



A·T·R·I·X

THE · NEWSLETTER · OF · THE · BRITISH · SCIENCE · FICTION · ASSOCIATION



CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	Maureen Porter	2
THE BSFA COLUMN		3
NEWS	Paul Kincaid et al	4
THE PERIODIC TABLE		7
FIFTEENCON REPORT	Caroline Mullan	8
MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD		9
CLUBS COLUMN	Ron Gemmell	9
INDEPENDENT BRITISH FAN POLL		10
THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTOLOGY	Jon May	12
SF & PHILATELY	Ken Lake	13
MEDIA REVIEWS		13
WRITE BACK		17
SOAPBOX		24

ARTWORK

Cover	Dave Collins
p. 2	Jim Barker
p. 6	Arthur (ATom) Thomson
p. 10	Arthur (ATom) Thomson
p. 13	Arthur (ATom) Thomson
p. 17	Richard McLaren

MATRIX EDITOR

Maureen Porter
114 Guildhall Street
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1ES

(0303 52939)

PAPERBACK INFERNO EDITOR:

Andy Sawyer
1 The Flaxyard
Woodfall Lane
Little Neston
South Wirral
L64 4BT
(051 336 3355)

FOCUS EDITOR

Paul Grunwell
218 Rainsford Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 2PD

(0245 350889)

VECTOR EDITOR:

David V Barrett
23 Oakfield Road
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 2UD

(01-688-6081)

Copyright: ©BSFA Ltd 1986. Individual copyrights are the property of the authors and editors.

ISSN: 0307 3335

Printed by: PDC Copyprint
11 Jeffries Passage
Guildford
Surrey
GU1 4AF

BSFA MEMBERSHIP costs £7 per annum and is available from:

Membership Secretary: Membership renewals:

Sandy Brown
18 Gordon Terrace
Blantyre
Lanarkshire
G72 9NA

Keith Freeman
269 Wykeham Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG6 1PL

RED SHIFT



Well, I'll keep it brief this time as there is plenty of other work jostling for room.

First of all, the Clubs Column is back, in the capable hands of Ron Gemmell, to whom all corrections, additions and deletions should be sent in future. I'm very grateful to Ron for taking on this particular aspect of *Matrix* and I hope everyone will try to support his mammoth task of assembling information.

Please for help. I'd like names of people willing to review fanzines of any description. Your name and address and an indication of what particular areas you are interested in (ie fiction zines/media/fanzines etc) would be helpful.

I still need more artwork as well. Small items are particularly welcome but the odd A4 piece as potential cover work wouldn't come amiss.

I'd also love to get some convention reviews in, especially the more specialised conventions that I am not likely to attend myself. Coverage has been very poor so far this year, and very out of date so can we make an effort on this please.

I'd also like some more contributions for the awards symposium. Response so far has been minimal, beyond the letters I already have. This is being held over to the February/March issue so there is still time to jot down your thoughts and send them in.

Apologies go to Bernard Smith for having to hold the piece on Cassandra over yet again, and to Bernie Evans, whose con report has irretrievably vanished into the filing system.

Apologies also to people who might have been expecting to hear from me - commuting and I do not get along well at the moment and I've had two bouts of flu and a stomach bug in under two months, which leaves me feeling less than inclined to do anything except die.

Apart from that I am most heartened with the general reaction to the new-style *Matrix* and hope that people will feel more inspired to make a contribution, no matter how trivial it may seem.

The next deadline is November 14th, rather short notice I agree, but we've had to juggle the dates of mailing sessions, and we didn't want to run into problems with the Christmas post and risk greater delays next time around.

In the meantime, read and enjoy!

WALKING ON GLASS

The BSFA Column

NEWS ROUNDUP

First, and most important, the BSFA BGM will be held during Novacon, on Saturday 1st November at 5pm. Obviously, we would like as many BSFA members as possible to attend, and provide a better turnout than at Alpacon earlier this year. Please make the effort to come and meet the faces behind the names, and also to let us know what you want done with the BSFA.

Remember 5pm on Saturday 1st November, during Novacon.

I've recently discovered that it has never been stated in *Matrix*, nor indeed in any other BSFA publication so far as I've ever seen, precisely where the collating and mailing sessions take place. In fact, I don't actually know myself, other than that they are held somewhere on Reading University campus. Given this fact, it's hardly surprising that people don't bother to turn up.

I had been hoping to print precise details of the location and how to get there, but unfortunately Keith Freeman hasn't passed on the map yet. In the meantime, if you are keen to come to the next mailing, on 6/7 December, please get in touch with Keith Freeman, 269 Wykeham Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 1PL, tel: 0734 666142 for details. Try sending an SAE.

I will be attending the mailing session which distributes this copy of *Matrix* to you, and will let you know what goes on in the next edition.

Another interesting but little known fact about mailing sessions that I have turned up is that labour does not go unrewarded. If you do go to a mailing session, a month's free subscription is tacked onto your existing subscription.

Unfortunately, Liz Holliday has had to relinquish her post as joint editor of *Focus* before the next issue appears, due to starting a teacher training course and spending four hours a day commuting across London. We wish her well with her course. However, Paul Grunwell is continuing as editor so *Focus* should be in this mailing along with everything else.

The final chapter of the *Antares* saga has drawn to a close. I collected the material from Alan Dorey when I was in Manchester recently. By mutual agreement between the BSFA and Cassandra, the material and artwork belonging to Cassandra members has been returned to Bernard Smith, whilst stories submitted by BSFA members have been passed to Paul Grunwell for possible future inclusion in *Focus*. There are presently no plans to produce *Antares* as the individual members of Cassandra have withdrawn permission to include their stories in view of the protracted production difficulties.

GETTING OUR ACT TOGETHER

by John Harvey

The last year has been difficult for the BSFA, particularly from the point of view of organising its activities. Since the departure of our last Chairman, Alan Dorey, the Association has been functioning on a 'day-to-day' basis, with little attention being given to forward planning. It must be taken as a measure of how well oiled the BSFA

machinery is that everything hasn't collapsed into total chaos during this period, although there has been a certain amount of disorder, particularly evident in the lack of various periodicals in mailings. In order to re-establish a planned and co-ordinated BSFA this summer has seen the reinstatement of Committee meetings.

The Committee is a sub-group of the Council (the constitutional managers of the BSFA) and consists of those people most concerned with the day-to-day running of the Association. This means the magazine editors, Treasurer, Company Secretary and so on. The current list consists of Dave Barrett, Paul Kincaid, Mike Moir, Andy Sawyer, Maureen Porter, Paul Grunwell, Hussain Mohamed, Phil Knight, Sandy Brown and myself.

Having started to meet regularly as a Committee, we came to the conclusion that our discussions should be publicized in *Matrix*, it being quite clear that many members felt that they were being kept in the dark about what went on at the organisational level of the Association. This is the first of what I hope will be a regular series, giving details of some of the topics discussed.

One of the first things we agreed on was that there should be a general improvement in the all the BSFA's magazines. From the highly favourable response that *Vector* has received lately, it was clear that the other magazines would benefit from similar treatment. This started with the new look *Matrix* in the last mailing and continues in this mailing with not only the very welcome return of *Focus* but also the first litho-printed edition of *Paperback Inferno*. We hope that this provides concrete evidence of our determination to improve the services and image of the BSFA.

Now comes the hard part. This 'new look' costs money, and whilst we all do our best to keep costs under control, prices do go up. After some years of the membership rates being held at £7 we decided that it was reasonable to ask for an increase. I shan't take up space explaining how inflation has eroded the present sub, but I do ask you to take a look at the latest mailing and ask yourselves whether you believe that 6 copies each of *Matrix*, *Vector* and *Paperback Inferno* plus 3 copies of *Focus* per year is worth £9.50 or not. I personally think it's worth a lot more. Many other organisations cost far more and give far less. The subject of increased subscription rates will be high on the agenda at the forthcoming BGM (see the notice with this mailing) so I trust that those of you with opinions on this will express them by that date, either in person or by letter.

The thorny question of a replacement Chairman has been heavily debated. We took a sideways look at the purpose and function of the Chairman, starting with the question "do we actually need a Chairman?" Some might consider that a heresy, but it is important to ensure that the effort is not expended on filling a position for the sake of it. In order to answer that question we analysed the role of the Chairman, and identified two major possible functions - acting as a figurehead, and acting as co-ordinator for the activities of all the other BSFA officers/workers. The first function should really be the domain of our President, Arthur C Clarke, which left the co-ordination aspect. This, whilst essential to the day-to-day running of the BSFA, doesn't really require a Chairman so we have created the post of Co-ordinator. Initially it fell to my lot to take on this task but this type of role sits uneasily on my shoulders so the 'chains of office' have been passed to Paul Kincaid who now spends his BSFA time not only editing the *Vector* reviews but also making sure that we're doing our jobs.

However, there are still a number of vacant positions for BSFA Officers which urgently need to be filled. These are Membership Secretary, Business Manager (now retitled Advertising and

Circulation Manager, to reflect the post's purpose more accurately) and, only just becoming vacant, Treasurer/Company Secretary. Phil Knight has been performing this rôle for the last year but is finding it increasingly difficult to devote time to the work and feels that he must step down as soon as a replacement can be found. If you have a knowledge of fiscal matters, preferably with some accountancy qualifications, and can spare some time, please get in touch with Paul Kincaid. The same applies with the other vacancies, but please be sincere about your interest. It is vital that you are totally committed to the BSFA.

We also considered membership numbers. Plans for increasing the numbers have been extensively discussed, together with the attendant problems of servicing a much larger membership. A number of possible recruitment methods are being examined, such as placing ads in books and periodicals and we are planning to increase the level of publicity in the near future.

The major event for a membership drive next year will be the World SF Convention in Brighton, and plans are in progress to make the most of this opportunity to reach the large numbers of potential members. Details will be made available in future mailings but you can be certain that we will be looking for assistance from you out there!

On the subject of membership numbers, these are in fact on the increase again. At the last mailing, there were just under a thousand envelopes sent out, which gives a very fair assessment of the current level of memberships, and contrasts favourably with the 800 or so mailings that were being sent out a year ago.

These then are the major items discussed recently. Space limitations and the need to make this as readable as possible mean that only the major topics raised have been included but I hope that it does give some idea of the direction in which we are trying to point the BSFA. As always, your ideas and opinions are wanted and most welcome.

THE BSFA PROFILE

ANDY SAWYER was born in 1952. We then skip over a few years until 1974 when he discovered the BSFA, pausing only to mention education (Essex University 1971-1973) and marriage (1972 to Mary. They have two children, only one of whom is known to read SF).

He experienced a fairly nomadic existence as a child: in a world where three years in the Far East could be followed by three years in the Mediterranean, the intergalactic vistas and alien customs of SF seemed to make a lot of sense.

Most of his fanish activity has been within or on the fringes of the BSFA. He once edited *Matrix* but left to revitalise the local Labour Party and discovered that politics is probably more fanish than fandom. Reviews and articles have been published in many fanzines over the years: the occasional poem has escaped from the Vagon Board of Poetic Control. Ironically, the greatest circulation - and money - he has attained was from an article which has nothing to do with SF. Perhaps fate is trying to tell him something.

He has produced a small-circulation zine, *ACNESTIS*, but this is now in abeyance while he tackles *PAFERRACK INFERNO*. He sees the function of FI as attempting as wide a coverage as possible of recent paperbacks - fiction and non-fiction - which may be of interest to an SF/fantasy readership: able, perhaps more so than *Vector*, to give brief evaluations and re-evaluations of reprints and standard SF as well as books on the borderland between SF and other modes of writing.

He thinks that SF is potentially the richest mode of literature but also potentially one of the drabest, and for this reason will not be averse to pointing out something which is only marginally SF: he thinks it has something to offer the SF community, while skating as quickly as possible over something which is quite definitely SF if it really has nothing of interest to say.

He has worked as a librarian for the past ten years and has recently moved from inner-city suburbia to rural suburbia: now lives in Little Neston two minutes from open country and within sight of the River Dee. He has thought long and hard about appending a list of his favourite writers but as it would be long, full of qualifications, and probably different tomorrow, has. He will, however, admit to feeling at times that if Michael Moorcock is not the most effective writer of the last three decades, he ought to be.

NEWS

Compiled by Paul Kincaid and Maureen Porter (with a little help from *Locust*, Stan Nicholls, and other nameless sources)

AWARDS

David Brin, newly arrived in Britain where he intends to spend the next year, has won the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for his novel *The Postman*.

Nominations for the 1986 World Fantasy Awards are:

NOVEL

The Damnation Game - Clive Barker
Illywhacker - Peter Carey
The Dream Years - Lisa Goldstein
Wintering - Paul Hazel
The Vampire Lestat - Anne Rice
Song of Kali - Dan Simmons
 the last three of which have not yet been published in this country, nor do we know of any plans to publish them.

NOVELLA

'Flight' - Peter Dickinson
 'Madelman's God' - T.E.D. Klein
 'Dead Image' - David Morrell
 'The Gorgon Field' - Kate Wilhelm
 'Dare I Eat a Peach?' - Chelsea Quinn Yarbro

SHORT STORY

'Paper Dragons' - James P. Blaylock
 'The Slovo Stove' - Avram Davidson
 'Return of the Dust Vampires' - Sharon Farber
 'The Jaguar Hunter' - Lucius Shepard

COLLECTION/ANTHOLOGY

Books of Blood IV-VI - Clive Barker
Black Venus - Angela Carter
Skeleton Crew - Stephen King
Night Visions 2 - Ed. Charles L. Grant
Imaginary Lands - Ed. Robin McKinley
Whispers V - Ed. Stuart David Schiff
Faery! - Ed. Terri Windling
Dragonfield and Other Stories - Jane Yolen

ARTIST

Thomas Canty
 Jeff Jones
 Alan Lee
 J.K. Potter

SPECIAL AWARD/PROFESSIONAL

Thomas Canty & Phil Hale
 Donald M. Grant
 Pat LoBrutto
 Terri Windling

SPECIAL AWARD/NON-PROFESSIONAL

Jeff Conner
W. Paul Gansley
Paul Nikol & Scott Stadalsky
David Silva
Douglas Winter

The awards will be decided by a panel of judges consisting of: Ellen Datlow, Patricia McKillip, Robert A. Collins, Dean R. Koontz and Charles De Lint. The winners will be announced at the awards banquet in Providence, Rhode Island, USA on 2nd November.

THE BRITISH FANTASY AWARDS 1985 were announced during Fantasycon XI. The nominations were as follows, with the winner at the head of each section.

BEST NOVEL

The Ceremonies (Pan) by T E D Klein
The Damnation Game (Weidenfeld & Nicholson) by Clive Barker
Hawkmoor (Jonathan Cape) by Peter Ackroyd
Obsession (Granada) by Ramsey Campbell
The Tea Party (Tor) by Charles L Grant

BEST SHORT FICTION

The Forbidden (Books of Blood 5/Fantasy Tales 14) by Clive Barker
Flying to Byzantium (Twilight Zone) by Lisa Tuttle
Kite Mistress (Interzone) by Keith Roberts
The Last Illusion (Books of Blood 6) by Clive Barker
The Sneering (Fantasy Tales 14) by Ramsey Campbell

BEST SMALL PRESS

FANTASY TALES ed. Stephen Jones & David Sutton
Dark Dreams ed. David Cowperthwaite & Jeff Dempsey
Fantasycon X Programme Book ed. Stephen Jones
Ghosts and Scholars ed. Rosemary Pardee
Whispers ed. Stuart David Schiff

BEST FILM

A Nightmare on Elm Street Dir. Wes Craven
Fright Night dir. Tom Holland
Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome dir. George Miller,
George Ogilvie
The Purple Rose of Cairo dir. Woody Allen
Re-animator dir. Stuart Gordon

BEST ARTIST

J K Potter
Jim Burns
Dave Carson
Mark Dunn
Stephen E Fabian

A special award was made to Les Flood in the year of his retirement from his position as head of the Carnell Agency.

Meanwhile from Ezoon II, the 23rd Japanese SF Convention, comes word of the Setun Awards, the Japanese equivalent of the Hugos:

BEST JAPANESE NOVEL: *Teki wa kaizoku/Kaizoku ban* (Our Enemies are Pirates/Pirate version) by Chobei Kanbayashi

BEST JAPANESE SHORT STORY: 'Super Phoenix' by Chobei Kanbayashi

BEST FOREIGN NOVEL: *The Garments of Caean* by Barrington J. Bayley

BEST FOREIGN SHORT STORY: 'Unicorn Variations' by Roger Zelazny

BEST MEDIA: *Dark Crystal*

BEST COMIC: *Doum* (A Child's Dream) by Katsuhiko Ohtomo

The short list for the £15,000 Booker Prize has just been announced. The Booker is one of the richest and certainly the most famous of our literary awards, and in recent years a number of SF-related books have found their way onto the short list. After J.G. Ballard's *Empire of the Sun* in 1984, there was *Illywhacker* by Peter Carey and the eventual winner, *The Bone People* by Keri Hulme last year. This year is no exception, among the nominees is Margaret Atwood's haunting futuristic fable *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Maths Claesson from Stockholm is this year's SEFF winner. SEFF is the fan fund established to bring Scandinavian fans to Britain and vice versa. Maths, a BSFA member, will be at Novacon.

PEOPLE

Dragon Aid has raised an estimated £10,000 for the starving in Africa. The SF and fantasy gaming world's contribution to Live Aid played 84 hours of Advanced Dungeons and Dragons between 22nd July and 25th July, easily beating the previous world record of 66 hours. With an audience of some 2,000 people attending the event during the five day marathon, which included an art show, auctions and quizzes as well as the world record attempt. Two teams of nine players began, and the survivors - Liz Holliday, Matthew Harmon Smith, David Sorrell, Sharon Springell and James Wallis - expect their record to be confirmed by the *Guinness Book of World Records* Ltd. The project initiator, Liz Holliday, warns anyone attempting something similar to have professional medical assistance on hand, and to be prepared for a very physically demanding time. Plans are already underway for another Dragon Aid project next year. Anyone interested in contributing to Dragon Aid should contact: Victoria Kassner, 5th Floor, Broadmead House, 21 Pantons Street, London, SW14 4DR.

David Pringle has stepped down as editor of *Foundation* in order to devote more time to *Interzone*. The new editor of *Foundation* is regular *Vector* reviewer, Edward James.

Kim Stanley Robinson is to attend Novacon. The highly acclaimed author is spending a year in Europe. Meanwhile his novel *Icehenge* is to receive its first world hardback edition from MACDONALD in October.

BSFA President Arthur C. Clarke has now left Sri Lanka 'for an indefinite period'. There is no explanation for this move, and it is not clear where he has gone to.

Les Flood has retired from the Carnell Literary Agency. The Agency, which handles many of our science fiction writers, is now in the hands of Pamela Buckmaster. Les Flood has long been one of the most respected figures in the British SF scene. His retirement was marked by a special meeting of the SF Supper Club on 19th September, where he was presented with a bottle of vintage wine. Among the visitors present at the Supper Club that night were David Brin and Bruce Sterling, who is in this country to attend Milford.

PUBLISHING

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW (formerly The Alien Critic) is to cease publication with issue 61, due at the end of the year. Deteriorating health has forced publisher and editor Richard E Geis to choose between SFR or devoting himself to professional writing. (Since 1963 he has published scores of sex novels under his own name and various pseudonyms. As 'Richard Elliott' he has produced several thrillers in collaboration with Elton T Elliott).

All is not quite lost, however, as Geis will continue to publish his 'personal journal' *The*

Naked Id, which can be highly recommended. UK readers can secure copies of SFR nos 60 and 61 for \$3 each, whilst *The Naked Id* is \$1.60¢ a copy, prices including postage. Both are available from Science Fiction Review, PO Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211, USA.

Following the success of their SF Classics line, GOLLANCZ are to increase their number next year from eight books to 12. Four titles for Spring 1987 have already been announced. These are: *A Fall of Moondust* - Arthur C. Clarke, *Rogue Moon* - Algis Budrys, *A Vreath of Stars* - Bob Shaw and *Man Plus* - Frederik Pohl. In addition, two more books have now been added to the list, and they are co-incidentally the first of the Gollancz Classics that were not first published by Gollancz. They are: *Inverted World* - Christopher Priest and *Flowers for Algernon* - Daniel Keyes.

More news from GOLLANCZ. Their venture into mass-market paperbacks, masterminded by Malcolm Edwards is to be launched in May 1987. Their first titles will be: *Witchworld*, *Web of Witchworld* and *Stargate* - Andre Norton, *Hefira* - Greg Bear, *Eye Among the Blind* - Robert Holdstock, *Angel and Sword* - C.J. Cherryh, *Mission of Gravity* - Hal Clement and *Night Walk* - Bob Shaw.

An American court has just ruled it illegal for British books to be imported into America for resale. It's a decision that's liable to have a serious effect on a number of American specialist booksellers, though it is too soon to know how it might affect anyone over here.

ARROW is rumoured to be considering dropping E.C. Tubb's Dumarest saga. They have stopped reprinting volumes that drop out of print and may stop taking the series altogether. Already they are half a dozen volumes or more behind the American publisher, with October seeing the appearance of Number 26, *The Coming Event*.

It has definitely been confirmed that Robert Holdstock and Chris Evans are editing an anthology of new British fantasy to be published by ALLEN & UNWIN to coincide with the Worldcon. All stories bar one are with the editors, and Keith Roberts and Lisa Tuttle are among the contributors.

HEADLINE is a new British publishing house that was launched on July 7th with £1.5 million capital. Their plans for 1987/88 include 24 new science fiction and fantasy novels.

HEINEMANN are responsible for a bold new experiment which deserves every support. The new hardback novel *Continent* by Jim Crace, which is marginally SF, is being published at the low price of £4.95, about half the normal price for a full length hardback novel.

Colin Greenland's second novel, *The Hour of the Thin Ox*, due from ALLEN & UNWIN in August, has been put back until the New Year for reasons that are a mystery to Colin himself.

NEW AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS

More mainstream writers are writing SF and SF-related books. The latest are: Paul Theroux - *O-Zone* (HAMISH HAMILTON, October), and Julian Barnes - *Starting at the Sun* (CAPE, September).

CAPE are also publishing a children's book which makes use of the latest technology whereby holograms can be transferred directly to the page. The book is *The Mirrorstone* by Michael Palin, Alan Lee, Richard Seymour.

Imaginary Lands edited by Robin McKinley and nominated for the World Fantasy Award (see earlier) along with a number of its contributions, is to be published by JULIA MACRAE in March 1987.

Gwyneth Jones has another children's book published under her pseudonym Ann Halam, it is *King Death's Garden* from ORCHARD BOOKS.

Diana Wynne Jones also has another book out, following hard on the heels of such recent successes as *Fire and Hemlock* and *Archer's Gnom*. The new book is entitled *Howl's Moving Castle* but so far we don't know who the publisher is.

GREENHILL BOOKS continue to rediscover early SF. Upcoming are: *Olympian Nights* - John Kendrick Bangs (September), *The Doings of Raffles Haw* - Arthur Conan Doyle (October), *Planetoid 127* - Edgar Wallace (November) and *Tourmalin's Time Cheques* - F. Anstey (December/January).

PETER OWEN has reissued the Anna Kavan classic *Ice* in hardback for the first time since its original appearance in 1967.

Due from HEINEMANN, *The Men who Mastered Time*, a first novel by David Butler about time travel and Coleridge's poem *Kubla Khan*. Also a Douglas Adams omnibus, *The Complete Hitchhiker*. Adams is also editor of the famine relief charity book, *The Utterly Utterly Merry Comic Relief Christmas Book* due from PAN in October.

New titles from THE WOMEN'S PRESS SF line: *The Two of Them* - Joanna Russ, *I, Vampire* - Jody Scott, *The Watcher* - Jane Palmer, and *The Travails of Jane Saint and other stories* - Josephine Saxton who also has *Little Tours of Hell* out from PANDORA.

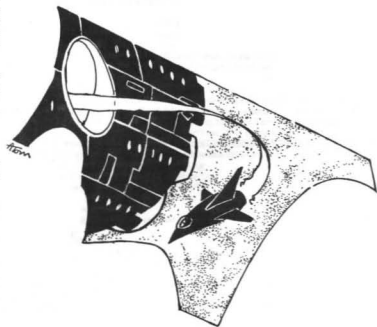
The Isaac Asimov business continues relentlessly. *Foundation and Earth* in hardback and *Robot's and Empire* in paperback come from GRAFTON in October, along with the series for children *Asimov's Ghosts*, *Asimov's Extra-terrestrials*, *Asimov's Monsters* and *Asimov's Mutants*. And for ROBERT HALE he edits *Isaac Asimov's Choice*.

Lisa Tuttle's new book, due from SPHERE, is also to have a hardback edition from SEVERN HOUSE. It will be her first hardback.

As for the other new books for September and October:

ALLEN & UNWIN - *The Wandering Fire* - Guy Gavriel Kay (Second part of the Fionavar Tapestry) and *Swordpoint* - Ellen Kushner.

BANTAM PRESS - *The Golden Horn* - Judith Tarr (Second in the Hound and the Falcon trilogy).



GRAFTON - *The Brave Little Toaster* - Thomas Disch, *Nature's End* - Whitley Streiber and James Kunetka both in hardback, and the following paperbacks: *Helliconia Winter* - Brian Aldiss, *The Copper Crown* - Patricia Kennealy, *Requiem at Rogano* - Stephen Knight.

GOLLANCZ - *The Lordly Ones* - Keith Roberts (a month later than advertised), *Humpty Dumpty in Oakland* - Philip K. Dick, *Trillion Year Spree* - Brian Aldiss, *Ron* - Greg Bear, *Soldier of the Mist* - Gene Wolfe, *Equal Rites* - Terry Pratchett, *Dad's Nuke* - Marc Laidlaw. Followed in November by a re-issue of *The Venus Hunters* - J.G. Ballard and *Huysman's Pets* - Kate Wilhelm.

CORONET - *The Mammoth Hunters* - Jean M. Auel.

METHUEN - *Some Will Not Die* - Algis Budrys, *The Devil's Looking Glass* - Simon Rees, *Like Nothing*

on Earth - Eric Frank Russell (First British publication of this collection).

FUTURA - *Gods of the Greatway* - Michael Coney (sequel to *The Celestial Steam Locomotive*), *The Masters of Solitude* - Marvin Kaye, & Parke Godwin, *The Seed Bearers* - Peter Valentine Trillett.

ARENA - *Not Wanted on the Voyage* - Timothy Findlay.

NEL - *The Voyage to the City of the Dead* - Alan Dean Foster, *A Blackbird in Darkness* - Freda Warrington.

SPHERE - *White Wing* - Gordon Kendall, *Nicar!* - Peter Tremayne.

ARROW - *Free Live Free* - Gene Wolfe.

THE PERIODIC TABLE

CONVENTION ROUNDUP

NICON 86 The First Northern Ireland Science Fiction Convention

26th October 1986, Students Union, Queen's University, Belfast

Guest of Honour: Anne McCaffrey, James White, plus Peter Morwood, Chris Boyce
Fan Guest of Honour: to be announced

Membership: Attending £2.00, Supporting £1.00

Send cheques/POs/etc, payable to "Queen's Clubs and Societies", to Thomas Ferguson, Science Fiction Society, c/o QUB, SU Building, University Road, Belfast, BT7 1PE

12th WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION

30th October - 2nd November 1986, Providence, Rhode Island, USA

Guests of Honour: Ramsey Campbell, Charles L. Grant, J. K. Potter

Membership: Attending \$45 (no at-the-door memberships, size limit 750), Supporting \$20

Information from 12th World Fantasycon, Box 3251, Darlington Branch PO, Pawtucket, RI 02861, USA.

NOVACON 16

31st October - 2nd November 1986, De Vere Hotel, Coventry

Guest of Honour: E.C. 'Ted' Tubb
Special Guest: Chris Evans

Membership: £5.00 attending, £10.00 on the door

Send cheques/POs/etc, payable to "Novacon 16" to Graham Poole, 86 Berwood Farm Road, Wyldes Green, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands.

Room rates: Single per night £21.50, Twin/double per night, per person £16.50

STAR TREK PLATINUM ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION

15th-16th November 1986, Boston

Guests of Honour include Gene Roddenberry, George Takei, Diane Duane and many more.

The rates are too complicated to summarise here but information to be had from Platinum Anniversary Convention, Box 6838, Broad & Water PO, Boston, MA 02102, USA.

DARKOVER GRAND COUNCIL MEETING 9

November 28-30 1986, Wilmington, DE, USA

Guest of Honour: Anne McCaffrey

Info: Darkover Grand Council Meeting, PO Box 8113, Silver Spring, MD 20907, USA.

CONCEPTION

A celebration of the 50th anniversary of the first ever SF convention, held in Leeds in 1937.

13th-15th February 1987, Queen's Hotel, Leeds

Membership: Attending £6.00

Send cheques/POs/etc, payable to "Conception", to 12 Fearnville Terrace, Oakwood, Leeds, LS8 3DU

CORFLU 4

20th-22nd February 1987, Cincinnati, Ohio

Information from Bill Bowers, 2468 Harrison Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45211, USA

A con for fanzine fans, nearest approximation might be a combination of Mexican and the now defunct Silicons.

ORICON

6th-8th March, Essex (anywhere in particular?)

Membership: £12.00 plus 3 SASEs

Send cheques/POs/etc to 66 Burdett Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 7JW

This is apparently an Irwin Allen cum General Media Convention. Who is Irwin Allen, and can I have some more information about this one please.

3rd INTERNATIONAL NICE SF CONFERENCE

23 April - 7, Nice, France

An academic conference with the theme: Edgar Allan Poe and Visionary Reason

Queries and proposals for papers to: Mrs Denise Terrel, director, Centre d'étude de la Métaphore, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Université de Nice, 98 bd Edouard Herriot, SF 369, 06007 Nice Cedex, France

CAPCON

1987 Australian National SF Convention

18th-20th April 1987 (MOVED from 25th-27th April)
Queanbeyan, ACT, Australia

Guests of Honour: Robert Asprin & Lynn

Abbey

Fan Guest of Honour: John Newman

Membership: Attending: A\$25 in advance, A\$30 at the door, Supporting: A\$5

Information from Capcon, PO Box 312, Fyshwick, 2609 ACT, Australia

BECCON '87

The 1987 Eastercon

25th-27th April 1987, Metropole Hotel, NEC, Birmingham

Guest of Honour: Keith Roberts

Fan Guests of Honour: Malcolm Edwards & Chris Atkinson

Membership: Attending £11, Supporting £6

Send cheques/POs/etc. payable to "Beccon", to Beccon '87, 191 The Heights, Northolt, Middlesex.

SOL III '87

Star Trek con

May 1-4, 1987, Liverpool

Information: Jean Barron, 39 Dersingham Avenue, London E12 5QF

MYTHCON XVIII

Mythopoeic Society Conference. Theme: Tolkien Retrospective

14th-27th July, 1987, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

Write for further information to Mythcon XVIII, c/o John D Ratcliff, Conference Secretary, 628 N 117th Street #2, Milwaukee, WI 53233, USA.

CONSPIRACY '87

The 45th World SF Convention (the first in Britain since 1979)

22nd August - 1st September 1987, Metropole Hotel & Brighton Centre, Brighton (surprise, surprise)

Guests of Honour: Doris Lessing, Alfred Bester, Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, Jim Burns

Fan Guests of Honour: Ken and Joyce Slater, Dave Langford

Toastmaster: Brian Aldiss

and another cast of thousands, I don't doubt.

Membership: Attending £25 (children 8-14 £12.50), Supporting £10

WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION '87

30th October-1st November 1987, Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Guest of Honour: Piers Antony

Fan Guest of Honour: Frank Kelly Freas

Information from World Fantasy Convention '87, Box 3251, Darlington Branch PO, Pawtucket, RI 02861, USA

ALBACON '88

tentatively July 1988

Central Hotel, Glasgow, Scotland

Guest of Honour: C J Cherryh

This is a Eurocon bid but will apparently go ahead regardless.

Information from Albacoon '88, 105 Craigton Road, Govan, Glasgow, Scotland, G51 3RQ.

I also hear a rumour that the Dragon Aid people, now known as Myth/real I believe, are trying to organise an SF convention with gaming and comics elements, scheduled for sometime in the next year or so. They are looking for help and advice from experienced con-runners so anyone willing to give a hand, please contact Paul Hanton, 189 Wellfield Road, Streatham, London SW16 2BY

FIFTEENCON: THE BSFG 15th ANNIVERSARY PARTY

by Caroline Mullan

Fifteencon began at Euston Station at five in the afternoon - the first we'd met five people waiting for trains we wondered if the whole of London fandom was going to Fifteencon. It wasn't.

We arrived at the Angus to find it had been redecorated since Mexico; all the panelling is now light oak, tastefully picked out with brass, and the upholstery is now pink and blue! Unfortunately they hadn't quite finished the whole hotel, and the convention was squeezed into half the normal space. The main programme room was out of action entirely, and the smell of paint was all pervasive in the bar, quite ruining the taste of the beer.

Rog Peyton set the convention off to a good start by arranging a mass signing session on Friday evening (thus ensuring the presence of large numbers of authors), and providing free booze for the party afterwards. The mass signing session was both a little more than expected and a little less: Freda Warrington, who had not been advertised, was at her first signing session ever, and was quite charming; but neither Colin Greenland nor his new book were in evidence. Unfortunately I didn't discover the free booze until after I had bought at least one round, but after that I was set for the evening, and for a good few hours of the morning too. The good news in the morning was that the breakfast tickets could be used for lunch; the bad news was that the Angus managed the unusual trick - even for them! - of making inedible salad. I did not eat well that weekend.

The Friday evening party set the tone for the entire convention: one long boozy party. The programming was minimal and disorganised, with only the Joint Guest of Honour appearance by Harry Harrison and Brian Aldiss generating any noticeable enthusiasm. The Memory Lane exhibition consisted mostly of Brum Group newsletters; people had refused to lend photographs, perhaps because a portfolio had gone missing at a previous convention and was not recovered. If you felt like spending money you could buy books and join future conventions, but most people didn't. On Saturday night there was another party, which started with cutting the birthday cake - a very good cake it was too! - and by all accounts the party was just as good as the one the night before. I don't know: I'm sure that something worth mentioning must have happened on Sunday, but I can't remember what. Most people went home, including me.

Fifteencon was a very good party - I enjoyed it; but it was not much of a convention.

MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD

HELP WANTED

I'm trying to compile a complete listing of SF clubs and groups in the UK and worldwide for *Conspiracy*, the Worldcon in Brighton in 1987.

If you are a member of a local or university group, please GET IN TOUCH as soon as possible. **WHEN** and **WHERE** does your club meet and **WHO** should I send information to?

I am also collecting fanzines, clubzines and newsmagazines from now until August 1987, for display in the fan room at *CONSPIRACY*. This is good publicity for your group or zine. Use it!

GO ON! Deluge me with mail!!!

I am Pam Wells of 24a Beech Road, Bowes Park, London, N11 2DA. Or you can phone me on 01-889-0401 after 8pm and at weekends.

AUGURIES Nos 3 & 4 are now available from Nik Morton, 235 West Street, Fareham, Hants, PO16 0HZ (Fareham 238944) price 70p (inc p&p); issue 5 will be available mid- to end-August. Contributions welcome, up to 3,000 words on any SF-oriented subject, poetry or prose, illos also welcome. SF only please, no non-fiction articles.

WANTED

Eric Frank Russell's *THE GREAT EXPULSION*, hardback or paperback. Offers to Tom A Jones, 14 Haywood, Bracknell, Berks, RG12 4WG

Brian N Ball: *Timepit* and *Timepivot*, Charles Fort: *Wild Talents*, Joe Haldeman: *Cosmic Laughter*, David Lake: *The Fourth Hemisphere*. Offers and requests for his full wants list to Ken Lake, 115 Markhouse Avenue, London E17 8AY (Tel: 01 520 2065)

I'm looking for children's fantasy books, either hardback or paperback. I'm particularly interested in finding titles by Edward Eager, and I am also looking for *Drowned Ammet* and *The Power of Three* by Diana Wynne Jones. On the other hand, tell me what you've got and I'll let you know. I am Maureen Porter, 114 Guildhall Street, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 1ES. Tel 0303 52939

THE CLUBS COLUMN

Well, here we are then, me with my first ever CLUBS COLUMN. Fine, that's the first line, now what's next? Maybe I'd better introduce myself: I'm Ron Gemmell, your new Clubs Liaison Officer; a title I'm going to do my very best to destroy. Please don't ever address mail to me with this awful appellation in tow, plain old Ron Gemmell will do just nicely.

In this column I'm going to strive to give you all the latest news of the clubs; their births and deaths, their special events, their changes of venue - all that really interesting stuff you really want to know; and if you don't then you

should do. And I mean ALL THE CLUBS, not just the well known favourites. I want to know about all the university and polytechnic groups, all the media groups - in fact, every club/society/group that is remotely linked to Science Fiction anywhere in the known Universe, or at least the British Isles.

Now I'm not considering writing and researching this column as a full-time job, believe me. There us no way I can gather all this information on my lonesome, I need your help.

WRITE ME! let me know all about the local goings-on in the local, tell me of all your many and varies club activities (please enclose the photographs), let me help you to help yourselves (uh, did I really make such a soft and sick statement? Just forget I said it, please)

Anyway, I've decided to start by listing All I know about The Clubs to date. It's not a lot, I mean there must be many more than those listed Out There - I hope to have substantially increased this list in the next few months. I'm depending on you!

It's at this point that I realise that my address and telephone number might be of some use. You will find me at 79 Mansfield Close, Birchwood, Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 6RN and my home telephone number is 0925 810966.

Now all I have to do is lie back and wait for the letters to come.

HOWEVER, before the list the NEWS!

Alas, the Birmingham MISFITS are no more. The group died a month or two back, its death due to an acute lack of members. Birmingham now boasts only one SF group, but has MISFITS died, or is it merely resting?

And as you should have read in the last issue of *Matrix*, the newly formed Queen's University SF Society are holding a one-day convention NICON '86 this October. They have recently written to me requesting the names and addresses of all the SF clubs operating in Northern Ireland and Eire in the past five years or so - I wouldn't mind knowing myself, so if anyone knows anything please drop me a line.

Does anybody out there know anything about the Surrey Limpwrist - like do they still meet, and if so where?

Kevin McVeigh has just moved down to Coventry to start a course at Lanchester Poly and would like to make contact with a group in Coventry. If such a thing exists his address will be 39 Loundon Road, Coventry, CV1 4AR (and how about dropping me a line you guys).

BIRMINGHAM - Birmingham SF Group meets at the Imperial Hotel on the first Friday of the month.

BOLTON - Bolton & District SF Group meets every Tuesday at the Old Three Crowns, 14 Deansgate, Bolton, 8pm onwards.

BRIGHTON - The Brighton Group meets every Friday at the Druids Arms, 81 Ditchling Rd. Contact: Andy Robertson 0273 558775

BRISTOL - TANSTAAFL (There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch) meet every Thursday at the White Hart, Park Row, 8.30 pm onwards. Contact: Alan Gilbert 0272 293693

CARLISLE - Carlisle & District. An isolated and very informal group, anyone passing through more than welcome but best to contact either Shep

- kirkbride 0228 27168 or Malcolm Furness 97 67748 first. The group usually meets every other Friday at various venues in Carlisle.
- CHESTER** - Chester & District SF Group. An informal group meeting in various venues in the Chester area once a month. Contact: Mike Scott 0244 678052
- CROYDON** - Croydon SF & Fantasy Group meets on the second and last Friday each month at the Windsor Castle on the Brighton road (A23). Contact: Des Lewis 01 668 1931
- DUNDEE** - The Dundee Group meets on the first Thursday of each month at The Town & Gown 7.30pm onwards. Contact: Jon Wallace, 21 Charleston St, Dundee, 0382 623399
- EDINBURGH** - FORTH (Friends of Robert the Hack) meet every Tuesday night in the Milnes Bar, Hanover St. Contact: Owen Whiteoak 031 228 3006
- GLASGOW** - FOKT (Friends of Kilgore Trout) meets every Thursday at the Bank, Queen St, 8-12pm. Contact: Vince Docherty 041 882 3006
- LEEDS** - The Leeds Group meet every Thursday at the West Riding pub. Contact: Simon Ounsley 0532 756162
- LONDON** - The One Tun, Saffron Hill, Farringdon. First Thursday of the month.
- The Griffin Tavern (Women only), Villiers St, Charing Cross. Second Wednesday after the Tun. 8pm onwards. Ask at the bar if you can't immediately find them.
- Southern Friends in Space meet on the third Sunday of the month, Wellington Tavern, Waterloo. Contact: Mike Dickinson 01 870
- NEWCASTLE** - The Gannets meet at the Green Dolphin, on the first Tuesday of the month, after 8pm. Contact: Harry Bell 091 4782559
- PRESTON** - The Preston Group meets every other Wednesday at the Black Horse Hotel, Friargate, 8pm onwards. Contact: Lawrence Dean 0204 51876
- PORTSMOUTH** - The South Hants Group meet on the second and fourth Fridays of the month, Scotts Bar, 37 Eldon St. Contact: Phil Plumby, 53 Havant Rd, Portsmouth.
- READING** - GLOMERULE (Reading SF Group) meet most Sunday evenings at the Pheasant, Southampton St. Contact: Dave Langford 0734 665804
- ROMSEY** - Romsey SF Society meet in the main bar of the Abbey Hotel on every other Wednesday, after 8pm. Contact: Jim Goddard 0794 390455
- SHEFFIELD** - The Sheffield Group meets every Wednesday at the Roebuck. Contact: Laura Wheatly 0702 333206.
- ST ALBANS** - STAFFEN meet every Monday. Contact: Mic Rogers, 22 Campfield Rd, St Albans
- WARRINGTON** - Warrington & Local District Originals (WALDO) meet every first and third Thursday of the month at the Ring O'Bells, Church St, 8pm onwards. Contact: Ron Gemmell 0925 810966



THE INDEPENDENT BRITISH FAN POLL

RESULTS 1986

BEST FANZINE

1st	STOMACH PUMP (Steve Higgins)	23 points
	STILL LIFE (Simon Ounsley)	
3rd	NUTZ (Pam Wells)	18 points
4th	PREVERT (John Jarrold)	15 points
5th	THIS NEVER HAPPENS (Lilian Edwards & Christina Lake)	14 points
6th	Xyster (Dave Wood)	8 points
7th	Some days you eat the bear, some days the bear eats you (Anne Hamill)	6 points
8th	For Paranoids Only (Nigel Richardson)	5 points
9th	Crystal Ship (John D Owen)	4 points
10th	Erg (Terry Jeeves)	3 points
11th	Fuck the Tories (Brown, Edmonds, Hanna, Nicholas, Hughes)	2 points
	Skel's a-Poppin' (Paul Skelton)	
13th	IDOMO (Chuck Connor)	1 point
	Epsilon (Rob Hansen)	
	Wallbanger (Eve Harvey)	
	Mexicon 2, the fanzine (The Mexicon 2 Committee)	

Total votes cast: 63 out of 78.

BEST FANWRITER

1st	SIMON OUNSLY	33 points
2nd	NIGEL B RICHARDSON	32 points
3rd	LINDA PICKERSGILL	17 points
4th	ANNE HAMILL	11 points
5th	DAVE LANGFORD	10 points
6th	Christina Lake	9 points
7th	Mal Ashworth	7 points
8th	Paul Skelton	6 points

9th	Lillian Edwards	5 points
10th	Hazel Ashworth	4 points
11th	Sue Thomason	3 points
12th	Michael Ashley, D. West Martyn Taylor, Pam Wells,	2 points
16th	Dave Bridges, Joe Nicholas, Jenny Kiesel, Ian Sorenson,	1 point
Total votes cast: 72 out of 78		

BEST FANARTIST

1st	D. WEST	34 points
2nd	SHEP KIRKBRIDE	12 points
3rd	ROS CALVERLEY	11 points
4th	ARTHUR THOMSON	9 points
5th	CATH EASTHOPE, ROB HANSEN	7 points
7th	Jackie Smith	6 points
8th	Dave Collins, Hazel Ashworth, Margaret Welbank	5 points
11th	Jim Barker, Harry Bell, Sue Williams, Pete Lyon, Iain Byers	3 points
16th	Dave Bridges, Phil Collins Collins	1 point

BEST FANZINE COVER

1st	PREVERT 11 (Sue Williams)	4 points
2nd	THIS NEVER HAPPENS (Dave Harwood)	3 points
3rd	NUTZ 4 (Dave Collins)	1 point
	CRYSTAL SHIP 10 (Steven Fox)	
	NUTZ 3 (Dave Collins)	
	TIGER TEA (Pete Lyon)	

Total votes cast: 11 out of 26

BEST LOC WRITER

1st	CHUCK HARRIS	3 points
	DAVE WOOD	
3rd	MAL ASHWORTH	2 points
4th	Michael Ashley, Hazel Ashworth Mal Ashworths, Joy Hibbert, Joseph Nicholas, Paul Skelton, Helen Starkey, Charles Stross, Sue Thomason	1 point

BEST SINGLE ISSUE

1st	THE TRANSATLANTIC HEARING AID (Dave Langford)	3 points
	YAWNCON PROGRESS REPORT (Nigel Richardson)	
3rd	THE FORTUS (Christina Lake & Lillian Edwards)	2 points
	STILL LIFE (Simon Ounsley)	
5th	Hello Everybody (untitled zine by Dave Bridges and Jackie Smith), This Never Happens 7, Crystal Ship 9, Tiger Tea 2, Illyria, Nutz 4, 5, Stampede 6, Mexican 2 - the fanzine.	1 point

Total votes cast: 20 out of 26

BEST INTERIOR ILLUSTRATION

1st	D. WEST (Stomach Pump)	6 points
	(Fanzines in Theory and Practice - New Noddy-fan Edition)	
2nd	CATH EASTHOPE (This Never Happens 7, p.53)	2 points
	SHEP KIRKBRIDE (Sic Biscuit Disintegrat 7, p.7)	
4th	WILLIAM BAINS (Crystal Ship 9, p.6)	1 point
	ROS CALVERLEY (Sic Biscuit Disintegrat)	

Total votes cast: 12 out of 26

BEST ARTICLE OR COLUMN

1st	WELCOME TO THE PLEASURE DOME (Simon Ounsley, This Never Happens 6X)	11 points
2nd	Rough Mix (Patrick Neilson Hayden, Prevert)	
	Seven Days in the Samarkand Desert with a Spoon (Owen Whiteoak, Stampede 6)	
	2 points each	
4th	The Other Place (Abi Frost, Mexican 2, the Fanzine)	
	Alien Landscapes (Judith Hanna, Prevert 10)	
	I came upon a Child of God (Paul Kincaid, Nutz 5)	
	Further Adventures of Gonad the Barbarian (Simon Ounsley, This Never Happens 7)	
	Miracle at Lawrence Road & Editorial (Linda Pickersgill, Tiger Tea 2)	
	1 point each	

Total votes cast: 21 out of 26

WORST FANNISH THING

The most heated fannish controversy of last year centred around Novacon 15 and the COFF result. COFF (Concrete Overcoat Fan Fund) got 4 votes, along with 1 for 'Coff result', 3 votes for the handling of the Nova Awards, and 1 for the Pearson/Probert walkout. There was also 1 vote for 'Novacon 15' and 1 for 'Eunice Pearson's Christianity'.

After that, Alison McDonald was most effective in raising fannish ire or, at least, 3 votes. Other matters of some concern, with 1 vote each, were: 'Death of Franks', Joy Hibbert, 'imminent death of British fandom', towels, 'Hugga Jackson', 'Dave Hodson's attack on Dorothy Davies', 'Mexicon moving north' and glandular fever.

Voters: Hazel Ashworth, Mal Ashworth, Terry Broome, Avedon Carol, Dave Collins, John Dallman, Chris Donaldson, Lillian Edwards, Rob Gregg, Rob Hansen, Alun Harries, Leah Higgins, Steve Higgins, Steve Hubbard, Christina Lake, Caroline Mullan, Paul Oldroyd, Simon Ounsley, John D Owen, Greg Pickersgill, Linda Pickersgill, Nigel Richardson, Martyn Taylor, Pam Wells, D. West, Owen Whiteoak.

Since that is only half the minimum fifty voters we wanted, we've concluded that British fandom isn't very interested in fan polls. There won't be another poll. These results are published mainly as a courtesy to those who did vote. Apologies for the time it's taken. Lack of communication between committee members, I'm afraid.

Pam Wells, Steve Higgins.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF

SCIENTOLOGY

by JON MAY

The philosophy, cosmology and methodology of the Church of Scientology has developed steadily since L. Ron Hubbard's first article on Dianetics appeared in *Astounding* in May 1950 (Vol 45, No 5). In that article Hubbard presented a theory in which the mind was likened to a computer, which, when working optimally, would have total recall of every perception and experience it had ever encountered, and an information processing capacity far in excess of the normal mind. Unfortunately no-one had an optimal mind, because of aberrations in their mental functioning resulting from earlier painful, or survival threatening, experiences. Hubbard hypothesised that the delicate, conscious 'analytical' mind needed to avoid such experiences, and so humans had evolved a 'reactive' mind that took over when survival was threatened, or when the mind was in other states of 'analytical attenuation' - such as sleep, unconsciousness or fatigue. This 'stimulus-response' mind could order the organism to act in specific ways aimed at removing it from dangerous situations, causing pain if the analytic mind resisted, and withholding pain if it obeyed.

This survival mechanism had a disabling side effect: the sensory impressions associated with it taking control previously were stored in a reactive memory bank. These were 'impediments' to optimal mental functioning, since they continually acted as circuit breakers on analytic thought, creating psychosomatic illnesses, tension and generally restricting the mind's abilities. The aim of Dianetics was to produce 'clear' personalities by locating these impediments, making the analytic mind aware of them, and so removing their power. The individual could then act in a self-directed manner, free from the hindrances of the reactive mind, and would be able to produce the correct answer to any inputs fed into their mind.

Hubbard was a skilled hypnotist, but though his technique for finding impediments appears identical to hypnosis, he insisted it was different. The 'pre-clear' was induced into a 'Dianetic reverie' to relive childhood experiences that had caused impediments. By repeatedly recounting such episodes the emotion involved was discharged, and the impediment cleared. This continued until the first and most traumatic impediment, the 'basic-basic', was located and cleared, and the individual became a Clear.

On the basis of that article Dianetics was clearly not the revolutionary 'science of the mind' that John W. Campbell had promised his readers - in fact it was little more than a derivative form of the abreactive hypnosis therapy used by Freud and Breuer. Statements by both Campbell and Hubbard seem to confirm this (see p.33, *Road to Total Freedom* by Roy Wallis, a detailed sociological analysis of Scientology from which much of this article is derived) but since Campbell knew almost nothing about the social sciences, and didn't even consider psychology a science, he probably thought he was on to something new. His reputation and enthusiasm gave Dianetics, which had been rejected by other publishers, a valuable platform, and within months Dianetic groups sprang up across

the USA and Britain, composed largely of *Astounding* readers. In this country they seem to have operated on a similar basis to fan groups, with mimeographed 'zines', a minimum of intergroup contact and co-ordination, and absolutely no national organisation.

However, the metamorphosis from pseudoscience to religion proceeded rapidly. Hubbard's terminology settled down, and his neologisms and borrowings can be recognised in Scientology literature today - impediments became 'engrams', their removal through reverie 'auditing', and the state of analytical attenuation 'anaten'. Initially four 'dynamics of survival' governed the reactive mind, the urges of the individual to survival through: 1) themselves, 2) their children, 3) their group, 4) humanity. To these were added: 5) all living things, 6) MEST (the physical universe of Matter, Energy, Space and Time), 7) theta (the life-source, or soul), and finally, completing the transition to fully-fledged religion, 8) the Supreme Being. Engrams were now being found (and cleared) not only in individuals' pre-natal memories, but in pre-conceptual memories, and their past lives.

Clearly Hubbard had developed not just a theory of the human mind, but of the entire universe, a cosmology. The thetans, immortal and omniscient, were the true selves of individuals, and had existed before MEST, which they created, it seems, in order to have something to do, much as someone locked into a featureless existence creates games and problems to occupy themselves. To make their games more interesting, the thetans progressively allowed more and more restrictions on their abilities, becoming, in Hubbard's terms, 'enturbulated' in MEST. While the aim of Dianetics had been to free the individual from their own engrams, Scientology aims to clear the whole world, to disenturbulate thetans from the traumas of the millions of MEST bodies they have inhabited since the beginning of the physical universe, and to create Operating Thetans.

Today many people encounter Scientologists without even knowing they have done so. Someone will come up to you in the street and offer you a 'personality test', to help you sort out any problems you may have. When you have completed it, you will be shown 'unacceptable' weaknesses, but reassured that they can be solved easily - 'Just come along to this address ...'. I first met Scientology at Speakers' Corner, where a group had set up an E-meter. This is a simple galvanic skin response device measuring fluctuations in the electrical resistance of the skin caused (theoretically) by sweating when under psychological stress - it works on the same principle as the lie-detectors the Government wanted to use at GCHQ, except that the one I saw was made of two old tin cans. It was probably no more reliable for that.

In order to fund their mission, the Scientologists have an economic base maintained through the sale of books, 'auditing' services, 'E-meters' and so on. Many people who meet them in the street will never hear about the cosmology, nor the aims of the movement. To those who are more attracted to the Church, however, and pay to be trained as 'auditors', the beliefs and practices of Scientology become part of their own belief system, and they cannot give up the Church without tremendous damage to their self-esteem, and without subjecting themselves to the very psychological traumas they probably went to the Church to solve in the first place.

To this extent the Church is no better, and certainly no worse, than any evangelical religious group. If you were to proscribe or condemn them on these grounds you would have a lot of religions to deal with. What has attracted most attention, however, is their organisation which, after a few schisms and splits in the early 50's, was completely dominated by 'Ron' until at least the

late 60's. The Church was rebuilt from a loose, anarchic network of Dianetics enthusiasts into a bureaucracy with rigid vertical structure and almost no horizontal connections, the elite living at sea on a fleet of ships known as 'SeaOrg', the Sea Organisation, outside the jurisdiction of middleclass governments. This structure means that power (and money) flows up to those at the top, everyone feels superior to those below them and aims to work their way up in the organisation. The sociologists who first defined the workings of such a classic bureaucracy as this thought it could only occur in secret government departments.

In the years before his death, Hubbard repeatedly denied that he gained any income from the Church, or that he had any control over its actions, and said he had sold his name to the Church so they could use it to sign documents. In reaction to the various official inquiries into the Church in the late 60's, when it was banned in parts of Australia, and suppressed in Britain, it has dropped a number of its criticised practices, and become more actively involved in programmes for social reform. In the early days, for instance, people who left the Church were termed Suppressed Person, and declared 'Fair Game', allowing any member to lie about, cheat or swindle them. This order is no longer officially issued, although critics in the 70's had extraordinary experiences in which they claimed to have been subjected to spying, forgery and misrepresentation. On the positive side, the Church is reported to have had dramatic success in an anti-narcotic program amongst offenders in Los Angeles prisons.

The Dianetics cult recognised Hubbard's status as founder, but since it was felt to be a science he was given no permanent authority, and several other people felt themselves equally competent to develop theory and challenge Hubbard's decisions. His master stroke was to provide a transcendental basis for his authority by allying it with the supernatural. On the basis of his metaphysical doctrines Hubbard was able to place himself at the head of a charismatic movement, and through control of publications was able to determine that which was correct and that which was heretical. Even when he withdrew from active direction, his portraits and other symbols of presence dominated Scientology buildings. It remains to be seen whether Lafayette Ron Hubbard's absence from MEST will allow other individuals to challenge his authority, creating schisms that will rapidly destroy the movement.

SF and PHILATELY

I recently acquired two items of both SF and philatelic interest. Do readers know of more?

The first is a rather large envelope with a heroic SF design printed at the left, inscribed for EASTERCON 22 and postmarked with the Worcester datestamp of April 10th 1971, with an extra headstamp "Posted at Eastercon 22".

The other is a neat postcard for OMPACON 73 with a lunar module design and, cancelling the stamp, an attractive large handstamp showing a spaceship and inscribed "24th British Science Fiction Convention" at the Grand Hotel in Bristol, dated April 20th, 1973.

Can anyone tell me of, or offer me to purchase, any other envelopes, postcards or similar philatelic items connected with BRITISH conventions or other SF events, which have passed through the mails. As a philatelic writer, I propose writing about these in the many magazines which accept my articles, and in each case I would provide a free plug for the BSFA.

Please contact: Ken Lake
115 Markhouse Avenue
London E17 8AY

MEDIA REVIEWS

STILL TRAVELLING HOPEFULLY

Philip Collins

Arthur C Clarke, on a rare visit to London recently, was invited to speak at the national film theatre on his involvement in film.

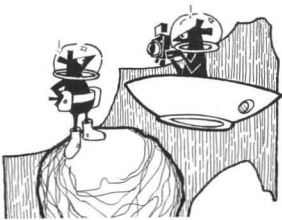
The evening started with some excerpts from 2001: A Space Odyssey and 2010: Odyssey Two, after which Clarke spoke for about twenty minutes, which was followed up with forty minutes of questions and answers led initially from the stage by Peter Nicholls and then thrown open to the audience. What follows is a presentation of Clarke's speech and replies given that night.

Arthur C Clarke's first contact with film was in 1955 when he bought an Arriflex movie camera to photograph the Great Barrier Reef during his scuba diving expeditions, but it was not until 1964 that he became involved in a professional capacity, when Stanley Kubrick contacted him. Clarke admitted that he had never heard of Stanley Kubrick at this time, but they seemed to get along well together.

At this juncture, he also added that he could no longer remember which parts of 2001 were his and which parts Kubrick's, although he definitely attributed the famous jump cut from the falling bone to the space ship at the end of the dawn of man sequence to Kubrick. He told of how, after filming the scene where the ape uses the bone as a weapon, he was walking along with Kubrick, who was carrying a broomstick, throwing it into the air and then catching it. Arthur C Clarke believes this was the genesis of that scene.

His only really serious argument with Kubrick was about the publishing of the book. Clarke finished writing it before the film was completed and was frightened that no one would buy it if the film flopped. However, Stanley Kubrick blocked the publication until the film's release. At first it seemed that Clarke's worst fears would be realised. After the film's first showing he heard an MGM executive saying "Well, that's the end of Stanley Kubrick", but after some trimming (including, apparently, some voice-over narrative, and a black and white sequence at the beginning in which actual scientists testified to the scientific plausibility of space flight) the film that Clarke called "the first 10 million dollar religious film" was released to great acclaim.

Arthur C Clarke then became involved with the film maker Francis Thompson on a documentary about the first Moon landing but this apparently fell through at the last moment. My impression was that Clarke was still sad over this loss.



Odyssey Two was first considered circa 1970 but Clarke wanted to wait until the results of the Voyager mission. He said he has a horror of having the science in his books being shown as nonsense in his lifetime. There is a similar delay with *Odyssey Three*. Clarke had planned to use the results of the Galileo space mission which was to have photographed the moons of Jupiter, but the space shuttle disaster caused the shelving of the Galileo project and this has affected the *Odyssey* project. Clarke also revealed that his latest book, *Songs of Distant Earth*, started as a movie outline before he turned it into a book but said little else on this.

He was reluctant to discuss his latest project as it hasn't yet been finalised but revealed that he was contacted some nine months ago by film producer Peter Gruber to write a film screenplay. He was reluctant at first but agreed to meet Gruber to discuss the idea. Gruber flew out to Sri Lanka, taking with him the scientist in charge of the Galileo mission, and over the next two days they thrashed out some ideas and later wrote a seven thousand word outline called "Cradle". According to Clarke the title says it all but beyond that he wouldn't comment.

I've arranged and compiled the above from Clarke's talk and some of the answers he gave to questions posed, to give a chronological outline. Below are some of the questions he was asked on other topics, and his responses.

What other books of yours have been optioned to the films?

Oh, *Fountains of paradise*, *Rendezvous with Rama*. I lose track of them. *Childhood's End* was first optioned about thirty years ago, and so far nothing's come of that so don't hold your breath. In fact, about a year ago someone in London commissioned *Childhood's End* for a theatre production.

Can you remember the first SF film you ever saw?

The Lost World, the original silent version. The scene of the dinosaur smashing up Tower Bridge greatly impressed me.

What are your favourite SF films?

Well, there's all the problems of 10 best and 10 Favourite as they are not always the same. *Things to Come* and *The Day The Earth Stood Still* are perhaps not very good films but they are still my favourites, they're so much part of my growing up that I can't be critical of them at all.

What recent SF films have you liked?

I saw *Dune*. An impossible project to do, but I thought it was the best that could have been done with it. I was also very impressed with *The Terminator*.

Which of your books do you think would make good films?

My only non-SF book, *Glide Path*, would be very easy to film. So would *Dolphin Island*. I must say though, that I am less sure today about the intelligence of dolphins, they seem too friendly to man (laughter). Oh, and of course, *Fall of moon dust*, that would make a great film.

Ah, but is there any dust on the moon?

We'd make sure we put some up there. (laughter)

Would you like to go into space?

Oh no, I'm too out of condition, I'd be an embarrassment, besides which, in a way due to my writing, I already feel I've been up there. In fact, one of the nicest things ever said to me about 2001 was at its Russian premiere. A

cosmonaut turned to me and said 'Now I feel I've been up in space twice.'

Are you a religious man?

I always say I don't believe in God but I am very interested in Him. I write about my religious beliefs in a chapter of *Songs of Distant Earth*.

Which do you prefer to write, fact or fiction?

If I was forced to write only one or the other I'd write fiction. I find it more challenging.

At the time of the initial release of 2001 Kubrick was quoted as saying he'd like to be frozen for a few hundred years to be able to see what the future's going to be like. Does this idea appeal to you at all?

Oh no, I've seen so many changes in my lifetime I'm well satisfied. With our scientific advances, it's the most exciting time to be alive. When I wrote my first novel, *Prelude to Space*, in 1948 I had man landing on the moon in 1979, and then I felt that I was being optimistic. No way did I think that it would ever happen as quick as that.

Do you read much contemporary SF?

Not as much as I used to. Nowadays it's impossible to keep up with it all. Besides, I've just bought a complete run of *Astounding* on microfiche so I'm going to be re-reading all of that.

Do you think that the world will ever really be united as you write about in some of your books, or will politicians prevent it?

I think unification must inevitably come with the growth in communications. Soon, we'll have individual pocket communicators so we can talk to anyone in Russia or anywhere and the politicians will be powerless to stop it.

Are you still an optimist?

I think I still am. I used to say I was an optimist because I felt mankind had a 51% chance of survival. Now I think it's only 50.5%. (Laughter)

THE FLY

Directed by David Cronenberg. A 20th Century Fox/Brooksfilms Production

Reviewed by Stan Nicholls

David Cronenberg has always been an interesting, if uneven, director, but many thought that with his really rather conventional handling of Stephen King's *The Dead Zone* he had forsaken the colourful eviscerations and mayhem of his earlier films. Don't believe it. With *The Fly* Cronenberg has made a truly intelligent and genuinely emotion-laden splatter movie, if that isn't a contradiction in terms. I confess to not having had very high hopes for this picture. After all, the short story by George Langelaan on which it was based is pretty limited in scope; a one-idea wonder, albeit a good one. What Cronenberg, who with Charles Edward Pogue also wrote the script, has done is take that basic idea and explore its ramifications in ways undreamed of by the producers of the 1958 version.

Seth Brundle (Jeff Goldblum) is driven by his obsession with scientific research, an oddball character with no real existence outside his work. All his energies are bent toward realising that mainstay of SF literature, the transmission of matter. When journalist Veronica Quaife (Geena Davis) comes onto the scene and they fall in love, the emotions unleashed in turn liberate his intellect and bring about the all-important breakthrough. Inevitably the romance is the seedbed for coming destruction. Wrongly convinced Veronica has

dumped him, Brundle gets roaring drunk and puts himself through the matter transmitter, oblivious to the housewife that joins him. Interestingly his transformation into an insectoid half-man is progressive - he takes on the jerking, never-still movements of an insect, along with awesome powers of acrobatics. Bits of him start to drop off and he carefully stores them in a medicine cabinet. Maddened, or enlightened, by his change to something not quite man or fly, he insists Veronica go through the matter transmitter to join him in a kind of symbiotic half-human state.

What starts as a horror romp, with plenty of authentic offbeat humour, develops into a variation on the Beauty and the Beast theme. Goldblum and Davis are both very good, investing their parts with a degree of feeling unusual in such pictures; he fighting to control his all-consuming instincts, she devoted to him but basically helpless.

Arguably Cronenberg's best film - certainly his most consistent and powerful piece of storytelling - it is also his most ambitious. Not all of the many serious themes he weaves into the plot stand up, but this is a consummate piece of film making - comedy, tragedy and shocker by turn. As you might expect, the special effects are well above average, and Chris Walas' work on the Brundle/fly creature is outstanding. If I have a criticism it's that Cronenberg, as is his wont, does get a bit bogged down with the special effects, particularly toward the end, and those of a timid disposition, or weak stomach, could be advised to think twice before seeing this one. But even the harder among us may find ourselves peeking through our fingers every time the door of one of Brundle's teletransporter chambers slides open ...

METAMORPHOSIS

Adapted by Steen Berkoff from the short story by Franz Kafka

Mermaid Theatre, London

Reviewed by Ben Staveley-Taylor

'Kafkaesque' is a word much in vogue, and *Metamorphosis* is one of those stories that everyone knows even if few have actually read. Gregor Samsa wakes up one morning to find he has become a giant beetle, and the plot observes how his family cope with the transformation.

The delight of the story is how the bourgeois surroundings envelop and smother the situation by pretending nothing is wrong. Gregor's family are torn between their natural revulsion and their sense of family loyalty to this truly repugnant creature. Meanwhile, the minutiae of everyday life must go on; Father complacently resumes the rôle of family breadwinner, and lodgers are officiously tended to, while all the time a five-foot dung beetle lies just yards away behind its door.

Berkoff's adaptation follows Kafka's plot very closely in theme, and is brilliantly acted, but nevertheless the arrangement falls short of the impact it aims for. The stage is minimalist, with Gregor's room represented by a skeleton cage of scaffolding placed behind the family living area, which is just three stools. Gregor is therefore always in view even when supposedly locked in his room. Much of the action is mimed, including most critically the tense business of opening and closing Gregor's door to feed him.

I found the slightly avant garde approach a definite barrier to appreciation of the piece. Throughout, I felt that the family were somehow not real people, which was a pity since the emphasis of the play was on the contrast between the true horror of the situation and the bewildering banality of the family. The mime too occasionally fooled me, I lost track of when Gregor's door

was supposed to be open or closed, and whether we were supposed to be able to see him or not.

But *Metamorphosis* was worth the price just for the acting of Tim Roth, who played Gregor quite superbly, showing what startling imagery can be generated by the unaided human form. For the whole duration of the play he squats cross-limbed in his cage, occasionally scuttling around the set or climbing around his room making obscenely insect-like clicks and scratches. It was a physically demanding part that Roth filled perfectly.

Berkoff's production was fascinating to watch, but by its abstract presentation never quite managed to involve the audience in the situation, and never quite punched home its cruel satire on middle class mentality.

A HITCH IN TIME (1978)

Written by T.E.B. Clarke. Directed by Jan Darnley-Smith. BBC1, Wed. 3rd September

ONE HOUR TO ZERO (1977)

Written by John Tulley. Directed by Jeremy Summers. BBC1, Thu. 4th September

Reviewed by Terry Broome

These two Children's Film Foundation films do not enhance the way SF is viewed by the general public, as a genre for kids. What's wrong is that the writers and directors view SF in the same light, and as a result *A Hitch in Time* particularly leaves a lot to be desired.

A Hitch in Time concerns two children (Michael McVey and Phenoma McLeilan) who help a dotty scientist (Patrick Troughton) perfect a time machine. This involves them jumping backwards and forwards in time at a speed I found confusing, and fouling up the various evil designs of their evil history teacher's ancestors.

The film mixes up numerous incompatible time-travel theories and the time machine, too, operates in an inconsistent manner that is never explained in the film. So much for its technical plausibility. The acting is very rusty, it's even cranky and unashamedly hammed up. The script is just silly, the time travel elements being used solely for slapstick comedy. And it is badly directed, it rushes by so quickly as to be totally confusing for its intended audience. If it could not be lengthened beyond its 55 minutes, then many unnecessary scenes could have been axed and some character development inserted.

One Hour to Zero, comparatively speaking, is much better. Paul (Toby Bridge) learns that Steve (Andrew Ashby) has run away from his home in a small Welsh community, and Paul sets off in pursuit. Meanwhile the nearby experimental nuclear reactor where Steve's violent father Sam (John Forgeham) works, and the surrounding countryside, are evacuated as the reactor becomes unstable and threatens to blow up. Paul convinces Steve to return home, but they find the village deserted. A looter (Dudley Sutton) locks Paul in a shed on the site of an open mine, and as zero-hour approaches Steve realises he'll never get Paul out in time. Then Sam decides he can stop the imminent disaster by changing the controls of the reactor 'to a different mode', but there are only minutes left.

An amazing degree of (deliberate) ignorance concerning reactors, radiation and nuclear explosions is evident in the film, which uses the 'imminent disaster' scenario simply to establish tension by setting a time limit on the heroics. The film would have worked better as the tale of a boy running away from home and patching up the father-son relationship, the borderline SF element is intrusive and distracting. However, children would probably find it quite enjoyable.

RIGEL 9

Music by David Bedford. Words by Ursula LeGuin. Released by Charisma/Virgin Records (1985)

Reviewed by Terry Broome

Kapper (Lorin Stewart), Lee and Anders (both Enn Reitel) are members of an exploratory team which lands on a forest world, Rigel 9, to conduct a survey (for reasons not apparent).

In the first track, 'The Forest', Anders (with the singing voice of Gerard Kenny) waxes lyrical on the hell of Earth and the beauty of Rigel 9: "The Earth has no more silence/deep space is silent/death could not be more silent ... it's quiet here/you can hear the voice that answers". And he is answered, by a native simply described as 'The Red One' (Sarah Duthie).

Before Kapper and Lee can intervene Anders is captured by The Red One and taken to a city of golden and crystal towers where he meets other natives of different colours. While he tries to communicate with them, Kapper and Lee come across more natives, panic, and gun them down. They capture The Orange One and some lovely lines result, like: "Alright, you orange freak, where's Anders?" The native simply repeats phrases it has picked up from the visitors, this time echoing the

talking ship: "Retain your weapons! Return to the ship!" After that it 'pretends' it's got a gun and kills itself, at which Kapper exclaims "I didn't do it! It killed itself, with a gun that wasn't there!" in an awed and slightly hysterical voice.

A funeral procession follows (featuring Strawberry Switchblade), then Anders 'escapes' from the natives. Rejoining Lee and Kapper he tells them of the city but they do not believe him, and in a very contrived and noisy climax the ship, with all three aboard, leaves Rigel 9.

Back on the planet, The Red One, in a rather mournful voice, echoes Anders' opening lyrics: "... it's quiet here/you can listen/A voice that answers/listen/listen", leaving you in some doubt whether the aliens were simply mimics or really were intelligent.

The album is sparse on description, the music is extremely repetitious (though three pieces do stand out), and the story is indeed a space opera in more than one sense. It isn't very original and some of the dialogue is extremely cranky. I was very disappointed with both Bedford, who did a version of *The Rise of the Ancient Mariner* and LeGuin, however, she was very restricted by the short length of the album and she may have deliberately written in a pulpy style to reinforce the idea of a space opera. For completists only.

THE TASKS OF TANTALON - Steve Jackson/Stephen Davis, (Puffin, 1986, £2.95)

DEMONS OF THE DEEP - Steve Jackson/Ian Livingstone, (Puffin, 1986, £1.95)

SWORD OF THE SAMURAI - Steve Jackson/Ian Livingstone, (Puffin, 1986, £1.95)

FALCON 5: THE DYING SUN - Mark Smith/Jamie Thompson, (Sphere, 1986, £1.95)

FALCON 6: AT THE END OF TIME - Mark Smith/Jamie Thompson, (Sphere, 1986, £1.95)

MAELSTROM - Alexander Scott, (Puffin, 1986, £2.50)

TREACHERY IN DRAKENWOOD - Paul Vernon, (Unicorn, 1986, £2.95)

FORTRESS OF THE FIRELORD - Paul Vernon, (Unicorn, 1986, £2.95)

TRIAL OF CHAMPIONS - Ian Livingstone, (Puffin, 1986, £1.95)

Reviewed by Andy Sawyer

It makes sense to review these game-books together, particularly as they're inter-connected anyway - I see, on looking inside *SWORD OF THE SAMURAI* that the Smith/Thompson team are actually responsible for the book, despite what it says on the spine. I mentioned *TASKS OF TANTALON* in *PI* 56 and am so closer to solving the mystery now that it's out in paperback. Puffin suggest that Tantalon breaks new ground in Adventure Gamebooks: to me it seems to owe something to Kit Williams' visual quests and is at its weakest precisely when it enters 'Adventure Gamebook' territory. A lot of people, though, will lap it up and - on balance - deservedly so. It's visually attractive and mentally challenging, and calls for several different approaches to the task, unlike most puzzles which seem to be variations on the same mental process.

More conventional fighting fantasy books still abound, and there's no need to go into great detail about each. The format is the same and the variation is the setting. *DEMONS OF THE DEEP* is set against a mythical 'Spanish Main' with pirates and a full ration of monsters, spirits and magic potions. At the risk of being heretical, it might

have been more imaginative to cut out the supernatural elements altogether; but then, aren't skeletons and sea-monsters part of the pirate 'thing'? *SWORD OF THE SAMURAI* takes elements from Japanese myth (but why, then, an ENGLISH riddle?) to add to the standard mix. A must for martial arts fans but, as with *DEMONS*, I find that the background is at times too obtrusive. By that, I mean that you become increasingly aware of the background, be it 'pirates' or 'samurai', is all that distinguishes one book from another. The threats that you face are all pretty much the same, and whole chunks could be lifted from one gamebook to any of several others without the player noticing any difference.

Sphere have two more 'Falcon' SF adventures. *THE DYING SUN* takes you on a mission against the evil Yelov through the usual far reaches of time and space. *AT THE END OF TIME* sends you into an abnormal timehole which has already caused the disappearance of another agent. Standard space opera it may be, but I enjoy the complex detail of the series. Some of the alien environments are pretty good, imaginative creations, and if you want an hour or so of escapist fun these books are well above average.

Alexander Scott's *MAELSTROM* gives detailed instructions on building up an interesting role-playing game based upon 16th-century English road life. As such, it's marginal here, but it has optional elements of the supernatural which could be adapted to SAS-type fantasy. It could be my own obsession with the period in which the game is set, but to me *MAELSTROM* is the most effective book in this selection. You could use it to create some richly detailed and complex games, particularly if you use readily-available versions of contemporary rogue pamphlets (such as Gámino Salgado's Penguin collection *Concycatchers and Randy Baskets*) as sources of ideas.

Paul Vernon's map-based fantasy adventures kick off a new 'Fatemaster' series from Unicorn. They're sub-standard Tolkienian fantasies which you would only appreciate in a novel if they were presented in a more striking way. This is the reverse of *MAELSTROM*, adventure games for people who require particularly cosy and safe adventures. For addicts only, as is Ian Livingstone's *TRIAL OF CHAMPIONS*, a return to the ingeniously deadly labyrinth of *DEATHTRAP DUNGEON*.



WRITE BACK

The Letter Column

My editorial comments in last issue seem to have been taken to heart, not always as I intended, and the response has been very good. Nick Cheesman will have heard from me about which book he would like, and to the other 30-something people who wrote in, sorry you didn't get there first, and thanks for writing in anyway. Now read on, to find out which bits of your letters I used.

JIM ENGLAND
Rosesale, The Compas, Kinver, West Midlands, DY7 6HT

I am rather bored by the kind of letter to *Matrix* that goes "I am inclined to agree with Fred Bloggs' reply to the letter from Joe Soap, but on the other hand Mick Finn has a point...". Such letters are uninformative to new members who do not know what has gone before nor who these guys are. Even the long-standing member does not want to have to dig out back issues. The solution is simple. Give guidance as to the kind of letter wanted - the complete-in-itself letter to be had in almost any promag. A lively and interesting letter column is vital in order to retain members.

A lively and interesting letter column is indeed vital, Jim, but I have to disagree with your diagnosis. Whilst the letters you describe can become tedious at times, they are also necessary to promote and continue discussions, which is the most important element of any lettercol. A column

17
full of self-contained letters would become exceedingly boring, and mention frustrating if readers knew that there was no point in responding. As editor I see my role as extracting the meat from a letter whilst discarding the padding. That's how I shall continue to work.

Jim also has some advice on *Matrix* in general.

I suggest that *Vector* concentrates on literature whilst *Matrix* deals with scientific and 'human interest' topics. There must be many BSFA members with ideas about 'the shape of things to come' and others with the sense of wonder to respond to them. Should FTL travel be dropped from 'hard' SF? What's new in AI and super-string theory? Is the 'zoo-hypothesis' the most likely explanation as to why they (aliens) aren't in touch with us? That sort of debate only needs one letter to start it off and if productive of novel and sufficiently interesting ideas they could get picked up by *New Scientist* or quoted in the mass media, which would give BSFA membership one hell of a boost.

I personally think your proposal completely ignores the fact that we are a literary rather than a scientific society. My brief is to run a news magazine about science fiction, as a literary form, providing news and comment, a pot-pourri of bits and pieces. It doesn't include trying to provide a cut-price space travel version of *New Scientist*. I can't believe that they or the media would be hanging on our every word, just in case we came up with something new. People who have the sort of ideas you're thinking of will already be working for the relevant agencies. And incidentally, where do you think I'd be cribbing news articles from? Not being a scientist myself, I'd be turning to good old *New Scientist*!

JOHN CONNORS
72 Wath Road, Nether Edge, Sheffield 7.

Matrix is subtitled THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BSFA so what the hell are Media Reviews doing in here. It should primarily be an internal zine which gives a forum for members to contribute to the BSFA (ie talk about it), carry news, con reviews, anything that is not related to criticism (which goes in *Vector*), which should be of general interest to fandom, not just BSFA members, and non-fans interested in SF. It should be a showcase for the BSFA.

ROGER WADDINGTON
4 Commercial St, Norton, Malton, N Yorks, YO17 9ES

I like your plans, in particular the emphasis on what the BSFA is actually doing; that's maybe what's been wrong in the past, that we've never had much idea and so didn't really care, thus leading to apathy among the membership and the members of the committee whose efforts must often have gone unappreciated. Publicity should work in two ways; firstly to show us just what work goes into keeping a department going, so that we can appreciate such efforts on our behalf, and secondly to keep each committee member up to the mark, so that he has something to report. Mind you, I hope that 'regular reports' doesn't mean every department, every issue. I also belong to the National Fantasy Fan Federation whose output includes a letterzine and a clubzine. The first is lively enough, but the second is almost exclusively concerned with reports from the various departments which tends to induce feelings of frantic boredom.

Two differing opinions on this magazine's function. We've had this argument about where the media reviews ought to go before. As far as I am concerned their place is in *Matrix*. *PI* and *Vector* concentrate on the literary aspects of SF whilst I cover news, and reviews of anything that isn't a book, giving me leeway to cover anything else that might be of interest to the readers. Effectively, I plug the gaps, and that suits me nicely.

Still on magazines

PHIL NICHOLS

19 Kendal Ave, Copnor, Portsmouth, Hants, PO3 5AX

As the idea of a BSFA bumper-mag has cropped up again, I want to put in a plea for diversity. Wouldn't BSFA mailings be dull if all we got was one thick magazine? The latest *Matrix* shows that it can have a presentable appearance and at the same time maintain an identity distinct from that of *Vector*. All we need now is a neatly printed *Paperback Inferno* and we have a very presentable set of publications! Let's keep this variety.

I seem to have caused a stir with my tirade against the apathetic majority of the BSFA, some of whom actually wrote in, which was, of course, my intention. Thank you to those of you who did. If nothing else, it's useful to me to know how you view the BSFA and what you get out of it. A major worry of mine is how I provide the right sort of material for people when I don't know what it is they want. This is why I don't necessarily expect articles, but the odd letter to say that I'm on the right track does help, believe me.

P T ROSS

(Address withheld by request, but I don't like making a habit of this)

Almost any society is liable to have active and passive members: those who enjoy doing something and those who enjoy the thing being done. If subscriptions cover the cost of the doing (as they must), those like myself who prefer to be spoon-fed can feel that the very fact of our membership is a form of support. A renewed sub is always a vote of confidence.

People join societies for a variety of reasons and stay on perhaps for different reasons. My own reasons for joining were *Orbit* which is proving fruitful, and *Focus* in which I hope, in time, to publish stories. SF is, after all, what it's about; I want to write as well as read it; if I succeed, that will be my active contribution; the other BSFA publications I regard as a welcome bonus, which may be how some regard *Focus*.

I do reserve the right not to go to conventions, not to vote for books I haven't read yet or committee members I've never met, not to enter competitions, not to write to the various editors until I've something more original to say.

Not all SF fans are fen, but I am renewing my sub. To the active 75 from one of the zombies - thank you all. Passively, of course.

BRIAN MAGORRIAN

The Hostel, The Retreat, Heslington Road, York, YO1 5BS

Although I have only been a member of the BSFA for a year or so I have had access to mailings for years through a university society, but during that time I have never actually sent anything to the Association. I don't regard it as a praiseworthy effort, but it might be illuminating if I explored the reasons for not contributing.

I count SF as one of my major interests, but it is not the only one. Therefore, to get a reasonable number of books read, I have never pursued SF fandom etc to any great depth. Secondly, reading reviews, articles, letters I get the impression that everyone else knows an great deal about SF compared to me, coupled with the fact that I have to read many articles with a dictionary by my side, and this tends to make me doubt my literary capability of writing anything.

Lastly, since I have been largely satisfied with the BSFA's services I have never felt the need to join the lemming-like criticsers of the BSFA who seem to make up the bulk of correspondents.

Vitriolic attacks on people who do jobs totally voluntarily always seemed strange to me. So what am I trying to say? That everyone should not bother writing anything for any of the BSFA publications? Not so. I believe, like you, that more people should get involved. However, just because a person doesn't write in doesn't mean that they're not interested in the BSFA in particular, or SF in general.

Thanks Brian. Mind you, I don't think you could be described as apathetic. I saw you at the BSFA AGM. And I'll let you into a little secret - I don't know that much about SF myself, not in detail. And I like articles in good, plain, well-constructed English. Long words are all very well, but not always necessary. I've only begun reviewing for the BSFA myself in the last year or so, since I was convinced that I could carry on writing English as I usually do, as you see it here. Rest assured, that you don't have to be professional level to contribute. I'm only the same as you lot.

JULIAN BILLS

3 Roseville Gardens, Codsall, Nr Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV8 1AZ

Reading the editorial it seems apparent that the BSFA suffers from a disproportionate lack of membership involvement. Being part of a small college group I have found this situation to be widespread. Might I suggest that this is how people like it? When most of the membership is content with the running of a society they tend to be silent. This has the unfortunate side-effect that whoever is running the society believes that there must be something wrong with it through lack of feedback. More importantly, this smug apathetic attitude held by the vast majority endangers the organisation since it will tend to decay as the active members leave it. In conclusion I would say that the maintenance of a proportionately small active membership is important but we should not become too worried if the BSFA has a vast majority who are silent. Personally, I feel that the BSFA is rapidly improving. After all, I seem to have bothered to write in.

As well as discussing the apathy of certain sections of the membership there have been more comments on expanding the BSFA.

IAN OLDFIELD

13 Spring Avenue, Egham, Surrey, TW20 9PJ

New blood and new ideas are needed. The larger the membership, the more contributors to the magazine hence better (and bigger?) magazines. If the membership fee was increased, which no one can argue with if better services will be the result, then more profit, especially with an expanding membership, would be gleaned, which could be put back into improving the services and organisation. My suggestion is that the committee should think of how the BSFA would be ideally run in an efficient manner for say, a membership of 5000 and a fee of £10 a head. In my opinion such an organisation would have to involve several people in full time jobs, especially as the expansion should be continued. Once a system is worked out for the ideal future, only then should you start to look at how a transition from now to then would be made.

We are obviously looking at ways of making the society more efficient and at ways of increasing the membership but I am greatly puzzled by the widespread conviction that we should need to expand into a membership of several thousand. Firstly, will we ever find that many people, then will we be able to persuade them to join at all, and as I already know an increased membership is not necessarily going to mean an increase in contributors.

Colin Vernham's suggestion about amalgamating with the British Fantasy Society drew at least one reaction.

ROB GREGG
103 Highfield Road, Romford, Essex, RM5 3AR

Colin Vernham must be crazy if he wants the BSFA to amalgamate with the BFS. Is he a member of the latter? If so he'll realise that they're solely interested in the horror genre and it is quite proper that they should have their own society and zines to further this interest. 'Real' SF would get even less coverage if we had to make room for all that. No, the BSFA is better off without the horror fans.

Alison Cook is a regular member of the collating team at BSFA mailing sessions and wrote in response to comments by Ken Lake and Colin Vernham.

ALISON COOK
52 Woodhill Drive, Grove, Wantage, Oxon, OX12 0DF

Please, all of you, take a good look at your mailing which has been collated, stapled, collated into a mailing, enveloped, labelled, sealed and posted by volunteers, working on average 10am until 6pm for two days. Multiply this mailing by a thousand. This mailing was accomplished by five people on Saturday and three people on Sunday. If the mailing was monthly I'd never have time to recover from collator's shoulder between sessions.

Kes, I understand that you envisage professional collators and mailing instead of volunteers for a quadrupled membership. If you could switch immediately, no problem. I'd gain a weekend. But what about the buildup until it becomes financially viable? What happens if it sticks just below viability. Personally I couldn't cope, and I think that the BSFA would collapse under its own weight.

From what I've heard, this has happened once already. I was appalled to realise that no one really knows where the mailing sessions take place, myself included, which is why I have taken steps to rectify this, and to reveal another little-known fact (I hadn't heard this in three years of membership) which is that there are rewards for collating. See the BSFA page for further details.

And we have a letter from Bernard Smith - I hope you all forgive my printing the first paragraph but I couldn't resist it.

BERNARD SMITH
8 Wansford Walk, Thorplands Brook, Northampton

Firstly, my congratulations to Maureen Porter on the production of *Matrix* 65. It was beautifully produced and the information was well laid-out and easily accessible. After reading the editorial I don't think that anyone can be left in any doubt as to what *Matrix* is and what function it will perform. The main thing is, however, that it now has an editor who is both competent and possessed of a definite sense of direction - something sadly lacking in the past. I sincerely hope that the standard can be maintained, both of production and integrity, and feel confident that it will.

I was totally mystified as to where (Hussain Mohamed) got the idea that I was criticising the editors of BSFA magazines. On the contrary, anyone who can put together regular magazines under the conditions that prevail in the small press deserves the equivalent of a VC. My gripe is, and always has been, with the invisible bureaucrats who have to take organisational decisions (or fail to, whatever the case) and whose failings permeate down and affect the whole atmosphere. I don't live in a vacuum and am in contact with many BSFA members, and it's painfully obvious that this has been happening for some time.

I think I can probably understand Hussain's feeling that the editors are being criticised when

Bernard criticises the organisation of the BSFA as we are the organisation of the BSFA. In the past, as I said last time, the Committee has been more or less emasculated because of little contact between them and the chairman, and no chance to organise regular meetings. This situation no longer exists. We are having regular committee meetings, two down and another scheduled for December. As I have also said before, the Council is merely an advisory body, and has no say in the day to day running of the BSFA. That's up to people like myself, Hussain, Dave Barratt, Andy Sawyer, Paul Grunwell, Paul Kincaid, in addition to our work on the various magazines, and the other members of the committee. There have been undoubted failings in the past but given a chance we are in a position to start consolidating and progressing, though not quite at the rate that many people might want. Unlike British Rail we will get there.

I guess it's time to turn to that perennial topic of SF and rock music.

DAVID WINGROVE
47 Farleigh Road, Stoke Newington, London, N16 7TD

The most obvious point to bear in mind is that music is a radically different medium from the written word. Its duration is severely limited, and unlike the cinema (which also suffers from this time limitation in working out ideas) it has only an aural, not a visual dimension. Science fictional ideas can, for the most part, only be suggested, not worked out in any depth. In SF rock, things are inferred more often than stated - atmosphere or mood is very important, often more important than the trite SF lyrics, as Andy Mills rightly perceives.

When dealing with SF as literature, do we often demand that form and content reflect each other, that a novel about the future should deal with that future in its own terms, that is, with a changed language, new social rules, a casual acceptance of wonders as commonplace? Or are we more satisfied with a form of SF which gives us just one or two twists on what we have now? I'd suggest that the latter, an easier form to write, is also more popular because it demands less of its readership. So it is in rock music for the main part. When most artists use an SF idea it is only to give a frisson to a standard rock and roll number. Form and content are thrown together, not merged successfully.

There are artists working in the rock medium whose interest in science fiction has led them to try to create a form of popular modern music which explores SF themes and tries to create a musical form to express them. Who are they? Amon Duul II; David Bedford; Blue Oyster Cult; Devo; Bloy; Emerson, Lake & Palmer; Peter Gabriel; Genesis; Peter Hamill; Hawkwind; I.Q.; Jefferson Airplane/Starship; Joy Division; King Crimson; Kraftwerk; Magma; Moody Blues; Mythos; Gary Numan; Omega; Pallas; Pink Floyd; Pretty Things; Return to Forever; Rush; Klaus Schulze; Seventh Wave; Tangerine Dream; Van Der Graaf Generator; Vangelis and Yes.

In many cases the science fictional element is as important as the music. Whether the end result is satisfying or not is a matter of taste, but in every case the artists involved have done so much more than append an SF title to rock songs. I don't want to claim too much for SF-rock. In most instances the artists involved have done their best work outside the SF medium. Nevertheless the beast exists and there are hundreds of instances of successful melding of the two forms. Is all SF good? Is all rock music good? No. Nor is the resultant hybrid all good or all bad, but it's bloody interesting to one whose interests lie in both fields.

Because much of this will be 'only names' to *Matrix* readers, I'll offer this. Anyone sending a

tape through for a taster - with return postage - will be obliged.

JOHAN SCHIMANSKI

Jongestubben 17, 1300 Sandvika, Norway.

Music may be concrete, but it seldom describes the concrete in the way that literature or art may. Thus it is difficult to liken it to SF, which often describes the concrete. On the other hand, there is plenty of non-meta-concrete SF around, at least since the not-so-New Wave, and much of this may describe/evolve emotional states also described by certain music, and vice versa.

Someone should also point out that the relationship between music and literature is problematic in other genres than rock or SF. Also, the relationship can always be viewed from two sides: we should not only ask whether there exists SF rock, but also if there exists rock SF (an interesting sidetrack is the ineffectiveness of SF authors to describe music-oriented youth cultures). One should also mention that there is a certain similarity between the rock and SF genres, in the way that they relate to their respective mainstreams.

DAVID PAXTON

44 Huthill Lane, Great Wyrley, Walsall, Staffs, WS6 6PB

I'm a member of a rock band, we write all our own material, and I abhor the idea of being labelled in this way. The SF fraternity has also suffered, many outsiders still thinking that SF is for kids. So please don't blindly label bands in this way.

having typed my way through that lot I think I might be pardoned for imagining that I now work for Sounds. Please, no more letters listing your favourite tracks, favourite bands, favourite albums. I feel that this topic has run its natural course, so I am closing the correspondence for now. Take note of David Vingrove's handsome offer (but DON'T send the tapes to me), write to one another, but please leave the lettercolumns free for some new topics.

I'll leave the final word on the subject with

BRIAN ALDISS

Woodlands, Foxcombe Rd, Boars Hill, Oxford OX1 5DL

I don't entirely share my friend David Vingrove's taste in music, though he does his best to educate me. So let me recommend not pop but Bach - his organ chorale ICH RUF' ZU DIR (on Erato NUM 75064). Why? It is thrilling and otherworldly, and is used as a theme in Tarkovsky's brilliant SF film of *Solaris*.

Not surprisingly, Ken Lake's attempt to define and categorise SF drew a good deal of response so let's start with a letter from Mike Don, who some of you will know better as the person behind Dreamberry Wine, one of our best mail order booksellers [plug].

MIKE DON

233 Maine Road, Manchester 14

One reason for listing everything together is the obvious one: personal laziness. The thought of critically examining every paperback I get and assigning it to its proper pigeonhole gives me the palpitations at the amount of work involved!

More generally, the idea of drawing little boxes around categories of fiction must always be pretty arbitrary (except possibly for genres like Westerns which are pretty well self-defining). Unfortunately for the tidy-minded, authors (less still publishers) in the skiffy world aren't so obliging. Examples are in order. H P Lovecraft. Is his fiction 'horror' or 'fantasy'? In the case of, say, *Colour out of Space* is it even, perhaps, SF?

Randall Garrett's 'Lord Darcy' stories. Alternate history/Poi SF? Working magic, therefore fantasy? Or a variant of detective fiction. And more recently, Barbara Hambly's 'Darwath' trilogy. Outensibly fantasy as the blurbs and the first two books of the trilogy confirm, but the climax of the story reveals the 'McGuffin' to be within the bounds of conventional SF.

About the only divisions which I find generally trouble-free to apply are a) separate listings of anthologies, and b) separating the SF/fantasy from 'mainstream', even though that too has difficulties, commonly with ostensible 'mainstream' (according to publisher's blurb) which has SF/fantasy elements.

Ken's definition of horror could be improved. As it stands many 'invasion from space' stories from *War of the Worlds* onwards would be classed as horror. I'd personally regard horror as not necessarily a genre in itself, but as fiction which aims to scare the bejesus out of its readers; and as such may use the trappings of fantasy, SF or even mainstream - like *Pyscho*.

I'd not complain about Ken's definition of fantasy, except that I have found a number of books which are 'fantasy' by reason of style, not content. The 'Elfquest' is one such. If you consider *poi* phenomena as 'possible' *Elfquest* is straight SF in content; stylistically it is still SF. The same goes for the 'Hawkmoon' subset of Moorcock's 'Eternal Champions' cycle. Although the series as a whole is clearly fantasy, this segment has no element excluded by Ken's definition - yet it would be nipping at the heels of the trappings of their fantasy element.

Categorising SF to the extent that Ken would like is a fascinating idea, but it's not that simple.

NICK CHEESMAN

1 Upper Weybourne Lane, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 9DG

I define SF as being 'that which cannot be defined'. Mainstream fiction seems to be dogmatic on what fiction is divided into, namely: detective/spy thrillers, romantic novels, westerns. Surely anything must be SF? Why should horror not be a form of fantasy, and fantasy not be a form of SF?

It's the flexibility that SF offers which draws me to it, because it is not subject to a doctrine, drawn up by an elite that tries to tell me what I should write or read.

JOSEPH NICHOLAS

22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London, SW1V 2ER

If there is one thing on which one can now rely it's the seemingly limitless propensity of Ken Lake to occupy a page or so of *Matrix* with some new scheme for regularising his favourite literature. This time it's a Trades Descriptions Act for dealers' mail-order catalogues so he won't be misled into buying the wrong books - no doubt with appropriate penalties for those dealers who don't abide by it, such as having all their stock confiscated by the Fannish Thought Police and being forbidden to rent table space at conventions for the next two years.

Or something equally stupid, because what does Ken propose to do with all those books which don't fit into his categories? Promulgate yet new ones for each new book that comes along, handing them down on tablets of stone from his lofty perch as Chief Adjudication Officer, endlessly elaborating and re-elaborating his maze of definitions and sub-definitions in search of the ultimate bureaucratic labyrinth of which he is the sole master? What a lot of arrogant bullshit this notion of his - and what a blinkered, narrow-minded and mean-spirited view of the world it reveals. It should hardly need to be pointed out in this day and age,

although it can't do any harm to repeat it now and then, that anyone so desperate to avoid new experiences by having them signalled to him well in advance, and to restrict himself only to continuous doses of 'more of the same' without which he begins to feel uncomfortable, is hardly likely to possess the breadth of knowledge and wisdom necessary to suggest rules for anyone.

BEN STAVELEY-TAYLOR

45 Polham Lane, Somerton, Somerset, TA11 6SP

I'm not sure whether he [Ken Lake] is joking when he concludes with the revelation that he has made a list of all horror writers and avoids all their works in booklists. Surely, when we start classifying books by author rather than by content, that's the ultimate cop-out? I can cite at least one horror writer who is also an excellent SF writer, namely K W Jeter.

No, Ken, I shan't support your call for a Trades Descriptions Act for SF because we'd all get sued too often. I can't define SF but I'm sure I'll know it when I come across it.

STEVE BULL

St Catharine's College, Cambridge, CB2 1RL

Defining SF is a very difficult problem. In many ways I agree with Ken - I don't like either Horror or Sword & Sorcery-style fantasy but consider that there is a lot of fantasy which is well worth reading, such as the works of James Branch Cabell or Russell Hoban's *The Lion of Boaz-Jachin and Jachin-Boaz*. A number of books pose problems for most of the categories that Ken has picked. For instance, *SS-CB* by Len Deighton is certainly an alternate history novel but I wouldn't call it SF.

My main interest is alternate reality books which covers a large range of material from John Fowles, through Michael Moorcock to Brian Aldiss. Some of these books won't fit into any of Ken's categories but I would regard them as SF because of the way they deal with perceptions of reality.

The problem with any definition of SF is that there will always be books that defy definition, and people whose idea of a definition differs from the generally accepted one. My definition would be along the lines of any books where a reality other than our own, or one from our past, is described. This is not a good definition but I don't think such a thing is possible.

STUART FALCONER

70 Willow Way, Ponteland, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE20 9RG

I have been trying to think of a simpler definition of SF which would fit the needs of [Ken Lake's] particular situation. He is not so much looking for a definition for critical purposes as a way of describing his requirements to an ignorant bookseller. I think the whole thing is a matter of taste. I believe I may be quoting but I regard SF as a branch of fantastic writing. Fantastic literature results when some aspect of the world has been altered. It may be explained as in Kafka or Borges, fantastic pure and simple. Or the change may result from a semi-mythological history, a being back to a semi-mythological history, a being back to a semi-mythological history, a being back to a semi-mythological history, a being back to a semi-mythological history. SF results from the change being brought about through technology.

STEPHEN R BAILEY

9 Glasven Road, Northwood, Kirkby, Merseyside, L33 6PA

Do we really need a classification scheme for the SF genre anyway? I think that such a discussion, though interesting, will ultimately be futile. No one will agree. I support Frederik Pohl's definition of SF, given in *The Complete Book of SF and Fantasy Lists*: 'It's that thing that people

who understand SF point to when they point to something and say "That's science fiction!"

Another topic that has generated a great deal of interest is L Ron Hubbard, or rather his demise. You should have read Jon May's excellent explanation of Scientology by now, and I hope it has clarified understanding of this cult/belief/philosophy/call it what you will.

ROGER WADDINGTON

On L Ron Hubbard; 'wreaking havoc with young minds' surely better describes the Labour Party, and 'stealing millions of dollars from the gullible' likewise the Conservatives ... At least Hubbard was only in for the money; as he said 'the best way to make money is to found a new religion', and he has my admiration, that he went ahead and did exactly that. Too many of the world's troubles have been caused by people who firmly believe in what they say and then inflict these beliefs on the rest of us with fanaticism and fury. At least with Scientology there was a degree of choice; ...

And if L Ron Hubbard can be proved to be reprehensible, if he committed crimes against humanity, surely the fact that towards the end he was relinquishing his cult religion and coming back to his old trade of science fiction, must count in his favour. The evidence is there, in several weighty volumes stating with *Battlefield Earth*; indeed the fact that he'd delivered all ten volumes of his last work to his publishers before his death, and judging from the three published so far, all 400 pages plus, must surely indicate that the task of ruling his evil empire had slipped away down the list of priorities. Too, his Writers of the Future scheme was surely an acknowledgement that he wanted to be thought of, at the end as in the beginning, as part of the science fiction field; and if such authors as Robert Silverberg, Gene Wolfe and Frederick Pohl, and most of all Algis Budrys, could lend him their names and support, can we be any less forgiving?

JOY HIBBERT

9 Rutland Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs, ST1 5JG

It [Scientology] originated as a self improvement system, which worked for some people and not others, which is true of all such systems. Naturally, the people who were helped thought it was a marvellous thing, and it's a sad fact of human nature that such people tend to try and defy the person who's helped them, and the latter lets them do it. Hubbard is not the only person this has happened to - 2 other well known examples are Jesus of Nazareth and Maharishi Mahesh Yoga. However, I think that 'undoubtedly evil' is a harsh way to describe a gifted man with human foibles, and 'evil work' is a downright inaccurate way of describing any harmless method of self improvement. It may be that Kevin McVeigh is a religious person who will perceive Scientology as a religion in opposition to his own. This is not the case. Scientology can be more accurately compared to, say yoga or TM than to a religion, and therefore is not necessarily incompatible with religions (though some Christian cults are strongly opposed to any form of self improvement, and so in practice it would be incompatible with them). However, it is true to say that in recent years Scientology has been corrupted by Hubbard worshippers and people who are after power over other people. The good news is that most principled practitioners of Scientology left or were thrown out of the movement during this bad patch, and are now styled 'independents', and are able to introduce people to the practice of 'auditing' without demanding any other commitment from them.

Moving onto another issue from last time, we have various responses to Ben Staveley-Taylor's letter on judging a media adaptation on its own merit.

PHIL NICHOLS

Ben Staveley-Taylor makes an excellent point of the difficulty of judging on its own merits a media presentation derived from an existing work. It has to be said, though, that it isn't easy either to 'forget' the source work or to decide where the director's (or whoever's) contribution begins and ends. WHILE I'm pleased that my review of *Fahrenheit 451* gets a thumbs up, I must admit I feared that I had, myself, fallen into the very trap Ben describes.

HELEN McNABB

The Bower, High St, Llantwit Major, S.Glam

Most adaptations fail to people who know and love the original book merely because compressing a book into two hours or so means that much is left out. TV series avoid some of the traps because they have more time to explore some of the depths and details of the book. It takes considerable talent to use a book as the basis of a film or play, or create a work of art which doesn't offend those who love the original because the format must be different, the demands and requirements of the media are different. It is valid for a reviewer to say 'It's not as good as the book', if this is what many of the viewers will feel, but it is also valid to point out the virtues of the film if it has any.

TERRY BROOME

23 Claremont Road, Lincoln

I thought I had made it clear that I enjoyed the TV production and liked the use of the Bogart/old movie idea. But, in comparison it was not such a strong piece of fiction - the written story was much more so. I think this is a valid criticism. I also agree that the production can also be looked at on its own merits - I simply chose to tackle it by comparison, which I feel is no less valid.

IAIN U ANDERSON

Ornum, Blackhall Road, Banchoy, Scotland

Yes, people, you can get new books from libraries, I have obtained 3 this year, but the problem is the number of books available. Maybe Andy Sawyer can tell us how many copies of a book the library service takes. A book published at the beginning of the year perhaps would reach all the membership but as the year went on less and less people would see a new book.

HELEN McNABB

As another librarian I support Mike Brain and Andy Sawyer. There have been many people who put down libraries as relics of our Victorian past. Although affected by cutbacks it shouldn't prove hard to get most of the mainstream hardcover SF - even South Glamorgan has it, and South Glamorgan is a notoriously bad library system.

IAN OLDFIELD

Virtually all the books I read come from local libraries and I don't remember having to order a book either for I find the selection and occasional new additions quite satisfactory. I have only been reading fantasy and SF for 2-3 years but even so it will be a long time before I exhaust the local stock, and after that there's the whole county to order from for the minimal charge of 30p per book.

Changing tack completely, we now have a letter about religion in SF followed closely by a letter about politics and SF.

PAUL D MORRIS

Windymys, St Peter's Lane, Withern, Alford, Lincs, LN13 0LL

I'm writing because of the surprisingly strong anti-religious feeling expressed in his otherwise

excellent novel *Fountains of Paradise* by Arthur C Clarke. I haven't got a copy of the book at the moment so I can't respond specifically but there seems to be a general feeling around that we are in a scientific age and can throw away the religions that were part of our childhood. I am a 'committed Christian' which means that I take God and his son, Jesus Christ, seriously, and know that he is relevant to our lives today, and think this view is, to put it bluntly, wrong. Is there anyone out there who is a Christian too? Is there any Christian SF around? I've only seen one book published by Lion, as well as some children's fantasy.

It's fascinating to speculate - if there is 'life on other planets' will they have suffered the same downfall as happened after the creation of this world? If not, why not? If so, did the Son of God come in an alien form in the same way that he came here. What concepts will they have of God? Will there be an equivalent to our anthropomorphic view of him as our 'Father'?

By the way, I don't think Jesus was an alien.

This is an extremely interesting letter which I hope will provoke some reasoned response. A word of warning though, I am not going to print endless letters simply saying 'Yes, I am a Christian', 'No, I'm not' as such responses are effectively wasting precious space. On the other hand, all valid comments will find their way in, for or against Paul's views.

BERNARD SMITH

It was depressing to read of the plight of Eduard Markov, and I hope that the BSFA responds to the appeal - both as an organisation and as individuals. I hope too that nobody does turn this into a political argument as it would do no good at all - Soviet slamming is easy and what is of prime importance is to do whatever will help Eduard Markov, regardless of personal attitudes towards the Soviet system. Could I suggest that the BSFA takes the initiative and makes him an honorary member. It would establish a link at once with a large number of people - fans, writers, critics, publishers - and would help to counter the isolation that he must feel. It might also give him an outlet for his writings. I have already written to him and offered membership of Cassandra, and hope that this link will prove beneficial to him in some way.

I already had Bernard's suggestion in mind and it was discussed at our last committee meeting, with total agreement. Eduard Markov is now a member of the BSFA.

DAVID McWILLIAMS

77 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15

I can't stand it when people describe a book as 'politically biased towards socialism' or 'has rightwing tendencies'. This sort of crap should be left to the people who spout it so well - politicians. ... Over here in the North of Ireland people are so sick of politics that the merest mention of it causes fists (and bullets) to fly. I have seen the consequences of imposing one's views on an unwilling populace.

Patrick Lee would like us to take note of 1987's proximity, and not just because of the Worldcon.

PATRICK LEE

24 Osden Drive, Cheshunt, Herts, EN8 9RL

The year 1987 has been used in science fiction more than once, for example in the superbly illustrated book *Spacebase 2000*, Stewart Cowley predicts that in 1987 nuclear powered engines, ion and plasma systems will be introduced, leading to the first space freighter entering service in the year 2004. On television we have been told that in

the year 1987 NASA will launch the last of its deep space probes - piloted by Buck Rogers.

Setting stories in the near future is all very well but to include a particular year is folly. Setting a story in a particular year may give us false hopes or nightmares (remember 1984). After all, does anyone believe that there will be a Moonbase Alpha by 1999, or Blade Runners and replicants by the year 2019? The twenty first century is very attractive, I admit, but science fiction writers are still using the first fifty years for their stories, with the incredible prediction that space travel will become very routine, with colonisation of moons and planets occurring at the same time.

I also heard from:

IAIN U ANDERSON who took me to task for using 'piss off' in my editorial on the grounds that children might be reading. Indeed they might, but have you heard the playground language of the average ten-year old. They use words I've never heard of.

KEN LAKE (115 Markhouse Avenue, London E17 8AY) took me to task for leaving too much white space - this came about because I was given a certain ratio to work to, regarding original and eventual size, and it didn't work. We're trying A3 to A4 this time so I hope the problems will be ironed out. On the other hand I refuse to cram too much on to every page. One of the things I greatly admire about *Vector* is the clean style, even if I don't personally like three columns to a page.

He also said 'Surely previous editors gave you a clip of unused material crowded out by earlier crises?' You really want to know the answer to that, Ken? John did pass on a few bits of information but not the guts of a *Matrix* ready-made. I'm personally quite pleased with the results, considering, and now is not the time to discuss the deficiencies (real or imagined) of previous editors.

TOM JONES (14 Haywood, Bracknell, Berks, RG12 4WG) also took me to task for leaving white space when doing the con listing. Speaking as a professional user of information I like to see it laid out clearly, so mistakes don't get made. I did a straw poll round the committee the other day and they all liked it, and it's staying.

He also objected to me describing the membership as drawing vitality from the committee and suggested more two-way communication. As you already know, I have instituted a special BSFA page, and will be printing regular reports of committee doings from now on, to show that we're working hard as well.

J D STEPHEN (60 Ardross Place, Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland, KY6 2SQ) pointed out that in the convention round-up Scotland is neither in England or overseas, for which I apologise. A suitable amendment has been made this time around, which I hope will redeem me.

JENNY WHITE (118 Greystones Road, Sheffield, S11 7ER) says that I made the BSFA sound like a mob of sluggish vampires in my last editorial. However, I realise that it must be discouraging to keep producing magazines and get no response, like talking to an audience which may not be there.

CATHERINE EVANS (82 Ty Fry Road, Rummy, Cardiff, Wales, CF3 8NS) writing to us for the first time, commented on Colin Vernham's suggestion about amalgamation 'I'm lucky my parents think I should get a magazine to read every week, but if the two organisations joined the membership fee would be too much. Also I wanted to join the BSFA not the BPSF.'

She also said that she decided to join the BSFA because of *Matrix*. I like to hear this, so thank you Catherine.

ROY GRAY (17 Ullswater, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 7YN) observes that the BSFA has lost its way, and should be seeking to improve the standard of SF, and also draws analogies between the Institute of Physics and the Institute of Packaging. I see a danger in comparing an amateur hobby-oriented organisation with professional vocational bodies. I work for the Institute of Biology, which is along the same lines, but so far as I'm concerned they are as remote from the BSFA as an ant from an elephant, or perhaps this is the wrong attitude.

TOM ELLIOTT (Flat 2, 285 Blackpool Street, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs, DE14 3AR) thinks that the key to the problem is delegation and suggests that we break the membership secretary's job into smaller parts. I foresee that this will be a popular solution, but speaking as a membership secretary myself I can assure you that dividing a job like this between two rooms is a recipe for disaster, let alone between two towns. We must accept that there are only a limited number of jobs available and that only a certain number can do them.

Tom asks about becoming a reviewer for *Paperback Inferno* or *Vector*. The first step is to get in touch with the respective editors and offer your services, perhaps send a sample review of any book you may have read recently. They will arrange for books to be sent to you if they think they could use you, with a deadline and word count, and you take it from there. If you want to review media items, television programmes or films, write a review (but don't make it too long), and send it to Mark Greener.

U.N. (16 Ayrsmo Park Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS5 6AR) wasn't happy with my 'incentive' to letter writers, although I saw it as following a long-established practice among magazines, both amateur and professional.

ROB GREGG criticised the inclusion of the Eudard Markov appeal in *Matrix* - the only one to do so, I might add - on the grounds that it had been widely circulated elsewhere and that it was thrusting a political statement at members. As a large number of BSFA members are not particularly active I thought it a good idea to draw it to their attention. The indication is that some people have already taken action as a result, from which I infer that they hadn't seen it before. As the British Science Fiction Association I think it would be a poor show if we didn't take an interest, hence the appeal, and the free membership of the BSFA which we have arranged.

KEVIN McVEIGH (37 Firs Road, Milnthorpe, Cumbria, LA7 7QF) commented on Ken Lake's Soapbox 'If categories were necessary, I'd personally prefer an indication of style to be worked in somehow but generally I don't like this categorisation to such extremes.'

SUE THOMSON (1 Meyrick Square, Dolgellau, Gwynedd, LL40 1LT) sent a detailed and fascinating letter discussing the types of music in *Dune* which is too long to reproduce here, although I have plans for it, but I will quote this little bit 'I read a good deal of 'feminist SF' which I tend to associate, logically enough I suppose, with 'women's music', and feel much freer to make up my own tunes to. There is no commercial rock music in here (Garner's CROSS TRAFFIC is a sort of essence-of-rock without a specific reference) and I have few associations between rock and SF. Perhaps I don't read the right books/listen to the right music.'

Which tends to reinforce my suspicion that it is a very personal thing, the relationship between music and reading. And this correspondence is now definitely closed.

A final word from Alan Thomson (101 Jordanhill Drive, Glasgow, G13 1UQ) 'You dun good'. Thanks, Alan.

SOAPBOX

BACK TO 1984?

by MARK GITTINS

Do we need censorship? Yes, of course we do; it is necessary and I think most people would agree to that. The problem arises over what degree of censorship is suitable for given media, in particular television. In my opinion that which exists at the moment is just about right (though certain scenes and words are cut, even late at night, which is going a bit far.) The scheduling of programmes provides an effective method of selecting a 'suitable audience' - for example, a 1 am screening of *Blue Peter* would not attract many viewers.

Mr Churchill, Mrs Whitehouse and Co, however, know what is good for us. They can protect us and, they assure us with wild-eyed intensity, we must understand that they know best, yes, Yes, YES. No. Obviously, Mr C, Mrs V & Co do not trust us. They consider us to be simple, impressionable puppets or else crazy, glue sniffing, dope-pushing addicts who watch the frightful violence of *The A-team*(!) and then rush out into the streets to copy these horrendous acts of carnage, reliving and slaying policemen and pleasant viewers of figure-skating whilst on a TV-solvent high. Whoopee, let's go!

I remember hearing one of Mr C's cronies saying, after watching some rather strange programme, that 'whoever made that film must have been either mad or on drugs'. Admittedly, the scene was rather bizarre, involving arrows being shot into a naked man, but it was hardly kiddies-hour viewing, and whilst watching it I felt no inclination to strip off and go look for my bow. People, even children, can differentiate between films and 'real' violence, horrors and situations. For example: Ethiopia, the film of which spawned Band Aid, Live Aid, Sport Aid etc. If it had been an excerpt from a Richard Attenborough epic, who would have cried?

Essentially, there are two questions to be asked:

- 1) Is there too much sex and violence on TV?
- 2) Would you agree with having an external body set up to deal with it?

If the answer to the first is no, then the second need not even be considered. If, however, your answer is yes, then we are back to the original question, which prompted me to write this in the first place, and the answer is, in my opinion, no. But this is a complex matter and some degree of censorship should, and does, exist. However, this is minimal and allows all tastes to be catered for whilst preventing 'Swedish nuns and the chainsaw bloodbath at Virgin High School' from having a 4pm showing or, more likely, any showing at all.

The excessive censorship being suggested (apart from fighting against something which is not there) will surely cause much excellent TV to be cut: a precious commodity these days with the proliferation of soaps and sit-coms. The companies will be forced to make films which can be shown entirely or cut without detracting from the effect (the latter resulting in violence/sex for its own sake) or else sacrifice TV showings and hence revenue. This is bound to be bad for all British films.

Mr C, Mrs V & Co seem to be particularly concerned with children and television's effect upon them. As people develop they are subject to various influences. TV is only one among many and surely not as important as those received from parents,

family and friends - actual people with whom two-way, progressive relationships can develop. You can talk about things to people but try it with a TV and you'll get some strange looks. Person-TV relationships are passive.

Quite honestly, the very idea of implementing the suggested measures is ridiculous. If the people suggesting them stood back and thought about it with clear, open minds, surely it would end there. However, I am convinced that they do not have open minds; their public school educations and cultured lives have separated them from the people they worry about. Clearly intellect separated from reality proves to be of little use, and these ladies and gentlemen have no right to tell us what we can and can't watch.

I say that it is up to the parents of children to decide what is and is not suitable TV. Of course, most parents can't be trusted to do this. Well, sure, but some parents murder their children yet children aren't confiscated at birth. It is up to us and up to the TV companies what we watch, and if you don't like it there are three more channels to watch or, if you dare, that 'off' button in the corner.

IMAGINATION IS EVERYTHING

by CAROLE ANNE WHEWELL

In these frightening times we live in, what better than to escape into an imaginary world, that in some cases is even more frightening than our own! Ironic, but living through a future fantasy seems more appealing to some than the reality of our present time.

Escapism is something we all turn to, so as to get away from our sometimes mundane day to day lives. Science fiction and fantasy offers us this escape, and it is ideal, and often comforting to know, that adventures lie at every corner of our existence; even though they come in the form of written words.

Whether you read or watch science fiction, you automatically become involved. It's as if stepping onto another plain of existence. The bigger your imagination, the more realistic it all seems.

So, what draws so many seemingly ordinary people to the whelms and depths of science fiction? For me, the answer lies in the fact that, although science fiction is based on the wilder thoughts and imaginations of our minds, it is closer to reality than we care to mention. Our endless imaginations that dream up the likes of Captain Kirks, time machines, aliens, etc, may only be an extension of what could be reality in another sphere of our vast universe. And, why not? We cannot state that such things do not exist because we don't know that for sure.

Perhaps, then, the horrific creatures that we conjure up in dreams, or the ideas and pictures that pass through our minds' "grey matter", are real. Perhaps they exist in another sphere, in another galaxy. Our imaginations may be visions of reality, and when we turn them into words and pictures, in the form of books and films, we get science fiction.

One day the word "fiction" may fall into disuse, to be replaced by "fact" or "probability" or the like. For I feel that fiction is based on reality. Imagination is but an extension of reality.

I suppose such a theory could never be proved, at least not in our lifetime. But, just think if all our thoughts were based on reality. Einstein wasn't far wrong when he said: "To imagine is everything."