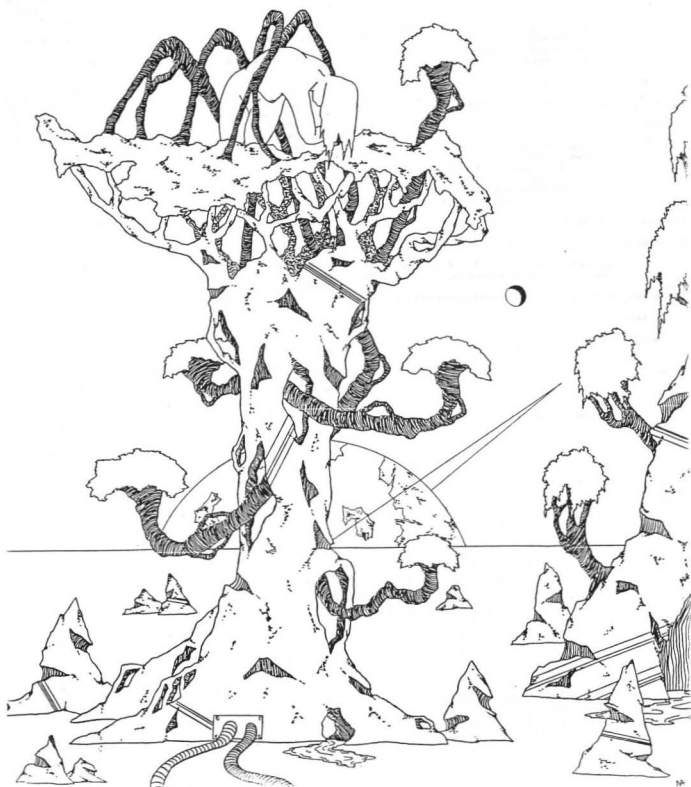


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75p

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



April May 1987

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ISSN: 0307 3335

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

BSFA MEMBERSHIP costs £10 per annum and is
available from:

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Red Shift

I was taking part in a panel about fandom during Conception. I think we were supposed to be considering what effect the Worldcon would have on the state of British fandom but it was degenerating into a free-for-all about the philosophy of running conventions and how the only way to help fandom was to recruit as vigorously as possible, and so on and so forth, and I had developed an overwhelming desire to smash a microphone over someone's, anyone's, head because this was the fifth time today I'd heard this panel discussion - although it turned up under different names - and I was still hearing the same damn arguments and counter-arguments, and I thought 'where is it getting us all?' And I was asked what sort of effect the Worldcon would have on the BSFA, and I probably said something about the BSFA not being about fandom any longer anyway. Then someone who shall remain nameless turned round and said 'I'll never understand why you're involved in the BSFA', the implication being that as a 'fannish' fan, which is ultimately what I am, I shouldn't be messing around with the BSFA. At the time, I made a facetious remark, but I've been thinking ever since.

The argument is that BSFA isn't 'fannish', and that's true. It was once about leading people into fandom, in the days when fandom was a group of SF fans, and about keeping them in touch. These days, with improved communication on every level, not to mention a lot more fans around in the first place, it just doesn't function in the same way. That's why I don't consider Matrix to be a fanzine. It's a newsletter, a digest of information about available options, covering every branch of fandom, something to get you started, or perhaps keep you up to date on a general level, and just about letting everyone know what the alternatives are. Where I differ from my friends who advocate vigorous recruiting to the cause of 'fandom' is that I've come to realise that there are people who are quite content not to get involved at all, beyond belonging to BSFA, getting the zines, and so forth, and there are plenty of people with a particular interest who don't really give a bean about fandom in its entirety, just their bit of it. And that's fine. I'm like that too. I like editing and writing for BSFA publications, I like my apa and fanzine writing and publishing, my fiction writing, and my con running. I don't want to become actively involved as a gamer, media type, anything like that. I'll watch Dr Who, but I don't really want to go to a Dr Who convention. My interest is on a general level. The holistic approach to fandom is fine if that's what you want

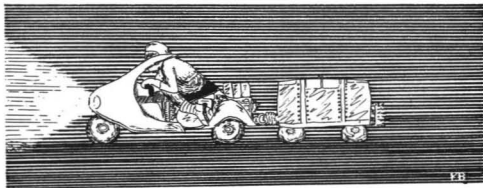
but smacks unpleasantly of intolerance when it isn't appreciated that not giving yourself up to play D&D isn't really selfish if you're going to spend all day cranking a duplicator for a zine. Same basic interest, different manifestation.

On the other hand, the implication that if you're a 'fannish' fan you can't be active in the BSFA as well, or some such similar nonsense is just as limiting, in fact more so. If that remark was made now, I'd say that I'm involved with the BSFA because I have something to offer - all my experience as a fan, whatever I've been involved with - and because I enjoy it. I don't have to experience all aspects to understand the motivation, even when I don't understand the particular interest. Back in that noisy room at Conception we were all talking about the same thing, attacking it in different ways, and I can see now that as long as we're still arguing about whether fandom, that's fine. The problem comes when the blueprint is formalised. May I never live to see the day when diversity is strait-jacketed in rules and codes.

Okay, rant over, time for a rant. As usual, I need more contributions. Soapbox material, reviews, letters - lots of letters please - look, before I programme a standard paragraph onto this machine, cheer me up a bit. The postman thinks I'm making him redundant. A few in depth articles would be good. Artwork is coming in nicely but if you want to contribute, feel free. Letters though, please? On the other hand, thank you to everyone who has contributed information on bookshops - the list is looking very healthy. How about doing the same to beef up the Clubs list. Make Ron's day as well. And thank you too to those people who have volunteered to help out at Worldcon. I know our Co-ordinator is asking for more names - we'll be getting in touch with people shortly.

And last but not least, I'd like to say that not content with getting on each other's nerves, fighting over the word processor, sitting up until the early hours surrounded by paste-up and dead tea-mugs, and scoring points off each other at meetings, Paul Kincaid and I decided to put this arrangement on a more permanent footing and became engaged on March 15th. Wedding next year, mailing deadlines permitting.

Deadline for letters, contributions, condolences and abuse - Friday 15th May. Be there!



WALKING ON GLASS

The BSFA Column

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

by Paul Kincaid

It's about time I got down to writing one of these, but all the usual excuses keep coming out. You know the ones, pressure of work, never enough time. But the excuses have got to stop. After all, this is a very busy and exciting time for the BSFA, and all the indications are that it is going to get busier. There are lots to gird, preparations to be made, and any other cliché you care for so long as we get ourselves ready for what is to come.

Okay, let's go over a few of the things that have been happening recently. You may recall that in the last *Matrix* we advertised for three vital jobs within the BSFA. One of these was Production Assistant for *Vector*, and I am happy to announce that the job was filled almost immediately by Simon Nicholson. The issue of *Vector* included in this mailing is the first one he has been involved with; but I hope there will be many more. Welcome aboard, Simon.

We also advertised for another Production Assistant to help with the typing of *Vector*, and I understand from David Barrett that this rôle has also been filled ready for our next issue.

Of course the main job we were advertising was for Treasurer, following Phil Knight's decision that he could not continue. Over the last couple of years Phil has done a lot to bring our accounts up to date. Things had got into a rather unfortunate state before he took over, and he has spent practically his entire time as Treasurer wrestling with figures from previous years. Thanks to his efforts our accounts are now just about up to date, and for the first time for far too long we are in a pretty secure financial situation. Unfortunately, his job takes him away from home far too much and for that reason he hasn't really been able to keep up the good work, hence his decision to step down.

John Fairley has stepped in at very short notice to fill the gap on a temporary basis. He is keeping us on an even keel until we are able to replace Phil on a more long lasting basis. On the behalf of everyone involved in the BSFA I want to thank John for the work he has been doing for the last few weeks.

However, he will be happy to learn that his temporary position may soon be coming to an end, since we have had an application for the post from someone who seems eminently qualified to look after the finances of the BSFA. We have to be formal about this, and the matter will be considered by the Committee shortly, but I think we can look forward to our financial state being solid and secure from now on.

On the matter of finances, of course, we have had to raise our rates since the beginning of the year. It was inevitable, given the way costs have risen and the plans we have for the BSFA publications. And I am happy to say that the change does seem to have gone very smoothly. The only minor problem is that a few people who pay their membership by Standing Order haven't changed the order in time so we've had a few payments at the old rate. So if you do pay by Standing Order, please check that you have changed the rate.

Of course you can already see where the money is going. All our magazines are now printed

professionally, and from the letters we've received I know I'm not the only one to think that the magazines have been greatly improved as a result. Certainly the improved appearance has meant that we are starting to increase the bookshop sales of magazines, which means wider publicity for the BSFA and more money which we can plough back into the organisation and printing the magazines is only the first step in our plans for the future. There are many more ways in which we can improve the appearance and the content of our magazines, and we plan to phase those improvements in over the coming years as finances permit.

Of course in the modern world it's inevitable that everything comes down to money in the end, and in real terms that means increasing our membership. I know that membership has been increasing steadily recently, and quite rightly so. After all, we now have a first rate organisation for people to join, and I think we provide very good value for money. But there are others out there who could be BSFA members, who would appreciate what we offer, who would enjoy the magazines we produce. What we have to do is reach them.

Some of you will remember, not so long ago, that various people in the letter columns of *Matrix* were debating ways of promoting the BSFA. One suggestion that came up was that we should include references to the BSFA whenever we are able to get items in newspapers and magazines. Well, from my own experience I've discovered it really does work. A short while ago I had an article about science fiction in a magazine called *Writers' Monthly*, and I referred to the BSFA in that. Even before I received a copy of the magazine myself I was receiving letters referring to the article and asking for details about the BSFA. I'm passing these letters on to our Membership Secretary, Joanne Raine, but now I know it does work. So why don't more of you try it? It's your association as much as mine, and we need all the publicity we can get.

I know the publicity works, because I also know that we are getting more and more requests for help and information from publishers, other organisations, and even television. It may not always be obvious, but the BSFA is definitely fulfilling the rôle so many of you have spoken about as a sort of central reference house in the wide world of science fiction.

But to come back to the matter of recruitment, our main interest, and the thing that is liable to be taking more and more of our energies over the coming months, is the Worldcon. It is the first time the Worldcon has been held in this country since 1979, and it is certainly going to be the biggest science fiction event this country has ever seen. We have to have as big a presence there as possible.

There will be a BSFA meeting at Easter as usual this year, but we are holding off our full AGM until the Worldcon in order to attract as many BSFA members as possible. We also want it to provide as high a profile as possible, so in addition we want to have a stall selling BSFA publications and memberships, and that isn't going to work unless we have people to man it. We'll be there part of the time, so why not you? We need as many volunteers as possible. I know Maureen has already asked this, and I know several of you have already replied. But we always need more volunteers. If you're going to be at the Worldcon (and if not, why not?), why not come along and give us a hand. After all, the more people volunteer, the less everybody has to do.

Maureen is going to be producing the daily newsletter at the convention (see, editing *Matrix* can lead to bigger and better things), and I know she's going to plug the BSFA in that. But if you can think of other ways of promoting us, then tell us.

PROFILE: Mike Moir

As far back as I can remember, I have been fascinated by, and wanted to read, SF. Unfortunately, my early reading was punctuated by false starts. "Hey" said friends regularly, "read this, it is GREAT!" So I was lent first an Asimov, then a Clarke, and finally Heinlein, and was put off SF for years. My own choices were no better; as I loved movies I thought novelisations would be great too. Finally, at the age of 15, having enjoyed a diet of Huxley, Vaughn, Greene etc, I was persuaded to buy Sturgeon, Erdbury and, best of all, Dick. Needless to say, I was hooked.

Like many people I discovered that other fans existed while at university. One fateful day I passed a noticeboard and saw a multi-paged mess pinned to the board, proclaiming 'Small Mammal 1: Are you an SF fan?' This was my first ever sight of a fanzine, best of all it said there would be a meeting, in the union bar, the very next day. Fortunately I did not expect much. In the corner of the bar, surrounded by piles of badly printed paper (later to be identified as even more fanzines) was Martin Easterbrook. Later (funny, it was always later) Bernie Peek appeared, and eventually a couple more. The second year's intake was even less impressive in number, but the quality was infinitely superior, and four years later I married her.

Martin spent much of the SF meetings telling us how wonderful conventions were, and even got everyone to help with the one day event; Lunicon, in 1977. Conventions seemed a great idea, but horribly expensive. Starting my first job in the last days of 1976 I immediately began saving for the Worldcon in '79. At Secon '79 we spent four days missing all the really good bits and thoroughly enjoying ourselves. Since then Debby and I have controlled our addiction to a steady half dozen conventions a year.

In 1983, I found myself persuaded (by Alan Dorey, who else?) to become Information Officer for the BSFA. Being a collector of useless information this sounded like a great job, but after three years, I decided it was time to call it a day. Answering the odd question was great fun, even the occasional five page list of questions. The requests for extensive help with three year research projects, I had to dodge. I eventually gave it up partly due to pressure of other work, but mostly because of questions like "in 1968, about ten minutes into episode three (or was it four?) of 'The Tomorrow People' there was this really terrific bit of music. What was it called and how do I get a copy of the record?"

Alan, who never missed out on willing labour, also persuaded me to become the Awards Administrator. I have always been addicted to the idea of awards. Obviously, all awards have their faults, but the controversy is half the fun. It may be difficult getting you lot to vote, but the BSFA award does have one of the world's best records for quality winners. Yes, I know that's subjective.

The only fanzine I have co-edited was the single issue of Abbey Habit. There have never been any more, because the editorial team turned themselves into a Publishing Company. Kerosina Pubs. (sounds like a brewery chain doesn't it?) takes up rather a lot of my time, but I wouldn't give it up for the world.

As to what I do outside of SF? I work in Operational Research, which is an ungaily mixture of statistics, maths, computers, economics and general problem solving. I have worked in such horrid areas as the nuclear industry and defence contracting, but now with a clearer conscience I work for the Post Office.

NEWS

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

AWARDS

A curiously unexpected shortlist for the Nebula Award has been announced. The novel category includes the unsurprising *Speaker for the Dead* by Orson Scott Card along with a number of considerably less likely titles: *The Handmaid's Tale* - Margaret Atwood, *This is the way the World Ends* - James Morrow, *The Journal of Nicholas the American* - Leigh Kennedy, and *Free Live Free* by Gene Wolfe which strictly belongs to the previous year though apparently the Nebulas work on the first mass-market edition.

On an altogether less exalted plain there were awards for sf and fantasy writers at the Romantic Times convention in Manhattan last November. The winning works had to have an element of romance in them, and the winners were:

BEST SF: *Probe* - Carol Nelson Douglas
BEST NEW SF WRITER: Jayne Ann Krentz
MOST VERSATILE ROMANCE WRITER: Jayne Ann Krentz
BEST HISTORICAL FANTASY: Parke Godwin
BEST NEW FANTASY WRITER: Esther Friesner
BEST TIME TRAVEL: Constance O'Day Flannery

PEOPLE

1987 looks like being a good year for Garry Kilworth. In August BODLEY HEAD are publishing 'a bizarre mainstream novel', *Spiral Winds*, while his previous mainstream novel, *Witchwater Country*, is due out in paperback from GRAPTON at the same time. UNWIN HYMAN have bought a new 'social fantasy' novel, *Cloudrock*, and have also bought the paperback rights to *A Theatre of Timonitis*. Finally, the French translation rights to *Songbirds of Pain* have been bought by DENOELIS.

Ursula LeGuin has confirmed that she will be attending Conspiracy 87. Other writers who have confirmed they will attend include Diana Wynne Jones, Louise Cooper, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Norman Spinrad, Kim Stanley Robinson, Frederik Pohl, Hal Clement, and Richard Cowper.

Meanwhile Guests of Honour Arkady and Boris Strugatski seem to be out of favour with the current Soviet regime and various writers' organisations are now putting pressure on the government to make sure they can attend Conspiracy. If you want to help out, contact Bridget Wilkinson, 15 Manor Dr., Southgate, London N14.

Iain Banks has been announced as the Guest of Honour at Novacon 17. Iain's new novel, an epic space opera called *Consider Phlebas*, is due from MACMILLAN in April. To distinguish his science fiction from the rest of his output, Banks has been persuaded by his publisher to insert M. (for Menzies) in his name for his sf. He will, by the way, be holding a signing session at *Andromeda Books* in Birmingham over the Becon weekend.

Margaret Atwood, whose novel *The Handmaid's Tale* has made the short lists for the Booker, Nebula and Arthur C. Clarke awards, is to visit this country in June when VIRAGO are publishing the paperback of her book.

OBITUARIES

Patrick Troughton, who was the second actor to play Doctor Who, died on 28 March after collapsing with a heart attack during a Doctor Who Convention in Columbus, Georgia. He was 67. He took over his most famous rôle from William Hartnell in 1966, and played the doctor until 1969. Since then he has twice returned to the rôle for special anniversary productions in 1973 and 1983.

Roger C. Carmel, the character actor who appeared several times in *Star Trek* in the rôle of Harry Mudd, responsible for introducing tribbles onto the Enterprise, has died from an overdose of drugs at his Hollywood home. He was 54.

PUBLISHING

It appears that the GREENHILL PRESS Science Fiction and Fantasy line is going to fade away into nothing. The enterprising series of reissues under the aegis of Brian Stableford is going ahead with its next two titles, *Master of his Fate* by J. MacLaren Cobban due in March, and *The Blind Spot* by Austin Hall and Homer Bon Flint due in April, but no further books are scheduled. Publisher Lionel Leventhal says that part of the problem is finding titles of sufficient quality, but the real cause is disappointingly poor sales. It would be a great pity if these fascinating publications of science fiction from the early years of the century were to cease. But Leventhal does hold out some hope, if they come upon a sufficiently exciting title, he says, they will publish it even if it is at a loss.

But as one publisher fades, another appears. Following the success of KEROSINA, we have MORRIGAN PUBLICATIONS from Les Escott and his father, Jim. Their first book has just been announced. It is *Death Arms* by K.W. Jeter, set in the same world as his earlier successes, *Dr Adder* and *The Glass Hammer*. *Death Arms* will be published on 31 May at £10.95, with a special limited edition featuring an exclusive Afterword by Jeter at £27.50. MORRIGAN apparently have their second novel lined up already. It is *Serpents Egg* by R.A. Lafferty, which will be published in August to coincide with the Worldcon.

Alan Moore's second collection of stories, *Twisted Times*, has just come out from TITAN BOOKS. Like his first collection, *Shocking Futures*, the stories first appeared in *2000 AD*. Meanwhile his comic *Swamp Thing* is soon to be published as a graphic novel by TITAN BOOKS.

TITAN have also announced the publication of *The Return of Mister X*, a graphic novel by Gilbert and Jaime Hernandez.

UNWIN HYMAN, at the same time that they bring out Colin Greenland's second novel, *The Hour of the Thin Ox*, have taken on his third novel, which he is now in the process of revising.

Forthcoming books from MACMILLAN include *Expecting Someone Taller* a comic novel about Gods, dwarves and Valkyries by Tom Holt who made his name writing sequels to the *Lucia* books of E.F. Benson.

The new novel from Gene Wolfe is *The Urth of the New Sun*, a sequel to his award-winning quartet, *The Book of the New Sun*. It is to be published in this country by GOLLANCZ in August. Wolfe, by the way, is another writer who has confirmed he will be attending Conspiracy, but it has also been announced that he will be attending Becon this Easter.

Another long-awaited new book is *Aegypt* by John Crowley. This has been known to be on the way since shortly after his tremendous success with *Little, Big* in 1981, but rumour of its appearance have come to nothing. However, the novel now

actually has appeared from BANTAM in America, with a British edition from GOLLANCZ due later this year. The book, which doesn't seem to be much shorter than his previous novel, is only the first volume in a quartet, though there is nothing on the American edition to indicate this fact.

Mary Gentle has just delivered the final manuscript for her new novel, *Ancient Light*, which will be coming out from GOLLANCZ in September rather than July as originally advertised. There is no indication yet whether this will affect the simultaneous reissue of her children's novel, *A Hawk in Silver*.

Another novel nearing completion is *Mother London* by Michael Moorcock.

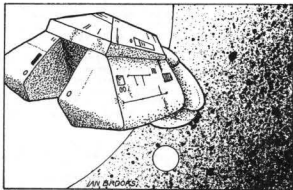
Interzone is due to break with precedent and publish a serial. Or rather, the new story from Geoff Ryman, 'Love Sickness', is too long at 30,000 words to appear in the magazine, so it is to be published over two consecutive issues. Ryman, meanwhile, has written four short plays for Conspiracy based on short stories by Guest of Honour Alfred Bester. They are: *They Don't Make Life Like They Used To*, *The Pi Man*, *The Flowering Thunderbug* and *Disappearing Act*. What's more, his play *Performance*, based on the monumental fanzine article by D. West, which was given a triumphant premiere at Conception in February, is to be repeated on the Conspiracy fan programme.

Further news about *Interzone*: Assistant Editor Judith Hanna has resigned due to pressure of her work at CND. She has been succeeded by Lee Montgomerie.

MISCELLANEOUS

A police raid on Central Books, the bookshop 'outlet' of Manchester of publishers SAVOY BOOKS, resulted in the seizure of several comics and film magazines, including *Fangoria* and back issues of *Vampirella*, other Warren titles and *House of Horror*. Shop personnel were told that the raid was the first of its kind; and that it was under the 'Young Persons Act' (possibly the 'Children and Young Persons Act'). As of March 17 nothing further has been heard from the authorities regarding a possible prosecution.

Savoy is used to raids; seizures under the Obscene Publications Act of the soft-porn mags which make up a good deal of Central Books' turnover are not uncommon. Interestingly, it appears that this Act, used recently to ban grow-your-own dope books, is not to be used here. Nor is it clear yet whether this is part of a national crackdown, as was the drug book campaign, or just the latest round in Attila James 'God Talks To Me' Anderson's war of attrition against Savoy. Mike Don



NEW AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS

ABACUS: *The Cabalist* - Amanda Prantera.

V.H. ALLEN: *Twilight Eyes* - Dean R. Koontz.

ARROW: *Solar Lottery and Eye in the Sky* - Philip K. Dick, *Contact* - Carl Sagan, *Space Skimmer* - David Gerrold, *We All Died At Breakaway Station* - Richard C. Meredith.

BANTAM: *Guardians of the West: The Mallorcan I* - David Eddings, *Heart of the Comet* - Gregory Benford & David Brin, *Song of Sorcery* - Elizabeth Scarborough.

BOUNTY: *Best of Rosemary Sutcliffe, Marvellous Land of Oz* - Frank Baum.

CORGI: *The First Named: Servants of the Ark I* - Jonathan Wylie, *The Light of Eden* - V.A. Harbison.

CORONET/NEL: *Son of the Endless Night* - John Farris, *Puppet Masters* - Robert Heinlein, *Pursuit: Survivalist 13* - Jerry Ahern.

FUTURA: *Warrior America: Doomsday Warrior 4* - Stacy Rider, *Downtown* - Vildo Polikarpus & Tappen King, *The Unicorn Quest* - John Lee, *Ambassador of Progress* - Walter J. Williams, *Black Star Rising* - Frederik Pohl, *The Twilight of the Serpent* - Peter Valentine Tislett, *Tales of Wonder* - Jane Yolen.

GOLLANCZ: *The Gollancz/Sunday Times SF Competition Stories, Robot Dreams* - Isaac Asimov, *The Second Great Dune Trilogy* - Frank Herbert, *The Coming of the Quantum Cats* - Frederik Pohl, *Evil Water* - Ian Watson.

GRAFTON: *Galapagos* - Kurt Vonnegut, *Lure of the Basilisk* - Lawrence Watt-Evans, *Galactic Pot-Healer* - Philip K. Dick, *The Blue World* - Jack Vance, *The Subatomic Monster* - Isaac Asimov, *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* - Vonda N. McIntyre, *The City in the Autumn Stars* - Michael Moorcock, *Islands out of Time* - William Irwin Thompson, *Dr Adder* - K.V. Jeter, *Demogorgon* - Brian Lumley, *July 20, 2019* - Arthur C. Clarke.

HODDER: *The Windeater: Te Kaihu* - Keri Hulme.

MACDONALD: *The Eyes of the Dragon* - Stephen King.

MACMILLAN: *Consider Phlebas* - Iain M. Banks.

METHUEN: *The Goblin Reservation and Cemetery World* - Clifford Simak, *The Compleat Traveller in Black and The Shift Key* - John Brunner, *The Faded Sun Trilogy* - C.J. Cherryh.

NEL: *Survivalist 13: Pursuit* - Jerry Ahern, *Son of the Endless Night and Minotaur* - John Farris, *The Puppet Masters* - Robert Heinlein, *Vargh-Moon* - Bernard King.

PALADIN: *The Place of Dead Roads* - William Burroughs, *Xorandor* - Christine Brooke-Rose.

PENGUIN: *Dragonlance Legends 1: Time of the Twins* - Margaret Weis & Tracey Hickman, *The Man in the High Castle* - Philip K. Dick, *Last and First Men* - Olaf Stapledon.

SEVERN HOUSE: *With a Tangled Skein* - Piers Anthony.

SPHERE: *Lifeburst and Nanseed* - Jack Williamson, *Ghost Train* - Stephen Laws.

STAR: *Strangers* - Dean R. Koontz, *Deathday* - Shaun Hutson.

TARGET: *Dr Who Illustrated A-Z* - Lesley Standing.

URWIN: *The Hobbit* - J.R.R. Tolkien (50th Anniversary special edition).

WOMEN'S PRESS: *On Strike Against God* - Joanna Russ.

Sylvester McCoy has been chosen as the new Doctor Who.

The actor chosen by the BBC to replace Colin Baker is probably best known as the holder of the world record for keeping a live ferret down his trousers. He also has a nice line in driving six-inch iron nails up his nose with a hammer.

However McCoy, although not widely known and something of a surprise choice, has had more conventional experience in television and the theatre. He had a part in *The Last Place on Earth*, the series about Scott of the Antarctic screened a few years ago, and has been seen on the popular children's shows *Tiswas* and *Vision On*. He has also appeared in a number of Shakespeare plays, including *Anthony and Cleopatra*, and last year made his debut with the National Theatre in a production of *The Pied Piper*.

McCoy, 43, once spent three years training to be a priest, but gave that up and became a pub entertainer. It was during this period he risked his artistic integrity with the ferret.

It is not yet known what style McCoy, who was born in Scotland, will adopt when the programme returns in the Autumn. But he does hope to inject a little more life into the part: "It will be more humorous, I hope, but it's not going to be a comedy half hour."

The Doctor Who Appreciation Society gave the appointment a muted welcome. "We would have been happier if the BBC had picked a better known actor" said a spokesperson.

McCoy's casting has ended a round of frenzied, not to say bizarre, speculation about Baker's successor. The late Patrick Troughton and Jon Pertwee were both rumoured to be considering a second crack at the part. Among those also said to be in the running were Peter Cushing, Alexei Sayle, John Cleese, Julie Walters, Joanna Lumley and Arthur Mullard.

The trial continues of John Landis and four others following the death of actor Vic Morrow and two children during the making of the film *The Twilight Zone*.

Morrow and the children were killed in 1982 when an exploding special effects 'bomb' caused a helicopter to lose control and veer towards them. All three were struck by the copter's blades.

Landis with four others, including the special effects co-ordinator and the helicopter pilot, are currently on trial in Los Angeles charged with culpability in the tragedy. The five defendants deny charges of involuntary manslaughter, and face prison sentences if convicted. A proven verdict would also have a profound effect on the way movies are currently made in Hollywood. Any subsequent imposition of stricter rules would be bound to increase budgets.

In February, six months into the hearings, Landis admitted breaking the law by employing the two children - seven year old Myca Dinh Le and Renee Chen, six - at night.

Meanwhile the story has taken a macabre twist with the revelation that a pirate video of the accident was circulated a few days after it occurred. Police are investigating the source of this 'nasty', thought to have been distributed through the same channels used to put out a film of Elvis Presley's autopsy shortly after the singer's death.

Relatives of Morrow, who was 53, are expected to file suit for damages if Landis and the others are found guilty.

Further news about the film of *Empire of the Sun*, which rumours have persistently made an on-again-off-again venture. According to Malcolm Edwards, Steven Spielberg has already been over to London and cast the leading rôle of Jim. Filming is due to start in February.

And another new film coming our way is *Outlaw Gor*, based on the John Norman novels and starring Oliver Reed and Klaus Kinski. Only time will tell if it qualifies for our next item.

The fifth annual World's Worst Film Festival was held at Harper College, Palatine, Illinois in January, and the theme this year was science fiction. As usual, the event - promoted with the slogan: "Horror! Laughs! Boredom!" - was a complete sell-out.

Among the classics on offer were: *X From Outer Space*, *Galaxy of Terror*, *Plan 9 From Outer Space* and the immortal *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*, featuring the incomparable acting talents of Pia Zadora.

Everyone who managed to endure all the films was given back \$1 of their \$3.50 admission fee, and generous quantities of 'barf bags' were made available. The organisers also issued the audience with plenty of newspaper wads, bowing to the inevitability that they would want to throw things at the screen. Usually a nurse is in attendance to assist those made ill by the movies, but this year they were on their own.

Finally to the small screen and more *Trouble with Tribbles*.

To Paramount Pictures, and most *Star Trek* fans, a Tribble is a small, furry creature much given to prodigious feats of reproduction. Thomas Hannon, owner of Bitesize International Inc, a small confectionery manufacturer based in Salem, Massachusetts, sees it differently. According to him, Tribbles are "... a tiny variety of cookie-like snacks whose name is a hybrid of 'tri' - for three or more ingredients - and 'nibble'." And that is just what he has started producing. Paramount, producers of the *Star Trek* TV series and movies, aren't buying that, and have petitioned the US Commerce Department's Trade and Patent office, seeking to have Bitesize's trade name declared unlawful.

Hannon, at 19 already a veteran of the American candy business, formed Bitesize in 1983, and first introduced his Tribbles in 1985. He considers Paramount's action high-handed and unreasonable. "If we were playing off their name, that would be another story. But there's no mention of *Star Trek*, no association with space or an animal."

The legal move by Paramount, which was expected to be heard in Washington at the end of February, comes at a bad time for Hannon as sales of Tribbles, launched late last year, are just beginning to take off.

Paramount have refused to comment, beyond stating that 'Tribble' is a registered trade name held by them.

FAN NEWS

Maureen Porter

Following on from my report of the One Tun's imminent move to the Wellington Tavern, near Waterloo Station, I can now confirm that the move went ahead, and that the regular meeting on the first Thursday of the month takes place at the Wellington. The first meeting saw the pub looking fairly empty, and those in attendance revelling in the unaccustomed space, and the novelty of real ale (it is a mystery to me quite why we were ever meeting in a Watney's pub anyway). A high

percentage of hangovers were later reported. However, as the evening wore on, the stragglers arrived and there was quite a decent gathering by the time I left, including people who hadn't been seen in the Tun for a good few months although it had been rumoured that authors might be sighted in nearby pubs in Farringdon. In fact, a lot of people who had been meeting in nearby pubs in Farringdon took the plunge and moved down. The second meeting was much larger and it seems like most people are planning to drop in at some point during the evening. Certainly, the atmosphere was a lot livelier than I recall from recent Tuns.

The Hitchhikers fans seem to be staying at the Tun for the time being, mainly for the very sensible reason that they've advertised themselves as being there in their society zine, but will possibly move down to the Wellington later in the evening, or move permanently later on. Another group has moved over to the Cille of York on Holborn near Chancery Lane, although the pub, whilst reportedly rather nice, was also rather crowded. It's believed that some of the media fans are meeting there. Other people are also apparently staying on at the Tun although I don't as yet know who, claiming that the incident which precipitated the move had not resulted in anyone being banned from the pub, and had been mis-reported.

Be that as it may, the Tun was due for something of a shakeup as it was becoming grossly overcrowded and many people, myself included, were getting to the stage where an evening at home seemed a much more attractive prospect. There had been plans afoot for some time to shift the venue, with groups of fans trying out various pubs, and certainly the Wellington is an ideal place for a gathering. The landlord is also reported to be delighted that we will be meeting there regularly.

One other monthly meeting has come into existence. This is on the third Thursday of the month, at the Banker pub in Dowgate St, near Cannon St. The pub is reported to be very large, well decorated and serves Fullers. Problems to watch, however, include the fact that Cannon St station shuts at 7.45 pm, although there are other stations nearby, and the management are presently a little worried as they've never had anything like an SF group before. They are apparently being as helpful as possible but are concerned about the reaction of their 'city-type' clients, and would prefer people not to wear jeans and t-shirts. Sounds a little worrying but we'll wait and see.

And now, a digest of a couple of flyers I've picked up at the Wellington recently.

"We are putting together a fanzine for distribution at Worldcon on the theme of fans and fandom, and we need contributions. How did you first get involved, why did you stay, why are you active in a particular area and what does 'being active' mean there? How have things changed since you became involved - is any change for better or worse - where do you see fandom going in the next few years, and why? Do you care?"

Ever run a conventin? Ever wanted to? Are you into rôle-playing or strategy games - what's your feeling about developments in games, the strengths or weaknesses of new systems, and why? What attracts you to your particular branch(es) of fandom and what do you think of fandom as a whole? Advertise your bit of media fandom, or explain why the media isn't working for you but straight SF is. Do you run/contribute to/loc an (apa)zine? Why - what is unique about it, and what does it give you that nothing else could? A list of all the various areas embraced by fandom would probably be as long as this page - why are so many diverse activities categorised together, and can what we understand as fandom really be covered by a common term at all?

MATRIX 69 APRIL/MAY 1987

Fire and Hemlock

A mixture of news and listings this time around.

Firstly, I've had a flyer about a new concept in fanzine publishing.

'Earthlight SF&F' is an electronically published general fanzine. It is published by Epub (part of The Association of Computer Clubs) and distributed by Prestel. It contains features relating to many parts of the SF&F field. It also spotlights the work of author and directors and examines larger works in more depth than can be done in our Reviews section, which contains reviews for recently published books, and to a lesser extent, recent films and videos.

We have a News area and a Letters column. We try to give warning of any SF&F related material that might be broadcast on TV or radio. There is also, as might be expected of a magazine, an Editorial which usually changes every week. The Forbidden Planet Top 10 Best Selling. UK published paperbacks is to be found on Earthlight.

There are also a number of specialist areas which are the sole responsibility of one of the four editors. The largest area is devoted to Fandom and lists some of the fanzines available, and some of the conventions to be held in the coming months. Also included is information about SF&F groups nationwide. The area of authors of very short stories is called Beyond Midnight. A new area on SF&F gaming will be opening soon.

The editors of this magazine are:

Name	Prestel Mbx No	Area
Michael Bernardi	919994136	Fandom
Andrew Cloke	089572494	Beyond Midnight
Gary Smith	089555497	Everything
Sandy White	819991070	(Gaming)
Earthlight SF&F	819991028	Group Mbx No

Earthlight should be on display at Conspiracy 87 (the Worldcon) if all goes well. A hard copy of the current edition of EARTHLIGHT is available for a reasonable cost from Michael Bernardi, The Rectory, St Wilfrid's Way, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3QH

Despite at least one request to the contrary, the magazine listing will appear every issue, although I don't anticipate it ever being as big as last time, as that was a round up. From now on, material will be listed as it arrives. Having said that, I owe an apology to various people for not listing their work last time, despite them sending zines to me. For this I must blame the dual-pile filing system which evolved, leaving me in the horrid situation of discovering the second pile when Matrix had gone to press.

No reviews this time around but there will be some more in the next issue. Can I make it quite clear that I am not installing one regular fanzine reviewer but will be farming material out to what I hope will develop into a regular group of reviewers, each with particular strengths and interests. And please, keep sending review copies, to the usual editorial address, and if Paul Kincaid and/or I are on your regular mailing list, please send two copies. I don't want to use my own zines for review.

Just to refresh the memory, a genzine is just that, general, including articles, reviews, anything you fancy. Perzine means it almost certainly has only one author, and includes articles, reviews, etc. We've also got a couple of clubazines this time, likewise fictionzines and a couple of critical journals.

ABBATOIR Vol 1 No.1 - Bryan Barrett & Lucy Huntsinger, PO Box 6202, Hayward, CA 94540, USA or 2215-R Market St, San Francisco, CA 94114, USA. Um.

THE BRAIN TAP - Simon Bostock, 18 Gallows Inn Close, Ilkerton, Derbyshire, DE7 4BU. Perzine (I think). 45p per issue including postage.

CIVILISATION REVIEWED #1 - Michael R Gould, 10 Braybrook, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, Cambs, PE2 0SH. Genzine, available for the usual? To be published quarterly (brave man).

EAGLE OF THE NORTH Feb 1987 - David Bell, Church Farm, North Kelsey, Lincoln. Perzine, available for the usual.

THAT DUCK #1 - Ron Gemmell, 79 Mansfield Close, Birchwood, Warrington, Cheshire, W43 6RR. Genzine, available for all the usual reasons.

EMBRYONIC JOURNEY - this is more for completeness, and because I shall have it reviewed. It's the conventionzine for Conception. Trying asking Graham James in case there are copies available, but don't count on it. Graham James, 12 Fearnville Terrace, Oakwood, Leeds, LS8 3DU.

ENTROPION #6 - Nick Shears, 27 Chiltern Rd, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP22 6DA. 'A small and fairly irregular fanzine' available for the usual.

FLOATING CHEESE - Steve Hubbard, 42 Langdal Rd, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcs. Perzine

I THINK I'M CRACKING UP - Simon Bostock. See The Brain Tap for address. Defies definition - write and ask about availability.

IZZARD #9 - Patrick and Teresa Neilen Hayden, 75 Fairview #2d, New York, NY 10040, USA. Available for arranged trade, \$5 or editorial whim.

LOGOS #1 - Michael Abbott, Linden, Alhampton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 6PY, after end of April. Genzine, available for the usual.

MEEP #1 - Lillian Edwards & Simon Ounsley, 1 Braehed Rd, Thortonhall, Glasgow, G74 5AQ & 21 The Village St, Leeds, LS4 2PR - joint perzine?

MICA - Dave Rowley, 11 Rutland St, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5JG. Potal gaming zine + a subzine called Bluejohn, from Joy Hibbert at the same address. Contact them for further information.

PARTY METHODS - Malcolm Hodkin, 15 Fife Park, Strathkiness High Rd, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9UE. Perzine available for the usual.

PERUMBRA #1 - Michael Cobley, 18 Athole Gardens, Hillhead, Glasgow, G12. Perzine to be produced to coincide with Glasgow cons - check with Michael for availability.

PULP #4 - Avedon Carol, Rob Hansen, Vinc Clarke, 16 Vendover Way, Welling, Kent, DA16 2EM. Available for the usual. This ish was edited by Pam Wells, her last issue.

SIC BUISCUIT DISINTEGRAT #10 - Dave Rowley and Joy Hibbert, 11 Rutland St, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. Genzine, available for loc, prearranged trade, contribution or 40p per ish.

STICKY QUARTERS #16 - Brian Earl Brown, 11075 Beaconsfield Rd, Detroit, MI 48224, Available for the usual Genzine.

TNH #9 - Lillian Edwards & Christina Lake, 1 Braehead Rd, Thorntonhall, Glasgow, G74 5AQ & 47 Vessex Avenue, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 0DE. Available for the usual?

ZETETIC - The Sic Biscuit Religious Supplement - Joy Hibbert, 11 Rutland St, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5JG. Available for 40p, loc or contribution.

CLUBZINES

BLACK HOLE #24 - Leeds University SF Society. Available for published contribution, including locs. 60p plus postage. Trade. Contact: The Editor, Black Hole c/o LUU SF Society, Leeds University Union, PO Box 157, Leeds, LS1 1UH.

THE CHRONICLES OF QUEST #1 - General, £1 per issue. Contact: Quest Science Fiction Club, Simon Bromwich, The Bridge Project, 40 Piccadilly, Bradford, BD1 3NN.

WHO SUFFERS - Hull University SF&F Society. Contact: The Editor, Who Suffers Magazine, The Science Fiction and Fantasy Society, Tolvo House, The University of Hull, Hull, North Humberside, HU6 7RX for availability.

FICTIONZINES

DREAM MAGAZINE #10 - published bi-monthly by Trevor Jones, 1 Ravenshoe, Godmanchester, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE18 8DE. Subscription: Single issue £1, One Year (6 issues) £5, Two Years (12 issues) £10.

SF INTERNATIONAL #1 - published bimonthly. Andromeda Pr, 99 Teardrop Ct, Newbury Park, California 91320, USA. Annual sub by seammil US\$14, by air US\$27

CRITICAL JOURNALS

AUSTRALIAN SF REVIEW #45 for six issues, Joseph Nicholas, 22 Denbigh St, Pimlico, London, SW1V 2ER

THE RINGBEARER - Journal of The Inner Ring, the Mythopoeic Literature Society of Australia. Issued quarterly. Enquiries to Managing Editor, The Ring Bearer, Dept of English, Univ of Queensland, St Lucia, Qld 4068, Australia.

COMPUTERS

MICRO-COMPUTERS AND SF

by Nick Cheesman

Considering the fact that many SF novels use the computer as a character or convenient plot ploy, I find it curious that the BSFA and fndom in general seem to ignore them, possibly because present technology is a little ... well ... primitive compared to the visions of CLARKE and ASIMOV. This is an attempt to redress that imbalance a little.

The problem is that SF as in all other media has been badly abused and underused preferring the trappings that SF presents to produce crude space invader style games with little regard for plot or intelligent thought. Fantasy on the other hand seems to have been treated quite well, with Tolkienesque scenarios very much in vogue, no thanks to Philip Mitchell who was largely responsible for the programming of *The Hobbit* published by Melbourne House several years ago, and currently on re-release. It did for the adventure game what *Manic Miner* and *Jet Set Willy*, and was followed up by the disappointing yet well presented *Lord of the Rings* (Pt 1).

Should you find these offerings a little too serious then CRL would be happy to sell you *Bored of the Rings* and the *The Roggit*, both programmed using the Gilsort utility Quill by the infamous

Delta 4, which are spoofs to end all spoofs. Both are highly recommended. The same Delta 4 crew are also responsible for an adaptation of *The Colour of Magic* by Terry Pratchett, on the Piranha label (Macmillan in disguise).

On the hardware front, should the lure of the computer be too much for you and you fancy flashing out a few pennies, be sure to shop around. If games are all you want, a 48k Spectrum is about the cheapest and is usually bundled with a tape recorder, software and a joystick. If you prefer a good business machine, the Amstrad PCW 8256 is unbeatable value, with the Amstrad PC a close second.

Finally, watch out for the return of Sir Clive Sinclair to the computer scene. It seems that the future development of the computer lies very much on his hands and his willingness to put his own reputation on the line while others reap the rewards might just bring the reality of postronic brains and HAL 9000s that much closer.

COMPUTERS AND FANDOM

by Michael J Bernardi

Ever since the last UK Worldcon, membership lists have tended to be held on small computers - partly because numbers had increased, but mostly, I suspect, due to the drop in their price, and the convenience this allows in mailing. There has also been an increasing tendency for the texts of fanzines and con reports to be produced by a computer acting as a word processor. We also hear that more and more pro writers are turning to WPs to aid them in their work, even to the extent of writing software for sale to their colleagues (Ansible Information: D Langford and C Priest).

The advantages of a WP to the zine editor are immediately apparent. It's possible to print out the whole zine without any types (of course, (proof reading may not catch every mistake.) It's possible to justify the right margin and to vary the line length. All this without having to retype. And it's possible to edit and re-edit to get it right, also important to fan writers as it allows an editor to request changes without the author having to retype.

However, my main reason for writing this article is to bring a new venture to your attention. On Friday 29th August a new 'fanzine' was produced. What's so special about that, I hear you cry? It was published on the Prestel Computer network. *Earthlight SF & F* is not the first SF computer distributed fanzine, and it's not even the first on Prestel. However, its predecessor, *Starlight SF*, died a year or so ago, when other commitments and disagreements with Prestel forced its editor, the ubiquitous Dave Langford, to give it up. (Further information to be found in the zine listing column - Ed.)

Whither the future? It's now possible to link a computer, via the telephone, to almost anywhere in the world. Will there be computer cons where participants are hundreds of miles apart. They could even run for weeks at a time!

Even now, it is possible for WP files to be directly used to produce camera-ready copy or even, using the correct printer codes, to directly typeset the copy for a book or novel, or even to send text directly from the computer to the typesetter. As technology advances, the cost will fall and ease of publication will increase. Will editors be their own publishers in future? Will the current publishers only print and distribute the book. Will future distribution be via the phone line, printed at home on the laser printers. Who can say. The future is stranger than even we can imagine.

The Periodic Table

CONVENTION NEWS

First of all, apologies to Connote8 for missing off their contact address last time round. Now restored to its rightful place, I promise to be more careful with the cut and paste buttons in future.

Becon have apparently added yet more guests to their star-studded cast, in the shape of Jane Gaskell, best known for the Atlan books, Ian Watson, and 'the originator of Max Headroom'.

The Gerry Anderson Appreciation Society has announced that its annual convention, Fanderson 87, has been cancelled due to poor advance interest from its members. The convention, which was to have been held in Norfolk on 3 - 5 April, featured Gerry Anderson as guest of honour.

Society founder, Helen McCarthy thinks the reason may be that Norfolk is too far for most of the members to travel. The majority of the 750 or so puppet enthusiasts live in or around London.

Rumours of another Mexican in 1988, timed for the traditional Novacon slot of the first weekend in November, have proved so far unfounded. According to the Brum Group Newsletter for February 1987, there were rumours of a Mexican, either the week before or after the World Fantasycon (29/30 October 1988), timed to take advantage of the presence in this country of many big name authors who would be attending the World Fantasycon, and who many British fans would otherwise not meet, owing to the limited membership and extremely high membership and room rates of this convention. Had it been after the Fantasycon this would have clashed with Novacon for that year. However, Greg Pickersgill, a member of the original Mexican committee, who are always consulted on future Mexican policy, has stated that he would never go along with a date which clashed with Novacon. At present there seems to be no Mexican in the pipeline.

There are rumours of a Cymrucon to take place in February 1988, but it seems that this is 'flexible'. Contact Tony McCarthy, 28 Claude Road, Cardiff for further details. Perhaps Tony would care to keep Matrix informed?

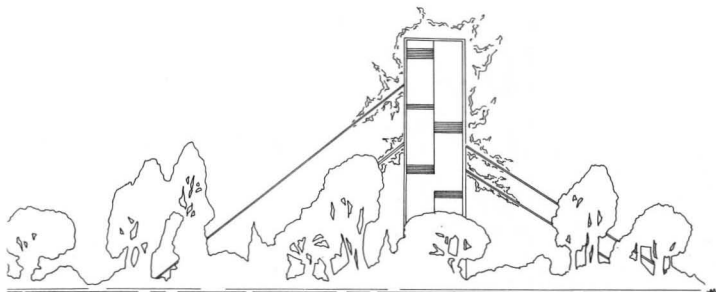
Just to confuse matters there is also a report of a possibility of another Welsh convention, courtesy of the Swansea group, although there appear to be no concrete plans as yet. Contact D M Sherwood, PO Box 23, Port Talbot, SA13 1DA to find out more than I seem to know.

CONVENTION ROUNDUP

Supporting membership means that you will receive all progress reports of the convention, the programme book, badge and the other bits and pieces handed out. A **progress report** is just that, something which gives you information on how the con is developing, how to get there, and the current list of members. The more sophisticated ones will often contain articles or pieces of original work by guests, and so on. The **programme book** is basically something which tells you about the convention, supplies a timetable of events, introductions to the guests, and, and, and. The most elaborate productions are almost zines in their own right, and well worth hanging on to.

Attending membership means that you can go to the convention as well. It is possible to **convert** from supporting to attending membership, generally by paying the balance between the two.

Pre-supporting memberships and convention bidding are somewhat different. If you pay **pre-supporting membership** you are showing your support for that convention in its attempt to win the bid to put on a convention. You're also providing finance to get the bid on the road, for publicity and bidding parties. If the convention you support wins, you'll find that your pre-supporting membership is deducted from the supporting/attending membership. You may occasionally find that even if your bid lost, the winning team are feeling generous and will do the same, but this is not a general rule. Not all conventions involve bidding. It occurs for such things as Eastercons and Worldcons, which are annual and peripatetic, and also for Unicons.



TELLY-CON

A convention devoted to television fantasy

18 April, New Imperial Hotel, Birmingham

Guests to include Patrick McNea, Joanna Lumley and Gerald Harper.

Membership: £8

Contact: 132 Cambridge Drive, Marston Green, Birmingham.

CAPCON

1987 Australian National SF Convention

18-20 April (MOVED from 25-27 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

3rd INTERNATIONAL NICE SF CONFERENCE

23-25 April, 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, BP 369, 06007 Nice Cedex, France

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF POETS AND SMALL PRESSES

25-26 April, Festivalhall, Corby, Northants

This gathering will apparently have a 'strong SF presence' with the Cassandra Group and Bob Shaw (on the 'open day' on Saturday, not the 'poets day' on Sunday)

£5 to Tom Bingham, 82 Dresden Close, Corby, Northants, NN18 9EN

SOL III '87

Star Trek con

May 1-4, Liverpool

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

RUBICON 2

29 May-1 June, Newbury

Membership: £5

Contact: Krystyna Oborn, Bishop's Cottage, Park House Lane, reading, Berks, RG3 2AH. Cheques payable to 'Rubicon'.

CONNOTES

Unicon 8

3-5 July, New Hall, Cambridge

GOH Geraldine Harris

Membership: Attending £8, supporting £4

Room rates: £17 per night

Contact: Connote8, Trinity College, Cambridge, CB2 1TQ

ALBACON 87

Glasgow's 10th Summer SF Convention

19-22 June, Central Hotel, Glasgow

G.O.H. Brian Stableford, Josephine Saxton

Membership: Supporting £4.00, Attending £8.00 until 18th May, thereafter £12

Room rates: Single from £17, Twin from £14.50

Contact: Albacoon '87, c/o Mark Meenan, 'Burnawn', Stirling Road, Dumbarton, G82 2PJ

MYTHCON XVIII

Mythopoeic Society Conference. Theme: Tolkien Retrospective

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

GOHs: Christopher Tolkien, John Bellairs

Information: Mythcon XVII, Box 537, Milwaukee, WI 53201, USA

MANORCON

A games convention

24-26 July, High Hall, Birmingham University

Membership: £5 for the weekend, £3 for the day

Contact: Richard Walkerdine, 13 Offley Road, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 2AZ

CONSPIRACY '87

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

27 August - 1 September, Metropole Hotel & Brighton Centre, Brighton

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

Membership: Attending £30 (children 8-14 £15.00), Supporting £10 (NOTE RISE IN MEMBERSHIP RATES)

Contact: Conspiracy '87, PO Box 43, Cambridge, CB1 3JJ

PRISONERCON '87

4 - 6 September, Portmeirion (The Village), North Wales

Some events will be free to the visiting public, whilst others will be open to members of Six to One (Prisoner Appreciation Society). For details contact Six to One (Prisoner Appreciation Society), PO Box 66, Ipswich.

FANTASYCON XII

The British Fantasy Society's annual convention

4 - 6 September, Midland Hotel, Birmingham

GOH: J K Potter (others to be announced)

Membership: £3 supporting, £10 attending (£9 if a

member of the EFS. Cheques made payable to Fantasycon.

Contact: Fantasycon XII, 15 Stanley Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5DE

NICON II

Late October, Belfast - rumoured to be 80% positive. How about going for the full 100%?

GOH: Katherine Kurtz, Robert Anton Wilson, Jim Fitzpatrick

Membership: £2 supporting, £5 attending (£6 after Easter, £7 after August)

Contact: 60 Melrose St, Belfast 9, Northern Ireland (gee, a sentient house!)

WORLD FANTASYCON '87

29 October - 1 November, Hyatt Regency, Nashville, TN, USA

GOH: Piers Anthony
Artist GOH: Frank Kelly Freas

Info: World Fantasycon '87, Box 22817, Nashville, TN 37202, USA

NOVACON 17

The Birmingham SF Group's 17th Annual Convention

30 October - 1 November, Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham

Guest of Honour: Iain M Banks

Membership: Attending £8 until Eastercon, £10 until 29 October, £12 on the door, cheques made payable to 'Novacon 17'

Room rates £20.50 single, £16.50 per person double/twin room.

Contact: Mick Evans, 7 Grove Avenue, Acocoks Green, Birmingham, B27 7UY

PLEASE NOTE THAT MEMBERSHIP IS LIMITED TO 350

1988 Conventions

CONGREGATE

10-12 June, 1988, Peterborough

G.O.H - to be arranged

Membership: Supporting £5, Attending £11.00

Information from Chris Ayres, 67 Ayres Drive, Stanground, Peterborough.

ALBACON '88

tentatively July 1988
Central Hotel, Glasgow, Scotland

Guest of Honour: C J Cherryh

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

MYTHCON XIX

Mythopoeic Society Conference

Berkeley, Ca, USA.

GOH: Ursula Le Guin

Info: Mythcon XIX, 90 El Camino Real, Berkeley, CA 94705, USA

HUNGAROCON

10-14 August, 1988, Budapest.

The 1988 Eurocon

Contact: Hungarian SF Society, Eurocon Committee, Budapest, Hungary, H-1078

NOLACON II

The 46th Worldcon

1 - 5 September, New Orleans, LA

GOH: Donald A Wollheim
FanGOH: Roger Sims

Information: Nolacon II, Box 8010, New Orleans, LA 70182, USA

Linda Pickersgill has apparently agreed to be English agent for this convention so contact her at 7a Lawrence Road, South Ealing, London, W5 4XJ for further information.

1989 Conventions

NOREASCON III

The 47th Worldcon

31 August - 4 September 1989, Boston, MA.

GOH: To be announced
Fan GOH: The Stranger Club

Info: Noreascon Three, Box 46, MIT Branch PO, Cambridge, MA 02139

EASTERCON BIDS

You may know already that it was decided at Albacoon last year to go over to bidding for Eastercons two years in advance, so at Becon this Easter, we will be bidding for 1988 and 1989's conventions. Below is a roundup of current bids.

There are two bids for Eastercon 1988.

Pollycon is offering a convention in Liverpool at the Adelphi Hotel. Bid Report 2 is now available. 'One of fandom's greatest strengths is its diversity, and Pollycon is going to exploit this to the full. We aim to reflect as many different facets of fandom as we can, and attract those looking for something a little outside their usual range. There will be a special emphasis on producing programme items that shed light on two or more different interests; similarly, we will choose guests with a wide appeal whenever possible. This will also be helped by our site; this has an excellent layout, with major rooms for all aspects of fandom leading directly off a central lounge which will always be open. This will focus the convention and make sure people can meet socially as well as at programme items.

Why this? Why now? Because people may be missing out on some of the things they don't know about. This will apply especially after the Worldcon, only six months before Pollycon. This will leave a great many newcomers wandering round, and we hope to show them some of the possibilities available.'

COMMITTEE

Michael Abbott	Dave Brown
Pat Brown	Colin Fine
Steve Linton	Ian Maughan
Karen Naylor	Gytha North
Joan Paterson	Richard Rampant
Alison Scott	Michael Scott

Pre-supporting membership is £1, available from 104 Pretoria Street, Patchway, Bristol, BS12 5P2

Opposition comes in the form of **Norwescon 88**,

'We firmly believe that the programme will be the make or break of Norwescon. That's not to say that we won't be having all the usual events, happenings and Bar Hours but simply that, as Mexico has so ably demonstrated, a good solid, planned programme can work wonders.

We're going to borrow some of their philosophy - quite unashamedly. Let's retain a good concept, and help make an Eastercon work as a revitalised event, rather than as More of the Same. We're going to aim for quality and variety - a sound mix of Science Fiction and Fannish events.

The Programme will be thematic: we shall be concentrating on SF as written literature, serious witty or both. We will bring in a number of carefully selected special guests and inviting people to prepare presentations within the overall theme. We will be promoting SF in all its written forms, and we'll even be touching on some fringe areas as well. We'll show films - not 24 hours a day however. We prefer to concentrate our resources on a sprinkling of blockbusters but also the unusual, the rare, esoteric and downright odd. The same applies to videos.

There will be alternative programming - some planned, some spontaneous. Rooms will be made available - you just turn up and do something fun, or serious. The Fan programme will be packed with original events and the best of the more popular events from years gone by. Involvement and interaction will be our watchwords.

The look of programme, the actual physical design and appearance of the staging and lighting will follow our desire to promote SF. We'll have proper lighting rigs, staging, Nice Comfy chairs and decent tables. There will be enough mikes to go round, we'll have artwork and poster displays, and scenery flats. We want to impress you, but also to involve you and give you your money's worth.

COMMITTEE

Ramsey Campbell	Alan Dorey
Rochelle Dorey	Ron Gemmell
Henry Newton	Bob Shaw
Margaret Tout	John Weston

Pre-supporting membership is £2, available from Norwescon '88, 16 Ambleside Close, Walton-le-Dale, Preston, Lancashire, PR5 4RS

There is one bid for 1989, in the shape of **Contrivance**.

I quote from the only publicity leaflet I've received 'After a Fandom-wide poll, we have decided on the Hotel de France, Jersey, as the location for Contrivance '89. Jersey is a very good site for a convention. The absence of sales taxes like VAT mean that alcoholic drinks are cheap and the weather is distinctly better than the average Easter weekend in Glasgow. What's more, the site is marvellous.

The de France is an old hotel which has recently undergone a major refurbishment. The number of rooms has been nearly doubled, and they are large and much more comfortable than in modern hotels. We will also be using the adjacent conference centre with its theatre, cinema, night-club and bars.' Unfortunately, I have no information on what Contrivance has in mind for the convention itself.

COMMITTEE

Chris Cooper	John Daliman
Steve Davies	Paul Dormer
Gwen Funnell	Katie Hoare
Martin Hoare	Tim Illingworth
Roger Perkins	Peter Wareham

Pre-supporting membership is £1, available from Tim Illingworth, 63 Drake Road, Chessington, Surrey.

I also know of one bid for 1990, named **Contravention**. I can't tell you very much about this one at all, mainly because it's only just starting out. Look out for more information soon.

COMMITTEE

Chris Donaldson	John Fairley
Jan Huxley	Rob Jackson
Paul Kincaid	Paul Oldroyd
Christie Pearson	Maureen Porter

Information from 35 Buller Road, London N17

UNICON BIDS

I've heard of one bid for the 1988 Unicon, for a convention in Winchester to be called **Wincon**. It claims to be the cuddliest convention in 1988. I quote from their publicity leaflet.

'WINCON will be very much in the UNICON tradition. It will be held in a beautiful campus setting with excellent conference facilities - including a theatre with its own professional stage and film projection equipment which means that we will be able to put on a good multi-media programme for your money. Current room rates are £7.55 + VAT so we expect WINCON room rates to be less than £10.

For those familiar with UNICONS there will be some differences. This will be the first UNICON to be held not at a university but in a teacher training college. It will also be the first to be run by a well-established local group with considerable experience of fandom - the South Hants Science Fiction Group. We hope this will help make for an unusually cohesive committee who are also well aware of what fans want from a convention. In addition, we have supplemented our experience with non-members, to give us the necessary strength in depth for our first convention - which is why our membership address is in Staffordshire!

We also think it will be the first con ever to be chaired by a stuffed toy - Guinness the Chairbear, who symbolises all the virtues of WINCON - friendly (likes lots of hugs), relaxed (makes a bean-bag look hyper-active) and economical (one swig of gingerbeer and he's anybody's.)'

COMMITTEE

John Bark	Mike Cheater
Peter Cohen	Dave Collins
Joy Hibbert	Phil Plumley
John Richards	Dave Rowley

(Includes committee members from two previous UNICONS. Between us we have also attended every previous Unicon).

Pre-supporting membership is £1, payable to WINCON, 11 Rutland Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs.

Details of any other bids for the 1988 Unicon would be gratefully received and publicised.

And just to round off this list of convention bidding, the two contenders for the 1990 Worldcon are Holland in 1990 - the people who distribute badges with clogs on - information from Colin Fine, 28 Abbey Road, Cambridge, CB5 5HQ, OR ELSE Ian Sorenson, 304a Main Street, High Blantyre, Glasgow, G72 0DH

Opposition comes from LA in 1990 but no address for that unfortunately.

And that about wraps up the convention listing for this time. Please send information about the convention you are organising, or else send me a report of the convention you attended, to the editorial address.

THE WANDERGROUND

The Clubs Column

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...

The evidence against the defendant, pirated from Matrix 66

You'll be forgiven for crying 'not a lot of striving going on' and demanding a hasty appearance of the clubs' column. Well, fret no longer, for here it is.

I've recently been informed that the South Hants Science Fiction Group moved from Scotts Bar to the Dorchester Arms (Market Way) about a year ago - a perfect example of the up-to-the-minute reporting that you can expect from my ace reporter, Eric the Mole. The group now meets every 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month from 6.0pm until the wild horses arrive to drag the reluctant bodies away; the man to contact for further details is Phil Plumbly on (0705) 673401.

Incredible but true, several people have contacted me with news of groups otherwise unknown to me and Eric, and maybe even Pandam at large. This truly is the age of discovery! Prepare yourselves, the News follows in roughly the same order as the pile of letters on my desk.

Peter Pinto of The Paperback Book Shop in Lancaster tells me that 'there's a sort of informal non-club loosely grouped around the shop...' Thursday afternoon seems the best time for seeing most of the group, though Wednesday afternoon being the slackest in-shop time (Lancaster's but not the shop's half-day closing) also sounds like a possible meeting time. Music, coffee and talk is the flavour of this group; an interesting mix of 'tea, symphony - and arguments'. The shop can be found at 33 North Road, Lancaster (0524) 382181

Next on the list is Dave Syme of the Bournemouth SF and Fantasy Group. The group has only been in existence since 1976; far too recent for Eric's standard information gathering techniques. 'It's a very informal group of fans with a wide variety of interests within the SF, fantasy, horror, gaming, and media genres.' The group usually meets on the first and middle Mondays of the month at the Dolphin Hotel, Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth (front bar). The contact is Dave Syme (0202) 432489

Don't go away, there's more here on the desk.

The City Illiterates meet every Friday during Autumn and Spring terms in the bar of the City Lutteram Institute, Stukley St, London WC2, after class - outside term time they meet in various pubs in our fair capital. Contact Roger Robinson (04023) 42304

And then there's the Imperial College SF Society, not surprisingly known as the Imperial College Science Fiction Society. They meet in the library every Thursday, show a film every couple of weeks, publish a fanzine annually, and hold a one-day convention each February. The contact is Julian Bills, the address being ICSFSC, Union Building, Prince Consort Road, South Kensington, London.

Now as far as my records tell, this is the only college society/group on mainland Britain. Eric and I both agree that this isn't likely to be a true representation of reality; any chance that the rest of you could drop me a line, noose attached if you prefer?

Finally, it's my sad task to report the demise of a group. John Dallman tell me that the Surrey Limpwrist are effectively deceased. Is this true? Can anybody out there verify this information? Does anyone want to?

Is this the end of this 'ere month's feeble attempt to produce some kind of readable column from this idiot clubs man?

I think so.

Eric the Mole however has other ideas and has stepped briefly into the light to deliver up another scrap or two of information.

Clever chap that he is, he has managed to locate a group in Cambridge University, and it won't surprise you to learn that this is the Cambridge University Science Fiction Society, CUSFS to those with a taste for tongue twisters. It meets on Thursdays in New Hall bar (New Hall is a college) during term time, and in the Bird in Hand pub on the Newmarket Road out of term. It arranges 3 speakers per year and discusses SF at weekly (Sunday) meetings during term. Membership is £2.50 per year, and is open to non-students. Eric suggests you contact Steve Bull, 1 Scotland Close, Chesterton, Cambridge, CB4 1QH for further information, as he supplied the original information and gave no other contacts. Eric wouldn't mind hearing from JONESBORO, also active in Cambridge University, and from the Oxford University Science Fiction Group, OUSFG to its friends.

According to Eric, something is stirring in Waltham Forest and District. Flyers at the last Tun advertised the inaugural meeting of the Waltham Forest and District Group. He hasn't heard yet whether this is to be a regular thing so advises you to contact Henry Balen, Flat 4, 8 West Avenue, Walthamstow - 01 509 2331- to find out what happened.

And on a different tack, Eric has also heard about Author! Author! which is a newsletter about the ever-popular, ever-ubiquitous Isaac Asimov, featuring words of wisdom from the great man himself. Organised by one Steve Tidey, £2 will buy you 4 issues of Author! Author!. Contact Steve at 58 Prince Avenue, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS2 6NW.

Finally, a few small corrections to the listing in Matrix 66.

BIRMINGHAM - Birmingham SF Group meets at the Ladbroke International Hotel, New Street on the first Friday of the month. Contact Geoff Williams, 6 Willow House, Mitton Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 2JR for details.

DUNDEE - The Dundee Group meets on the first Thursday of each month at The Globe, 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: Jim Darroch, 8 Montague Street, Edinburgh, W8S 9QU

SHEFFIELD - Contact Steve Lawson, 130 Valley Road, Sheffield, S9 9GA

And that is all that Eric the Mole reported before he disappeared back into the depths of his hole.

The Media Page

CLASSIC ON TRIAL

A Review of the 23rd season of *Doctor Who*

by John Campbell Rees

After eighteen months, the new season of *Doctor Who* started, and from the beginning, the Doctor (Colin Baker) was in trouble. His own race, the Time Lords, had arrested him and put him on trial, charged with interfering. This idea, first used at the end of the Doctor's second incarnation (Patrick Troughton), although only as a short snippet taking less than one episode, was the basic theme tying together all the stories of the season. This season also saw the introduction of a new arrangement of the theme music, which has returned the high-pitched notes, and also the fright value. The original Ron Grainer score, with its swirling music lent mystery to the Doctor's character, which was dulled when the music was rearranged in 1980 and a sickness introduced.

One disappointment of the first story was the character Glitz (Tony Selby) who could have been a Fagin, but instead became a second rate Arthur Daley in space, accompanied by a third rate Minder, Dibber. The real weakness was the main villain, a robot which spent all its time ranting and raving, but not actually doing much. It should not have taken the Doctor four episodes to outwit it.

By the beginning of the second story, it was obvious that something had to be done to rescue the season. The Valeyard (Michael Jayston) announced that his second piece of evidence for the prosecution was the Doctor's last adventure before he was taken out of time. The Doctor was soon tangled up with an old enemy, Sil (Nabil Shaban), and an unethical surgeon, Crozier (Patrick Rycart), who are searching for a replacement body for Lord Kiv (Christopher Ryan). The Doctor undergoes a complete character change, becoming uncaring and selfish. By the time he ends this charade in the last episode, it is too late, Crozier transfers the mind of Kiv into Peri's body, and the Doctor is apprehended before he can attempt to rescue her.

This story was the best of the three. Its power was in the layers of suspense that were piled on, a classic piece of Hitchcock-type drama. Despite the sad ending it will become a classic Doctor Who story.

The third story was a chance for the Doctor to give evidence in his defence, using a story from his future to show that he will improve with time. It also featured the debut of Bonnie Langford who, to my surprise, was quite good. The main story was divided into a series of sub-plots, which were carefully managed, equal weight being given to each. However, I found the jumping from plot to plot slightly confusing, but without them the story would have fallen apart.

This story gave me a buzz as I watched it. It contained the essential Doctor Who, which has been missing since the beginning of the fifth incarnation (Peter Davison): it was the indefinable element which made the series so successful in the early days. Maybe it was the sellotape and sticky-back plastic production methods, when the production team pulled off major technological feats, but only by the skin of their teeth. Maybe now they will abandon the production line methods which have prevailed in recent years, which whilst slick are not very good.

Episodes 13 and 14 see the story move up a gear, when the umbrella plot, featuring the trial of the Doctor, comes into its own. It appears that the

Doctor has lost his case when help comes from an unexpected source, the Master (Anthony Ainley). He explains that the Doctor has stumbled onto a Time-Lord coverup and that the Valeyard is in fact the evil mirror of the Doctor, who needs the Doctor's remaining lives to become solid. The Valeyard escapes, the Doctor is pardoned, and he continues on his travels.

This was quite a shock. But as the majority of the action was crammed into the final episode, the story was not given enough space to develop and became highly disjointed. It was as if the production team had got bored with the story and wanted to get it over and done with as soon as possible.

The season had its faults, but it did have some very interesting developments. I will reserve final judgement on Bonnie Langford as the Doctor's new assistant. Two stories are not really enough to give an accurate measure of quality. Doctor Who has managed to survive the eighteen months rest more or less unscathed and is still a remarkable series. Long may it remain so.



HAS THE TIMELORD GOT A FUTURE?

by Rob Huxley

With the 7th incarnation of the good Doctor soon to be unleashed on the universe, perhaps now is the time to review the direction this revered (almost sacred!) programme series is taking.

The last run throws into sharp relief the problems with the programme. Several stories showed great promise but left one feeling dissatisfied and disappointed. Some excellent ideas seem to go to seed, and have poor endings. Whilst the whole idea of the Trial of the Time Lord in linking together different stories was good, the climax was very wishy-washy. The impression given was that the series was not planned ahead and the writers were left having to tie up endings at the last moment by resorting to the metaphysical gobbledygook in the "matrix". And for want of a better idea the Master is wheeled out yet again to take the blame, inducing not the intended 'Boo, hiss' etc, but 'yawn, oh look, it's the Master again, put the kettle on dear!'

This brings us to casting. The series seems to be becoming a camp for refugees from other series, e.g. Geoffrey Hughes - Coronation Street's Eddie Yates, Christopher Ryan from The Young Ones and many more. Brian Blessed must be as concerned as a Dalek about becoming typecast ('Ho ho, slit their gizzards!!' etc). However, this does seem to produce a strong blend of good acting and a natural humour, as these stars obviously enjoy their roles, so perhaps it isn't so much a refugee camp as a playground. On a sour note, I am afraid that the inclusion of Bonnie Langford, multi-talented as she may be, does nothing to dispell the pantomime impression ('it's behind you' - slapping of thighs etc) that the series is in danger of creating.

The effects have admittedly advanced since the very low budget period of the 70's when the poor

Doctor was earthbound due to financial restraints. However, in these post-Star Wars days we expect more from spacecraft models than squeaky bottles and sticky-back plastic. All credit however to the BBC for recognising the obvious fact that spacecraft pass silently in space (US directors O Kubrick and Carpenter excepted - take note!!). Interior sets are another matter and, on the whole, are quite good. The 'Murder on the Orient Express' atmosphere was particularly well created in the encounter with the dreadful Verboids by good scripting (excepting Miss Langford) and background.

Who watches Who? Is the audience mainly physiological juveniles or those like myself who have been watching since episode one and see the Doctor as a permanent fixture in a detrimentally changing world. If the audience is less than 16 years old, then educational opportunities abound and the BBC is usually quick to exploit this. However, this is counteracted by a constant misuse of existing terminology such as *constellation* - a configuration of stars resembling familiar animals or objects in the eyes of earthbound man, not, as the Doctor implies, a close grouping of stars in space. This irritating tendency could be solved by having a scientific adviser to the programme in the way that other series consult vets, policemen, etc. By all means make up new words but don't make teachers' jobs harder by misusing the old.

Putting aside all prejudices, I feel that the BBC really must decide what they intend to do with the series, if they haven't already. Spend money on it, iron out the wrinkles and let it realise its potential; or let the good Doctor die honorably and permanently, protecting a good old British institution from the onslaught of the soaps.

ANDREI TARKOVSKY - His Life, His Work

by Philip Collins

Andrei Tarkovsky was born in Russia in 1932, and died at the end of last year in his new home in Italy. He made a total of only seven features but each with an incredible depth of personal vision.

Even his first film, and most conventional in story terms at least, *Ivan's Childhood*, which tells of a young Russian soldier returning to his lines after a scouting expedition, is suffused throughout with Tarkovsky's personal images and vision. The haunting, deep-set eyes of Ivan (Izolya Burlyayeva) stare out at us from the opening scene and we sense already that Ivan will not survive the war. All of Tarkovsky's films are filled with this sense of ultimate doom.

Tarkovsky's next film, *Andrei Rublev*, again involves a young wanderer, this time a frustrated artist striving to express his personal vision: the film goes against the grain of most bio-pics in that the artist is never shown actually painting any of his pictures but instead wanders, frustrated and blocked in all he does. When finally the mental block is smashed, the previous dingy monochrome is discarded and there is an explosion of colour, showing the icons Rublev was to paint.

Tarkovsky himself was also to experience artistic frustration. *Andrei Rublev* was made in 1966 but disliked by the Russian authorities for its length and its bleakness. They delayed its release in the West until 1971, just prior to the release of Tarkovsky's next film *Solaris*.

Solaris is the film probably best known to SF fans. Based on the novel by the Polish writer, Stanislaw Lem, in his telling of the story of Chris Kelvin (Donatas Banionis), Tarkovsky has removed just about all the special effects hardware usually so prevalent in SF films. The planet Solaris has the ability to make reality of

dreams and past memories. Tarkovsky later said in an interview that he saw the film as being about the moral and ethical aspects of science. Personally, I felt the film just doesn't work. Each time I see it, I quickly lose sight of and interest in the main characters and blunder around, lost in the (admittedly beautiful) imagery. Still, relatively speaking, it was a popular breakthrough for Tarkovsky, and the West eagerly awaited his next work.

It was to be a long wait, eight years in all. This was not Tarkovsky's fault however, as he had clashed a second time with the authorities. In 1976 he completed a film called *The Mirror* which the Russians immediately placed in the Third Category, which meant that distribution was severely limited to small provincial cinemas and workers' clubs. Few prints were made and no financial returns were given to the film-makers. The Deputy Director of the Committee for Cinematography, Boshakov, accused Tarkovsky of wasting public funds and generally made life difficult for him. *Mirror* is Tarkovsky's most obviously autobiographical film, showing his childhood dreams and memories, and his relationship with his parents. Tarkovsky's father was a famous poet and some of his poems appear as voice-overs on the soundtrack. Almost impossible to synopsise, the film is one to bask in and experience.

Stalker was Tarkovsky's next film, in 1981, and it remains my favourite. Adapted from the Strugatsky brothers' novel *Roadside Picnic*, by Tarkovsky and the authors, the film is both faithful to the book and to Tarkovsky's own cinematic visions. The speaker of the title (eagerly played by Alexander Gaidukov) is a guide who escorts a writer and a scientist into an area called 'The Zone' where, it is claimed, there is a room where all wishes will be granted. There is a wealth of allegories on display here with none being crudely thrown into your face. What the film 'says' exactly is up to you to decide. Personally, I have a different theory each time I see the film.

In 1983 Tarkovsky defected to the West and in Italy (where he was to live) set about making *Nostalgia*. The story tells of a visiting Russian lecturer (Oleg Yankovsky) who falls in love with his interpreter and guide (Domiziana Giordano), and befriends an aging mathematics professor (Erland Josephson), an outcast because he believes the world is swiftly coming to an end. I don't feel properly qualified to say much about this film as I've only seen it once, at the time of its release in early 1984, and for a Tarkovsky movie, one is just not enough. All I will say is that despite its near geographical location, it remains quintessentially a Tarkovsky film.

For his final film, *The Sacrifice*, Tarkovsky returned to science fiction. The story concerns an ageing atheist (Josephson again) who, after a nuclear holocaust, prays to God promising that if all is retored to the way it was he will sacrifice all his worldly goods. When he wakes the next morning he discovers all is back to normal and, keeping his side of the bargain, sets light to his house. His horrified family, convinced that he is insane, have him taken away. If you've read only this synopsis, you now know next to nothing about the film. All films, and particularly Tarkovsky's, are a lot more than a photographed story. Words cannot adequately express the power and shock of the scene when the holocaust begins, for example, and a porcelain jug of milk falls from the shelf, crashing to the floor. The sudden burst of white and the noise of the smash is devastating in its impact. Visually the film is reminiscent of some of the works of Ingmar Bergman, using the Swedish landscape and Bergman's regular cameraman, Sven Nykvist, but the bleakness and power of the film mark it unmistakably as a Tarkovsky work.

Andrei Tarkovsky - gone but never forgotten

Members' Noticeboard

All entries on the Members Noticeboard are absolutely FREE and should be sent to me at the editorial address. I'll take For Sale and Wanted ads, ads for penfriends, and to make contact with other fans in your area, and for information.

WANTED

I'd like to thank those members of clubs and groups who have already been in touch with me about this, but I am still 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 newszines 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.

~~~~~

Wanted in paperback in reasonable condition

|                |                        |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Alfred Bester  | Dark Side of the Earth |
|                | Tiger, Tiger           |
| James Blisch   | Cities in Flight #2    |
| Olaf Stapledon | Last and First Men     |
|                | Starmaker              |
| Jack Vance     | Mirror of Infinity     |

Offers to: Mike Evans, C208 Emrys Evans, Menai Avenue, Bangor, Gwynedd.

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Wanted - Michael Moorcock hardbacks. 1st editions in dustwraps if possible, please.

Contact: P J Ellis, 18 Upperkinraig St. Roath, Cardiff, CF2 3HA

Wanted: biographical/bibliographical information concerning Eric Frank Russell. I am particularly interested in the time he spent living in the Wirral area and would be grateful for information from any fan who knew him or of his activities in the British Interplanetary Society in the 30's.

Contact: Andy Sawyer, 1, the Flaxyard, Woodfall Lane, Little Neston, South Wirral, L64 4ET

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I am interested in seeing any review magazines e.g. Starburst, with reviews of the following films: Spacehunter, Metalstorm and Android.

I am particularly and primarily interested in photographs from these three films, particularly Android.

Contact: Parick Lee, 24 Ousden Drive, Cheshunt, Herts EN8 9RL

~~~~~

Wanted: VHS videotape of Stargazer on Zummerdon.

Contact: Joy Hibbert, 11 Rutland St, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5JG

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## FOR SALE

Billion Year Spree: The History of SF by Brian Aldiss. H/back £5

The Universe Makers: SF Today by Donald Wollheim. H/back £2

One Hundred Years of SF Illustration by A Frewin. H/back £5

The SF Book: an illustrated history by F Rottensteiner. S/back £3

Great Balls of Fire: Sex in SF by Harry Harrison. S/back £5

H P Lovecraft: a biography by L Sprague de Camp. H/back £7

SF Monthly - complete run, in two SFM binders plus last four issues loose. Offers ...

All items in very good to excellent condition. If interested in any of the above, write to: James Parker, 18 King William St, Old Town, Swindon, Wilts, SN1 3LB

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## Store Wars

I seem to have struck a chord with this section of Matrix as many people have sent me information about bookshops and mail order services as well as pointing out some serious omissions. I'd just like to say that the listing, deficiencies and all, is my responsibility whereas Stan Nicholls has been doing the clever stuff with the articles. In keeping with the theme pervading this issue - namely Dr Who - he's produced a piece about the Dr Who Shop, which sounds worth a visit just to see the place, never mind whether you are actually interested in the subject.

The big news this issue is that SFF Books has run into problems. Gone is the glossy magazine cum book catalogue - the last issue was in black and white on a lower grade paper and shortly to appear is SFF Books - Under the Eye, a new catalogue. There seem to be a variety of reasons for this change of plan. I quote from the last issue of the SFF Books magazine.

"The long Christmas and New Year holidays and the week lost to the snow complicated and frustrated the preparation of the magazine. More seriously, the major financial partner of SFF Books has unexpectedly pulled out and the bank has followed suit. Both quoted the lack of advertising revenue as the reason for their loss of faith in the business. Personal problems, and the imminent sale of the house from which the magazine is launched each month, complicate matters.

"SFF Books was in a way two separate enterprises: the book selling and the magazine. There has never been any problem with the book sales and this side of the business will continue with NO changes (there will still be no postage and packing on sales over £1.50 etc). However, until the dust clears and I can arrange alternative finance or sponsorship, the magazine as it is now is sunk.

In March, SFF Books will be sending out SFF Books - Under the Eye which will be 'much smaller (4-8 pages) and will have at its heart the 'recent and recommended' and 'new releases and re-releases' sections of the old magazine, that is, reviews of

all books released the preceding month with any additional space being used for news, articles, contracted artwork and short stories. It will be of a standard comparable to the old magazine, though of a different design and format. The intention is to use Under the Eye as a base from which to build back up to a full SF Books magazine."

I'll let you know about further developments as they reach me.

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Patrick Tilley will be signing copies of *Amtrak Wars 3: Iron Master* on Saturday 15th May from noon.

\*\*\*\*\*

I've received a letter from Anthony Smith of House on the Borderland in Peterborough. He tells me that they cover SF, fantasy and horror, American comics and small press publications: *Fantasy Tales*, *Dagon* etc.

He also adds that they specialise in the work of H P Lovecraft, Arkham House publications, Weird Fiction and Cthulu Mythos (and please excuse me if I got the upper case in the wrong places.)

As well as the shop address published in the last Matrix, there is an address for mail order customers:

61, Langley  
Bretton  
Peterborough

Tel: 0733 260611 after 7pm  
Shop hours are normal hours.

I actually located a bookshop new to me the other week, lurking in the little alleyway called Denmark Place which links Charing Cross Rd, Denmark St and St Giles High St. Called Paradise Alley, it's at 23 Denmark Place, which is the branch of the alley which runs onto Denmark St itself, between Forbidden Planet 1 and Forbidden planet 2. It's small but seems to deal in secondhand, though I may be wrong - I didn't have time to stop and go in.

Stan Nicholls, not content with writing about the shops, has furnished me with a list of omissions, complete with categories - does this man ever sleep?

Cinema Bookshop, 13 Great Russell St, London WC1.  
Tel: 01-637 0206 - C, J

Toby English: The Gallery, Lamb Arcade, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 0BS. Tel: 0491 36389 - A, B, G

Ferret Fantasy, 27 Beechcroft Road, Tooting, London, SW17 7BX. Tel: 01-767 0029 - F, H, J

Gosh! The London Comic Shop: 39 Great Russell St, London WC1. Tel: 01-636 1011 - A, B, D

Margaret Perry, 10 Osborne Road, Reading, Berks, RG3 2FG. Tel: 0734 582548 - F, H

Phantasmagoria Books: 8 Colwell Rd, East Dulwich, London, SE22. Tel: 01-693 1938 - F, H, J

Skyrack Book Service: 51 The Superstore, Merrion Centre, Leeds, LS22 8LY - A, B, F, G

The Warlord: 818 London Rd, Leigh-on-Sea, Southend. Tel: 0702 73348 - D, E, gaming

The Warlord II: 362 Chartwell Sq, Southend. Tel: 0702 615988 - D, E, gaming

Moving on to mail order, I somehow managed to miss mentioning Serapis Books last time around despite

the fact of the Serapis catalogue floating around to remind me. Serapis deals in secondhand books and can be contacted at Flowers Barrow, School Road, Nomenland, Salisbury, Wilts, SP5 2BY. Tel: 0794 390455. And yes, that is the same address for Kerosina Publications, and the very same Jim Goddard.

Even more amazing, I forgot to list Forbidden Planet's mail order address, which is PO Box 378, London E3 4RD.

I also heard from John Duffy, trading as Anney, mostly dealing in paperbacks, and who should have another catalogue out about now. Contact him at 19 Cowper Road, Mexborough, South Yorkshire, S64 0LQ

Lastly but not least, Richard Lewis's name has been passed to me as a book dealer, but I'm not sure what he covers. Contact him at 21 Brewster Road, Leyton, London E10 6RG.

Finally, a couple of queries someone might be able to help with - I remember coming across a Brighton bookshop called Eye in the Pyramid. Is it still out there? And can anyone give me a run-down of Brighton bookshops so I can publicise it prior to Worldcon. And the other query - I've come across a bookselling outfit called Perilous Dreams at conventions in the past, hailing from the Southend area, I think. Can anyone confirm their existence? And any other specialist bookshops, gaming shops, and so on - pass on the information and I'll give them a mention.

Please remember that a mention in this column does not constitute official endorsement by the BSFA.

THE PAPERBOOK BACK SHOP/INTERSTELLAR MASTER TRADERS

We all know there's a special place reserved in Hell for estate agents, but I'm not using one of their infamous euphemisms when I describe the Paperback Back Shop as 'intimate'. The place is certainly small, but I use the word in the context of personal attention and individual treatment of customers. Service, alas, is a concept unknown in too many retail shops these days, and the specialists are no exception. More shameful is the fact that it's possible to find SF outlets employing people with little knowledge, and less interest, in the subject. Not so here: this outfit has grasped the fundamentals of SF retailing - that there is not an inexhaustible supply of customers available to support you, and that they expect you to know your stuff.

The Paperback Back Shop (not a misprint, note!) opened in December 1985 with the help of an enterprise allowance, and grew out of Interstellar Master Traders, which was already well established as a mail order business. The shop is a very determined attempt to cram several quarts into a pint pot - apart from film material, including film tie-in novels, which is scarcely touched on, virtually every other aspect of SF and fantasy is covered. The stock is, temporary sell-outs aside, exhaustive and Peter has every UK paperback SF and fantasy title in print that he is aware of, as well as imported American books, and secondhand material. Magazines, role-playing games, artbooks, badges, T-shirts and a line of the more esoteric comic titles also have their place.

INT/PBS is the brainchild of Peter Pinto - readers may remember his highly personal and occasionally controversial fanzine *Feetnotes*, published in the late seventies. He also acts as a freelance adviser on SF to Methuen and other publishers. It's early days yet, but he has an eye on expansion in the future. Ideally, he would like a place spacious enough to allow the staging of special events, signings in particular. ('Only a very unpopular author signing session would be practical at present', he says). The local pub is being considered as an option for such activities, and it has the added attraction of keeping the

local real ale. But for the time being you can discuss your wants over a cup of coffee in the shop. If the small-is-beautiful idea appeals to you, but the wilds of Lancaster are too remote to contemplate, you can send in orders. However, Peter hasn't managed to put out an issue of *Interstellar*, a 'catalogue-cum-reviewletztine' since *Interstellar 11* so the mail-order service is currently restricted to titles that he can transfer from shop stock, plus the want-listing service.

Incidentally, Peter is interested in staging a regular con in either Morecambe or Blackpool - poorly served in this respect at the moment - and would appreciate feedback on the idea.

The Paperback Back Shop/Interstellar Master Traders, 33 North Road, Lancaster, LA1 1NS. Tel: 0524 382181 (24 hour)

#### THE DOCTOR WHO SHOP

The Doctor Who Shop opened on 1st December 1984, and has the distinction of being the only store dealing exclusively in material relating to the indestructible Time Lord. It's also unique in being the only shop I know operating from a 3000 sq ft warehouse. Admittedly the stock does not yet occupy all that space but, like some amorphous alien entity from the show, the vast amount of Whonania on offer is slowly creeping into the remaining void. The range of new and old items displayed constitutes a treasure house for enthusiasts - there are all the books, magazines and comics you would expect, along with a wide

selection of toys, games, models and general ephemera, including some choice rarities.

The shop is owned and run by Alexandra Saul, assisted by a small army of fellow fanatics, all possessed of an awesome knowledge of the Doctor and his adventures. While the shop is obviously a labour of love, Ms Saul is a dancer and actress by profession - her many credits in films and TV include parts in *Return of the Jedi*, *Bergerac*, *Coronation Street*, and *Walter*. She likes to involve herself in charitable enterprises; for example she recently organised a sponsored walk in Birmingham with all the participants wearing costumes from the programme, much to the bemusement of the locals.

The shop has been a success from the start, and she enjoys a good relationship with the BBC but, as with mainstream fandom, she maintains the most rewarding aspect of the past two years has been meeting many other fans, both here and in her frequent stock-hunting travels in the States. In fact that's how she met her husband to be.

In common with many specialist outlets, being a bit off the beaten track, in London's dockland, is not as big a disadvantage as it might seem. The true fan will travel any distance to the Doctor Who Shop - indeed around 50% of its customers are from abroad, principally the US, Canada and Australia. For the less outgoing there's a mail order service, with catalogues on request.

The Doctor Who Shop, A3 Landside, Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, London E1 (Tel: 01-481 0826)

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## The Matrix Competition

by Elizabeth Sourbut

Hello, and welcome to a rejuvenated competition column. I hope to be setting a new puzzle in each mailing, and I promise to be less obscure than I used to be! The lucky winner will receive a £5 book token, so it's worth having a go. This month I've set a quiz, so start browsing through your bookshelves and send me your entries for the:

#### Matrix 69 Puzzle

Below are the opening lines to 20 famous science fiction novels. I would like you to tell me the title and author of each book. 2 points for a correct title, 1 for a correct author, the entrant with the highest number of points wins.

1. Once upon a time there was a Martian named Valentine Michael Smith.
2. Like a glowing jewel, the city lay upon the breast of the desert.
3. There was a wall.
4. Her ballet slippers made a soft slapping sound, moody, mournful, as Anna van Tuyl stepped into the annex of her psychiatric consulting room and walked towards the tall mirror.
5. The sky above the port was the colour of television, tuned to a dead channel.
6. I had reached the age of 414 hundred and fifty miles.
7. These are the storie that the Dogs tell when the fires burn high and the wind is from the north.
8. It is possible I already had some presentiment of my future.
9. When a day that you happen to know is Wednesday starts off by sounding like Sunday, there is something seriously wrong somewhere.

10. No-one would have believed, in the last years of the nineteenth century, that human affairs were being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own.

11. He has no material power as the god-emperors had; he has only a following of desert people and fishermen.

12. It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.

13. So, then, I have to go downtown to the University and forage for dollars again.

14. Dr. Strauss says I should rite down what I think and remembir and evrey thing that happens to me from now on.

15. The year 1866 was remarkable for a mysterious and perplexing incident, which no-one has yet forgotten; seafaring men were particularly excited.

16. The idiot lived in a black and gray world, punctuated by the white lightning of hunger and the flickering of fear.

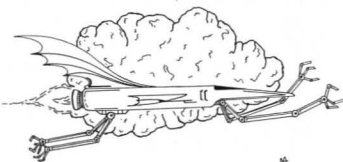
17. **Stock cue SOUND:** "Presenting SCANALYZER, Engreley Sateiserv's unique thrice-per-day study of the big, big scene, the IIndepth IIndependent IImmediate Interface between you and your world!"

18. This is how Yuli, son of Alehaw, came to a place called Oldorado, where his descendents flourished in the better days that were to come.

19. In the night-time heart of Beirut, in one of a row of general-address transfer booths, Louis Vu flicked into reality.

20. A beginning is the time for taking the most delicate care that the balances are correct.

Send me your entries (and don't worry if you can't get them all; you may have got more than anybody else) by the next mailing deadline please, to: Elizabeth Sourbut, 15 South Bank Avenue, York YO2 1DR.



## Write Back

And welcome to the letter column - what there is of it. Where were you all? The supply of letters dwindled away to almost nothing. Let's hope we can all do a bit better next time. Nic Howard made the effort and received two paperback books, which are even now winging their way to him. How do you fancy seeing your name here next time - first come, first choice.

We start with a letter which takes me to task for my review of Fantasycon.

Julia Fitzgerald & Keith Timson  
Squirrel Bank, 4 Lansdown Grove, Hough Green,  
Chester, CH4 9LD

We were surprised to hear the complaint about the Birmingham fantasy convention last September. We enjoyed ourselves enormously, met many other authors - and mixed with the fans and aspiring writers. We certainly didn't keep ourselves apart. Everything was great, from the opening party, to the films, the book room, the raffle - and especially the authors' panels which were excellent. We'll certainly be making this a regular event in our calendar, particularly if the Awards 'banquet' is edible in future! Our thanks to the organisers for a wonderful weekend.

Which just goes to prove that you can't please all of the people all of the time. For my own part I stick by what I wrote originally. I didn't enjoy the convention at all, and speaking as a person who has helped organise a couple of conventions, as well as being a veteran con attendee there were certain attitudes apparent which I did not approve of. The solution, of course, is simple and I shan't be going again.

Andy Brewer  
228 Rochdale Road, Middleton, Manchester M24 2GH

The fact is I don't seem to be reading much SF nowadays. Is it just me or is the BSFA full of people who, though enjoying SF, don't actually read that much of it? Lately, I've been reading more and more horror and fantasy books, of which many are horrendously bad, I agree, but the point is that I can be bothered searching through the dross to find the odd jewels. With SF that no longer seems to be the case. I still try but it's getting harder for me to finish an SF novel than ever before. I used to subscribe to *Interzone* but of the few issues I have, I can't honestly say I enjoyed many of them: 'obscure' is the word that springs to mind when I think of *Interzone*. Don't get me wrong, I'm not in favour of 'train journey' SF (although sadly that's what most of it seems to be today), but there don't appear to be many writers around who make you think about a book the way that Ballard, Aldous, Ellison et al do/used to. Where is Philip K Dick when I need him most.

This is not a blanket condemnation of SF, as I said earlier, there are vast amounts of rubbish in all literary fields (and I should know, I've read plenty of rubbish in my time), but SG is dearer to me than any other genre. It's what started me reading books in the first place, but the old 'sense of wonder', to use a hackneyed phrase, has gone for me. Am I too old - 26, is it just a phase we all go through? I don't know. I am not going to stop reading SF, I can only hope that the enjoyment will come back. Has anyone else been going through a period like this.

If you're too old at 26, what hope is there for me? 28, seeing as you asked. Seriously, I know what you mean - I feel the same way at times, and then read a gem, which cheers me up for a while. I think it's cyclic, myself, but what does anyone else think? This looks like a very promising discussion topic

Jennifer Cobbing  
Flat 12, 419a Harrow Road, London W9 3QJ

I liked Tom Jones' comments about SF fans searching for someone 'lower' to criticise. (M68)

Fans of Star Trek, Star Wars, etc, so often get laughed at by the elitist SF fans, but I believe that SF has become more respectable and popular because of these 'poor relations'. There are many children and young adults who were crazy about 'Star Wars', for example, who must surely go on to other SF material because of its influence.

I was an SF fan long before 'Star Trek' (it started with Dan Dare actually) and although I enjoy many forms of SF, Star Trek is my first love. And I'm not ashamed to admit it. Many films and TV series are considered tacky by some SF fans but if they can influence just a few people to become serious fans then their existence is justified.

And now for an entirely different view of Star Wars from:

James Parker  
18 King William St, Old Town, Swindon, SW1 3LB

I once earned the epithet 'the Tony Benn of the BSFA' because I insisted on putting SF in a political context, or saw it more specifically as another manifestation of US cultural values. These reflections had been inspired by the success of the Star Wars movies, with their glorification of militarism and simplistic moral perceptions. These movies frightened me. They still do. Indeed, I now recognise Star Wars as the unhealthy precursor to the likes of Rambo, Top Gun and Delta Force etc. In short, my warnings about the kind of fascist 'entertainment' that Star Wars might engender have been fully vindicated. It is also significant that relatively intelligent, complex movies like Blade Runner and Dune have been comparative failures at the box office. On the literary front, I would likewise bet that Hubbard's *Battlefield Earth* is easily outselling Priest or Harrison.

All very depressing, but it is a reality that must be acknowledged. Fascism sells! It is a commercial proposition in the movie and publishing worlds. Increasingly, audiences respond only to monosyllabic Aryan heroes swathed in blood-chilling weaponry, graphic visceral thrills and a kindergarten morality. 'Baddies' are almost always perceived as verbose, emotional and effeminate in nature, intellectual where as 'heroes' are not.

Am I taking these trends in popular mass culture too seriously? I think not. A I have observed before, it is in the most mindless fodder churned out by the Hollywood fantasy factories (sponsored by the Pentagon and Madison Ave) that the most sinister strands of a sick, reactionary culture can be traced. And it is my profound belief that

SG has been the conduit through which this mental poison has leaked. Think about SF, with its gaudy ~~mise en scene~~, sexually repressed heroes, mechanistic powerplay etc. How ironic that a genre that reached out to embrace the very limits of space and time should be dragged down, through a process of greed-inspired rationalisation, to the dollar-strewn and blood-soaked gutter of the new consumer militarism.

Then again, perhaps SF was always a sick unhealthy beast at heart. Maybe it has now found its true vocation as a cultural fellow-traveller of America's new Right. Star Wars was once regarded as harmless fun, a test for the kids. I condemned it at the time, and condemn it still as SF's first Nuremberg Rally. Despite everything above, I remain an SF fan. Optimistic fool that I am, I believe that the ideals of Wells will still transcend the current deviations.

Takes deep breath, stands by letterbox with arms open to catch floods of mail.

And on to the next instalment of the religious debate.

Tom Jones  
14 Haywood, Haversham Park, Bracknell, RG12 4EG

I'd like to make one comment, somewhat late, on Kev McVeigh's statement I know of no religion/movement that has not produced evil or atrocity... If by this he means doing harm to other people then he may find that Buddhism is pretty free of evil and atrocity. Taoism may also be in the same boat. Confucianism on the other hand was largely a set of rules which favoured the mandarins and kept the populace in their place (was this evil?). Hinduism may have had extreme sects, but on the whole it didn't try to convert by the sword. Unfortunately, the three major Western religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam have been responsible for some pretty terribly things, up to full scale wars.

Wic Howard  
Eynon House Annexe, Church St, Reading, RG1 2SB

At the risk of seeming to over-react, I want to make a reply to Alex Brown's statement (M68) that Christianity and SF are incompatible, one being based on dogma and providing a rigid view of the universe whilst the other is speculative and encourages a flexible view.

It seems to me that Alex Brown has the rigid view. A Christian view of the universe is that God created it. (I don't mean as in the Genesis story, because that's what it is - a story.) Everything had to begin somehow. I would hardly call that limiting. It was the beginning of everything that now is: unlimited in scope I should've thought!

(I think that I can see things from both points of view: I've been reading SF, fantasy and horror for over 15 years; joined the BSFA in 1978; joined the BPS in 1980 and have served on its committee since 1982; and expect to start full-time training for the Anglican Priesthood later this year.)

I agree with Alex that virtually the only SF written from a Christian point of view are the novels of C S Lewis and Charles Williams. At least, that's all that comes immediately to mind. However, there are the two great novels *Last and First Men* and *Star Maker* by Olaf Stapledon - who I think was a Quaker. These contain much use of religion, and, particularly in *Star Maker*, much incisive satire and comment on what must be Judaism and Christianity (not to mention racism too).

I also seem to remember reading that Cordwainer Smith was an Episcopalian. That might (!) account for the feeling of quasi-religious transcendentalism.

And now, BSFA's very own tame librarian

Andy Sawyer  
1 The Flaxyard, Woodfall Lane, Little Weston,  
South Wirral, L64 4BT

I suppose I'd better set the record and point out that ordering a book (as opposed to borrowing it) from your local library doesn't 'cost nothing'. But Joseph is of course right in what else he says concerning the awards: I'd just hate the image of hundreds of SF fans hurrying to their libraries to request the books on the awards shortlist, and blaming it all on me when they discover they have to pay. It's still a lot cheaper than buying the books, though... And yes, some authorities won't accept requests for fiction, in which case, I recommend a stiff letter of protest to the leader of the Council.

Joy Hibbert  
11 Rutland St, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5JG

It's interesting to read Philip Collins' *Soapbox* during the current controversy over the play *Perdition*. Not that the two have anything in common, but there seems to be one point which draws them together - depth of and length of thought. One of the complaints about *Perdition* was that because it is a visual form people will be drawn along with the emotions expressed and be more affected by the arguments of the good actors than the lesser ones. If the playwright had put across his viewpoint in a factual book (and, I think, to a lesser extent, in an historical novel) it would be easy for the consumer to flick back a few pages and reread a passage, to stop and consider a point. In a play, or film, this isn't possible. Philip mentions the fact that emotion can be expressed far more convincingly in a film than in a book, and apparently considers this to be a good thing. As far as I can see, Regan was re-elected because he appeared in a sentimental film about his relationship with his wife and because he is a charismatic speaker. Policies were not an issue. Far too many things are decided on pure emotion already - the replacement of the printed word with visual media can only make this worse.

And lastly an intriguing thought

Patrick Lee  
24 Osden Drive, Cheshunt, Herts, EN8 9RL

I have a minor worry that other people may share without knowing it. Should we share and profit from our dreams, and if we do, do we destroy any chance of the becoming true? I am not talking about dreams which, reasonably, could become true, but about the dreams, and maybe the nightmares, that we experience in science fiction and fantasy.

Long ago, some of us may have dreamed of encountering an alien spacecraft and being taken away to another world where we hoped to find friends and adventures. Of course, there are some things in SF that could become true, e.g. we can fly to the Moon, and we could fly to Mars. But we learned to accept that we cannot fly at the speed of light.

The point is, does keeping your dreams to yourself increase the chances of them actually becoming true (and when I say dreams, I mean those provoked by reading SF and fantasy). Does writing a story or painting a picture about your dreams increase the chances further? Does sharing the dreams with others, particularly with the intention of financial profit, by selling your book or picture destroy the dream?

And thank you to all the people who wrote in to say nice things about *Matrix* - quoting is too embarrassing. Deadline for letters will be 15th May so get those typewriters, word processors and biros moving.

# Wither Charity

by Paul Brazier

WHEN MAUREEN TOOK OVER AS EDITOR, she asked me to do a piece for her *Soapbox* page in the new-look *Matrix*. I suspect that this was at least partly because she knew I had controversial and unpopular opinions about charity in general and 'Live-Aid' in particular. I agreed to do the piece, but it died a-börn'n, stymied as I was by my inability to convey to people the utter futility of giving money to charity.

So here I am again, harping on the same old tune, and while those who know me might be thinking 'why does he bother?', those who don't know me are perhaps wondering what has happened to stir me from my self-confessed sloth.

There's a simple one-word answer: 'Zeebrugge'.

As I write, the disaster at Zeebrugge is two days old, and around 150 people have died. When I got to work this morning, the women were telling each other how they couldn't stop crying at the news. Yet yesterday, Sunday, there were a naval architect and a marine journalist on TV learnedly explaining to a slightly non-plussed reporter that not only is this particular disaster designed-in to drive-on drive-off ferries – by virtue of the fact that those enormous car decks are not sealable into the small water-tight pockets which are the norm in ship architecture – but that in fact there have already been a whole slew of other similar calm water and even in-harbour capsizings with similar designs of ship.

This evening, I got home from work and heard a lorry driver who survived the disaster state that he had seen seamen fighting to close the doors which were jammed open. The ferry company had dismissed this as 'non-sense'. In the same report, the government were reported to have donated £1m to the disaster fund.

I went to my bedroom ready to ignore all this, take that hot shower, scrub that sweaty body, when I remembered another shower I took in Sudan, crying hot tears into the luxurious hot shower water of the rich man with whom I was staying in Kosti knowing that half a mile up the road people were starving or dying of thirst. Then I wondered, in the time it took 150 people to drown in Zeebrugge – people who had been happy, well-fed, on holiday, and were suddenly snuffed out by a quirk of fate – in that time, how many people in the third world finally succumbed, after months or years or lifetimes of suffering, to the ravages of malnutrition, dehydration, famine, exhaustion, and disease?

And thus came I back to the old tune. Money is meaningless where human suffering is concerned. Whether it's a million pounds for 150 deaths at Zeebrugge or forty million pounds for the Sudanese/Ethiopian famine where millions have died, it is meaningless. All it does is save our consciences and let us carry on our lives having 'done what we can'.

We haven't! What we've done is lull ourselves into believing we're doing something whereas in fact that is all we are doing.

If I get strident, it's because I've been to Africa, and I've seen people starving in an economy driven by the West which instead of food crops grows cash crops so it can buy the petrol it needs to run the engines which drive the pumps which irrigate the fields where the cash crop grows. I've seen flour baked into bread which is then fed to goats because no-one could afford it in the middle of a famine area. Gifts of money and even of food do no good.

In a world where a list of previous ferry sinkings can be produced at the drop of a hat to show that ferry design is unsound, where those same ferries sail with doors open in order to speed turn round which in turn is in order to maximise revenue, and where people grow cash crops while their compatriots starve, I cannot see how giving money to the victims of this insanity is anything other than salt in the wound.

After all, they suffer directly because capitalism has first say in their economies. Whether in Sudan or Zeebrugge, people died in order that big business maximise its profits. But big business is not the real bête noir. Their wealth is fed back into our economies and our pockets in order to stimulate their markets so both they and us become ever more wealthy. This is our rising standard of living. Have you never wondered where it comes from? It comes from cutting corners in design: it comes from exploiting countries that don't know better. And we design to give a tiny fraction of it back to alleviate the suffering it causes – this is the unacceptable face of capitalism, and this is the sick global economy from which we all benefit so grandly.

Worst of all, when we give to charity, do we actually deny ourselves anything in order to do so. How many people actually went without to give money to Live Aid? I suspect very few. Which means that simply put, all these charitable acts do is stimulate the economy, which is exactly what causes the tragedies in the first place.

I expect you're all aware of the horrifying statistic that the amount of money spent on defence in a fortnight could supply clean drinking water for the entire third world for a year. So suppose Reagan and Gorbachev succeed in eliminating medium range nuclear missile from the European theatre, where do you suppose the money thus saved will go? Into alleviating the Sudanese famine? Into designing safer car ferries? Or into devising other sneakier ways of unbalancing the European equation and so winning a war here?

Frankly, the whole society makes me heartily sick, especially when I look at the world and see how little I can do. But I do know this. Never mind politicians' mendacious circumlocutions, what I have said above is true. And no doubt the people of the world care about these tragedies. And no doubt the people of the world have the power to do something – if only they care enough.

So, if enough of you reading this are moved to action, you could do worse than abandon your comfortable middle-class sentimentality and question the motives of the next charitable collector you encounter. Just how will jumping out of an aeroplane, cycling to Brighton, or giving money to Saint Sir Bob do any good for anyone except themselves.

The plain fact of the matter as I see it is that giving money to charities exacerbates the very problems it is supposed to be ameliorating by stimulating the economic environment which caused the problems in the first place. It makes things worse, not better. So question charities. Make the collectors think twice. If we work hard enough, maybe it will percolate up into the higher echelons of our political system. And maybe some political opportunist will see capital to be gained from it. Then watch it grow.

But remember, money is an insult to the victims of a tragedy. If we truly care, once we see a tragedy happen, be it famine or shipwreck, we should never let it happen again.