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"You'd better have a damned good excuse for the Ben Trusan being off..." Hissed a gruff voice from the punters side of the bar. The only thought that went through the mind of the barman was "Goddamn SF conventions."

YORCON III ISSUE

EDITORIAL.

By

DAVE HODSON.

It took me about two days to sober up completely, and even then I still had the after effects of lack of sleep to cope with. But, all-in-all, it was worth it. Yorcon III was the first convention I've ever attended and I enjoyed every minute of it; the late bars, the panel discussions about fanzines, apas, fandom through the last four decades and TAFF, the talk given by Teresa and Patrick Hilsen Hayden, this years TAFF visitors, and Alan Dorey's 'Odd Man Out' quiz. The last item was probably the funniest of the programme events because Greg Pickersgill won the quiz single-handed for his team, poor Rob Hansen & co. didn't know what hit them.

Yorcon was also a good place to meet people for the first time. Bernard Smith walked round with a huge wad of pipe-cleaners poking out the breast pocket of his shirt and puffing away like a chimney and was generally nothing like I expected him to be, Chris Laker sat near the piano doing probably the most detailed criticism of fiction I've ever seen all over the latest issue of Cassandra Anthology, and Charles Stross ran around the convention like a dog with its tail on fire trying to find publishers agents on whom to foist the huge manuscripts of a trilogy of SF novels he'd written, typed, revised, and had printed and bound in a spare ten minutes before lunch. I met an extremely friendly Simon Polley and felt as if we'd been friends for years, and then chatted to a vision of loveliness wearing a badge that said Debbi Kerr and found out soon after that she's Simon's wife (oh you disgustingly lucky chap). Greg Pickersgill threatened to do painful things to Matthew

Shackles anatomy, Alison Hastur was wearing Dave Wood's shirt, Trevor Mendham fended me off with a copy of ATU XVIII, Paul Ward let me crash out on his floor for two nights and John Harvey and I staggered around after large doses of scotch and beer (purely medicinal you understand). Alan Dorey never seemed to spend more than thirty seconds at a time in the same place.

I would say that the most amazing thing about going to Yorcon was the reacclimatisation, but when one considers that for three days I had no

PTO...

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NOW AVAILABLE !

The first three BSFA facts sheets providing up to date bibliographic information on SF authors :-

1. P. K. DICK
2. R. A. HEINLEIN
3. C. J. CHERRYH

Suggestions for further authors to be included in the series welcome.

Available free with an S.A.E. from the information officer :-

MIKE MOIR
7 The Thicket
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Hants

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news of the outside world (except for being told that Spurs had dropped even more points in the championship race) it's not really that strange. Still, let's move on to other things.

Sue Thomason has given up the fanzines column as of the August issue of Matrix, but have no fear a replacement has already been found and it would be wise to start sending your lines for review to him immediately. Full details are included somewhere in the fanzines column.

As of next issue all media reviews should be sent to Mark Greener who is now co-editor of the column. Mark's full address and an emergency telephone number can be found in the short introduction to the media reviews column.

Paul Ward has sent me numerous cartoons and illustrations for use and we will probably be seeing many more in future. Paul's solid style of work is the perfect counterpoint to the 'Dan Dar' cartoons by Alex Prentice and the artwork in Matrix is really looking up.

The Philip Collins piece in the last issue has caused a lot of response; included inside is an article, made up of the replies to the piece, by Joseph Nicholas and David Barrett which should be of invaluable aid to members thinking of submitting articles to any of the BSFA magazines. The letters column also expands upon the points raised and includes some points about the procedure used to compile the BSFA awards final ballot.

It was proposed at the BSFA AGM that we conduct a forum in Matrix regarding this last point and hopefully, after having read the relevant letters in this issue, you'll write to either Mike Moir or myself with your views.

One last announcement: Focus 11 will contain an article on ORBITER. If you have any good (or bad) experiences of the BSFA's postal writers' workshop, suggestions as to how it could be improved, comments on how your Orbiter group works (or doesn't), comments on why you have (or haven't) joined an Orbiter group, etc., etc., please send them to Sue at:

1. Meyrick Square
Dolgellau
Gwynedd LL40 1LT.

And she says she'd like to hear from as many people as possible (a gentle hint meaning get writing).

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Artwork in this issue: Dan Dar cartoons by Alex Prentice, Pages 1 & 10 by Paul Ward.

* MATRIX 59 Deadline: *
* MONDAY MAY 20th 1985. *

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All contributions should be sent to :
Dave Hodson, Matrix Editor, 104 Debdon,
Gloucester Road, Tottenham, LONDON, N17 6LN.
(Telephone : 01-801 4574.)

BSFA Membership costs £7 per year and can be had from :
Sandy Brown, 18 Gordon Terrace, BLANTYRE,
Leamington, G72 9NA.
Membership renewals should be sent to :
Keith Freeman, 269 Wykeham Road, READING,
Berkshire, RG6 1PL.

Chairman of the British Science Fiction Assoc.
is Alan Dorey, 22 Summerfield Drive,
MIDDLETON, Greater Manchester.

This years mailing sessions are on...June 8/9...
August 3/4...October 5/6...December 7/8.

This edition of Matrix was produced on the BSFA press by John Harvey, who is also responsible for the photos on page 8. Humble apologies to those whose likenesses have been so treated, particularly Patrick Neilson Hayden who certainly doesn't look as blank as this. He'll probably resign after seeing it. Also the head labeled as Rochelle Dorey probably isn't, anybody know who it is?

//// STOP PRESS ////

News of a new SF short story market comes from VNU PUBLICATIONS who are launching "COMPUTING MAGAZINE". They are looking for hard SF stories involving computers, preferably 2 to 3000 words long but up to 5000 will be considered - word rate £ 88/1000.

Contact Candice Goodwin at VNU PUBLICATIONS, 53-55 FRITH ST. LONDON W1.

FRIDAY NIGHT IS BSFA NIGHT !
Well the third Friday of every month is. So why not come along and meet some of the other BSFA members at The Coopers Arms, 87 Flood St. Chelsea (10 mins from Sloane Sq. tube station)

June meeting features Maxim Jakubowski talking about SF and publishing. See you there.

DAN DAR.

Aspl.

SIR HUBERT SAID I'D TO
SIT ON MY PROBLEM,
SO I AM.



THIS IS THE FIRST TIME
I'VE SEEN YOUR BRAIN
AT CLOSE QUARTERS

THOUGHTS OF THE CHAIRMAN NOW

Well, we've made it through another AGM, this time returning to the Dragonara Hotel in Leeds. Some notes on the discussions follow this piece, so I won't drag you through all the detail!

However, a few matters were raised which I would like to illuminate for you. First and foremost, Tom Taylor, our Treasurer, has resigned, leaving this valuable position vacant. Eve Harvey has gallantly stepped into the breach on a pro-tem basis in order that day-to-day running of the Association can continue. Obviously, we do need to obtain a replacement as soon as possible, so if anybody feels that they are suitably qualified for the post of Treasurer/Company Secretary, do please let me know. You don't have to be a qualified Chartered Accountant, but you must have a head for figures, be prompt and efficient and capable of handling all the Association's financial matters. If anyone needs further information, please write to me, or why not give me a ring one evening (061-653-6293) so that we can have a chat about it. I look forward to hearing from you!

One other matter which I wish to talk about is the planned production of a BSFA fiction anthology. I have dropped hints about this already in these pages, but we are definitely planning to issue such a publication before Christmas this year. Much of the fine detail still needs to be sorted out, but the essential points are:

- 1) It will be edited by Bernard Smith (of Cassandra) and a member of the BSFA committee
- 2) It will contain the best of the fiction that has already appeared in Cassandra, together with the best new submissions received by October 1st 1985 from BSFA members.
- 3) It will probably be A5 format, and will go out to all members without additional charge. Extra copies will be printed for sale at a cover price to be decided (probably 75p).
- 4) We are looking for quality fiction - obviously, if we haven't got enough good submissions, its appearance could be delayed, or cancelled, but we expect the membership to rise to the occasion.

The anthology is being prepared as a response to membership requests, and is initially planned as a one-off production to see what sort of demand there is. Bernard Smith and I have talked at length about the sort of thing that should be done, and hopefully something very positive will come out of it. Contributions should be NO MORE THAN 7,500 words in length, and should be typed neatly, double-spaced on one side only of A4 paper. We are looking for Science Fiction stories in all its possible

definitions, so if you want to write like Ballard or Clarke, or Donaldson or Dick or whatever, we're interested in seeing it. In the first instance, submissions should be sent to me at my home address, ALAN DOREY, 22 Summerfield Drive, Middleton, Lancs M24 2WN. A list of full requirements is available upon request.

MOVING ON

By the time you read this, we should have the full editorial team for Vector lined up. That is, a Features Editor, Reviews Editor and a Production Editor. I can certainly promise you that some big things will be happening with Vector (and Matrix) over the next few months, not the least the probable introduction of a new printer, this time more conveniently located not a million miles from Reading. So, fingers crossed, the June mailing should certainly be something to look out for.

Paperback Inferno too is all set for its new editor, ANDY SAWYER, whom I popped over to see a month or so ago. Andy has got a lot of good ideas to improve its range and content, and indeed, has already put a substantial amount of work into finding new reviewers to join the existing 'team' and ensuring that all possible outlets for anything remotely science fictional have been thoroughly scoured.

THE BSFA AWARDS

The BSFA Awards were presented at YORCON III this Easter - Mike Moir, the administrator, will no doubt write about them at greater length in subsequent Matrixes, but I would like to thank everybody for their valuable support - more people voted this year than for a very long time, and obviously, it does make the awards that much more representative. It was particularly pleasing that two of the winners - Robert Holdstock (novel) and Geoff Ryman (short story) were at Yorcon and thus able to accept their awards - to much applause I would point out.

MAILING SESSIONS

Again, before I close, I would like to appeal for more people to come along to the Reading mailing sessions. Obviously, it has been a little difficult of late whilst we've been finding editors and a reliable printer to ensure that deadlines are met, but with luck from June onwards, there should be no such problem. If anyone does want to come along, it's always a good idea to give Keith Freeman a quick ring just to confirm details and location - 0734-666142.

Right, that's about it for this time - a few words in my next column about the changes still to be expected, together with some words about the stalwarts on the council who have recently moved onto other things.

I'll see you all then!

Alan Dorey

ACM NOTES

As usual, the AGM was held at Eastercon and, as usual, the majority of people completely ignored it. With your next mailing will be the formal minutes, but to give you all some idea of what went on, here is a summary.

The first major item was Alan Dorey's review of the past year, highlighting the period of change undergone with a change of editorship of 3 of the magazines - Matrix, Vector and in the near future PI. In addition, Alan mentioned the recent discussion about Cassandra - the fiction zine and announced that it had been decided to publish a fiction anthology in collaboration with Bernard Smith and Cassandra. If the experiment is successful, this could well become an annual event, hopefully appearing more frequently than the old BSFA Yearbook.

As you will no doubt have noticed from your last mailing, the BSFA Meetings in London have moved venue and are now under the aegis of Roy Macinski and Nick Trant.

Moving onto memberships, Alan said that total membership had fallen slightly in the last year, largely due to the fact that Arrow no longer run our ads and a large proportion of our new members found out about the BSFA in this way. It was pointed out by one of those present that this could be because Arrow might be under the impression that we were competing with Interzone, and Alan promised to look into this and, if possible, see if we couldn't reinstitute the adverts.

The membership fee is unlikely to be increased from the present level of £7.

On the subject of Council membership, Alan announced that Joe Nicholas and

Tom Taylor were resigning and did not wish to stand for re-election.

The following people were re-elected: John Harvey, Sandy Brown, Jim White, Les Flood.

During the year Sue Thomason and Dave Hodson had been co-opted onto the Council and this was ratified. In addition, Andy Sawyer (PI) and Dave Barrett (Vector) were elected.

No-one had anything to say about the accounts and so we moved onto Any Other Business which covered the topics of attendance at mailing sessions (not enough of you punters turn up); politics (it shouldn't be in the zines, or at least not as much as there is according to some, oh yes it should according to others). BSFA Awards and Empire of the Sun's nomination (it's not SF, oh yes it is; it shouldn't have been included for nominations, anything the membership wants to nominate should be included). On this latter matter, your BSFA Supremo decided to have an open forum in Matrix to discuss the matter of awards - what should be eligible in particular the inclusion of first paperback publication.

Finally, Alan made official my stupidity in opening my big mouth by offering (in an unguarded moment at the last mailing) to take over Tom Taylor's position for a short time until we could find someone more suitable.

THIS IS ONLY TEMPORARY - COME ON SOMEONE, OFFER TO TAKE THE DAMNED THING OFF ME.

And on that note I'll sign off.

Eve Harvey

Round the Clubs

Hi there! Welcome to the latest in a long line of clubs columns from the latest in a long line of clubs officers. My name is Trevor Mendham, and I have recently taken over as the BSFA's Clubs Liaison Officer, as part of which job I have to produce this column. In future Matrices I intend to pass on news about latest developments, new groups, etc, as well as more in-depth articles on the workings of groups in general and the activities of specific ones. But for this first article, I will simply introduce myself and give you an idea of what I intend to do.

The reason this post exists is to provide a central pool of information on groups up and down the country. This information is available when needed to help members in locating and joining local groups, or starting their own if necessary. In an ideal world, every member would know of a local club or group near to him or her and be able to attend if they so wished. It is my job to get as close to this ideal as possible.

The main thrust of the post, then, is collecting, collating and disseminating information, whether through this column or in response to enquiries direct from members. Which brings me to the main point of this column, a plea to all club members. Information, I want information. At the moment, my files are virtually empty. A number of people have written to me with details of their group, for which I'm grateful, but I still need more. If you want new members, I can only help you get them if I, but obviously the more the better. The basic details I need to know are when and where you meet, what sort of group you are (eg serious discussions, piss-ups in the local, etc) and if possible a contact who newcomers can get in touch with before coming along. This information will be filed for sending to anyone interested and will also appear in the national clubs register which should appear later this year. It won't take ten minutes and could be a lot of help to someone. Also, of course, I need to be kept up to date with any changes - clubs information can go out of date far too quickly.

One thing I'd like to try and do is to extend the scope of the term 'clubs'. In the past, this has tended to concentrate almost exclusively on 'straight' or 'fannish' groups. There are also a lot of other connected groups which members might be interested in, eg media clubs, writers' workshops, etc and I'd like to have this information as well. I have a number of contacts who can provide some of the information I need, but obviously the more the better. It has also been suggested that perhaps I should consider APAs as sort of non-geographically based groups. This is certainly something I will consider - does anyone have any opinions on the subject?

OK, that's enough begging for now, I'll finish for this time with a couple of items. The first is a piece of news/straight from Yoron. That the well-known group of Glaswegian rise-artists the Friends of Kilgore Trout have moved. They are now meeting at The Bank, Queen's Street, Glasgow every Thursday from about 8PM. If you want more information, try ringing 041-3330784 during the day.

Finally, I must reproduce a note I was handed at the first BSFA meeting in the new venue: "Spankers Hill Science Fiction Society. An informal collection of like-minded cycling folk and fellow-travellers. Meet under the blasted oak, Spankers Hill, Richmond Park, Surrey, summer months, weather motivating, drugs optional. No blacks, gays coloured, AIDS, victims, opposition parties. Yet." And to think I actually volunteered for this job...

If anyone has any information on groups to pass on, wants to know of their local group, is thinking of starting one up, or whatever, I'd be delighted to hear from you. My address is 53, Towncourt Crescent, Petts Wood, Kent BR5 1TH. See you around.

*** The MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD is a free advertising service for all BSFA members who wish to buy, sell or exchange items or information, make contacts, publicise fannish ventures, etc. Just send your advertisement to the editor via the editorial address.

WANTED...Hulton Eagles, any condition as long as readable. Personal needs, not a collector. Info to: Alex Prentice, 9 Polton Gardens, Lasswade, Midlothian, EH18 1BL.

GAMES FOR SALE...War of the Ring-£8, Cry Havoc (nearly new)-£7, Electronic Grandstand Soccer-£5, Triples (nearly new)-£5, Cluedo-£4, Yahtzee-£4, Scrabble-£4, Conservation-£4. All in excellent condition. Please enclose SAE for return of cheques/POs if the item has already been sold. Ian Russell, 145 Horse Way, Edmonton, London, N18 2UH.

WANTED...Any edition of Peter Haining's anthology "Freakshow" containing the story "Big Sam was My Friend", World's Best SF No.1 edited by Wollheim & Carr and published by Sphere paperbacks in 1971. Best SF Stories of the Year (ed: Lester del Rey) containing "The Human Operators" by Ellison & Van Vogt UK SF Book Club hardcover edition 1974, Victor Canning's "Twist of the Knife", "The Manasco Road" & "The Runaways". Don Cressley's Dr. Falfrey novel "The Dawn of Darkness" in hardcover edition. The reward for good condition copies of the above is exchange for signed 1st editions of US copies of Ellison works presently selling at high prices. Contact: Vince Docherty, 20 Hillington Gardens, Cardonald, Glasgow, G52 2TP.

WANTED...1. Ursula K. LeGuin - Wild Angels (Capra Press 1975);

2. The Altered I - Edited by Lee Harding (1976);

3. The special LeGuin issue of Science Fiction Studies (vol. 3, part 1, March 1976).

I am willing to pay a reasonable price, of course. Contact: Jan-Cees Noord, Arduinlaan 24, 9743 TG Groningen, The Netherlands.

ORBITER...I am desperate for responsible persons to act as organisers or take part in this circulating postal workshop for would be writers. Only serious persons should apply, only those prepared to be committed to the system. Oh, the horror stories I could pass on. SAE to Dorothy Davies, 3 Cadels Row, Faringdon, Oxon, SN7 7AX.

WANTED DESPERATELY...June 1971 Fantastic, June 67 Galaxy, June 66 Worlds of If, Trumpet No.9 (November 69), March 65 Worlds of Tomorrow. I will even pay to borrow these items. Martin T. Harlow, Maycott, 194 Old Wokers Road, Wokers, Surrey, GU22 8HR.



The 1985 BSFA Awards were announced at Yoron III. The winners were as follows:

Best Novel: Robert Holdstock - MYTHAGO WOOD (Gollancz)

Best Short Fiction: Geoff Ryman - THE UNCONQUERED COUNTRY (Interzone 7)

Best Media Presentation: COMPANY OF WOLVES (Directed by Neil Jordan)

Best Artist: JIM BURNS

Congratulations to all the winners.

unconventional!

ALBACON 85.

19th - 22nd July 1985 at the Central Hotel, Glasgow.
 Guests of Honour: Harlan Ellison and Anne McCaffery.
 Membership: £8.00 attending, £5.00 supporting.
 Room Rates: Single room £15.00, single room with bath £17.50, twin room £12.50, twin with bath £16.00, double room with bath £16.00, triple room £12.00. All rates are per person per night and are fully inclusive of breakfast and VAT.
 Information: Vincent J. Docherty, 20 Hillington Gardens, Cardonald, Glasgow, G52 2TP.

CANCON 86/UNICON 6.

13th - 15th September 1985 at the New College Hall, Cambridge.
 Membership: £7.00 attending, £4.00 supporting.
 Room Rates: £16.10 per person per night, inclusive of breakfast and VAT.
 Registrations should be sent to Neil Taylor, c/o Perspective Designs Ltd., 9 Penbrooke Street, Cambridge, CB2 3QY.

FANTASYCON X.

6th - 8th September 1985 at the Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham.
 Guest of Honour: Robert Holdstock.
 Master of Ceremonies: Charles L. Grant.
 Pre-registration: £1.50/\$3.00.
 Information: Fantasycon, 15 Stanley Road, Morden, Surrey.

MEXICON II.

7th - 9th February 1986 at the Strathallan Hotel, Birmingham.
 Membership: £9.00
 Room Rates: £17.50/person/night inc. bath, tea & coffee facilities in room, voucher for either full English breakfast or snack lunch, and VAT.
 Registrations: Pam Wells, 24a Beach Road, London N11 2DA
 Correspondence: Linda Pickersgill, 7a Lawrence Road, London W5 4XJ

AUSSIECON II.

22nd - 26th August 1985 at the Southern Cross Hotel Melbourne, Australia.
 Guests of Honour: Gene Wolfe and Ted White.
 Membership: check with UK agent for latest information.
 UK Agent: Joseph Nicholas, 22 Denbigh Street, Fullice, London, SW1V 2ER.

THE 1986 EASTERCON BIDDING.

Albacon III won the privilege to stage the 1986 Eastercon at the bidding session held on the Sunday morning of Torcon III. The bidding needed a recount after the first count showed only two votes between Albacon and the bid from Contravention.

BRITAIN IN '87.

Britain's bid for the 45th WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION.
 Pre-supporting membership can be had for £1.00, \$2.00 (US), \$2.50 (Canada), \$2.00 (Australia).
 UK membership from: 24 Duckett Road, London, W4 1BW.

USA (West Coast): Marty Cantor, 11565 Archwood Street, N. Hollywood, CA 91606.
 USA (East Coast): Bill & Mary Burns, 23 Kensington Court, Hempstead, NY 11550.
 Canada: W. Paul Valcourt, 1205-1755 Riverside Drive East, Ottawa, Ontario, K1G 3T6.
 Australia: Justin Ackroyd, GPO Box 2708X, Melbourne, Victoria, 3001.
 Roger Weddall, 79 Bell Street, Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065.

Tynecon 11 / The Mexican - a factual account...

OR, my first ever con...

OR, how SF ruined my love life.

by Martin Hewitson.

I attended my first ever con, the Mexican, with my girlfriend in May 1984. We had both gone for our own reasons: she for a dirty weekend (not being interested in SF except for the 'Star Wars' type), and I to have SF rammed down my throat, meet other fans and authors, and generally get more involved.

We arrived in Newcastle at 10am on Friday and booked into the Royal Station Hotel where the convention was taking place. We then went off to explore the town until noon, when the registration desk would open and we could register. At the desk we had to answer two yes/no questions for the compulsory quiz. The questions I had to face were:

Isaac Asimov became an American citizen in 1926, true or false? (false - 1928)

Warren P. Howard is better known as Frederick Pohl, true or false? (true)

We then had coloured stickers put on our con badges in response to our answers (which were given out the following day), but the winners of this first round were told at the opening ceremony, so ensuring at least some of us had a peaceful night's sleep safe in the knowledge that we were out of it.

Next we had a wander around the first floor of the hotel. Things were still being set up in some parts but, on the whole, were finished. The book room was very interesting. It had a good supply of imported American titles, second hand books, and old and new magazines; so was suitable for both serious collectors and the casual reader (my girlfriend even found a book to suit her). I made repeated journeys to this room, just to lust after the many books I could not buy.

The fanzine room was an entirely different matter altogether. I have never read a fan mag, and have not got the faintest idea about fandom, so had no idea of what to expect. I was confronted with a room that had all of the tables therein piled high with magazines, and small groups of people standing about talking. I realised I would leave them alone to get it set up properly, but each time I returned the pile of mags were still just as high, but more of a mess, and the people were still talking. I figured that the room was set up properly in the first place and, as I didn't really know what to expect in there, I didn't really know what was expected of me in there. I felt like an intruder each time I entered, with nobody seemingly in charge to ask what it was all about. I never seemed to find out what was going on, and I would have liked to have known. Really, I would have.

The con bar was directly over the corridor from the main hall where the programme was to take place. Unfortunately the drinks that were supposed to happen there never did (sigh), at least not whilst I was there. There seemed to be more chin-wagging going on than drinking.

The first item on the programme was the film 'Savage' which started at 6pm. As with about half of the films in the programme, I thought the SF content was not enough to make the suitable for an SF con, but that did not stop me enjoying the ones that I watched. After the film came the opening ceremony explaining the idea behind this con (concentrating on the written aspect of SF and leaving out the fringe activities), and then the first discussion on the programme featuring John Clute, Colin Greenland (I feel in love with the physical presence of the man), Chris Priest, and Richard Cowper (my first sight of real, honest to goodness writers!).

Over the weekend the programme had a good selection of subject items, ranging from a reading by Aledair Gray from his book '1982, Janine', through discussions on SF criticism, publishers lists, and writers workshops (I

immediately feel in love with Lisa Tuttle when I saw her in this item. Her and her big, beautiful glasses), to fandom and many other things. Each was given by people who had experience in the subject of the discussion, e.g. Malcolm Edwards on publishers lists, Lisa Tuttle and Rob Holdstock on British and American workshops, Colin Greenland on current SF magazines, etc.

Most of the items were very interesting and informative, there was something to interest most people most of the time; indeed, even my girlfriend enjoyed some of them.

Interspersed between these talks and discussions were further rounds of the quiz, with the contestants doing strange things with ping pong balls, cream crackers, darts, and electrified wires. Oh, and also answering more questions. Also, along with this, there were the films, and on the Sunday evening what must have the highlight of the con for most people; Geoff Rysan's stage adaptation of the Philip K. Dick novel 'The Transmigration of Timothy Archer'. This was the best attended item on the whole programme, attended by what must have been the total attendees at the con, and I don't think anybody could have not enjoyed the production.

On the Saturday night there was a disco, and on the Sunday night a party, both of which I missed unfortunately (early night you know), but I gather they were both greatly enjoyed.

Now I come to my personal highlights of the con; my conversations with the authors. Now, I am a shy person and will not approach people I don't know to talk to, but what for them to come to me. If I had not have had my girlfriend with me to talk to, I might have talked to some people, but as it was I didn't. But, on Sunday afternoon, I was approached by none other than Alasdair Gray. It happened in the Kelly bar where people went for the cheap bar snacks. I was sitting at a table waiting for my girlfriend to bring our meals, when Alasdair came up to me and said:

"May I join you?" (He wants to sit with ME!)

"Yes. Sure. Sit down."

"I had this for lunch and it was so good I thought I'd have it again." (steak and kidney pie, mash and gravy)

"We are having chilli this time. We had the sandwiches last time." Then two other people sat at the table and began to talk to him. I was in a dream world for the rest of the day.

On the Monday, before the closing ceremony, which included an auction of porno fanzines, 7 foot tall cacti (bought by a Scot who then wondered how he would get them home on the bus), and many other things. As everybody was getting ready to leave, Chris Priest came up to me and said: "Looking for somewhere to leave your bags?" "Why? You got somewhere?" (that's right, play it cool)

"Yes, room 107. Give the key to the next person you see." He gave me the key. My palm was sweating for a week.

So, what did I get out of my first ever SF con? Well, I had long, deep discussions with two writers (O.k., o.k., insignificant chit-chat, but I can dream, can't I?), I discovered 'Interzone', fell in love with Lisa and her glasses, found out about the BSFA and soon joined it (no complaints so far), discovered the writings of Chris Priest (sore! sore!), and got the incentive to do more writing. Oh, and soon split up with my girlfriend.

But, did I enjoy it? You bet, amigo.

How to kill the B.S.F.A. in eleven easy stages

1. Don't go to BSFA meetings.
2. If you go, arrive late.
3. If the weather is good say, "It's too fine an evening to be sitting cooped up inside," then watch television.
4. If the weather is bad say, "I can't go out on a night like this," then watch television.
5. If you do attend a meeting, find fault with the work of the committee and, in particular, the chairman.
6. Never accept an office, as it is easier to criticize than to act.
7. Complain loudly if you are not appointed on a committee; but if you are, do not attend committee meetings.
8. If asked by the chairman to give your opinion regarding some important matter, tell him you have nothing to say. Bore the backside off everyone later on in the bar by telling them exactly what should have been done.
9. Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary. When other members roll up their sleeves and willingly use their ability to help matters along, howl that the BSFA is run by a clique.
10. Having elected the chairman and his committee, begin to tell everybody they are power-mad egotists.
11. When asked to argue for some difficult action, refuse to do so on the grounds that the members are too apathetic.

NOO NEWS 2 A Little Green Man Publication

DAN DAR

NOW YOU KNOW WHY COL DAR IS NEVER SEEN WITH HIS MOUTH OPEN





GREGORY BENFORD
YORCON GUEST OF HONOUR

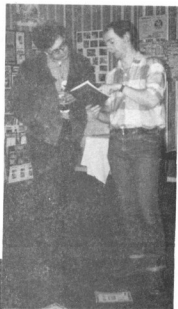
Apr 5-8 '85



TAFF TALK- PATRICK NIELSEN HAYDEN
AND ROB HANSON



RELAXING IN THE BAR (L-R) KATE JEARY, JOHN JARROLD,
CHRIS ATKINSON, ANNE PRINGLE AND ROCHELLE DOREY



FANZINE
EDITORS
NIGEL
RICHARDSON
AND GLEN
WARMINGER



PLANNING THE FUTURE - THE BRITAIN IN '87 WORLDCON COMMITTEE (L-R)
COLIN FINE, JAN HUXLEY, CHRIS DONALDSON, PAUL OLDROYD, CHRIS ATKINSON
LINDA PICKERSGILL AND MALCOLM EDWARDS

Eastercon 1985 was not without its controversy, the main bone of contention being the decision to use function space from two hotels. The Dragonara housed the main programme, fan room, video room and creche whilst the Queens had the art show, book rooms and film programme. The two hotels are separated by the main Leeds railway station and a 5-minute walk. This, many people felt, would fragment the convention and lead to the collapse of the whole event.

The organisers were seasoned campaigners, having held one of the classic 70's conventions in 1979 with Yorcon I, then fallen short of expectations with a second attempt in 1981 due, by general consensus, to the Dragonara being too small; 1979 had not shown this as the August Worldcon had reduced membership at Easter. So the logic went if one hotel is too small then why not try two?

Was it the disaster so widely predicted? No, it certainly was not, but it would be wrong to call it a successful move. The convention was not split into two camps for the whole duration, events in the Queens closing down early in the evening so that everyone congregated in the Dragonara for late-night socialising. It was necessary, however, to make a definite choice between the book room, etc and the programme items rather than just 'pop in for a few minutes'. The book dealers especially suffered from this, but all in all it was an interesting experiment which certainly did not stop the con being a very enjoyable event.

All the usual elements were there - a Guest of Honour in the shape of Gregory Benford, Linda Pickersgill was fan Guest of Honour and a host of well-known authors found their way along, including Bob Shaw, John Brunner, Rob Holdstock, Terry Pratchett, David Langford and Norman Spinrad. Plus, of course, SF fans in their hundreds.

A solid vote of thanks must go to all the organisers, rather too many to name. Suffice to say your ever-wonderful BSFA chairman had a finger in the pie (as usual), ex-Matrix-editors Graham James and Linda Strickler James steered the whole ship with impeccable direction, one-time Matrix fanzine reviewer Simon Ounsley edited the programme book and Simon Polley (remember him?) was in top form in the Queens Hotel.

The backbone of any convention is the programme; newcomers and serious fans need this as a pivot for the weekend whilst the laid-back fannish fans have something solid to ignore (so the story goes). Thankfully Yorcon had put plenty of effort into this aspect and amongst the many unusual and interesting items were Martin Hoare revealing the secrets of Computer Hacking, Geoff Ryman's stage adaptation of 'The Transmigration of Timothy Archer', panel discussions on fantasy, the future of British SF magazines, SF utopias, time travel stories and a panel/workshop on the realities of publishing fiction.

Unfortunately the committee were a little too successful since not only did the main programme look exciting, but the fan programme too. We can do little more than list the main programme items since choices had to be made and we chose the fanroom most of the time. Hopefully others will write in with their views on whether the programme in actuality was as interesting as it appeared.

Under the guidance of Fanroom Boss Jimmy Robertson, an assortment of fans discussed such matters as 1984 fanzines, TAFK, the art of critical reviewing in fanzines and listened to

Linda Pickersgill's Fan GoH talk. One panel in particular '50s/60s/70s/80s - Four Fandoms' was interesting in that it illustrated so very clearly that fandom has really changed little over the years.

Of course there were films galore, of course the Guest of Honour made a special speech and of course there was the fancy Dress Parade. The art room had some excellent displays, and the Ken McIntyre award for fanzine artwork attracted 27 entries - a world record!

So what happened at other times? Well, for many the real name of the game at conventions is socialising - the bars did vast amounts of business, fans drank, gyrated in the disco, chatted, shouted, fell over backwards and had desperate fun until the sun re-appeared each day.

Elsewhere in this issue you'll learn that the BSFA award was given to Rob Holdstock, Geoff Ryman, Company of Wolves and Jim Burns. The Doc Weir Award, now administered by the BSFA went to Jim White and the winning entry of the Ken McIntyre award is reproduced in this issue.

It has been said of Eastercon that they all have added their own little bit of innovation to the 'artform'. The two hotel approach was obviously Yorcon III's major step in this direction, but there were many others. One such was the replacement of the banquet with a buffet. For many years the con banquet on the Sunday night has been poorly attended and generally condemned. However, it did give an excuse for after-dinner speeches and an opportunity for the awards ceremony. A total abandonment would have left a vacuum and so the buffet approach was adopted; for £2 the hotel offered either chicken & chips or chili con carne. The logistics of serving left much to be desired as it took well over an hour for everybody to be served but it was a brave effort and worth perfecting by future con committees.

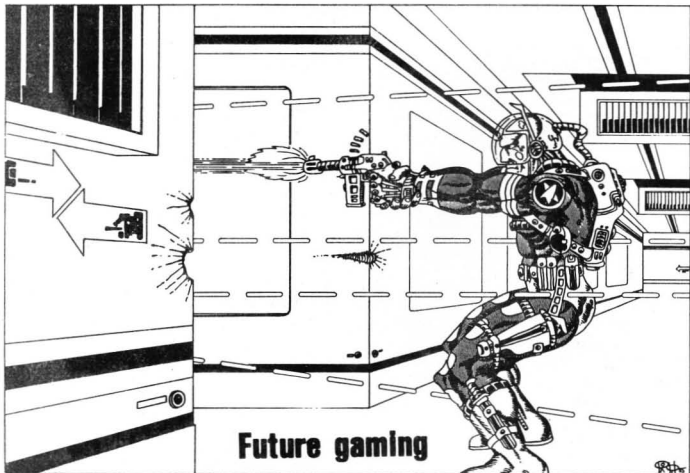
After-dinner speeches? There were none, as such, but there was the 'Great Pork Pie Raid' in which various fans presented their ideas for transporting a standard Brian Burgess pork pie across the room. The winner was Jim Barker with his human catapult, ably assisted by Pam Wells and a certain Eve Harvey. Maybe not as intellectually stimulating as after-dinner speeches, but at least nobody fell asleep.

Another innovation was in the programme notes. Rather than a straight list of talks/panel titles etc the organisers had taken the trouble of describing the various programme items. All very helpful in making those decisions a multi-programmed event forces on us.

And finally, the most successful and least noticed innovation - an extension of checkout time from the Dragonara on Monday until 4 p.m. Definitely a move that ought to be followed by every con organiser in the future.

Conclusions? Well, from the Harveys' point of view an unexpectedly very enjoyable convention (yes, we were to be counted with the doubting Thomases beforehand). It must be remembered that each person will have had a completely different convention, and no doubt letters in response to this piece will show other sides of it, but overall Yorcon was a convention of experiment, not all were successful, but at least they gave a basis for future conventions to perfect upon, and the committee must be loudly applauded for having the guts to persevere with their ideas.

John & Eve Harvey



Future gaming

THE UGLY AMERICAN - A review of TWILIGHT 2000.

Published by Games Designers Workshop £24.95.

Reviewed by Marcus L. Rowland.

Twilight 2000 is a role-playing game set in Europe during a spasmodic war, two years after an exchange of nuclear weapons. The player characters are American soldiers or their allies.

The physical contents of the box are well designed and presented; two rule books plus various charts, maps, and lists (a total of approximately 100 pages), with dice. The system is based on the use of moderately complex equation of characteristics and skills to determine the base chance of doing something, then a percentile dice roll to succeed. Combat is on a roll to hit, roll hit location, roll damage system, with penetration rules for armour. The system works reasonably well, provided all skills are calculated before they are used, but is hampered by the use of abbreviations instead of names; CRM is Combat Rifleman, PST is pistol, etc. This makes the rules shorter and more concise, but slows down play until the system is learned.

While the system is playable, the moral stance and attitudes it exemplifies are loathsome. The rules favour the style of behaviour found in "fun" war films; player characters will occasionally get killed (but not terribly often), in a week or two, critical (Die or get better in a week or two), or slight (get better in a day or two). There are rules for infection and radiation poisoning, but they aren't nearly harsh enough. The setting, two years after the last nuclear weapon was used, has evidently been designed to avoid showing the worst effects of the bomb; the random encounters don't include civilians suffering from third-degree radiation burns, blind children, and the hideously dead and dying victims of the blast and heat. Starvation and plague are occasionally mentioned, with the implication that characters can always use their weapons to get food and medicines.

The war described is the favourite American scenario, slow escalation with most of the damage confined to Europe, Russia, China, and the Middle and Far East. Britain appears to have been destroyed, America is the sort of anarchistic state loved by survivalists. The environment left after the holocaust doesn't seem much harsher than Vietnam or the Congo. The "Nuclear Winter" predicted by many scientists either didn't occur, or just made the normal winter slightly harsher than usual. In the year 2000 Europe is split into tiny cantonnements ruled by rival warlords, some Russian and some American. No centralised governments remain.

Against this background, the players are supposed to choose goals; survival is the obvious priority, but further objectives are left to the discretion of the referee and players. The suggested theme (which beautifully explains the attitude of the game) is to "return home" to America. Europe evidently isn't worth anyone's time or effort. The rules never say anything about the possibility of rebuilding settlements, negotiating local peace treaties, or doing anything else to start civilisation working again. The box blurb says "They were sent to save Europe.....Now they're fighting to save themselves", and it's evident that this game has been written by and for Americans, with little or no understanding of European attitudes or desires.

At a time when most RPG manufacturers are trying to get out of the "hack and slay" mould and establish more thoughtful systems which emphasise atmosphere and "sense of wonder", this game is a strange throwback to wargaming roots that many role players are trying to forget, with the added ingredients of squalor and chauvinism. Luckily, the high import cost, and the importers reluctance to buy more than the minimum needed to fulfill contractual obligations, will probably stop this game becoming popular; there are a large number of good RPG's at a third to half this price, including several which are regarded as classics of the genre. This is definitely a game to avoid, unless you feel that you can't live without rules for this particularly unpleasant setting.

PHILIP COLLINS - A REPLY
by Dave Barrett

The majority of BSFA members appear to be happy to receive and read mailings without contributing anything in writing themselves. That's fine; it's the same in all organisations, from the local WI to the TGWU. Te people who do contribute tend to be the same small group, which can give the impression that BSFA writers are an exclusive clique. This in itself deters many of the silent majority but quite a number, like Philip Collins, would like to but seem to find their way blocked.

Why should this be? After all, every editor of every BSFA magazine is always begging for more contributions; now that I suddenly find myself VECTOR Features Editor I'm already faced with vast numbers of blank pages to fill and the recurrent fear that I may not be able to fill them. So why, in that case, are there so few new names? There are a number of reasons:

- Some members who would like to contribute don't feel confident enough or 'qualified' to do so.

- The editor may already have a piece on a similar theme, or it might not be right for that magazine at that time.

- Some contributions are simply too dull, or too erudite, or too naive, or too badly written. I have a folder full of letters from THE GRAUNIAD, the BBC, SF magazines and book publishers saying 'I'm afraid it's not original enough,' or 'It simply isn't funny enough,' or the blunt 'It isn't good enough.'

But if you're really determined, you won't be deterred by rejections. You'll keep on writing, keep on submitting, keep on improving. And take you'll note of advice, after, of course, turning the air blue ('What the * does he know about it?'). In the case of THE GRAUNIAD or the BBC I wouldn't expect to receive constructive criticism or guidance, but in the BSFA most of us are amateur writers, we know from our own experience the value of editorial encouragement, and I think some feedback should normally be expected. But don't forget that the editors of VECTOR, MATRIX, FOCUS and PAPERBACK INFERNO have full-time jobs, families, normal everyday chores, and other

time-consuming interests apart from the BSFA; they can't be expected to write a line-by-line crit of your latest rejected submission.

And there's no law that says that YOUR piece HAS to be rejected.

I'd guess I'm speaking for all BSFA editors when I say we want to see more new names appearing in the magazines; I'd certainly welcome unsolicited articles for VECTOR, or discuss ideas for a piece. A few thoughts for anyone thinking of joining the happy throng:

- If you're uncertain, write a few LoC's first; that way your name starts to become familiar, people comment on what you've written and maybe stomp all over your much-loved theories - and you're off.

- If you're fired with a burning zeal to write a particular piece, then write it and submit it. On the other hand, if you don't want to waste your effort if the piece isn't likely to be published, write to or phone the editor of the relevant magazine first. You obviously won't get a guarantee of publication sight unseen, but at least s/he'll be able to tell you if s/he's not interested for any reason.

- If you want your MS returned to you, always enclose an SAE.

And if for some reason your piece is rejected, it doesn't mean YOU have been rejected, even though it feels like it.

* * * * *

The above was sent by Dave as a reply to the piece in the last Matrix by Philip Collins. Dave also said he would not be willing to consider any submission to him that was not typed; this does not apply to Matrix because so much more of what I handle is highly topical. A film has a far more limited life than a book, and a review of such should appear as early as possible. Matrix also seems to attract a far higher proportion of new writers who may not have access to a typewriter, so please do not feel that the hand-written review of the latest Steven Spielberg epic you've sweated blood over won't get read. I'll consider anything regardless of the form it comes in. (DH)

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MEDIA REVIEWS NEWS ITEM.

As of the next issue of Matrix all media reviews should be sent to MARK GREENER, 2 WHITE HART CLOSE, BUNTINGFORD, HERTS.

In case of you have any queries, Mark can be reached on : ROYSTON 71689 in the evening.

GRANFALLOONS : A REVIEW OF "MORONS FROM OUTER SPACE."

Reviewed by Mark Greener.

One of the factors which determines the success or otherwise of a situation comedy is the quality of the juxtaposition between the eccentric and the normal. It is the conflict between these two elements which highlights the intrinsic absurdities of the situation, hence humour results. A comedy having its roots in SF can be of this type or be either self-parody or satire. "MORONS FROM OUTER SPACE" attempts to be an SF situation comedy but fails as there is no element of juxtaposition.

The fact that juxtaposition is an important component can be emphasized by examining some 'successful' situation comedies which incorporate an SF element: "BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET", "MY FAVOURITE MARTIAN", "MORK AND MINDY" and, to an extent, "THE HITCH-HIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY" all have an eccentric element, usually an alien, to contrast with our view of normality. "HITCH-HIKERS" was somewhat different in its application of this principle; it was the environment which was eccentric whilst the 'alien', Dent, was normal. Furthermore "HITCH-HIKERS" was a skilled synthesis of parody, satire and sit-com, which might go some way to explaining its success. The major problem with "MORONS" is the basic premise; normal aliens. There is no conflict between the aliens and our world. This leaves the film an unfunny, disorientated mess.

The plot is easily summarised: while on holiday from the planet Blob, Julian (Paul Brown), Desmond (Jeremy Nail) and his wife, Sandra (Joanne Pearce), crash their spaceship on the M1 just outside Luton. This leaves their co-traveller Bernard (Mel Smith) trapped in the remainder of their orbiting mobile home. The crashed trio are taken away to be interrogated by the military and scientists, who come to the conclusion that the aliens are "pinheads from another planet."

The military, in the form of US Colonel Larabee (James B. Sicking), decide the aliens are a threat to aid to assassinate them. The extraterrestrial trio escape with the aid of reporter Graham Sweetly (Griff Rhys Jones). Meanwhile Bernard is rescued by a passing alien who mistakes him for a female. When the alien (a rotting corpse) makes a pass at Bernard and realises his mistake, Bernard is ejected and ends up in North America. When he claims to be the fourth alien (Sandra has revealed there was originally four members of their party on a TV chat show) he is locked up in an asylum. He escapes and makes his way to New York where the other three are playing a big rock 'n' roll gig with Sweetly as their manager...

"MORONS" is an example of the form of humour which is indigenous to the English middle classes; and a pretty poor example at that. "MONTY PYTHON", "NOT THE NINE O'CLOCK NEWS", the Tom Sharpe books, "ADRIAN MOLE", etc., all fall into this category. Indeed, many of its exponents come from the last refuge of middle class ideology - Oxford and Cambridge - so they are well equipped to prey upon the neuroses and ambitions of that social strata. After all it's an easy thing to do; by its very nature the middle class is insecure. This is not to say that humour cannot arise from an examination of the middle class condition - "MONTY PYTHON" proved it could - but as art is a reflection of its creators, their prejudices emphasise any failures in terms of cinematic structure. This is what has occurred with "MORONS." For example, the aliens are working class stereotypes. They are all lazy and either congenital imbeciles, tarts or alcoholic geordies. This is the type of image that arises out of paranoia. Most of the time these stereotypes are not contrasted with anything, hence no humour. However, when they are presented to a meeting of the upper classes, one of the films few moments of true wit results.

On a more cinematic level, the plot lacks any real inertia. The only real element of plot development is the transformation of Sweetly from a "mild-mannered reporter" to a businessman exploiting the aliens (I'll resist the temptation to draw conclusions from this aspect of the film). A change in character is implied by his change of dress and attitude. These are not examined in any depth. I consider that the intention of the film might have been to show how society forces fame onto anyone who represents the illusion of "a better life" when, in reality, they are just like us. Again this theme is underdeveloped.

Predictably an attempt at satire is introduced; "CE3K", "ONE FLEM OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST" and just about any 1950's SF film you can think of are not really satirised, but merely referred to. Satire takes certain aspects of its victim and exaggerates them; "MORONS" leaves the reference intact.

Although the actors make a brave attempt at enlivening a dull film, it still has the feel of an extended TV sketch. It hasn't even got the inertia to sustain a half-hour TV play. "MONTY PYTHON" were able to

make the transition from TV to cinema by realising the two media are different; cinema is not just an enlarged telly, the two media require different attitudes, a fact Rhys Jones and Smith have yet to understand. In all "MORONS" is a poor advertisement for our cinematic talent in British Film Year.

THE TERMINATOR

Reviewed by Mark Greener.

"THE TERMINATOR" presents a problem; the film is all surface gloss with no substance to back it up. It revolves around a void. It is, therefore, difficult to formulate a critical evaluation of the film, and a lot of what follows is extremely subjective. It does not pretend to be anything other than an exploitation film; a fairy tale for adults without the moral implications of the genre. "THE TERMINATOR" is the cinematic equivalent of a book one buys at Smiths to read during the train journey to Novacon.

The Terminator (Arnold Schwarzenegger) is an android sent back from the year 2029 to kill a waitress, Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton), whose son will become a rebel leader in the fight against the machines which will take over the world in the wake of a nuclear war.

Kyle Reese (Michael Biehn) is a young guerilla also sent back in time to protect Sarah from the terminators' unvaried attentions. Sarah eventually believes Reese's story and they attempt to escape and outwit her assassin...

It comes as no surprise to learn that the director, James Cameron, comes from the Roger Corman school of film; "THE TERMINATOR" is a typical New World film, combining all the elements of action, pace, violence and a touch of sex which exemplifies Corman's ideal.

However, the film is made with a skill and attention to detail typical of Carpenter (infact Cameron was production designer on "ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK"), which is rare in an exploitation film.

The plot is sparse; it ignores all those inconvenient time paradoxes so beloved of SF and instead manipulates the viewer into a position where they are of no consequence. One even forgets those gaping holes littering the plot. The special effects are excellent and, in places, quite revealing, but the violence is without the nasty sexual overtones of "DRESSED TO KILL" and its type.

All-in-all, "THE TERMINATOR" is a film well worth seeing for a hundred minutes of fun; but if you don't guess the ending within half an hour or so, you deserve to be drummed out of the BSFA...

2010.

Directed by Peter Hyams.

Reviewed by Roy Mackinski.

Preconceptions are dangerous things. Sometimes they can work to your advantage but, more often than not, they lead to frustration and disappointment. It was with this in mind that I approached 2010, determined, as far as possible, not to compare it with its famous predecessor, but to judge it on its own merits.

2010, in fact, picks up the story some seven years after 2001 with Heywood Floyd (Roy Scheider) being approached by the Soviets to join their mission to reach Discovery. The Russians know they can get there first, but equally they're well aware of the fact that once they get there, being totally unfamiliar with Discovery and its systems, they stand a poor chance of reactivating the ship and thereby learning the truth behind the enigma of why HAL malfunctioned and Bowman disappeared. Whilst at first reluctant, when Floyd learns that Discovery's orbit is decaying and time is running out, he agrees to join the mission and takes with him HAL's creator (Bob Balaban) and a spaceship engineer (John Lithgow).

As the Russian ship, the Leonov (captained by Helen Mirren), nears Jupiter they pick up strange signals emanating from Europa. A remote probe is dispatched and, after skimming across the satellites surface, is destroyed. Floyd interprets this as a warning that, for unknown reasons, they are to stay away from Europa.

Whilst, overall, the film is very faithful to the book, this is the first of a couple of major changes. In the book contact with whatever lies on Europa was made by a Chinese expedition prior to the arrival of the Leonov. The second and more important change is that, in the film, the events taking place around Jupiter are set against a backdrop of escalating confrontation between the superpowers back on Earth. Both these devices work well giving the film a dramatic edge over the book.

Once the Discovery is boarded the film shifts a gear and races towards its climax, answering along the way many of the questions posed by 2001 and revealing the importance of Europa.

2010 is, in many ways, the epitome of a hard SF movie, and as such shares the strengths and weaknesses of that sub-genre. It excels at conveying the scope of its theme, the grandeur and beauty of deep space (for which Richard Edlund and his highly talented visual effects team must take much of the credit) and the scientific authenticity of its execution (albeit with the notable exception of how the effects of gravity were portrayed; at times it seemed as if it was being switched in and out at random). Against this I was left with the impression that, despite the efforts of a uniformly strong cast, the characters were little more than talking heads with little or no substance. However, this criticism could be leveled with even greater force against 2001.

Unlike 2001, which was a work of supreme artistry, 2010, which is a work of consummate craftsmanship, is neither innovative or memorable. Nevertheless, if you're looking for a couple of hours of solid, visually spectacular and often exciting entertainment, you could do an awful lot worse than this.

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"Ten past eight: the year we go whoosh! in Jupiter orbit (sigh...)"

2010

Directed by Peter Hyams.

Reviewed by Hussain Mohamed.

Briefly, for those two or three people who do not know what or why 2010 is: Arthur Clarke wrote a sequel to the celebrated film/novel in which the abandoned spaceship *Discovery* in near Jupiter orbit becomes the object of an international race to discover what happened to it, to the computer HAL and to David Bowman who disappeared into a giant 'monolith' also in Jupiter orbit. The race never really gets off the ground because the US ship is still years from completion when the Russians announce that they are ready to go, and the Americans discover that their lost ship is quite likely to crash into Io in the near future. A deal of sorts provides for a small American crew to travel aboard the Russian ship *Leonov* - a typical bit of Clarke sleight of hand. The remainder of the story is an immense Jovian travelogue interspersed with bits of 'hard SF' as the crew board the empty *Discovery*, squalor at Io and carry out some very fancy orbital manoeuvres. A transmogrified David Bowman returns as an emissary from 'them'. HAL is resurrected for a while. The climax features an amazing piece of planetary engineering in which Jupiter becomes a miniature sun to aid the progress to sentience of newly discovered but still primitive life in the seas beneath the icy surface of Europa. Next stop 20,001...

The problem with assessing this film is that, unlike 2001, the entire storyline was already in existence before a frame was shot, which made it a task for a skilled adaptor, not a creator of original images. To his credit Peter Hyams has evidently tried to make a film worthy of its pedigree; something that acknowledges, however feebly, the necessity for technical accuracy. That it fails has a lot to do with the modern commercial approach to SF films and the need to make things simple, immediate and familiar. If *Star Wars* made a billion dollars with ships that rumbled and hissed through space, then so should 2010. If *Alien* (execrable film) also hit the jackpot with its portrayal of a spaceship crew as bickering, dull, and 'ordinary', then why not 2010? Much hyped by MGM, 2010 seems tailor made for a generation that believe science must never be seen to dwarf the 'ordinary' concerns of man (unless it is magic of course- *Ghostbusters*, *Gremlins* and so forth).

It is illuminating in this context to look at some of the differences between book and film. The discovery of life on Europa is an event of enormous significance, thrilling and mysterious - in the book. Two scenes in the film, and hardly any coherent explanation of what we see. Jupiter and Io dominating both in the eyes and the minds of the mission crew in the book. Thin slivers of Jupiter hanging off the screen and a deathly quiet Io - in the film. (I wonder what happened to the *Cray* super-computer and the imaging staff from JPL?). But perhaps worst of all is the very different approach to the Russian crew of the *Leonov*. They are highly trained, tough, professional and business like; wary at first but generally friendly and co-operative - in the book. But in the film - from the very beginning both Americans and Russians work in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and barely concealed antagonism. The Russians win hands down in the competition to be churlish and parochial. Why is it that members of the American crew are the only ones to retain any spirit of wonder and awe at the events taking place outside the ship? Why is it that the only Russian to be genuinely friendly is conveniently killed soon after? Clarke at his worst is worthy but dull; at his best he is a great spokesman for international co-operation and humanism. The partisan approach Hyams

takes betrays the spirit of the original. Consider that Clarke dedicated his book to 'two great Russians', Alexei Leonov, the first human to 'walk' in space, and the dissident scientist Andrei Sakharov. In today's climate of international political brinkmanship he is to be congratulated for even considering writing about East-West co-operation in a popular literary genre. God knows it happens rarely enough. But Clarke is no blind utopian; his earthbound crisis is superpower confrontation across central America, the mission crew, whilst never forgetting that, are able to let their humanity transcend such madness when faced with the evidence of 'them'. Hyams allows central America to so influence and dominate the thinking of his mission crew that the reasons for their presence near Jupiter become almost devoid of meaning. Failure of nerve? Commercial expediency? Lack of ambition/ability? All of these, maybe... Kubrick triumphed with 2001 because he refused to compromise with his audience; use your brains or don't waste my time. Hyams does not need an audience with imagination, just so long as they are familiar with news-media portrayals of international politics. And, of course, state of the art special effects (generally excellent I will freely admit, despite the Jupiter aerobreaking manoeuvre looking a little too much like the fiery meteors in *This Island Earth*).

And finally - after Jupiter ignites and the mission is homeward bound, a message is relayed from 'them'. All these worlds are yours - except Europa. Attempt no landings there. As a dramatic device it is very convincing and very effective, being cryptic, spare and a little chilling. Hyams adds a rider about living in peace that personalises what was 'other' and robs it of all mystery and wonder. It puts scepticism into a story that was anything but in its original form. Neither for that matter was 2001, but I know there are any number of people who would argue with me about that!

2010 was better than I imagined it would be - no dogfights in outer space - but compared to what it might have been with more care, attention to detail and a lot more courage, it is pretty poor stuff.

To anyone interested in the background to the film I would recommend the recently published 'The Odyssey File', a short but interesting transcript of the communications between Clarke and Hyams during the making of the film. Did you realise that Boeing Aerospace gave technical help with designs for the aerobreaking sequence? Wow, mindboggling, huh!

MAX HEADROOM.

Channel 4, April 4th 1985.

Directors : Rocky Morton & Annabel Jankel.
Producer : Peter Wagg.
Screenplay : Steve Roberts.
Theme & incidental music :
Midge Ure / Chris Cross.

Reviewed by Terry Broome.

Enter Edдисон Carter, a roving reporter for Network 23's live 'WHAT I WANT TO KNOW SHOW.' The time? Thirty minutes into the future. The place? A block of flats. Something big is going down and Carter wants to know what it is. Then someone high-up pulls the plug, stranding Carter - with one fact: there's been an explosion - and a couple of thugs who proceed to beat him up.

Scene change. Focus: Mr. Grossman, chairman of the board on Network 23, arguing with various board members about the continued use of blipverts (flashed adverts which are designed to prevent channel switching), and getting some stick from a board member, then, in particular, Introduction: Brice, inventor of the blipverts, a teenage whiz-kid with a speech defect, university accent and no scruples - he couldn't

care less that blipverts cause some unactive people to "spontaneously explode", even his own "Rebus Tape", with a recording of said event, fails to move him. Carter merely stumbled over the "truth behind the blipverts" in the flats, and Brice suggests having him killed, but the reporter heads Network 23's most popular show...

Shift: Carter is persistent, and aided by Laura, a colleague, he breaks into the upper levels of Network 23's office block and views the Rebus Tape. Computers control, or else are connected to almost everything, and surveillance devices are easily broken into. Laura, at her computer, thus manages to by-pass alarms, open and shut (and, indeed, move) lifts, but Brice is also watching and sends two goons to capture him. A furious battle for domination over the lifts (with Carter a human yo-yo inside) and security barrier at the basement car-parks entrance gate ensues, ending when Carter ploughs into the "MAX HEADROOM" barrier-arm at speed on a motorbike. By the time Laura (who has a voice that sounds like a cross between Anna Ford and Annika Rice) reaches the basement, Carter has been carted off. Standing near the barrier, in the rain, she recalls, unfortunately, a certain Cadbury's Flake advert. This sequence, lasting about ten minutes, is, nonetheless, the most visually effective and gripping of the hour.

Shift: Grossman visits Brice and they discuss what to do with Carter. Brice suggests making an exact computer model of Carter's brain, his visual looks, right down to his thoughts (which would be controlled to a limited extent, the super computer would have free-will and self awareness. It would be able to converse with and be aware of its audience), and using it for a while before disposing of the real Carter (later on one of the goons hints at the political and oppressive uses such re-creating could achieve, but this avenue is ignored). Grossman, a shifty, sinister, paranoid type isn't satisfied with the computerised Carter and orders Brice to get rid of it. Brice gets his two goons to do this, at the same time disposing of the real Carter. The reporter is sold to an organ-bank, Nightingales, which is called a "body-bank" here, and the goons sell the computer model to Reg, owner of Big-Time TV, thinking he'd never be able to make it work.

Enter Reg, a down-on-his-luck entertainer and TV company owner, with a station bottom of the ratings. He and his wife (?) are lower-class, grubby, drab (a situation that soon changes), but Reg gets the computer working and christens the model "MAX HEADROOM" (a phrase he keeps repeating), and before anyone can do anything about it, the Max Headroom Show boosts Big-Time TV to the number one slot. Network 23, who have taken the blipverts off the screen temporarily, are furious at their falling figures. They find out about Max Headroom and Grossman visits Brice for an explanation.

Meanwhile...Carter has escaped from the body bank and eluded the goons who are chasing him. Laura picks him up and they visit Brice, leaving him tied up for Grossman to find.

Shift: Grossman, with two assistants, pays the goons to take them to Big Time TV and Brice is forced to go along. But Reg suspects that MAX is hot and clears off. The goons take the company to a dump where they proceed to crush the two assistants and load them up for Nightingales. Grossman and Brice try to make their escape, but the entire proceedings are suddenly interrupted by Carter and Laura who demand an explanation from Grossman about the blipverts, and Ben (remember him) screens the whole thing live.

View: Yes, this is ludicrous stuff, but it does have tremendous visual power and a fairly plausible background (ripples of the thriller BIRD OF PREY, the films VIDEO DROME and BLADERUNNER, indeed it has a Dickian-type atmosphere), although, for all this, it is closer to MAD MAX than NETWORK.

View 2: Certain SF themes, devices and preoccupations are prevalent (spontaneous combustion - slightly twisted, the media, computers and surveillance, Niven's "organ-legging" is slightly twisted, and the setting is an almost New Wave near future).

Close: The music and acting are excellent (though Brice does bare unfortunate resemblance to a young Richard O'Sullivan as he appeared in a certain Cliff Richard and the Shadows film), as is the photography and the editing, but the script and plot are lacking and the end is very weak; lacking a satisfying climax and denouement. This becomes understandable (and unforgivable) when you realise the whole thing was meant as a kind of extended trailer for a pop video show (which is, by the way, sometimes fairly amusing with the supposed "computer animation" of MAX) and I felt cheated. This shouldn't have had the soul purpose of being a trailer - some thought should have gone into it standing up as an independent whole. Perhaps that way the ending would have been much more powerful. As it is I can't help but think this was, for all its vision, a cheap shot.

VENUS SMILES.

Radio 4, 13th March 1984.

Adapted from the J. G. Ballard story by Michélene Wandor.

This was one of the plays in the storytellers series of short stories dramatised for radio. As such it was a standard radio production based on a story from the VERMILLION SANDS collection. It concerned a statue that plays music and enlarges itself. Although those that played the mysterious artist for it manage to break it up before it becomes too large, at the end of the story the houses they live in hum because of the need to re-use the statues parts in other structures. Nothing was added to the story by its adaptation for radio, so I assume it was chosen because it was one of Ballard's more readily understood short stories.

Reviewed by Matthew Shackle.



Fanzine Reviews

Please send all fanzines for review to Sue Thomason, 1 Meyrick Square, Dolgellau, Gwynedd LL40 1LT. If you are sending me a zine that you DON'T want reviewing in Matrix, please mark it DNR.

This time there is the good news, the bad news, and the bit that I forgot to put in the SHORT TITLE CATALOGUE, that being Trevor Mendham's address, which is oh blast he hasn't put it on his zine, and I'm down at the factory typing this up at the last minute (8.30 p.m. on March 18th, this should have been with Dave on the 16th, oh bother). I'm sure Trevor's address will be in Matrix somewhere now that he's clubs secretary...

The good news, and the bad news, depending on how you want to look at it, is that the next Matrix fanzine column will be the last one that I do (for a while, anyway). I feel I'm ending up wanting to praise the same few zines for issue after issue. And I GET the same zines, issue after issue. There's a lot I don't get (and perhaps you do), and a fresh view of the fanzine scene would probably be nice, and anyway isn't it about time I stopped reviewing the things and got back to producing a few of my own???

So what is worth talking about in more depth this time round? Two examples of a new-ish format that seems to have a lot to recommend it -- the loczine. THIS NEVER HAPPENS -- THE LOCS and ATU XVIII -- RELIGIOUS SUPPLEMENT both have the great virtue of actually having something to talk about. In ATU's case it's Christianity, for and against; a large bunch of interested people stating a wide variety of opinions make this a zine worth reading, and thinking about, and re-reading. TNH's loczine is based on TNH, of course; interesting again to see what people think about, what has been sparked off by the original articles, and the zine also contains an excellent conrep from Simon Ounsley.

Then there is STOMACH PUMP 6, a zine which I perused with great interest and attention, because it's all about... fanzine reviewing. What it mostly convinced me of was my total inadequacy as a fanzine reviewer. Not only am I not bright enough or educated enough to really understand all this implicit meaning, subtext stuff, I'm not FANNISH enough. I never was very fannish, really. I got into all this because I like reading SF, and I STILL like reading SF, and I'll probably like reading SF when I'm 90. So there. I feel I'm somehow commenting on all this fanzine production from the outside, without REALLY understanding what it's all about, even though I produce fanzines of my own sometimes. If you want to be made to THINK about fanzines and your involvement with them, read this zine.

Finally, there's DAMN THE TYPOS, which I enjoyed reading, because I thought it was well-written.

Perhaps one disadvantage of being an outsider is that it's becoming clearer to me all the time what a narrow range of zines I like. I don't get a lot out of many groupzines, which seem designed for people in or close to the production group, full of in-jokes that I don't understand or have any referents for. They tend to get filed WPB. I don't enjoy zines which seem to have been produced simply to have something to trade with. I do enjoy zines written because the writer has a passionate desire to communicate something, and a certain amount of skill in communicating it, and the "something" is not something like a group solidarity, but an IDEA.

You want me to define what an IDEA is? I can't -- for you. Perhaps you would have loved some of the zines I was unmoved by. Why don't you take over the column for a while, and have YOUR say? Starting in August... Offers to Dave at the Matrix editorial address. Don't say I didn't give you plenty of warning.

A SHORT TITLE CATALOGUE OF CURRENT FANZINES

ANSIBLE 42. From: Dave Langford, (see CLOUD CHAMBER for address.) For: £2.00 for 5 issues. You really ought to be getting this already.... Usual brilliant burble, scandal, gossip, misleading information for tourists, etc.

ATU XVIII -- RELIGIOUS SUPPLEMENT. From: Trevor Mendham,... For: usual? 14pp, basically a lettercol extending the debate on Christianity from ATU XVIII. Well worth reading.

BIG EYED BEANS FROM VENUS 2. From: Chuck Connor, Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wissett, Near Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 0NF. For: Members of The Organisation, prospective members of The Organisation, and (apparently) me (no I am NOT joining your apa, and if you lay ONE FINGER on my pussycat, Connor, words like "excruciating" and "agony" will take on a whole new dimension of meaning for you...) 10pp (gosh how I hate these smug creeps who turn out 10-page apazines when I'm putting my brain through the blender trying to meet my minac...) Good cartoons.

CLOUD CHAMBER 33, 34. From: Dave Langford, (see ANSIBLE for address. Oh, all right then; 94 London Road, Reading, Berks RG1 5AU). For: "Franks Apa and hardly anyone else, honest Frank, would I lie to you?" 2pp (each). Langfordzines.

DAMN THE TYPOS ?3? From: Malcom Hodkin, 45C South Street, St. Andrews, Fife, KY16 9QR. For: "In all honesty it must be said that this fanzine is available; damn the usual." 10pp. Look Hodkin, my printer won't do Greek. and why wasn't the title on the front cover? Getting a zine apparently called THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY doesn't exactly inspire one to rapture (or to read it...)

DRUMMING THE BEATING HEART. From: Robert Stubbs, 12 Halden Ave, Hellesden, Norwich, Norfolk NR6 6UX. For:editorial whim? 5pp. personalzine: article on The Caribbean, a gay nightclub.

GRAZING SAINTS 12. From: Cath Easthope, 113 Abbey Road, Erdington, Birmingham. For: The Organisation (Apa-B), editorial whim. 4pp, personalzine.

INTERZINE. From: ?? For: Editorial whim? 18pp. A zine funnier in concept than in execution.

JAWZ 3, 4, I DON'T WANT TO GO TO SWANSEA. From: Alex Zbyslaw, 197 Herbert Avenue, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH12 4HR. For: 35p, trade/loc. Combination gameszine and personalzine.

JOYOUS WINTER SOLSTICE - THE DECEMBER LASFAPA ZINE. From: Harry J. N. Andruschack, P. O. Box 606, La Canada - Flintridge, California 91011, USA. For: LASFAPA, whim. 4pp.

LILITH'S CHILD 16. From: Joy Hibbert, 11 Rutland Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs. ST1 5JG. For: The Organisation (Apa-B), editorial whim. 16 pp.

SPUNG! 1. From: Christopher Ogden, 202 Heywood Road, Prestwich, Manchester M25 5LD. For: trade, whim, stamp. 8pp, entertaining conrep plus article on synthesisers. Goodish firstish.

STOMACH PUMP 6. From: Steve Higgins, 62 Connaught Road, Reading, Berks. RG3 2UA. For: "available to anyone I deem to deserve it, for Trade, Loc or unseemly behaviour." 46pp, six articles, see review.

THE MIRROR CRACK'D. From: Caroline Mullan, 50 Cecil Road, Wealdstone, Harrow HA3 5RA. For: trade, loc, editorial whim. 9pp, personalzine, articles: Taming the Jungle, Family Celebrations, Wither Conventions?.

THIS NEVER HAPPENS 6 3/3 - 3D: THE LOCS. From: Lilian Edwards, 72 Gordon Road, Finchley, London N3. For: Having written to TNH, I guess. Loczine, consisting of 22 pages of lettercolumn, some illos, and a Novacon report. 36pp in all.

THOUGHTS 2. From: Mike Lewis, 4 Smallman Street, Stafford, ST16 3PF. For: usual. 16pp, loccol, fine comic strip.

WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE Vol. 4, no. 2. From: Jean Weber, P. O. Box 42, Lynham ACT 2602, Australia. For: trade, contribution, loc, artwork, interesting clippings, uncanceled US, UK or Australian postage stamps, editorial whim, or as a last resort, money. 18pp, good stuff this.

As of the August 1985 issue of Matrix the new fanzine reviewer will be:

GEORGE BARNETT, 49 YORK ROAD, ALDERSHOT, HANTS GU11 3JQ

so don't forget to tell anybody you know that publishes a fanzine to send a copy along to George at the above address.

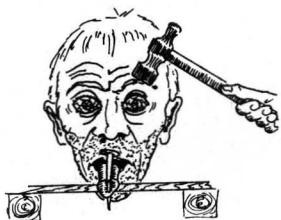
Opposite is the winning entry in this year's Ken McIntyre Award for fanzine artwork: Invasion of the Scargills by Iain Byers which appeared as the back cover of Wallbanger 10, edited by Eve Harvey.

INVASION OF THE SCARGILLS



COMING SOON - AT A PIT NEAR YOU





Nail em down...

I'll start the letters column this issue with the first two missives for the BSFA award forum proposed by Alan Dorey during the AGM...

Peter Pinto
80 Eastham Street
Lancaster LA1 1TS

I wish to protest, in advance of the 1985 BSFA awards, not that a non-SF novel has the opportunity to win the only British national award for best SF novel of the year, but that the current nominations short-listing procedure appears to make it necessary that it gain this opportunity only at the expense of an SF novel being dropped from the final ballot.

I earnestly urge that, where the awards organiser or any committee member feels there to be serious doubt about the SF nature of a nominee that makes the final ballot, the awards organiser be authorised to extend the shortlist to include the next most popular title.

If the BSFA membership wants a non-SF novel to win the Carnell, so be it - but I resent having the opportunity of considering a full shortlist of SF novels taken from me by any author's personal or professional popularity.

Steven Tew
144 Broadway
Wakefield
W. Yorks, WF2 8AQ.

As a new member of the BSFA, my first inclination is to sit back and take things as they come for a while.

The apparent running argument over letters on the nuclear debate, for example, has not been enough to pitch me out of my apathetic daze and join in the skirish. What does get up my nose is when the BSFA decides to let non-science fiction be nominated for a science fiction award. I've heard the arguments put forward to support this at the AGM, but they just don't stand up to rational analysis. "Empire of the Sun" is the main offending article, so let's consider the arguments in favour of its nomination. Firstly, it has been suggested that an SF writer should be rewarded for the excellence of his mainstream work, especially if the literary establishment fails or refuses to do so. Nonsense. The BSFA is not a literary charity giving compensation to writers who fail to sufficiently impress the mainstream establishment, even if an injustice has been done, or the writer's SF reputation has prejudiced literary elitists against his mainstream work.

Secondly, it has been suggested that "Empire of the Sun" is science fiction. I shall suspend judgement on this until someone gives full reasons for such an assertion (come on Mr. Dorey, Mr. Noir, I think you owe us an explanation), but it reminds me of the cinema audience who laughed hysterically throughout the bleak and depressing "Interiors" because they knew it was a Woody Allen film.

Third point: "It is of interest to science fiction readers." True, but so should a lot of mainstream literature. Science fiction may be a distinct genre, but no SF writer can totally divorce himself from the influence of modern (or past) literature, and no SF reader should deny it either. But this is hardly a criterion for eligibility for an SF award.

What is essential to remember is that if "Empire of the Sun" had been written by a mainstream author it would not have been nominated, or even considered, let alone considered by some to be SF.

No-one will deny there is a grey area of borderline SF. I have been reading SF for the best part of 20 years, quite long enough to be aware that there are no neat definitions of the genre, and that fierce disagreements about the nature of SF are inevitable. Priest's "The Glamour" is an obvious example here, and I would not be prepared to argue that a very good case cannot be made out for its inclusion in the BSFA awards list. However, it would be stupid to ignore the author himself when he says it is not SF. While this may not be a conclusive denial of its SF status, it should be enough to put doubt into anyone's mind when coupled with the fact that there are no exclusively "SF" elements in the novel.

The essential point is this. It does not matter how much an SF writer has written, or how good his SF is, or even how good the book in question is. What matters is whether the book is good science fiction. If it is neither good nor SF then it should not be nominated for an SF award. An effective award administrator should not be afraid to draw the line, however arbitrary, simply because he may make a mistake.

Nigel E. Richardson
9 Windsor Green
East Garforth
Leeds LS25 2LG.

Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear...M57 is a sorry thing. Where shall I start? The terrible

grammar? The entire air of the thing now has of being the Kiddies Korner of the BSFA mailing? Who are you aiming Matrix at? Gameplaying, comic readers who wouldn't know a possessive apostrophe if one sat on their face...or so it seems to me. I'm not being an elitist: I believe that Matrix should cover all the peripheral interests pertaining to SF, but you seem to have replaced these traditional subjects like fanzines, conventions and book news, pushing them out to make way for your own pet interests. Together with using Matrix to advertise your own mail order concern it strikes me that you apparently see the bloody thing as your own persine. This isn't on. There are plenty of magazines, both amateur and professional, for gamers. The same goes for comics fans. The whole point of Matrix, as I see it, is to supply those things that are not available elsewhere, like news of forthcoming books and films. Matrix 57 gives three lines to book news.

Come on, take a look back at the Matrixes produced by Graham Jones and Linda Strickler. There you have a balanced mixture of the informative and the fanciful, good, funny, relevant cartoons (if the guy who did - and I use that tense in the hope that he does not do any more - the DAN DAR "cartoons" is more than four years old than I feel very sorry for him as he can't spell, can't draw and isn't very funny), four or more pages of informative, thoughtful reviews in a sensible length, book, film, magazine news, etc.

I didn't particularly like the racist comment on the back, either.

Look, as I expecting too much? Should I lower my expectations of Matrix and assume it is aimed at the sub-literate and who don't like those disrespectful reviews in PI and the grown-up talk in Vector? Am I out of step with the likes of Dave Kelly who says "Nice to see Matrix widening its horizons with the games and comic features" then goes on to say that discussion about nuclear weapons should be excluded? I've always been a bit suspicious of people who believe that SF means a kind of specialist intelligentsia, but surely BSFA members have more going for them than bloody games and comics...

*** Sorry to have to say it, but I get the feeling you've read a different issue of Matrix to the one I put together. I had probably one of the best media review sections to grace an issue of Matrix, the fanzines made their welcome return, a very mixed letters section. Of course there's still a lot of work to do which is why I asked for somebody to help with the news column, I want to make the thing a lot more comprehensive in coverage and content. I've written to both Sue Thomason and Trevor Mendham saying there is no space restriction on either of their pieces as I see fanzines and clubs as a very important part of SF fandom and thus Matrix. I think that you're not really giving me a chance to get into my stride.

Yes, I advertised my mail order concern in Matrix, but I still had to pay for the space. I don't get any special considerations and the money goes to the BSFA to help pay for the mailings you receive. Next time you are in London have a look at the lamp-post down Serwick St., the racists you complain about is a legacy of when skinhead bands used to play the Marquee Club regularly. I helped put that page together nearly four years ago with an old friend of mine, and the signs on the lamp-posts are still the same...

Jane Reynolds
54, Sunner House
Maddas Street
Bow, London, E3 3RB.

Today I received the latest BSFA mailing, and I can only say how utterly infuriated I am with the standard of the association as a whole, in particular with Matrix. For those of you who didn't know it existed, joint membership is available at half-as-much-as again as normal membership; the sole advantage of this is getting two issues of Matrix per mailing. Last mailing my husband and I received, for the first time, two voting forms for the farcical BSFA Awards, thanks to Peter Pinto pointing this out at the meeting held just before mailing time. However, we have received only one final ballot sheet, thus making it impossible to vote unless we attend Torcon, which due to financial strain is impossible for us. I see absolutely no point in receiving two copies of Matrix when it cannot perform its function as a newspaper. I don't mind articles on comics, RPGs or nuclear debates, but I object strongly to the omission of any news, apart from one small column on new films. I personally expect to see something more along the lines of Locus (but without the gloss or colour) i.e. who is publishing what and when; what authors are busy; more information about cons, including reviews of as many as possible, not just Eastercons, and a general news stance. I also abhor its lighthearted attitude, especially when readers are trying to make serious comments. I lost count of how many points raised were neglected in M57.

On to other aspects of the BSFA. I'm afraid that what I have to say largely echoes what Philip Collins said. I sent an article to Geoff Rippington of Vector on 28/10/83, and when my husband spoke to him two months later he had yet to read it. I don't think he ever did. I also wrote to him three times (including three SAEs) to ask about contributing to Vector, in the belief that my article was not the right sort of article, or perhaps there was something specific he would like reviewed or discussed. I offered to send examples of my work, but after spending a small fortune on stamps, no reply was forthcoming. I wonder if he forwarded my letter to the new editors? I suspect not. Similarly my two letters to Orbiter (both with SAEs) were unanswered by Dorothy Davies despite her seemingly continuing whining for volunteers. Likewise Inferno. I didn't send anything to Focus because if it only receives three stories a year and publishes two which are both pieces of toss (I wonder what the third was like) then any self-respecting writer would not consider it challenging enough. If I sent a story to Focus I think it would ruin my credibility as an author because at present the quality of the stories it publishes must surely be stuff that no-one in their right

minds would print. If all three stories received are bad, then none of them should be printed.

On now to the issue of the BSFA printing a fiction magazine. Good. This is something that is vitally important, as the lack of contributors to Focus emphasises. I have read many excuses as to why this isn't practical or probable and worse still, washovers why it isn't worth arguing about (re M57, answer to G.R. Laker's letter. Because working for the BSFA is a 'labour of love' is not an answer to why you won't publish a fiction magazine). Your excuse for an article on taxing reading should have emphasised not just the fact that the cost of books and magazines would go up, but that this would mean fewer publishers would be willing to take risks with anthologies, genre fiction and especially new authors. Since a BSFA anthology could cover all these gaps in publishing that the proposed VATing is liable to leave (I write before this is definite), then shouldn't it be looking to aid the genre as a whole? If the Tories succeed in preventing the working classes from having reading material freely available by heavy taxation, then it will be up to the smaller groups to do what they can to keep up interest in the written word. The BSFA is supposed to aid the recognition of SF in all possible ways, and I hardly think that an article on how VAT will effect Dave Langford (though I respect him and his work) published after the budget is hardly going to help BSFA members to lobby Parliament on how important it is for all readers, writers and publishers in Britain not to have books taxed. I feel that the least the BSFA can do to aid this cause is to publish a fiction magazine, because if VAT goes ahead, then no-one else will!

I also have a number of complaints about the quality of the reviews published, for example 'This is Hawkwind...', wherein the reviewer got the subject matter of one of the songs wrong) and the tendency towards reviewing things which aren't SF as though they were (Return to Waterloo), presumably just to give the writer an ego-trip or to fill space, or both. I detest the arrangements for voting for the awards which is ill-conceived, badly thought through and improperly executed, and I intend to make lengthy complaint about that to the appropriate persons.

To sum up, the BSFA does nothing whatsoever to make it worth joining, and unless it very soon makes a stance against VAT on books or publishes something other than 2 or 4 self-praising magazines, then I intend to cancel my membership and warn all friends not to join. If anybody is interested in formulating a new SF society with better attitudes (guaranteed opposition to the nuclear threat, thereby eliminating stupid debates), I would be interested in hearing from them about doing so quickly, before the BSFA becomes even more stagnated than it is at present. I also intend to answer all letters - it cannot possibly take up any more time than the wasted hours I have spent writing to Vector, Orbiter and Paperback Inferno.

Miss S. Hender
613 The Brasches
Easton-in-Gordano
Bristol BS20 0LY

I'm afraid I am yet another of your transient members; I'm not renewing my membership after the first year. Since I am not active in SF fandom (don't go to conventions) and all I do is actually READ the stuff, you will probably say "Good riddance". Nevertheless I'm going to try and explain why I'm not rejoining even if you throw my letter in the bin at this point.

Basically I joined the BSFA in the hope it would tell me things I didn't already know. However I have seen no information in your publications which I could not have got from the national newspapers, publishers, authors agents, people in the trade (is the fantastically helpful SF shops around the country), authors and editors themselves, SF encyclopedias, magazines, etc. etc. Most of the reviews seem to be self publicist, or about the techniques of writing, and have to be read

in the same way one reads a GUARDIAN editorial: just read the last line to find what it's about. They never seem very informative about the book itself. For a society that has been going as long as the BSFA has I am very disappointed at how ineffectual it is and how keen on "preaching to the converted". I have actually received letters from people in the SF trade saying "What's the BSFA?" I passionately believe in SF as an important literature, perhaps THE most important, since it prepares us mentally for the future and expands our minds. Brian Aldiss says that it covers everything from "The big bang to The Heat Death of the Universe" and all over forms of literature is minuscule in comparison (if not trivial). There is no reason, for example, why schools (not colleges and universities, SCHOOLS) should not be encouraged to use major SF books as part of the syllabus, and I would have thought this was the kind of campaign an organisation like the BSFA ought to be running. After every new discovery in ANY field, I would like to see articles in the papers saying "Following the discovery of X by Professor Y at the University of Z, the BSFA today pointed out that this was predicted as long ago as 1954 by (insert name) in his book (insert name)". This wouldn't cost much, you could have a pre-typed page with blank spaces, all you would need to do is buy a rubber stamp. As THE BSFA (unless there's another one) shouldn't you be EVANGELISING Science Fiction? There are literally millions of people who still think that Science Fiction is FLASH GORDON, that it is "escapist rubbish", "kids stuff" and that you "grow out of it". "Science Fiction" is even used as a term of abuse: as in "it can't be true-it sounds like Science Fiction" applied to anything and everything that is a bit new and different.

This effectively prevents interest/research into anything new or different. Here we are in 1985 - in our lifetime we will be living on the planets (if they aren't already); shouldn't you be attacking this denigration of SF?

As far as I can see, the only information in BSFA publications, is news about conventions - so for people who don't go to these, it's not really worth being a member.

Joseph Nicholas
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Pimlico
London, SW1V 2ER.

People leave the BSFA for various reasons; but very few of them ever write and tell us what those reasons

are. So, in one sense, Philip Collins's piece in Matrix 57 is greatly appreciated - and in another sense, for its near-gratuitous lambasting of various BSFA editors, rather resented. Yes, we may not always have agreed with the points Philip put forward; yes, we may not have always responded to his letters and contributions as swiftly as he would have liked; yes, he may therefore have felt we were ignoring him. But this doesn't really excuse the sweepingly caricatured generalisations that he advances in lieu of a detailed argument - such as, for instance, his dark suspicion that Geoff was Rippington kept WARFing his Vector locs because he didn't agree with what Geoff was doing; which, as a "reason", strikes me as too paranoid in its implications to be taken seriously.

On the other hand, of course, Philip may well be correct; but then I can't speak for my fellow editors. I can, however, tell you that his comments about me, and what he sees as my "I'm right, you're wrong, piss off" attitude. "What's the point of writing locs when one continually meets this sort of response?" he asks, presumably referring to the letters that he himself has had published in Inferno's letter column and the dismissive way in which he feels I've treated them. I invite anyone with the issues in question to study the matters for themselves, however - in issue 43 he took issue with my interpretation of Chris Evan's The Insider, and in the three or four lines left to me at the bottom of the page he conceded that he might well be correct; in issue 44 he misread

a couple of lines in Chris Bailey's review of Gene Wolfe's The Fifth Head of Cerberus, as a result of which such of what he said was irrelevant or tangential and had to be corrected; and in issue 49 he passed general comments on Judith's illustrations in the previous issue, to which she responded by thanking him for noticing them in the first place. And I haven't heard from him since. He also complains about my response to his offer to review for Inferno, and in so doing leaves quite a lot out. It's true that I did reply to him with some stuff about "the why's and wherefores and symbolic purpose of reviewing", but my purpose in doing so was to ascertain whether or not he shared any of the same ideology that I and everybody else was and is working to; that is, the idea that criticism is of itself important and worthwhile, and not something to be undertaken lightly. What he doesn't say is that I also asked him, as I have asked everyone else who has made similar offers, to submit a sample review so that I could see what he was capable of. A few weeks later, I received a 100-word review of a Brian Stableford novel which he told me in a covering note he was also sending to the BSFA. At a BSFA meeting a couple of weeks after that, I remarked to him that I'd rather he sent me something which wasn't likely to be published elsewhere, and that whatever he sent should be rather longer. In order that I could reach a proper editorial judgement. He agreed with me on both counts; but nothing ever turned up. Surely Philip isn't seeking to blame me for his own failure to provide me with material? (And his line about his inability to type I can't understand at all. The way to learn, Philip, is to buy a typewriter and teach yourself. How do you think the rest of us have managed?)

I nevertheless regret that Philip should feel that the BSFA hasn't served him as well as he feels it should have done, and am sorry to see his go.

Chris Bailey
23 Clevedon Road
London, SE20 7QQ.

Philip Collins seems to have had a bad attack of pique and this is probably

because his motives in wanting to write for the BSFA are rather suspect. I don't think that the organisation was set up for the specific purpose of preening any person's ego. I look on writing for the BSFA as a means of sharing enthusiasms and ideas, and the various editors perform their functions in the same spirit. If one is concerned solely with personal glory, then undoubtedly there are better places where one can achieve that end. I hope the British Fantasy Society gives Philip what he wants.

Martyn Taylor detects a strong smell of rat. I will agree with him to the extent that sometimes I wonder what the hell is going on. Unfortunately the very nature of the BSFA works against efficient communications. The AGM comes but once a year, obviously; geographical difficulties and various personal commitments make other full committee meetings rare events (which is nevertheless not an excuse to hide behind - although run in people's spare time etc. etc., money does change hands). I am assuming that the BSFA is a democracy and, for example, Alan Dorey and a few committee members wanted a megamagazine against the wishes of the majority of ordinary members, they could be stopped. Isn't there supposed to be a consultation or something? Shouldn't one be dished out to everybody?

Dorothy, it is in fact your problem for which the Government designed its 'Protect and Survive' pamphlet. There is nothing you can do. Seal the house up and stay inside it.

*** Philip Collins's piece certainly caused a response and that can only be for the good, but I do feel that some people are missing points.

I specifically asked for somebody to help with the news column in last issue's editorial and have said to Alan Dorey on many occasions that I want Matrix to have a news section to rival Locus, but this cannot be done overnight,

it's a lot of bloody hard work. Sue Thomasson and I now issue newsletters regarding the state of the journals we edit to other editors and committee members in an effort to overcome communications difficulties, and hope that the new PI and Vector editors follow suit. I've got into the habit of seeing John Harvey every Friday lunchtime in order to compare notes. And my 'phone bill since I took over Matrix has gone up 33%. I put a lot of effort into Matrix, but I know it's not perfect and can only hope that the range and quality of submissions I get keep improving. That and a lot of effort will take Matrix as close to perfection as is possible.

Terry Broome,
45, Hykeham Road,
Lincoln, LN6 8AA.

Issue 57 was a treat.
Gone is the Andrex
paper and now Dave
Kelly's office-mates

will have to buy M or join the BSFA like the rest of us, instead of reading it off the toilet seats.

P. Nichols covered what I wanted to say, and though not all the mistakes were yours, I counted over thirty additional mistakes (many repeated), feeling that you had mutilated the article - a case of editorial G.P.H. No, really, I'm not that upset. You had teething problems which you've done an excellent job of ironing out with the latest issue.

I'm also glad someone wrote in about the shadier sides of the council (sounds like the Illuminati), and Bernard Smith went some way to explain their exasperating behaviour: with a little patience, more sympathetic ears, and a refrain from acting until the confusions had been sorted out, Bernard's proposals might have turned out to be viable. As things stand, CASSANDRA would be better off totally independent (the whole incident is even more senseless in the light of news of a possible fiction magazine at the end of the year, anyway).

Stewart Morri can try various places to discover the addresses of WHISPERERS and the infrequent FANTASY TALES, other than trying the actual magazines - by consulting LOCUS of THE BRITISH FANTASY SOCIETY, both of which having recently mentioned them.

Philip Collins has had some bad experiences with the BSFA, but it is disheartening he blames the Association as a whole and not the various editors, who are all in the process of standing down, or have already done so. Even if he is unsuccessful in being published, or even heard, as a news source, MATRIX and FOCUS are invaluable, and it is hard to believe there isn't some other reason for his leaving. However, though I sympathise with his troubles, guilt cannot be laid on the successors of the various editors he talks about.

Dorothy Davies
3 Cadels Row
Faringdon, Oxon.

I've heard some talk of
an Art Orbiter. But - I
know nothing about it,
or even whether it still

exists.

Let's assume it has long since slid into oblivion. Is anyone interested enough to revive it? I know there's plenty of artistic persons out there in BSFA land, how about an Art Orbiter? This could bring me confusion in letters of request of membership, should there be sufficient persons interested to start one or more, so does anyone have any ideas on what else to call an Art Orbiter section? Discussion via this lettercol or my letterbox welcomed. I'd like to involve more people in these collective groups if I can. Thoughts, people, please. I'm prepared to put people in touch with one another, for art reasons, on the same basis as standard Orbiter groups.

Alex Prentice
9 Polton Gardens
Leaswade
Midlothian
EH18 1BL.

I've been a member of the
BSFA nearly three years
now. In that time I've
seen numerous suggestions
made regarding introducing
'officials' to the
ordinary and, particularly,

new member. I've seen a few lists too (or have I) that stated Alan Dorey is chairman, etc., etc...

BUT NOT ONCE HAS ANYBODY MADE ANY ATTEMPT TO LET US KNOW WHO ALAN DOREY IS.

I further gather, from reading his columns in

the magazines, particularly Matrix, that he is an astute businessman looking after all us little BSFAers interests, at least in the running of the Association. But still nothing about who he is.

I'm not so well versed in everything SF as some, so please forgive my ignorances. Perhaps 95% of the names that crop up in the BSFA magazines mean nothing to me. I have neither the time nor the money to attend conventions where I might meet these people for myself. Perhaps what I'm suggesting might encourage more to attend conventions and other meetings as there could be less distance between the floor and the chair. I don't expect a pocket blog, everytime an obscure authors name is mentioned, but I would like to know more about those directly involved in the association.

What was A.D. before coming to the BSFA? What are/were his qualifications for climbing up that ladder? Has he written anything and, if so, what? What is he away from the BSFA 'office'? Has he a family? What age (not too specific), etc? And anything else that makes him more human. A sketched portrait or caricature (authentic) would help too.

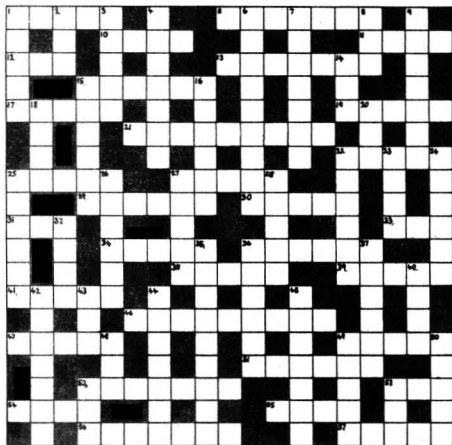
May I suggest that a booklet, the cheapest available, with one sheet to one person, giving us all the humanising bit as described above. It need not be revised frequently, but individual sheets can be re-issued as and when permanent 'posts' are taken over.

Anyone have similar ideas?

*** As a matter of fact...



Well, that's about all for this mailing, the deadline for the next Matrix is MAY 18th.



BILLION
YEAR
CROSSWORD
SIMON WALKER
CHRIS CARNE

ACROSS

1. Generic for early SF magazines. (5)
5. Join minds with a McCaffrey dragon. (7)
10. - Orchid, from The End of Time. (4)
11. Director of 'The man who fell to earth'. (4)
12. The opposition to science in The Rose. (3)
13. SF's answer to the Rev. Moon. (7)
15. Inescapable misfortune or Nivens cowardly creature. (6)
17. A child of 22 across and Gaea, also a satellite. (5)
19. It's falling caused consternation in Asimov's classic short. (5)
21. Pretender to Tolkien's throne. (9)
22. Poe's fallen house, reconstructed by Bradbury. (5)
25. It's railways were fixed by Kapp's Engineers. (5)
27. Star. (6)
30. Hi man. (anag.) Fremem term for testing season. (5)
31. Publishers, no old books! (3)
33. Uneven. (3)
34. Wood-nymph. (5)
36. Single-sided strip. (6)
38. Rabbit/Writer. (5)
39. Mystic number; hills, heavens, and sisters. (5)
41. Carroll made a nonsense of pursuing this! (5)
46. The questioning protagonist of that TV series. (6,3)
47. The stuff between the stars. (5)

49. Decide on Anne's world. (5)
51. Author of the 'Hainish' series. (2,4)
52. Creator of Sos, Var and Neq. (7)
53. Another of those sets of initials which means we couldn't find a proper word to fit, old Crash himself this time. (1,1,1)
54. Half-brother to the Bendin weyr-leader, Pern. (4)
55. Irritable little thinker from Blake's 7. (4)
56. Village of the Damned. (7)
57. Of Iliad and Odyssey fame. (5)

DOWN

1. Collaborator with De Camp on the 'Enchanter' series. (5)
2. Alien brigands of 'Dancers at the end of time'. (3)
3. Bird-woman, enticer of sailors in the Odyssey. (5)
4. Aldiss novel without end. (7)
6. Final resting place of The Ring. (5,4)
7. House name for Doc Savage authors. (7)
8. 'Triton' author, initially. (1,1,1)
9. Alien race who left us Gateway. (7)
14. Wife of Aegir, Norse ocean god. (3)
15. Alternate world, entered via a wardrobe. (6)
16. Author of the 'Amazing Stories' mysteries. (6)

18. Island weyr of Pern. (4)
20. Iota, eta, sigma; Greek form of Jesus. (3)
22. Planet, husband to Gaea. (6)
23. Science Fiction Achievement award. (4)
24. German space opera hero. (6)
25. False signs of Martian civilisation. (6)
26. Expatriate US author often compared to Vonnegut. (6)
27. Blish's FTL communicator. (5)
28. Actor, Enterprise science officer. (5)
32. Renegade ethical of Riverworld. (4)
35. Write this in Large and Friendly Letters! (4,5)
36. Wife of Pohl, New-wave enthusiast. (6)
37. The first psychohistorian (6)
40. Paradise. (4)
42. Gas giant of Sol. (7)
43. Giant bird of Arabian legend. (3)
44. Author? Are you positive? (3,4)
45. Furry nasties of Helleniconia. (7)
48. A long time! (3)
49. Sometime collaborator with 26 down, eg 'Black Alice'. (5)
50. Zelazny's world, of which ours is but a shade. (5)
52. Gil Hamilton has a long one! (3)
53. Pohl novel of a brave new world. (3)