinterpretation of what I said. It has all been sorted out cordially in the Tum - the cordial was poured over him!

Seriously ... seriously? That accusation of anti-intellectualism does stick in my craw, just the tiniest bit, and it does look bloody funny coming from a man who doesn't seem able to recognise a reference to Kafka when he sees one! Perhaps it all depends on what you mean by the intellectual approach. All too often, it seems these days, the approach of heavily intellectual critics leaves them vigorously flogging dead horses on the grounds that they are not sheep.

Which is precisely what I thought Joseph did in his 'Flash Gordon' piece.

Just for the sake of argument, I enclose a review of Bertrand Tavernier's 'Deathwatch'. A good film that I fear will vanish from our ken and we'll be left with 'Clash of the Titans', the previous of which made me long nostalgically for the production values of 'Jason and the Argonauts' and the Steve Reeves 'Hercules' films.

Que sera, sera, as they say in Barnsley.

JOSEPH NICHOLAS
ROOM 9
94 ST GEORGE'S SQUARE
PIMLICO LONDON SW1Y 3QY

Ah, but that's what I've always liked about fandom: turn your back for a moment and - at least to judge by MATRIX 36 - the whisper of knives being drawn from their sheaths is almost defening. Keeps the old paranoid reflexes in tip-top condition, anyway - but I'm grateful to Ian Wright for his defence of my labours, bloody exhausting though they all are ... and having (at the time of writing) only recently returned from Australia I feel even more drained of energy than usual. And before you ask: yes, I really enjoyed myself out there.

What the Australians - pace Ian's remark - made of me I as yet know not, although I dare say their opinions of me will begin surfacing in their fanzines in due course. What I do know, however - and what I knew within weeks of having won GUFF - was that I wasn't able to trade on the reputation I have here in Britain. I had to go in there with the objective or virtually remaking myself from the ground up ... which was not altogether difficult when you stop to consider that I'm probably the most archetypal living example of the fan whose paper personality has hardly any points of agreement with the real one. (Which remark gives me pause to wonder just how many members of the BSFA are actually aware of this distinction - how many of them, after all, have ever actually met me in person?) So it was a real pleasure to be able to play myself rather than the role model that I and others have conspired to erect and, better, discovered that I preferred it that way after all.

Which helps explain why, having cast aside the mask, I feel rather horrified by my reply to Martyn Taylor. While I might in some sense stand by what I said (albeit that cold intellect has always been a handy method of denying emotion), I'm appalled at the snotty, pompous, arrogant, condescending and downright boorish tone in which it was voiced, and want to apologise for it forthwith. And in print, naturally.

On the other hand ... well, to say, as many of my critics do, that I'm wrong because my views differ from theirs is hardly the height of reasoned argument (I could as well level the same charges at them, but they still wouldn't make much sense). All it means is that we disagree, fullstop - or, if not a complete fullstop, that we at least have the grounds for the making of a fertile and illuminating debate on the scope and nature of those disagreements. But I'm afraid that I don't really feel up to arguing with David Taylor and Trevor Mendham right now (the latter has, anyway, read all I had to say on the matter of spaceflight et al in my "The End Of The Dream" piece in NAPALM IN THE MORNING 3, and if he's got any comments to make on it, shouldn't he be writing directly to me?) - except, perhaps, to point out that I can't follow the thrust of David Taylor's missive at all, because I remain at a loss to understand how delight or otherwise at the successful first flight of the shuttle is supposed to instantly convert everyone to the wonders of space technology et seq. Nor can I go along with his contention that it's only "so-called fans ((emphasis mine)) who go around saying that the Space Age is dead" - is there some strict party line that we're now all supposed to be following, or something? Heaven forfend that such should ever come to pass!

R NICHOLSON-MORTON
235 WEST STREET
FAREHAM HANTS PO16 0HZ

Please add my name to the seemingly small list whose occupants are grateful that Joseph Nicholas is interested in SF - most of the BSFA would be the poorer without him. (Leave? Not Joe, surely!)

Yes, he goes over the top sometimes, particularly in PI (and I don't think that swearing improves one's case one iota - it only labels the individual (perhaps mistakenly) as some-



I'M RATHER
WORRIED ABOUT
JOSEPH

PEOPLE
ARE
STARTING
TO AGREE
WITH HIM

one with a very limited vocabulary). But some of Joe's articles - particularly in VECTOR - are sound, well-reasoned and show - as Kevin Smith re-states - that Joe cares. If only I - and others - cared as much, no doubt the

BSFA offices would be somewhat crowded, and the world would have lost a few more trees that little bit earlier.

I agree with Martyn Taylor's impassioned appraisal in general; his concern for the poor, the oppressed, the old, the young, the sick et al is laudable. But to single out Columbia or Concorde seems to me to be somewhat biased. Concern for science and its misuse is Martyn's platform; yet science affects almost every aspect of our lives in the West and is being misused in areas other than those related to high-technology machines such as the cited Columbia and Concorde. It is debatable that this scientific effort does improve the lot of the majority of the world's population - because we should surely be thinking in global terms and not nationally...? If the money was not spent on Columbia or Concorde, would it end up helping the world's needy? Probably not. Whilst Concorde's usefulness is questionable, I believe that the existence of the Shuttle can benefit mankind by making satellite placement cheaper and therefore more accessible, so that such satellites will eventually improve the world population's circumstances with solar-power stations, better climate prediction, improving policing of natural disasters, increase in world communication and ultimately an overlap in world ideologies to the point where they will be diluted

and made less dangerous.

Sadly, the Shuttle will be used in a military context - but better that war is fought up there than down here. Banning war from space won't make us less aggressive down here, will it? Better, of course, that we all lived comfortably with our fellow men - yet till genuine sociological grievances can be ameliorated that's not possible.

To be a little cynical, might I suggest that, while we denounce the squandering of someone else's dollars on things which gain our disapproval, let us also discountenance the profligacy involved in movies, particularly SF blockbusters; book publishing, depleting the world's forests; the publishing industry spewing out dollars-that-could-feed-millions on hype and junkets; the plethora of car designs and built-in obsolescence, when low-cc basic modules would do; oh, and banish soccer and other sports which squander millions of pounds to satisfy a relatively small percentage of the population; let us not forget all those unthinking souls who eat three or more meals a day, and imbibe considerable amounts of alcohol whilst bemoaning the tragedy of the world's starving millions ... Soccer, cosmetics, sweets and cigarettes, books, films, SF fandom, fanzines - does the existence of any of these really help the oppressed, the starving? No. The sick, the aged, the young ... yes, some offer a form of opiate ... A bit tongue-in-cheek, the above speil, but - Idealism is all very well, but where does it stop? Perspective needs to be applied - but whose?

More from Nik Morton later. Tongue-in-cheek, he says, but the corollary is that we simply ignore any form of excess or abuse, acquiesce, capitulate, abandon protest and silently become 'geriatric fans'. Not me, boss, and not John Brunner either:-

JOHN BRUNNER
THE SQUARE HOUSE
PALMER STREET
SOUTH PETHERTON
SOMERSET TA13 5DB

Shortly before leaving the Dragonara I picked up on the grapevine that a handful of people reacted badly to what Ian did during the "Should SF Support Causes?" panel, and that mention was being made of writs of *manamus* and all such stuff.

Let me go on record as saying that I think Ian was as surprised as I was by this reaction, inasmuch as not one single person involved in this - to name it kindly - 'movement' seems to have objected to the session (repeated, I believe, if I recall what was said over the hotel Tannoy devoted to "Dupers for Poland").

If that isn't "a cause", then I'm afraid my dictionary must be wrong. Myself, I'm strongly in favour of our Polish friends getting the means to produce what the Russians would call *samizdat* material - how could I not be, when my first-ever story to see print (other than in school magazines) was in a home-made publication, *Slant*?

But trying to pretend that this is nonpolitical is absurd! Even at a time when the BBC is reporting anti-union propaganda almost exclusively, in Britain, while reporting pro-union propaganda wholly exclusively, from Poland!

There are some people who will define a statement as "nonpolitical" even if it consists in a direct quotation from a Tory election manifesto, and "political" even if it makes good and logical sense simply because it doesn't fit their views. Fandom, as Peter Bell rightly said to me at Leeds, has the great merit that two people of radically opposed views can argue to their hearts' content and then go on standing one another drinks (assuming the bar is open) without coming to blows. Indeed, yes! Long may it be so! But one of the definitions of 'man' is "the political animal" (excuse me, ladies, but I quote from the past), and that too is part of the future we all await with mingled expectation and trepidation. SF readers, of all people, should not increase the risk of being blown to hell and gone by declining to act on their own behalf ... behaving, as it were, as though war, like weather, is beyond our control. Because it isn't.

Mind you, not all of us agree with John Brunner; although I think that Gwynfor Jones below has taken certain comments out of context, he can have his say:-

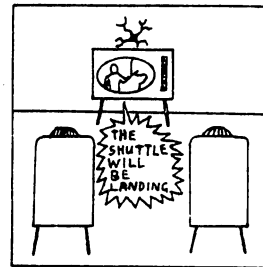
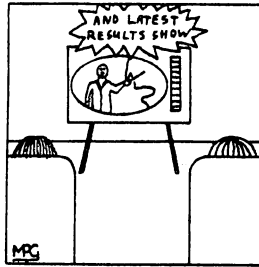
GWYNFOR JONES
34 BRYN GWYNT
AMLWCH PORT
ANGLESEY, GWYNEDD
NORTH WALES

A word or two 'bout something I read in the LoC of MATRIX 36; Mr Brunner's pomposity almost matches his air of pretension. How on earth can he crucify people with the label of having occupations which are both mundane and boring. Surely there can be no less mundane and boring an occupation than being chained to a typewriter all day!

Stop patronising us lesser mortals with your Olympian attainments Mr Brunner, we just might develop some sort of complex.

Hope you're not too shit-scared to print it old chap, love MATRIX by the way, hate VECTOR; bring back Chris Fowler to run it and to hell with the expense!!

I don't know that Kev would regard your comments on VECTOR as wholly reasoned and objective (even though your comments on MATRIX obviously are!), but since he has his own Expanding Letter-col, he can deal with you himself. And now we hear from an ex-MATRIX editor and others on and off the Dole Queue:-



TOM A JONES
39 RIPPLESMERE
BRACHNELL
BERKS RG12 3QA

I was amazed to read all the flack you received on the 'Life on the Dole' piece. I'm sure I smell fear amongst some of the replies; fandom is a cozy thing, the last thing people want is reality brought home to them. (I suppose we should thank Mrs Thatcher for bringing a little excitement into our lives, most of us can't be sure this isn't our last week at work.)

I've always felt most people read SF not to gain new insights or explore the different but to be reassured that the big unknown out there is actually just like America and the aliens are pretty human really. Authors who stray from this tend to reap their reward in critical acclaim rather than mass popularity, e.g., Michael Bishop.

I'm not condemning this outright, mindless entertainment is fine, but it's not the be-all and end-all. Similarly, a list of who got pissed where isn't the ultimate in fanish writing.

Mike Dickinson catches the apathy, the sense of uselessness, very well without slipping into political rhetoric. I found this controlled approach more effective than the far left's frequent rantings. Congratulations to both of you.

In general you seem to be taking MATRIX back to the original concept; a zine covering as many different topics as possible with a general sense of fun but not frightened of the controversial.

I found the comment in the letter column about the BSFA becoming (a) political and (b) left-wing hilarious. In general, fandom has always been apolitical and fanish talk seldom turning to politics. The fact that a number of fans are now willing to express an openly socialist viewpoint is only a reflection of our times. I trust as editor you will not impose any kind of political censorship, but the letter writer has little to worry about, the BSFA is unlikely to become an activist left-wing organisation.

I was interested to read about the vote on unilateral disarmament at the Eastercon. I'm all for it providing Russia start first. I'm one of the strange left of centre Labourites who believe the practicalities of the situation require we have nuclear weapons.

MARY GENTLE
FLAT 7
11 ALUMHURST ROAD
WESTBOURNE
BOURNEMOUTH DORSET

On the subject of MATRIX 36: enough has been said in favour of Mike Dickinson's interview for me not to have to re-state the case. However, it is worth examining the reasons why the response against the article was so hysterical in tone.

Could it be that the objectors are also supporters of the SF-as-entertainment-alone school? And that their hysterical outbursts are triggered off by fear of unemployment, fear of political involvement, fear of that outside world which has such an effect on them that they seek their escapism in science-fiction?

There they were, safely cocooned in Asimovian and Clarkeian certainties, when along comes the spectre of 1981 - no wonder they dive down a bolthole loudly protesting. Let's hope they don't wake up in the dole queue.

CHRISTINA LAKE
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It looks as if I'll finally get around to writing to MATRIX. Congrats on a thought-provoking letter column last issue. I remember being glad to read the Mike Dickinson interview in MATRIX 34, but it wasn't till I saw other people's reactions that it began to worry me. These could essentially be divided between those who enjoyed the article and those who felt it had no place in a science fiction magazine. Logically the latter are right, when you consider that the BSFA publications are paid for by people who presumably want to read about SF rather than any of the fascinating subjects covered by other minority journals. So why was I pleased to see a bit of social relevance creeping into MATRIX? Maybe it's because fandom does at times seem so unreal and privileged that I need to be reminded every so often that it does bear some relation to the rest of the world. SF fans are like people (some of them even are people). We all know they drink. They also work or don't work, read newspapers, think about life occasionally and hold opinions on matters other than the relative merits of Chris Priest and Larry Niven. It seems to me that a magazine like MATRIX is all the better for reflecting this, when and as the editor deems fit, if only to stop ourselves becoming a sect of smug introverts.

CAMILLA SPEITAL also wrote, "I whole-heartedly support your attempt to bring the 'real world' into the magazine" and MICHAEL BOND thought that "SF was a literature concerned with the real world and fandom should reflect this"; JON WALLACE took the other side, in agreeing with Alan Ferguson's comments in the last issue, as did CHRIS LEWIS. Back to Christina's letter; she, and others, continue on the subject of sects with some reflections on Dorothy Davies' article in the last issue on SF Weirdies:-

Speaking of sects, Dorothy Davies' article raised several points I'd often wondered about. For instance, who in their right mind would form a Battlestar Galactica appreciation society? Yet one exists. Can active, as opposed to passive, participation in the universe of a TV series be taken as a sign of intelligence under these circumstances? Most fan clubs of SF shows do want more than their members' money. They want (like the BSFA) response and participation. Crossroads fans might buy souvenir booklets on the programme, but would remain consumers. Still, maybe if Star Trek was on four times a week the fans would have no time or need to invent their own and would sit passively at home drooling over Captain Kirk!

Television creates many universes, most of them fairly limited, but with room enough to

get in if you really try. Who cares? To each their universe... I must go back to reading the unemployment figures in the Guardian!

ROGER WADDINGTON
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NORTH YORKS YO17 9ES

Seeing that you've managed to lure Keith Freeman out of the woodwork, I can't very well stay behind; and too, knowing that I'll have to decide whether to renew with the next mailing has concentrated my mind wonderfully - use it or lose it, isn't that what they say?

I have to admit that it's the first time that I've sat down (?) and really read MATRIX in quite a long while, as opposed to casually leafing through and meaning to pop in a comment here or there. And it's mainly the number of new names that seem to be writing, strangers all; a whole new generation of fen seems to have

sprung up while I've been idling away my fannish career! Future shock, indeed; to really understand that Alan Dorey (who?) is now Chairman of the BSFA, and Joseph Nicholas is wreaking havoc among the paperbacks is much like finding Tharg and Judge Dredd where you expected to see Dan Dare and Captain Condor! Still, autre temps, autre mœurs; and at least it shows that the BSFA is still surviving and even growing.

On the snobbishness or otherwise of SF fen, I would say that it seemed a lot simpler in the early days (not that I was around then!) because there was one science fiction and thus one fandom, and we needed each other; those were the days of 'Fans are Slans' and 'It is a proud and lonely thing to be a fan'; it was a united fandom against an uncaring world. As to the present situation, I'm undecided whether it's due to the increased availability of SF, or for the tendency of all organisms to grow and fragment, from the humblest amoeba to the BSFA Committee; and indeed, if fandom is really necessary at all in these days! All I know is what I see; that F & SF fen look down on Analog fen, the Hitch-hiker fen feel superior to Star Trek fen who in their turn feel superior to Space 1999 fen; and there is no health in us, as the Prayer Book has it. But as to the solution ... well, it seems strange to be pleading for understanding in a fanzine! But we've got to understand that 'difference' doesn't necessarily mean 'superiority'.

I'm maybe on surer ground, in commenting elsewhere in Dorothy's observations, for there really are people who sit quietly at home and read their SF books, watch the SF series; in fact, I work in the same office as one! She and her husband, and their children all read the SF books that they find in the library, both old and new; they used to watch the repeats of Star Trek and now watch the repeats of Blakes Seven; and all in all, seem perfectly happy with their lot.

JON WALLACE
21 CHARLESTON STREET
DUNDEE DD2 4RG

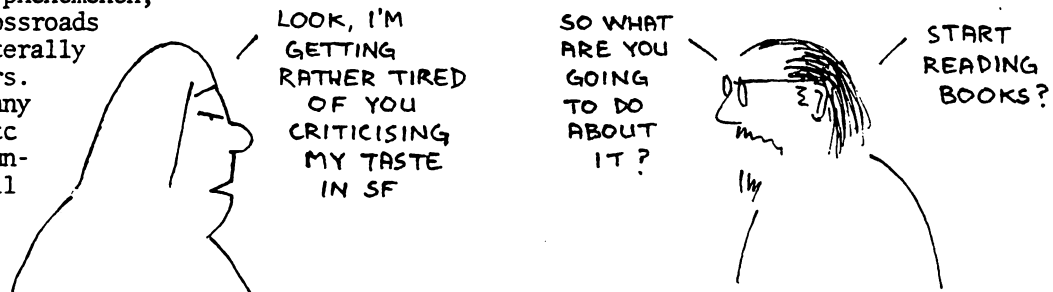
On Dorothy Davies' short on 'SF Weirdies?' I don't know the situation south of the Walls (Hadrian's and the Antonine), but up here, the reason for SF Weirdies banding together to dominate the world seem very clear. First among them is the very attitude

which got Dorothy to write in the first place. The institutions that she quotes as examples of the non-society phenomenon,

Coronation St., Crossroads et al. all have literally thousands of viewers. You can walk into any pub, bingo hall, etc and find about a hundred people who will agree, disagree or argue with you about the shade of Benny's new woolly hat (if that's what you really want).

But walk into a pub, bingo hall, etc and mention someone as SFly famous as, say Heinlein, and all you'll get is "Duh, who he" (or, up here "Whassat, Jimmy, mines a pint"). The reaction, therefore when, on entering your thousandth pub (bingo hall, etc), of "Heinlein, yeh, isn't his latest book great/crap (delete as applicable)" spurs such a joyous reaction that you don't want to let that person escape. Instead, you talk him into helping you form your very own SF group.

Later, when you discover the BSFA or something through such an unlikely thing as a notice in the public library, and find that you can argue by post without getting hit if you're win-



ning, it seems the next logical step to take. And finally, when your meglomania, bolstered by actually having a LoC printed instead of WAHFed, reaches its highest, you take the final step and produce your own zine. WOW! Somewhere along the line you may have attended a con or two, but it isn't what I would call essential. Soon, you find that you've been elected TAFF, or asked as guest of honour to a con or ... but that's all fantasy at the bottom. Here.

NIK MORTON also commented on Dorothy's article, making much the same points as above. Now, from yet another MATRIX editor, full of apologies (aren't we all?) and adding some thoughts on Mike Weller's SF and Comics article:-

ANDY SAWYER
59 MALLORY ROAD
BIRKENHEAD
MERSEYSIDE L42 6QR

Sorry to start off with references to the Mike Dickinson interview, but, despite what Andy Hobbs suggests, I found the article as it was - the response of someone whose name and views on SF have been pretty widespread in fandom to being on the dole - a lot more interesting than 'his views on SF, VECTOR, fandom'. Even more so than the 'How-many-pints-I-managed-to-down-and-who-I-puked-up-over' school of journalism which tries to pass current in certain echelons of fandom.

Linda's report on the 'Should SF Support Causes' debate at YORCON was interesting: I have heard from other sources in the Labour Party (Science Fiction Tendency) that she hasn't told the half of it! Makes me wish I'd been there.

I must apologise to Mary Gentle who is probably younger than I am (most fans are, nowa-days *moan*). I did use the expression "a treat for we more geriatric fans" but there was an "and" tacked on to the WRONG END of that clause; I was really referring to "Journey Into Space" (which I remember from First Time Round not LCTR, which I'm enjoying when I manage to listen to it, which isn't often.

Mike Weller's article on "SF and Alternative Comics" threw out a lot of ideas and I hope he's offered the chance to expand on them, perhaps in the pages of VECTOR. If SF 'has become too familiar' through incorporation in the icons of everyday life, is there an alternative? Or should there be? Isn't it interesting how 'undergrounds' become separate mainstreams? My limited experience of underground comics leads me to believe that SF comes a good way up the lists of influences - just behind sex 'n' drugs and about level with rock 'n' roll: it would be interesting to see a study on this interface.

Must go now ... I see someone from My Old School has joined the BSFA: are you sure about this thing, lad - look what it's done to me!

SIMON BOSTOCK
18 GALLOW'S INN CLOSE
ILKESTON
DERBYSHIRE DE7 4BW

SF in comics is a very neat organised set of comic-magazines, among the most well-known 1984 and Heavy Metal, though the latter caters more to the average fantasy fan. The former, however, is quite a handful to handle, rather better than the Marvel and DC brand in that their stories are actually infested with SF globules, while others are just crap Superhero things, like Green Lantern or Supergirl. Take your average issue of 1994 (title change!): 'Provocative Illustrated Adult Fantasy', it announces, but what it really means by 'adult' is that it is full of erotica; the whole '94 team are a bunch of perverts. I find that most SF magazines showcase this form of entertainment, and have come to the conclusion that they see it necessary to intertwine SF with sexist bits to have what they see as a good thing going. I think that 1994 is interesting and roughly worth the money. And comics fandom? Definitely more formal than us SF folks; they actually sell their zines to people who seem not to mind. Indeed, I once saw fit to ask money for my SUPERNOVA, but not any more; long live the influence of The Usual!

Quite right, Simon, although other groups/genres/whatever, produce fanzines, virtually all of them start off selling their zines with pretensions of going pro. As far as I know, SF Fandom is the only one where the basis of fanzine trade applies. Mind you, some SF magazines do attempt to sell - mainly the Fiction Magazines (watch this space....); and on that subject, there were reams of support for a FOCUS continuation:-

COLIN GREENLAND
SCIENCE FICTION FOUNDATION
NORTH EAST LONDON POLYTECH
LONGBRIDGE ROAD
DAGENHAM ESSEX RM8 2AS

Alan Dorey raises 'The Question of FOCUS' at the bottom of the penultimate page of MATRIX 36: a pity it wasn't featured more prominently. Certainly FOCUS should be continued. The BSFA can afford it and there's sufficient interest among the members. The "demand" for any magazine, like any product, is difficult to quantify. Until you're offered it, do you know what you want? Perhaps the demand will become countable if present suggestions of multi-tiered membership are taken up, so that members can choose which of the magazines they want to receive. Meanwhile, the theoretical case for FOCUS is obvious. In today's incredible shrinking market a magazine which offers information and encouragement to amateur writers will at least be supportive and may actually be directly useful. If it can also offer an outlet for even a little of their fiction, it will top off the advice with an incentive. Ideally it will contain as much from the commercial viewpoint as from the aesthetic. This magazine is exactly what Chris and Rob have left us - compare Nik Nicholson-Morton's article in No 4 with Chris Priest's in the same issue. It would be a great shame not to continue it, and, I think, a sign of ingratitude to two editors who already seem a bit depressed about their creation.

Most important, there are volunteers stepping up to take over. David Swinden, with his

sub-editing experience, his contributions to FOCUS, and his BSFA fiction prize tucked firmly under his belt, seems to have every conceivable credential for editorship, and I'm sure he'll be propped up in his moments of despair by Allan Sutherland and Chris Bailey. What the basis and content of their new magazine should be are administrative decisions for them and the committee, not me, but a suggestion: how about a pair of workshop issues, with fiction in one and different readers' responses organised in the second?

Colin is a Fellow in Creative Writing at the SF Foundation; I say is but his term may well end in September. Despite agreement for a 75% grant from the Arts Council, the N.E. London Polytechnic looks like refusing to cough up its 25% share. That is a feature of the present hard times; the arts is amongst the first to feel the pinch.

DOROTHY DAVIES
3 CADELS ROW
FARINGDON, OXON
FARINGDON 20384

I am brokenhearted at the demise of FOCUS, and if anything can be done to revive it and/or something in place of it, I'll do all I can to help.

The process went like this for me, and possibly for others?
'I think I'm turning out to be a writer' 'writers need markets, buy Writers and Artists Yearbook' 'read Writers and Artists Yearbook, find BSFA address' 'save up £6 and join BSFA' 'find FOCUS in first mailing and - ' the rest is there in FOCUS for all to read. It has helped me tremendously, not only the market space but the advice and the Contract section and so on. Fiction has its place, yes, but more important are the articles on writing. And they could, of course, be included in VECTOR, but then they become part of a critical journal, which is not their place nor is it VECTOR's function. I want FOCUS back, please, everyone. Dorothy is crying all over her typewriter.

LORRAINE WHITTINGTON
44 NORTON GRANGE
NORTON CANES
CANNOCK STAFFS

In November of last year, I became unemployed and decided to put my spare time to good use, for since I was eighteen (I am now twenty-six) I have harboured the secret desire to write my very own SF Book. I invested in a battered, second-hand typewriter, along with other assorted tools of the trade and began - manfully (or womanfully?) ignoring the hoots of derision by my ever-sympathetic husband. I then enlisted the aid of two, very brave and loyal, friends to vet each chapter as they were produced and all went well - until chapter eight. My enthusiasm dwindled rapidly, my friends shuffled uncomfortably when asked for their comments and my husband's hoots became even louder!

I needed help, I decided. So, with the aid of (would you believe it?) Woman's Own and A. C. Black Ltd., I discovered you. I was saved! If I could not solve my problems, perhaps I could send the incompleted manuscript to you and you could solve them for me. Ah! Such was my naiveté. The first mailing arrived (I was now up to Chapter 12) and yes, you did indeed help me. I couldn't bring myself to throw all my hard work away, instead it has been relegated to the loft.

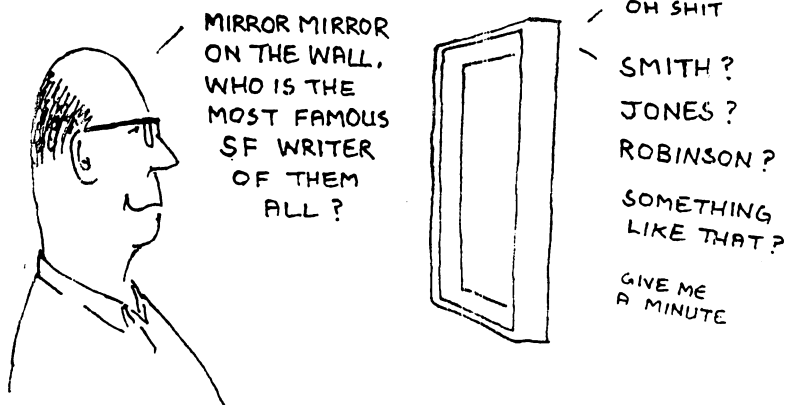
The book reviews were better written than my book, I couldn't understand half the letters and obviously, because I had joined, you decided to suspend FOCUS, the one magazine I was interested in. But for all that, I'm glad I've joined. I have been introduced to new authors, the more I read, the more I learn and yes, I found the second mailing easier to understand than the first. I think £6 is exceptionally cheap considering the amount of literature you send out.

P Keys also wrote in favour of the continuation of FOCUS; the matter will be discussed at the next BSFA Committee meeting on 15 August, in the light of all the views received. Maybe there's another subject the committee should be debating?:-

ARNOLD AKIEN
4 DUNBLANE ROAD
SEABURN
SUNDERLAND
TYNE AND WEAR SR6 8EU

I was one of the vast multitude of noble members of the even more noble BoSFA who were present at the last A.G.M. and thus I was there when the earth-shaking decision was made to retain Arthur C Clarke as President. Now, I hasten to say that I did not instigate the move to oust Clarke from the Presidency - a position he probably doesn't give a sod for anyway - but I was nonetheless one of those who voted to replace him, so perhaps it behooves at least one of us anarchists to explain himself.

Clarke's accomplishments are many and no-one with any sense of justice would attempt to say that he wasn't a worthy choice for President, but... oh the 'but' that breaks all



compliments ... he is no longer an active SF writer. It is true that Clarke's name is a draw to new members but I would say that this is not so prominent a 'name' as it was in the halcyon days of '2001 A SPACE ODYSSEY'. I have no desire to seem to be sneering at Clarke's character or past achievements; like most of us he has his faults and virtues, and he has achieved more than most of us ever will in the SF genre but, but ... put bluntly it all depends on how we see it as being merely a figurehead position; requiring nothing of its holder other than that he should have a 'name' that draws the punters from the crowd? Do we require anything at all of our President other than the use of his fame - such as it is - in the 'outside world'? It would seem that at least some of us do ask for more.

Now, that A.G.M. vote was a close thing, and it could just as easily have gone the other way. Such a vote would hardly have been representative of the whole of the BSFA membership (I hope it would have - if such a provision isn't in the BoSFA rule book it damn well ought to be!) but that vote did demonstrate a certain amount of dissatisfaction with our Prez on the part of a sizeable minority of the members of the BSFA. We should, in fairness to both Clarke and the BSFA, find out how far this dissatisfaction has spread, and why it exists. I demonstrate my own personal prejudices when I say that the President should be an active writer rather than, say, a media personality. Furthermore, it is the British SFA - should it be headed by a man who is virtually a permanent resident of a foreign country and who only sets foot on British soil to conduct business or take a holiday?

Whatever the merits of the situation, we must realise that it exists - and do something about it. I, for one, would not like to see the issue buried for a year only to emerge like a resurrected corpse at the next A.G.M. - instead, let us debate the role of President through the letter column of MATRIX, and, if it is felt necessary, hold an election for President. Whatever your opinion of Clarke, he has done too much for the SF genre to deserve summary dismissal. We have a year to decide the issue - let's do something about it.

Arnold makes a good point, I believe, about a wider consideration being given to the question of the Presidency in that a decision either by the Committee, or on a quick vote at the AGM could well be un-representative of members' wishes. Let me know your thoughts, please. Now for the inside story on Babel-con:-

PHILL PROBERT
26 BILTON GRANGE ROAD
SOUTH YARDLEY
BIRMINGHAM 26

Reasons why I resigned? To begin with, Gary O'Hare talked with me about the problems he was facing in running the convention. I told him some very simple advice and gave him some names and addresses of whom to advertise to. It ended up with me doing a half page advert for them. It then followed that, on the eve of Stagcon, I called up Joy Hibbert, whom I did not see eye to eye with at the time, to ask if they wanted me to take any flyers to the convention. She then asked me if I was taking over the chairmanship. I said that I would, providing I had support. She agreed and I was Chairman. OK, so I know I am a fool. My girlfriend knows I am a fool. However, I believed that it was possible to hold a convention on the best-selling science fiction book, radio series, television series, records and so on. It would make the ideal medium for a convention. So plans went ahead with me writing off to you and others telling you about the con and how it was revitalised. Things for a time seemed to be going well. However, I had not counted on some of the committee being more interested in making a film about themselves!! What made things worse was that the people who were supposed to know about Hitch-Hikers, i.e., newsletter editors and such-like, were obviously not interested in the Hitch-Hikers and were, in fact, more interested in Dr Who!!! Eventually I knew that I could not count on the committee backing me up with any help. So I bit my teeth and resigned. I feel a real fool for the entire venture. One little postscript: I know that they could have continued with the convention. Yet they did not; they really did not care, well most of them. I'm sorry for all the people who have believed in Babel-con as I did.

And, life wouldn't be complete, would it, without a letter from the lovable Chuck Connor?:-

CHUCK CONNOR
SILDAN HOUSE
CHEDISTON ROAD
WISSETT
NEAR HALESWORTH
SUFFOLK IP19 0NF

Whereas I might not have liked the last MATBITS (which I doubt, because I think something interested me and I commented on the style and approach if I remember correctly), at least it got a response from me. This issue (#36) seemed like a return to the usual semi-bland 'safe' material I've come to associate with it.

Now, I don't know if this is in reaction to the comments on your bum editing, or what - I sincerely hope you don't give in that easily - but can I make a friendly suggestion? As a fellow editor I would like to suggest that if you want to change something/some people then do it slowly. If you suddenly presented a picture of Jilly Johnson in a toadskin bikini in, say, WAR CRY, then you'd be in danger of getting a shocked (or stunned) readership. But, if you change things slowly then you'll be allowing the reader to adapt to the change at the same pace you're working it, thus you won't get people threatening to resign (which is silly as it won't change a thing) or ripping you up for arse paper.

Another interesting thing was the SF AND ALTERNATIVE COMICS. The 'alternatives' have always interested me for the very simple reason that they are prepared to go further and be more daring/experimental than the normal "gotta make the money" commercial comics. One point in my quest for excitement was a low one, that of NEAR MYTHS; its untimely demise due to a complete lack of response to the last 5 issues (they lost money on every single one). This is a very

sad loss, and I'm not joking.

On a less sadder note, though not much, I would like to offer my thanks to Rob Jackson, for all the ~~van reviews~~ advertising and contacts made through his review column. This was a definite change for the better when it was introduced and somehow I don't think it will ever be the same again - no offence (yet) meant to Simon.

And so, onto the letters. Was that a typo?! Did DL use the word "kindly" in front of my name?! Gad, this will ruin my image as an all-round nasty person! Just for that, I will have to dig out those old copies of RELATIVITY and reprint the reviews of AUNTY CYRIL. And, while I'm about it, Richard Philpott can go on carrying his CND thoughts for as long as he likes, I've no objection, I mean to say, they're bound to protect him from a nice little terrorist bomb, aren't they?

In closing, well almost, as there seems to be a demand for more 'real life' in the SF novels from 'modern' authors, I'd just like to say that I'd like to see more muggings, rape scenes, shootings, mass murders, drugs, sex and booze in the genre. Who's going to be the first author to write about the latest Race Riots? According to the general feeling, he or she would be writing a number one best seller.

And finally, keep at it Graham. Remember that you just can't change the World in One Day (I mean, it took me seven to make the bloody thing!), but it has certainly become more livelier than I've known it for some time.

Thank you so much for the advice. For those of you who are interested (and with apologies to their con-committee) Chuck will be appearing live at ANGLICON '81. Now, I've come to the tragic bit ... the 'also rans'. It's a pity in many respects that pressure of space simply doesn't permit us to print everyone's letters, however profound they may be. We try and select the most interesting ones (would you believe?) but also we try and give new members, or those who haven't written before, a chance. So, if we haven't included your prose this time, don't let it deter you from trying again. All comments of whatever form are welcome, even those from the aforementioned person.

We Also Heard From JOHN HOBSON: who suggests that some thought be given to making the BSFA Awards more prodigious (e.g., selected by a Panel of British Writers). MICHAEL BOND: who wants to know how to get into the fanzine circle. A series of articles on a guide to fannish terminology; printing and distribution of fanzines; etc will be forthcoming real soon now. JEFF SUTER: who complains about BSFA apathy and suggests that local groups should invite noted BSFA dignitaries (such as Alan Dorey) to their meetings. CHRISTOPHER JOHN MILLS: who doesn't like the cover of VECTOR and suggests that even a photograph of Dave Langford would be better. NICK FLYNN: who wishes to thank the mailing crew for their hard work. K BUSBY (from the last issue): "So Nigel Kneale is working on a series about SF fans? Not something to look forward to, judging by the following quote from "Evening News" 31/8/79: 'Nigel Kneale is a science fiction writer who hates science fiction, never reads it, knows next to nothing about science, and after spending a day at a science fiction conference (sic) in Brighton last weekend, thinks they're all a bunch of loonies, who watch far too much Star Trek. "They are all about 25 years old," he said, "and they are either colossally fat with wispy wives or vice versa..."' and CHRIS LEWIS, P KEYS, CAMILLA SPEITEL and MARTIN TAYLOR (again). Artwork and articles have been received from: MARTYN TAYLOR; WILLIAM EWING; JOHN DELL; MICHAEL GOULD; JOSEPH BURDEN; SIMON BOSTOCK; HARRY ANDRUSCHAK; ANDY SAWYER; PAUL OLDROYD and ARNOLD AKIEN and are receiving attention.

* * * THE REAL NEWS COLUMN * * *
* * *

Normally at this time of year, media people seem to become infected with a strange, disabling disease. Instead of good solid unbiased reporting, we become deluged with worthless stories. So when the unemployment figures hit three million, when a whole South Coast town is evacuated because of a chemical spill, and when food prices in Poland quadruple overnight, what does our national press do? Publish a Spike Milligan poem on that Wedding on the front page.

The Silly Season is upon us; the season when all news stops and nothing happens apart from a vast increase in the sale of Alliteration Dictionaries (for small-minded, short-memored reporters) and editions of "1001 Useless Facts". The Daily Star will tell us about the "17-year-old blonde, a keen archery fanatic, whom any young Robin Hood would like to have in his sights" while The Times, in more sober vein, will advise us that it's 294 years since the typewriter was invented. Real News, it seems, doesn't have a place.

Except in MATRIX, that is.

We've a BSFA Committee Meeting in a few days, and the agenda is one of the fullest I've seen. My appeal last issue with regard to FOCUS has brought a great response (more later) and two potential editors (or, more accurately, editorial teams); we've details on future Hammer-smith meetings; the first of the new BSFA bibliographies has gone to press (with the second in the pipeline); Eurocon '84 moves ahead, and now, news of discounts on several American SF magazines.

But first, the Science Fiction Foundation. As you know, this organisation is housed at the North East London Polytechnic, and for BSFA members it's important as the site of our library. Some of you may have read reports in the press recently (Sunday Times, July 19th) that it looks as if it's going to have to be closed down soon. The facts at the moment regarding

the Foundation are uncertain, and unfortunately, we've had to go to press before the 1981 Foundation AGM. However, the situation is this: since Malcolm Edwards (former Administrator) and David Pringle (Research fellow) left without being replaced, the day-to-day running has been handled by the ever-resourceful Joyce Day. Joyce works on a part-time basis and is probably known to a number of you as the person who deals with library enquiries. In September 1980, Colin Greenland was appointed Fellow in Creative Writing, attached to the Foundation. But, with Government cutbacks, this position is to be terminated next month - see elsewhere in MATRIX for details. The library and the thrice yearly FOUNDATION Magazine (now very ably edited by David Pringle) WILL CONTINUE; our books are in NO DANGER. But for all self-respecting SF enthusiasts, we must ensure that a valuable body such as the SF Foundation continues. And not just continues, but thrives.

I may be too late when you read this, but there is a chance to save the Creative Writing Fellowship and most importantly, the Active future of the Science Fiction Foundation. Register your protests (or suggestions) to: Dr G Brosnan, The Director, North East London Polytechnic, West Ham Precinct, Romford Road, London E15 4LZ. The matter is URGENT. Urgency creates need and desire. Don't read any further now, but write off to the NELP. It must be saved for the future of academic study of Science Fiction in Great Britain.

On a lesser, but nevertheless important, note, Joyce Day called me the other day regarding the BSFA library. Apparently, one or two people are holding onto borrowed books for too long. Most public libraries only allow 3 weeks. We allow 6 weeks and yet some members are retaining books for months.

This must stop - PLEASE! It's only common courtesy. Several particular books are in great demand and still out on loan. If you've lost or damaged the books, do let Joyce know. Anyway, apart from that, the library is running well at the moment, so why not take advantage of it? Do remember that enquiries will take longer in the summer during Polytechnic Vacation times.

FOCUS

Following my almost stop-press style appeal two months ago, I've had a very healthy response to the Question of Focus. Now, in my position as Chairman, I'm supposed to remain neutral about the issue until we reach the forthcoming committee meeting. However, I'm sure it won't be too remiss of me to say that, in principle, I think a continued FOCUS is essential.

The letters I've received will be used at the meeting as evidence of BSFA members' views, but as promised, I'll air a few of them here. I'll just explain, though, that we do have two groups of people interested in editing a revived FOCUS (or equivalent) and, obviously I'm not going to publish those letters. I have already written to both groups with a number of questions and points for discussion and at this stage their views must remain private. Those who want to take on the project are principally led on one hand by DAVID SWINDEN (a former FOCUS contributor) and on the other by KEN MANN, a MATRIX regular. Here are your views:

Alex Stewart of Colchester: "FOCUS as it stood, was rather limited. What it did, it did well; as a struggling writer, I found it quite useful. But I'm afraid one 'How I sold my first novel' or tract on the importance of literary values reads very much like another." He would like to see greater coverage of the arts (writing, film, media, music, etc).

R. Nicholson-Morton of Fareham wrote a very convincing defence of FOCUS, which basically boiled down to: More articles on SF creativity, an "agony" column, a writer's bookshelf, competitions, magazine and anthology analysis and advice on story ideas.

Most people wanted to see more fiction, a greater emphasis on regular news on market conditions, and as our Fareham correspondent says:

"(should approach) SF publishing editors/departments to contribute articles about their triumphs AND their failures - how their particular system works. In addition, authors under that publisher could contribute, relating their experiences when they first began writing, how they found a publisher/agent, how they have considered their authorial development and what they conceive of as constituting SF. Bold, brave articles perhaps, forthright..."

Chuck Connor, Suffolk, wrote that "fiction should play a more substantial role in the new magazine, certainly more than just two pieces. Obviously there will be no payment for contributions, so why not give the writers more lee-way? This does not mean that competition should not be stiff, far from it." Chuck also makes an interesting point that "working under the title FOCUS would be leaving the future editor/editors under some obligation to produce a carbon copy of it. A title change would have to be initiated before anything else so as to free editors, and give the reader an unbiased outlook towards the magazine." A size reduction to A5 is also suggested, and this is compatible with our wishes anyway, since this will assist us greatly in printing and production.

Greater attention to artwork, and fostering young artists is another recurrent theme, as is the frequency of production. Most suggest a twice-yearly level, in addition to the current mailing magazines. If FOCUS were revived, this is probably the rate we would select if costs did not become too prohibitive. Obviously this might bring closer any future subscription increase, but we're surviving now - and growing - so given a good head of steam, this extra item could quite happily be absorbed.

And finally on FOCUS, a long letter from Dorothy Davies of Faringdon, Oxon: "I joined the BSFA when I started to write. I have read SF for over 20 years and never felt the need to join before as you will see from my MATRIX letter earlier. I've been a fan and slipped out of fandom (and) I joined because I wanted a wider understanding of the SF world, and I hoped for some more specific advice to come to me along the way. It does, like a MATRIX note that

Galaxy has gone down, saves me finding out the expensive way. FOCUS was a bonus, and I'm regretting its loss very much indeed.

"FOCUS (offered) the would-be, and professional writer an in-depth look at the world of SF, plus writing generally, which he/she cannot get anywhere else. I've seen The Writer magazine published in America. I belong to the Freelance Writing organisation, and obtain their quarterly magazine Contributor's Bulletin. All very interesting and helpful, but I've had more help, advice and information from 4 issues of FOCUS than from anywhere else."

Dorothy's very passionate defence made further suggestions for content - "much the same as before, but more letters, articles from professionals on aspects of the profession ... (and) I am prepared to do all I can if required, to assist any new FOCUS to get off the ground...."

Well - not one letter against, or do those who feel FOCUS is not a necessity consider it a waste of time to respond? We shall know soon enough. And, who does the year's free membership (on me) go to for their "FOCUS" letter? I think Dorothy deserves it - so, next time you have to renew, we'll extend your subscription for a further six mailings.

Just a little space left, so I'll compress the rest into note form:

BIBLIOGRAPHIES: first one on BOB SHAW now being printed; second one, on KEITH ROBERTS, now being compiled by Paul Kincaid. ... SF Magazine discounts (on a BSFA bulk purchase basis) available on LOCUS, SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW and THRUST. Those interested contact Paul Turner at 75 Harriman Drive, Forest Hill, London, SE23, who has details (we would order in bulk, and then mail them out to members who requested them). ... HAMMERSMITH MEETINGS - a separate information sheet goes out with this mailing. ... EUROCON '84 in the UK? An ad-hoc committee has been formed and several plans made - further details shortly. ... BSFA AWARDS being presented shortly, with Gregory Benford's being presented at the 1981 World SF Convention in Denver, Colorado, USA. ... Major News concerning a new project with BSFA assistance to be announced soon

OK - that's it from me until October. Unlike British Rail, the BSFA really does go places and I'll see some of you at Silicon and Unicon. Thanks to everyone that wrote and those that sent Pochelle and me wedding cards. It was all very much appreciated, and helps to prove that the good ole BoSFA is Strong and Vital.

Alan Dorey

