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



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MATRIX EDITOR

Maureen Porter
114 Guildhall Street
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1ES

Tel: (0303 52939)

Contributing Editors

CLUBS

Keith Mitchell
3Fl, 43 Iona St
Edinburgh
EH6 8SP

NEWS - Paul Kincaid, address below

BSFA CO-ORDINATOR

Paul Kincaid
114 Guildhall Street
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1ES

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MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:

Joanne Raine
33 Thornville Road
Hartlepool
Cleveland
TS26 8EW

TREASURER

Brett Cockrell
40 Cyprus Road
Finchley
London
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PAPERBACK INFERNO EDITOR:

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

(051 336 3355)

FOCUS EDITOR

Liz Holliday
108 Twyford House
Chisleley Road
London
N15 6PB

COMPETITIONS

Elizabeth Sourbut
10 Trentholme Drive,
The Mount
York YO2 2DG

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS:

Keith Freeman
259 Wykeham Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG5 1PL

ADVERTISING

Dave Wood
1 Friary Close
Marine Hill
Clevedon
Avon

VECTOR EDITOR:

David V Barrett
23 Oakfield Road
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 2UD

(01-688-6081)

ORBITER CO-ORDINATOR

Sue Thomason
111 Albemarle Road
South Bank
York
YO2 8LE



Red Shift

WELL, IT FINALLY HAPPENED. AFTER MONTHS OF ONE SMALL STRIKE after another, we got the big one - a nation-wide, all-out postal strike. I'm still not entirely certain how it has affected this issue of *Matrix*. A few hardy souls managed to convey letters and material to me, without going through the post, but it is clear that the threat of strikes, and then the strike itself, discouraged many people from sending anything at all. And I can't honestly say I blame anyone for that. It certainly caused a few anxious moments around here as to how on earth we were going to manage to send out the next mailing. And even now the strike is over, it is clear that the postal service is still sorting out the backlog. We knew for sure that things were moving along when we discovered eight parcels on the doorstep one day, and I had to retrieve another five from the local office, two days later, but we're still awaiting a motley selection of convention reports, birthday cards and cheques, so all is still not as it ought to be.

In consequence, getting material for *Matrix* has not been an easy task, so I apologise if this issue seems a little thin, or lacking in information anywhere. If it should happen that postal difficulties arise once more, or if you prefer it anyway, I do have a fax bureau number, to which material can be transmitted. The number is 0303 57403, and please mark all material 'For the Attention of Paul Kincaid', as it's actually his work number, rather than mine. I'm looking into other possibilities for receiving material, involving electronic mail and what-have-you, so it may be that in future, we can, if not do away with the necessity for the post, at least minimise the effects of a further strike. In the meantime, the usual general plea for letters, information, reviews, and to students particularly, to get some information about your university or college group to Keith Mitchell as soon as possible.

It is at times like this that one is uncomfortably reminded that, for all the conventions and society meetings, and despite the telephone, fandom, in all its many forms, is still primarily based on the written word, with the more far-flung members of any society relying on their regular mailings to keep in touch, not to mention the individual correspondences. I certainly found something very unnerving about not being able to contact various friends - not everyone is on the telephone, and I'm not very fond of using it anyway.

Of course, the strike provided a field day for manufacturers of fax machines, in particular, and I was extremely entertained by the notion that the printed word can never be entirely superseded by the computer screen and the floppy disk, despite the assurances we've received within the last ten years, that the printed word would soon be obsolete.

I unfortunately missed the recent reshewing of a television programme, made a good few years ago, which attempted to predict the future of our world. I gather it was pretty wide of the mark in some respects, spot on in others. Since then, I've been wondering about science fiction's role in mapping the future. Perhaps the most famous example of this would have to be the depiction of life in a space station in 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, but if one turns to J G Ballard, for example, *Drowned World* and *The Drought* depict two scenarios which may have seemed highly improbable when the novels were published, but are now coming uncomfortably close to home, in essence if not in exact detail. Again, it was Ballard's *High Rise* which first alerted people to the possible problems of living in tower blocks. William Gibson's novels open a whole new realm of possibilities, in a world which is already turning more and more to the computer, whilst LeQuin's *The Lathe of Heaven* dealt with, among other things, The Greenhouse Effect and population overcrowding. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is a reality.

One step removed, dystopias are a constant theme of science fiction writing, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* being two prominent examples. And how many novels have you read which discuss the possible

consequences of nuclear war? And all this before we turn to the concepts of faster-than-light travel, and the colonisation of other planets, unreal at present, but perhaps a possibility for the far-flung future. The scientific rationale already exists.

It's been said, before now, that science fiction readers are probably better prepared for a nuclear holocaust than anyone else, simply because they have already explored the ideas through their reading. From that it is a small step to argue that we probably have as good an idea as anyone, if not better, what the future may hold in the way of scientific and technological developments, not to mention the shifting patterns of society. We've seen it all before, somewhere, in this literature of ideas.

In that case, though, can we honestly claim that science fiction predicts the future? For my own part, I think this would be a dangerous assertion, likely to invite ridicule from uninformed periles whose knowledge of this genre is more limited than ours. At the same time, I think we can say that science fiction explores the possibilities in a way that no other form of literature does. I doubt very much that many of us would be prepared to assert that we'll all be living on the Moon by the year 2000, but equally, I am sure we can all think of something we have read about, which has attained a degree of reality.

What this is cunningly leading around to is an enquiry into what members of the BSFA anticipate happening within the next fifty years. Yes, it's a ploy to encourage people to write, but at the same time, given the enormous changes which have occurred within the last few years, it would be interesting to know how we envisage the immediate future. For example, I still boggle slightly at the thought that I have many friends who cannot remember a time when man was not travelling into space, and yet I was born just a year after the first man went into space at all, and I still clearly remember the first moon landing. When I was young, video recorders and home computers, not to mention the ubiquitous pocket calculator weren't even a possibility, hardly even a dream, and I'm not yet thirty. Your average person on the street had probably never heard of the Greenhouse Effect, let alone the Ozone layer.

So, please, write and tell me how you envisage the world changing, and if you can draw analogies with stories and novels, so much the better. It will be interesting to make comparisons.

This is the last editorial I shall write as a lady of leisure (if this is leisure, the work just doesn't bear contemplation). 2nd October sees me joining the ranks of the undergraduate population at the University of Kent. I don't anticipate it causing any problems with *Matrix*, in fact, I think it will encourage me to make a greater effort to maximise my time, which can only benefit all concerned. On the other hand, it means that I may be a little slow in responding to letters, and I shall no longer available on the phone during the day, although Paul Kincaid will doubtless take messages as necessary.

One of my course options is called 'An Introduction to Literature and Science'. The reading list includes such well-known works as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, and other titles familiar to those interested in the history of written sf. I'd be curious to know about other university courses which include components of interest to sf readers, so please let me know if you are taking, teaching or are aware of any appropriate courses.

The deadline for submitting material is:

FRIDAY 11th NOVEMBER

Write soon, and write often - of course!

WALKING ON GLASS

The BSFA Column

 An Extraordinary General Meeting of the BSFA will be held at 11a on Sunday 6 November at Novacon, in the Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham. The purpose of the meeting is:
 1. to approve the Accounts for 1987
 2. to change the quorum for a general meeting of the BSFA from 15 to 3.

THE LONDON MEETING

Recent meetings at The Plough, Museum St, have been fraught with problems over the bar. However, at the September meeting, Maureen Porter, somewhat to her surprise, finally located the landlord, Mr Eales, and we hope that the problem will be resolved at future meetings. Robert Farrago has kindly agreed to liaise with the landlord, and Maureen Porter and Paul Kincaid are going to organise forthcoming events. Now that the landlord is a real person, rather than a shadowy figure, we hope that the meetings will take on a more substantial air.

To remind people, meetings are being held on the third Thursday of the month, and commence at approximately 7.30pm, although the event of the evening will tend to start round about 8.30pm. We are charging 50p entrance to members, and £1.00 to non-members, who are extremely welcome, so please bring your friends. This money is to pay for the hire of the room. We have received one complaint from a member about having to pay this entrance fee, but 50p seems to be a reasonable sum to pay for an evening's entertainment, and no-one else has complained so far.

The August meeting featured Alex Stewart, who has recently edited an anthology of stories loosely about sex in space, to be published by New English Library, in late 1989, the publication date having been put back again. Although nominally interviewed by Paul Kincaid, much of the questioning came from the audience - interviews at London meetings always seem to be of a very informal nature, which seems to suit the atmosphere of the meetings very well.

We also held an auction, run by Maureen Porter, which produced some very silly prices for some very silly books. Also on offer were some proofs of American paperbacks, not yet available in this country, and a cardboard box, which was sold for the princely sum of 5p. A grand total of over seventy pounds was raised for the BSFA. Many thanks to all those who participated.

The September meeting seemed all set to be a social evening, although Christopher Evans was due to discuss the writing of science fiction. Maureen Porter lost a good half inch of fingernail to nervous chewing, particularly as she had earlier been assured that he actually was in London. Eventually, wild scenarios of appalling accidents were put aside when Chris arrived, accompanied by Rob Holdstock and Garry Kilworth, who had been detaining him elsewhere, and the interview went ahead.

Chris's book - Writing Science Fiction, published by A & C Black - is a plain and straightforward guide to the mechanics of writing science fiction, and this subject was discussed as some length, with the proviso that no book can teach you how to write in any genre, only provide pointers and hints. Chris's final advice to budding authors was to keep writing, and to re-read and revise work.

The October meeting will be held on 30th October, at our usual venue, the upstairs room at The Plough, Museum Street, just around the corner from Forbidden Planet in case anyone thinks

that the centre of London really is the back of beyond. We'll be holding a quiz, entitled "So You Think You Know About Science Fiction?" So if you do, come along and take part. We want about four contestants, and there'll be a prize for the winner.

The November meeting will be on Thursday 17 November, speaker to be announced. We'll leaflet the Wellington with details nearer the day, but turn up anyway, it's sure to be an entertaining evening.

Suggestions for future speakers, and other events would be gratefully received at the editorial address.

In the normal way of things we would hold a Christmas Party as our December meeting, but we've decided this year we'll give it a miss. Instead we recommend that people turn up at the Conspiracy Party, see the News column this issue, to support a worthy cause.

 We are legally obliged to publish the accounts of the Association as approved by the Extraordinary General Meeting of 13 February 1986, and we are continuing to do so at the rate of one year's accounts per issue. This issue we've up to:

BSFA Accounts, 1986

Council Members' Report

Council Members

A.C. Clarke	President
A.S. Dorey	Chairman resigned 5 April 1986
P. Kincaid	Co-ordinator, appointed 5 April 1986
F. Knight	Secretary
L. Flood	
B. Shaw	re-elected
J. White	
J.P. Harvey	
A. Brown	
M.J. Edwards	re-elected
D.R. Langford	re-elected
S. Ounsley	re-elected
G. Rippington	resigned 31 January 1986
C. Greenland	resigned 5 April 1986
S. Thomason	
D. Hodson	resigned 30 June 1986
A. Sawyer	
D.V. Barrett	
M. Moir	appointed 5 April 1986
M.S. Porter	appointed 30 June 1986

The Council Members during the year ended 30 September 1986 were those listed above. B. Shaw, M.J. Edwards, D.R. Langford and S. Ounsley retired by rotation and offered themselves for re-election. A.S. Dorey resigned as Chairman and was replaced by P. Kincaid who took the title Co-Ordinator.

Accounts

The Council Members submit the accounts for the year ended 30 September 1986. The excess of income over expenditure for the year was £949, and is dealt with as shown in the income and expenditure account.

Activities

The principle activities of the Association during the year were the promotion of science fiction and the publication and distribution of science fiction magazines.

Auditor

The auditor, F.J. Steward, FCA, has agreed to stand for re-election.

By order of the Council

Brett Cockrell
 Secretary
 40 Cyprus Road
 Finchley
 London
 N3 3SE

Report of the Auditor to the Members of the British Science Fiction Association Limited

I have audited the financial statements of the above Association for the year ended 30th September 1986 as set out below. These statements have been prepared under the historical cost accounting convention.

I have been unable to verify the existence or value of certain of the tangible assets.

Subject to this, in my opinion the balance sheet and income and expenditure account, prepared under the accounting convention stated above, give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association at 30th September 1986 and of the excess of income over expenditure for the year then ended, and comply with the relevant sections of the Companies Act, 1985.

(Signed) F.J. Steward
Chartered Accountant

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 30th September 1986

	Note	1986 £	1985 £
TURNOVER	2	6952	6131
COST OF SALES		(3587)	(4893)
GROSS PROFIT		3365	1238
Distribution costs		(1951)	(2407)
Administrative expenses		(475)	(1011)
Interest receivable			
Bank Deposit	6	45	
Building Society Deposit			
		6	12
		27	72
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES			
BEFORE TAXATION	3	951	(2108)
Taxation on interest received	4	(2)	(13)
RETAINED SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR		949	(2121)
STATEMENT OF RETAINED SURPLUS			
Balance at 30 September 1985		1257	3378
Retained Surplus (Deficit) for the year		949	(2121)
Balance at 30th September 1986		2206	1257

The attached notes form part of these accounts.

Balance Sheet as at 30th September 1986

	Note	30/9/86 £	30/9/85 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible Assets	5	522	637
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors			
Trade debtors		300	233
Cash at bank and in hand		1821	694
Building Society Deposit		1821	72
		2121	766
			999
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year			
Trade creditors		104	97
Other creditors:			
Corporation Tax		37	35
Other		9	-
Accruals		250	410
		220	352
NET CURRENT ASSETS		1711	647

EDWARD MARKOV - UPDATE

Latest news from the USSR is bad. Edward was called to OVIR - the Emigration Office - on 29 August, 1988. He received another visa-refusal on the same grounds as previously, i.e. 'secrecy'. Edward's wife, Mila, was greatly upset by this new refusal; the stress of long years of waiting, combined with being separated from her son, are beginning to be too much for her.

Edward was invited as International Fan Guest of honour to Wincon (Union 9) - held in Winchester during August, and has been invited to ICONOCLASM in Leeds in June 1989.

Letters are getting through with difficulty but Dov Rigel urges people to keep writing.

Full details were published in Matrix 77, but to remind you,

TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		2233	1284
CAPITAL AND RESERVES			
Other reserves	6	27	27
Income and Expenditure Account		2206	1257
		2233	1284

Signed by:
P. Kincaid Director
B. Cockrell Director

Notes on the Accounts

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) The accounts are prepared according to the historical cost convention.

b) Depreciation is provided for on the cost of the library at one-tenth of the net book value each year and on office equipment at one-fifth of the net book value each year.

2. TURNOVER consists of the following sources of income:

	1986 £	1985 £
Subscriptions	6359	5460
Publications	514	73
Litho Service	6	124
Advertising	-	447
Magazine Chain	31	19
Bedges	13	-
Other	29	-
	6952	6131

3. SURPLUS ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES is stated after charging:

	1986 £	1985 £
Depreciation on tangible assets	£115	£142
Auditor's remuneration	£20	£20

4. TAXATION

Corporation Tax provided at 30% on Bank Deposit interest.

5. TANGIBLE ASSETS

	Library £	Office Equipment £	Awards £	Total £
Cost at:				
1/10/85	913	1679	27	2619
DEPRECIATION				
At 1/10/85	838	1144	-	1982
Charge for year	8	107	-	115
At 30/9/86	846	1251	-	2097
NET BOOK VALUE				
At 30/9/85	75	535	27	637
At 30/9/86	67	428	27	522

6. OTHER RESERVES consist of:

	1986 £	1985 £
Award Funds:		
Doc Weir Memorial Fund	15	15
British Fantasy Award Fund	12	12
	27	27

Edward would like people to write to him at Kostyushko 10/67, Leningrad 196240, RSFSR/USSR. He is particularly interested in seeing copies of publications produced by independent and amateur presses in the West. Recorded and registered deliveries have a better chance of getting through, but much of what is sent will not arrive. The number of letters sent, however, is very important to those in authority in the USSR.

Convention organisers wishing to invite Edward and his wife to their cons should send a formal invitation to Edward, and also send a copy to the Soviet Writers Union: Soyuz Pisately SSR, ul. Vorovskogo 52, Moscow 121825, RSFSR/USSR.

Please notify Dov Rigel of any action or invitation on Edward's behalf. In the event of Edward being able to attend a con (i.e. granted a visa to leave the USSR) all costs will be met by Dov Rigel. Contact Dov at: 80 Mill St, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 2EP. Tel 08675 78653 (home) or 01 439 7717 (work).

NEWS

Compiled by Paul Kincaid (with a little help from *Locus*, *SF Chronicle* and other sources)

GAMES WORKSHOP TO LAUNCH PUBLISHING VENTURE

Games Workshop is to launch its own publishing imprint, *GAMES WORKSHOP BOOKS*, following on the huge success of other tie-ins to role playing games.

David Pringle is to be the editor of the line, with Ian Miller as art editor. Pringle is to start working for the company on 15 October, initially from home, but it is hoped to open an office in Brighton soon.

If all goes well they plan to publish their first titles in summer 1989. Pringle's brief is to edit a series of novels and short story collections based on *Games Workshop's Warhammer* Universe, though if successful they may expand later. Among other things, Miller is keen to produce a line of illustrated books.

As yet nothing has been lined up, but Pringle will be commissioning work from British writers, and anticipates that the quality of the books will be higher than their American equivalents. Established writers will probably produce work under a pseudonym, but Pringle hopes that this will be an opportunity for new writers to produce a novel or two. As a market place it should certainly be lucrative.

This, however, is not the first time that the prospect of *GAMES WORKSHOP BOOKS* has arisen in this country. When the project was first mooted, *Games Workshop* were to lend their name to the venture but it would be published by *FUTURA*. A number of authors were approached. At least two leading British writers are known to have turned the project down right at the start, but several others, including Paul Barnett (John Grant), Brian Stableford and Michael Scott Rohan agreed to produce books.

However, when the contract was finally produced it proved to be unacceptable to all the authors involved, and all withdrew from the project. At this point things seem confused, with various participants pointing the finger of blame at different parties. The end result, however, is that *Games Workshop* have severed their connection with *FUTURA* and decided to do it alone. Rohan, meanwhile, had actually reached an advanced stage of a novel, and that, shorn of all *Warhammer* elements, will be published by *FUTURA* in the normal way of things. Neither Barnett nor Stableford appear to have been so far advanced, though Pringle reports that Stableford may yet produce a novel pseudonymously for *GAMES WORKSHOP BOOKS*.

After that debacle, however, Pringle admits that that one of his first jobs will be to work out a new contract for authors.

His new job, incidentally, should not hamper Pringle's editorship of *Interzone*. He reports that he took the job on the understanding that it would not conflict with his work on *Interzone*, nor with his position as science fiction advisor to *SIMON & SCHUSTER UK* where his initial contract still has six months to run.

CONSPIRACY RESCUE PARTY

Efforts by Conspiracy, the 1987 World SF Convention, to avoid bankruptcy now include a major fund-raising Christmas party.

The party will be held at *Cafe Munchen*, on St Giles High Street, London, on December 17th.

Festivities will start with an auction. Contributions already received include first editions of *Mythago Wood* and *Landavys* by Robert Holdstock, and *Shockwave Rider* by John Brunner. There is also a fine-bound edition of *Stand on Zanzibar* by John Brunner, and a painting by Jim Burns.

Following the auction there will be author signings and readings, and then the party, with many of the leading names in British science fiction in attendance.

Another contribution to the Conspiracy rescue comes from the American news magazine, *Science Fiction Chronicle*. New or existing UK subscribers to the magazine can take out an annual subscription for £18, instead of the usual figure of £21, and £2 will be donated to Conspiracy.

If you subscribe or renew at the regular rate of £21, then £6 will be donated to Conspiracy.

Sterling cheques should be made payable to Aigol Press, and should be sent directly to SF Chronicle, Box 2730,

• GAMES WORKSHOP LAUNCHES PUBLISHING LINE • HUGO / STOKER AWARD WINNERS • CONSPIRACY RESCUE PARTY UPDATE ON BRITISH ANTHOLOGICAL SERIES • JOURNEY INTO SPACE AVAILABLE ON TAPE

Brooklyn, NY 11202-0056, USA.

Envelopes should be postmarked no later than 15 October. There is no word of whether this deadline has been extended in the light of the recent postal strike.

AWARDS

The winners of this year's Hugo Awards are:

NOVEL: *The Uplift War* - David Brin
NOVELLA: "Eye for Eye" - Orson Scott Card
NOVELETTE: "Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come Out Tonight" - Ursula K. LeGuin
SHORT STORY: "Why I Left Harry's All-Night Hamburgers" - Lawrence Watt-Evans
NON-FICTION: *Michael Whelan's Works of Wonder* - Michael Whelan
OTHER FORMS: *Watchmen* - Alan Moore & Dave Gibbons
DYNAMIC PRESENTATION: *The Princess Bride*
PROFESSIONAL EDITOR: Gardner Dozois
PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Michael Whelan
SEMI-PROZINE: *Locus*
FANZINE: *Texas SF Inquirer*
FAN WRITER: Mike Glyer
FAN ARTIST: Brad Foster
JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD: Judith Moffett

The Nolacon committee also presented a SPECIAL AWARD to the SF Oral History Association.

The Big Heart Award was presented to Andre Norton.

The Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award for the best SF short story of 1987 went to "Rachel in Love" - Pat Murphy which also won the Nebula Award.

There was a tie for second place between "Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come Out Tonight" by Ursula LeGuin and "The Evening and the Morning and the Night" by Octavia Butler. There were Honorable Mentions for "Dinosaurs" by Walter Jon Williams, "The Gift" by Pat Forde and "Heretics" by James Patrick Kelly.

The newly formed Horror Writers of America have announced the winners of their first annual *Bram Stoker Awards*. The shortlist, which was announced in the last *Matrix*, is drawn up by recommendations from the members, such as the Nebulas are, and the winners are decided by a vote of the members. The winners were:

LIFE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: Fritz Leiber, Frank Belknap Long and Clifford D. Simak

BEST NOVEL: *Misery* - Stephen King tied with *Sven Song* - Robert McCammon

BEST FIRST NOVEL: *The Mitten* - Lisa Cantrell

BEST NOVELETTE: "The Pear-Shaped Man" - George R.R. Martin tied with "The Boy Who Came Back From the Dead" - Alan Rodgers

BEST SHORT STORY: "The Deep End" - Robert McCammon

BEST COLLECTION: *The Essential Ellison* - Harlan Ellison

BEST NON-FICTION: *Mary Shelley* - Muriel Spark

Science Fiction Chronicle has announced the winners of its 7th Annual Reader Awards. The winners are listed in bold, with second and third place in order.

NOVEL

The Birth of the New Sun - Gene Wolfe

Swordspoint - Ellen Kushner

When Gravity Falls - George Alec Effinger

NOVELLA

"The Secret Sharer" - Robert Silverberg

"The Blind Geometer" - Kim Stanley Robinson

"The Tale of Rumor and Desire" - Samuel R. Delany

NOVELETTE

"The Evening and the Morning and the Night" - Octavia E. Butler

"Rachel in Love" - Pat Murphy

"Schwarzschild Radius" - Susan Swartz

SHORT STORY

"The Circular Library of Stones" - Carol Emshwiller
 "Forever Yours, Anna" - Kate Wilhelm
 "Angel" - Pat Cadigan

DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

The Princess Bride
 Robocop
Beauty and the Beast

PROFESSIONAL ARTIST

Michael Whelan
 Tom Canty
 James Gurney

PROFESSIONAL EDITOR - MAGAZINES

Gardner Dozois
 Edward L. Ferman
 Ellen Datlow

PROFESSIONAL EDITOR - BOOKS

David A. Hartwell
 Beth Meacham
 Brian Thomsen

SEMI-PROZINE

Science Fiction Chronicle
Interzone
Locus

FANZINE

Izzard - Patrick & Teresa Nielsen Hayden
Len's Lantern - George Laskowski
File 770 - Mike Geyer

FAN WRITER

Teresa Nielsen Hayden
 Dave Langford
 Patrick Nielsen Hayden

FAN ARTIST

Arthur Thomson
 Brad Foster
 Stu Shiffman

The Society of Strip Illustrators, the body for comics writers and illustrators, has announced its annual awards.

The *Mekon Award* for best foreign produced work went to *Watchmen* and Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons who created the comic were named, respectively, best writer and best artist.

The *Mekon Award* for best UK-produced work went to *Violent Cases* by Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean, and McKean was named best newcomer.

The *Frank Bellamy Award* for outstanding achievement in the comics field went to the late *Ron Ebbelton*.

The *SSI*, meanwhile, is suffering from a recent exodus of members and a consequent shortage of funds. Following one confusing meeting recently *Neil Gaiman* found himself installed as chairman, and he has now embarked upon a vigorous campaign to drum up new members, and encourage former members to rejoin.

The judges have been named for the 1988 *Philip K. Dick Award*, which consists of a cheque for \$500 to the author of the best original paperback published in the USA during the previous calendar year. The judges are: Charles Platt, *Kim Stanley Robinson*, Eleanor Arneson, Michael Levy and Mike McQuay.

The short list for the £15,000 *Booker Prize* has been announced, and once again has fantasy interest. *Solan Rushdie's The Satanic Verses* concerns a battle between good and evil in which one character acquires horns and the other a halo. There are slight elements of the fantastic also in *Peter Carey's Oscar and Lucinda*. The other nominees are: *Utz* by Bruce Chatwin, *Beginning of Spring* by Penelope Fitzgerald, *Nice Work* by David Lodge, and *The Lost Father* by Marina Warner.

The *Aelita Award*, the annual Soviet SF award, has been presented to *Viktor Kolupayev* for life achievement.

A new award, the *Ivan Yefremov*, was awarded posthumously to *Dmitry Bilenkin*. There was also an award for *Vitaly Bugrov*, editor of the magazine *Ural'skiy Sledopyt*.

PEOPLE

Following the best of the year selection chosen by *David Garnett* for his *Orbit Science Fiction Yearbook* as reported in the last

issue of *Matrix*, we can now compare it to the selection of *Gardner Dozois* in *Best New SF* 2, which has just been published in hardback and paperback by ROBINSON.

Only two stories appear in both anthologies: "Rachel in Love" - Pat Murphy and "Forever Yours, Anna" - Kate Wilhelm. Two other writers have stories in both, *Lucius Shepard* ("Shades" in the Dozois) and *Howard Waldrop* ("Night of the Cooters" in the Dozois). Otherwise there is no crossover. The rest of Dozois's selection is: "Dream Baby" - Bruce McAllister, "Flowers of Edo" - Bruce Sterling, "At the Cross-Time Jaunters' Ball" - Alexander Jablokov, "Dinosaurs" - Walter Jon Williams, "The Temporary Kings" - Paul J. McAuley, "Perpetuity Blues" - Neal Barrett Jr., "Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come Out Tonight" - Bruce E. Lofgren, "The Gardener's Tale" - Robert Silverberg, "Glass Cloud" - James Patrick Kelly, "The Evening and the Morning and the Night" - Octavia Butler, "Angel" - Pat Cadigan, "The Faithful Companion at Forty" - Karen Joy Fowler, "Candle in a Cosmic Wind" - Joseph Manzione, "The Fair's Clock" - Ian Watson, "Ever After" - Susan Palwick, "The Forest of Time" - Michael Flynn, "The Million-Dollar Wound" - Dean Whitlock, "The Moon of Popping Trees" - R. Garcia y Robertson, "Diner" - Neal Barrett Jr., "All the Hues of Hell" - Gene Wolfe, "Halley's Passing" - Michael McDowell, "America" - Orson Scott Card, "For Thus do I Remember Carthage" - Michael Bishop and "Mother Goddess of the World" - Kim Stanley Robinson.

It must be encouraging that both Garnett and Dozois have chosen two British or British-based writers.

Meanwhile, *David Garnett* has announced the contents of *Zenith Science Fiction*, the original anthology that is being published by SPHERE in March 1989. The stories are: "In Translation" - Lisa Tuttle, "Time of the Tree" - Robert Holdstock, "Death Ship" - Barrington J. Bayley, "The Traveller" - Colin Greenland, "Cinema Altère" - Andrew Stephenson, "The Pleasure Giver Taken" - Storm Constantine, "White Noise" - Garry Kilworth, "Gardenias" - Ian McDonald, "Fennopolis" - Elizabeth Soubert, "Days in the Life of a Galactic Empire" - Brian W. Aldiss, "Skyrider" - William King, and "The Bridge" - Christopher Evans.

And other *Edens* now seems to be an annual feature from UNWIN. Christopher Evans and Robert Holdstock have announced that they are now open for submissions to *Other Edens* 3.

Meanwhile *Alex Stewart* has heard from NEL that *Arrows of Eros*, the anthology of sex in space stories he has edited, will not be published until November 1989.

And *Chris Morgan* has apparently failed in his bid to persuade *LEGEND* to increase the length of the original anthology it is editing for him. He had hoped to increase the size from 100,000 words to 150,000 words while still paying the additional contributors at the rate originally agreed. Since *LEGEND* had not agreed to go along with this we can presumably expect a rash of "subtle horror" stories turning up in other magazines and anthologies. The anthology is scheduled for publication next Easter.

Maxim Jakubowski, editor, anthologist, and Arthur C. Clarke Award judge among other things, has added yet another string to his bow. He has just opened a new bookshop in the premises recently vacated by *Forbidden Planet* in Denmark Street, London. Called *Murder One*, it is a specialist bookshop devoted to crime fiction.

A.N. Wilson, the novelist and biographer, reported in a recent interview in *The Sunday Times* that he intends to follow his book on Tolstoy with only one more biography. The subject is to be C.S. Lewis.

James Goddard, of KEROSINA BOOKS, is organising an SF weekend in Beverley, near Hull, from 7-9 October. Guests include *Brian Aldiss*, *Lisa Tuttle*, *Bob Shaw*, *Ian Watson* and *SEMPER*. There will be participatory workshops, talks, chat show sessions, exhibitions, film screenings and all the requisite razzamatazz.

Iain Banks is now on the Literary Festival circuit. On 29 October he's speaking at the Kent Literature Festival at the Metropole Arts Centre in Folkestone.

Judith Clute, whose artwork has graced the covers of several *Women's Press* SF books, has an exhibition of her oil paintings at the Blenheim Gallery, 3 Blenheim Crescent, London W11 from 4-22 October.

Brian Stobbs seems set to be relaunched as a major SF writer. His new novel, *The Empire of Fear*, to be published by SIMON & SCHUSTER in October, has already sold for "a substantial five-figure sum" to PAN for the paperback rights, and is

receiving a massive publicity push from the publishers. The novel itself moves from the 17th to the 20th century in a world ruled by an aristocracy of vampires, and somehow involves such incidental characters as Richard the Lionheart and Vlad the Impaler.

Paul Bennett, who writes as John Grant, is at work on a series of fantasy novels for children. He is somewhat vague about the length of the series, however, saying that it's at least four but possibly 12 volumes.

Patrick Tilley may be the first guest of honour to disappear from the convention he was attending. Tilley was guest of honour at Wincon in Winchester. He turned up as expected, but when he failed to show up in advance of his guest of honour speech members of the convention committee obtained a pass-key to his room. They found the room empty. In the centre of the floor Tilley's room keys were neatly placed on a copy of the Programme Book. Pinned to a notice board in the room were a pair of shoe laces and a note saying that the room was a time warp and he had gone through it. Tilley was not seen again. When the committee phoned his home the family seemed unconcerned, it appears that Tilley often does things like that. There is no word as yet of whether Tilley had reappeared.

OBITUARIES

E. Hoffman Price, prolific pulp author and more recently the author of a series of space operas, died on 18 June 1988, aged 69. From the 1920s onwards he had written for virtually all the pulp magazines of the day in whatever genre, though he was probably best known for his oriental fantasies in *Weird Tales* and *Oriental Stories*. He was a full-time writer from the days of the Depression until the 1950s, when the pulps died and he gave up writing, only taking it up again when he retired in the late 1960s. In the 1980s two oriental fantasy novels, *The Devil Wives of Li-Fong* and *The Jade Enchantress* were published, and these were followed by the five space operas in his "Operation" series, the last of which was *Operation Misfit* which appeared in 1987. He has also had two collections of his fantasy stories published, *Strange Gateways* and *Far Lands*. Other days:

Duane L. Jones, actor and director, who starred in George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, died on 22 July 1988, aged 51.

Henry Koster, the Hollywood director whose best known work was *Harvey*, the fantasy about a giant invisible rabbit which starred James Stewart, died in September 1988, aged 83.

Milton Krasner, the cinematographer on *The Invisible Man Returns* and *The Invisible Man's Revenge*, died of heart failure on 15 July 1988, aged 84. He won an Oscar in 1954 for *Three Coins in the Fountain*.

Josh Logan, the film and theatre director who made *Camelot*, died on 12 July 1988, aged 79.

Alan Napier, the character actor, has died. He was 85. Born in Birmingham, he was one of that group of English actors who worked steadily in Hollywood for some 40 years, with parts in such films as *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, *The Invisible Man Returns* and *Cat People*. However it was only in the late 1960s that he achieved fame when he was cast as the butler in the *Batman* TV series.

PUBLISHING

More news on the new publication announced last issue. Its title will be *The Gate*, a quarterly digest of Science Fiction and Fantasy published by W Publishing of Peterborough. The first issue will be on sale in January. Each issue will have approximately 200 pages, and a total of 30,000 to 35,000 words. There will be a featured novelette of up to 15,000 words, and several shorter stories. Payment will be £30 per thousand words per publication. The address for subscriptions (remember there's a special annual subscription rate of £7 for BSFA members) and submissions is: Richard Newcombe, W Publishing, 28 Saville Road, Westwood, Peterborough, Cambs PE3 7PR.

Another new publication is *The New York Review of SF*. The editorial team, in their preview issue, announce that "SF" is, in our opinion, seriously in need of a publication combining high reviewing standards with a knowledge of the literature, a publication which is suspicious of trends but sympathetic to a continuing evolution of thought and achievement that seems to have been more often referred to than discussed in recent

years. ... *The New York Review of SF* aims to become the leading review medium in SF. In addition, we will publish engaging and provocative essays, and a variety of special entertainments, on topics of interest to SF readers." The impressive 18-page preview includes a poem by Gene Wolfe, an article by John M. Ford, and a column by Daniel Pinkwater as well as a selection of reviews.

The editorial team consists of: Managing Editor - Teresa Nielsen Hayden; Reviews Editor - David G. Hartwell; Features Editor - Kathryn Graser; Fantasy Editor - Susan Pelwick; Short Fiction Editor - Tom Weber; Designer - Patrick Nielsen Hayden. The journal will be published monthly by DRAGON PRESS, and subscriptions are \$24 per year. Cheques should be made payable to Dragon Press, and sent to PO Box 78, Pleasantville, NY 10570.

G.M. is a new magazine which covers a wider range of games than *White Dwarf*, which has become a house magazine for Games Workshop. The new magazine is monthly from September, and costs £120.

OCTOPUS, the massive publishing company chaired by Paul Hamlyn, is to launch a new mass market paperback line. OCTOPUS PAPERBACKS will begin to appear in the bookshops next spring, and they are planning to publish 100 titles in the first year alone. They plan to be one of the three biggest paperback publishers in the country by the end of their third year. There is no word of whether they will include science fiction on their list, but since the imprint will provide a paperback outlet for HEINEMANN, SECKER & WARBURG and METHUEN it seems likely that there will be some.

Another new Small Press publisher has arrived on the scene. DRUNKEN DRAGON PRESS is the brainchild of Bog Bayton and Rod Milner of Birmingham's Andromeda Bookshop. Their first title is *Dragonhiker's Guide to Battlefield Covenant at Dune's Edge: Odyssey Two*, a collection of science fiction parodies by Dave Langford.

The selection from the autumn catalogues published last issue has brought a few more publishers out of the woodwork.

Brian Aldiss writes: "Not having had much luck as an author, I'm turning publisher. AVERNUS will publish our first book to coincide with the World Fantasy Con. It's Frank Netherley's *Science Fiction Blum*, the book of the Road Show. £4.95, illustrated paperback."

Meanwhile, MACDONALD/FUTURA have hastened to provide their forthcoming list up to June 1989:

November: *The Bewitchments of Love and Hate* - Storm Constantine and *The Orbit Science Fiction Yearbook* edited by David S. Garnett are both "B" format paperbacks, plus *The Hidden World* - Stuart Gordon.

December: *Wizard at Large* by Terry Brooks is simultaneous hardback and "B" format paperback. At the same time there's Brooks' *The Black Unicorn*. Other books include *The Gauntlet of Malice* - Deborah Turner Harris in "B" format, and *Isaac Asimov's Robot City 1* - Michael P. Kube-McDowell.

January 1989: *The Spellkey* - Ann Downer, *The Net* - Loren J. McGregor and *Janissaries: Clan and Crown* - Jerry Pournelle.

February: *Fireshaper's Doom* - Tom Deitz, *A Far Distant Shore* - Keith Tinsion ("B" format), and *Dreams of Flesh and Sand* - W.T. Quick.

March: *Fiasco* - Stanislaw Lem, the Clarke Award nominee in "B" format, *Isaac Asimov's Robot City 2* - Mike McQuay, and *The Second Book of Lost Swords* - Fred Scherberger.

April: *The Broken Citadel* - Joyce Kilmer Greenstein ("B" format), *The Wormhole Jungle* - Robert Reed ("C" format), *Mindbond* - Nancy Springer.

May: *Sister Light, Sister Dark* - Jane Yolen, *The Gold Coast* - Kim Stanley Robinson ("C" format), and *The Wooden Speeches* - Bob Shaw.

June: *Realm of Gods* - Catherine Cooke, *Janissaries: Storms of Victory* - Jerry Pournelle, and *Voice of the Whirlwind* - Walter Jon Williams ("C" format).

Meanwhile there have been changes in the senior reaches of MACDONALD. Richard Evans has resigned to become a freelance editor, and has been replaced by Alan Semon.

The publishing merry-go-round continues, if on a somewhat lower key than last year. THORNSON have taken over WILLIAM KIMBER, the publisher of numerous ghost stories including those of R. Chetwynd-Rhys. The ghost story side of KIMBER has been put under the control of Michael Cox, the editor of the *Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories*, which may herald some improvement in

a notoriously uneven line.

Meanwhile, THORSON'S CRUCIBLE imprint has now been given over entirely to non-fiction. A new imprint for fiction called EQUATION has been introduced, with a paperback list of ghost stories called EQUATION CHILLERS. The first three titles under this imprint are to be launched to coincide with the World Fantasy Convention this November; they are *The Flint-Knife: Further Spook Stories*, stories by E.F. Benson which have never had book publication before, edited by Jack Adrian who also edits *Warning Whispers*, stories by A.M. Burrage, again stories which have never had book publication. The third one is *In the Dark*, a collection of ghost stories by E. Nesbit edited by Hugh Lamb. An incomplete edition of this appeared from METRUE in 1984, but around half the stories were missed out of that edition and this will be the first time that the full set see volume publication.

Spring 1989 will see the publication of two more EQUATION CHILLERS, *Fear Walks the Night - Tales of Terror* by Frederick Goos selected by Richard Dalby, and *The Magic Mirror - Lost Tales and Mysteries by Algernon Blackwood* selected by Michael Ashley.

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The shake-out among American literary agents, announced last issue, has come to naught. In the end the Kirby McCauley agency and Curtis Brown Ltd failed to amalgamate, and McCauley is now trying to put his own affairs in order. At the same time Kay McCauley, who left to set up her own agency, has rejoined Kirby McCauley, and Ralph Vicinanza, who did indeed set up his own agency, has signed an agreement with McCauley to handle all the foreign affairs of the McCauley agency, just as he did when a member of the company.

NEW & FORTHCOMING BOOKS AUGUST - OCTOBER 1988

- Brian ALDERS *Ed Galactic Empires* (LEGEND, pbk)
Brian ALDERS with David WINGROVE *Trillion Year Spree* (PALADIN, pbk)
Piers ANTHONY *Vale of the Vole* (OEL, pbk)
Mike ASHLEY *Ed The Mammoth Book of Short Horror Novels* (ROBINSON, pbk)
Isaac ASIMOV *Prelude to Foundation* (GRAFTON, hbk); *The Big Sun of Mercury* (LIGHTNING, pbk)
John BARRIS *The Man Who Pulled Down the Sky* (OEL, pbk)
James P. BLAYLOCK *Horusulus* (GRAFTON, pbk)
James BLISH *Spook Must Die!* (CORGI, pbk)
Ben BOVA *Kinsman* (METRUE, hbk)
Scott BRADFELD *The Secret Life of Houses* (UNWIN, hbk)
John BRUNNER *The Days of March* (OXFORD, hbk & pbk)
Lois McMaster BUIOLD *The Warrior's Apprentice* (HEADLINE, pbk)
Octavia E. BUTLER *Kindred* (WOMEN'S PRESS, pbk)
Reamey CAMPBELL *Ed New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* (GRAFTON, pbk)
Orson Scott CARD *Seventh Son* (LEGEND, hbk & pbk)
Jonathan CARROLL *Sleeping in Flame* (LEGEND, hbk & pbk)
Jack L. CHALKER *Pirates of the Thunder* (OEL, pbk)
Tim CHILD & Dave MORRIS *Knightsnightmare* (CORGI, pbk)
Arthur C. CLARKE *Imperial Earth* (VGSF Classic 27, pbk)
John CLUTE, David PRINGLE & Simon OUNSLIE *Eds Interzone: The 3rd Anthology* (SIMON & SCHUSTER, hbk)
Louise COOPER *The Thorn Key* (ORCHARD, hbk)
Tom DEITZ *Windmaster's Bone* (CORGI, pbk)
August DERLETH *Ed Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* (GRAFTON, pbk)
William C. DIETZ *Sam McCade: War World* (OEL, pbk)
Gardner DOZOIS *Ed Best New SF 2* (ROBINSON, hbk & pbk)
David EDWARDS *Deamon Lord of Keranda* (BANTAM, hbk)
Claudia J. EDWARDS *Bright and Shining Tiger* (HEADLINE, pbk)
Carol EMMSWILLER *Carson Dog* (WOMEN'S PRESS, pbk)
Raymond E. FEIST *Faerie Tale* (GRAFTON, hbk & pbk)
Raymond E. FEIST & Jenny WURTS *Daughter of the Empire* (GRAFTON, pbk)
Bruce FERGUSON *The Shadow of His Wings* (GRAFTON, pbk)
Phillip FINCH *I a Place Dark and Secret* (STAR, pbk)
Kenneth C. FLINT *The Dark Druid* (BANTAM, pbk)
R.A. FORDE *Wise-Woman* (OEL, hbk)
Christopher FOWLER *Roofworld* (LEGEND, hbk & pbk)
David GEMMELL *Last Sword of Power* (LEGEND, hbk & pbk)
Mary GENTLE *Ancient Light* (LEGEND, pbk)
Ann HALLAM *Transformations* (ORCHARD, hbk)
Joe HAZEDMAN *Tool of the Trade* (CORGI, pbk)
M. John HARRISON *Viriconium* (UNWIN, pbk)
Christopher HIGG *Liege-Killer* (METRUE, pbk)
David J. HOGAN *Dark Romance* (EQUATION, pbk)
Mike JEFFERIES *Shadowlight* (FONTANA, pbk)
Gwyneth JONES *The Hidden Ones* (WOMEN'S PRESS, pbk)
Ed KELLERER & Harriette VIDAL *Madonna* (STAR, pbk)
Stephen KING *The Running Man* (OEL, pbk)

- Donald KINGSBURY *The Moon Goddess and the Son* (GRAFTON, pbk)
Michael P. KUBE-MCDEMONE *Empire* (LEGEND, pbk)
Hubert LAMPO & Pieter Paul KOSTER *Arthur and the Grail* (SIDGWICK & JACKSON, hbk)
Louise LAWRENCE *The Warriors of Tean* (GLIONS TEEN TRACKS, pbk)
J.S. LAFANU *The Illustrated J.S. Lafanu* Selected and Introduced by Michael Cox (EQUATION, hbk)
Robert LEESON *Slambash Wags of a Coopa Gormer* (GLION TEEN TRACKS, pbk)
Daniel J.H. LEVACK *PKD: A Philip K. Dick Bibliography, Revised Edition* (HECKLER, hbk)
Barry B. LONGYEAR *Sea of Glass* (LEGEND, pbk)
Richard LUPOFF *Countersolar* (GRAFTON, pbk)
John McLAUGHLIN *Toolmaker* (Koei (CORGI, pbk)
Graham Dunstan MARTIN *Giffwish* (SWALLOW, pbk)
Michael MOOROCK *The Dragon in the Sword* (GRAFTON, pbk)
Douglas WILES *Black Wizards* (PENGUIN, pbk)
Larry NIVEN *The Snake Ring* (ORBIT, pbk)
Andre NORTON *Spell of the Witch World* (VGSF, pbk)
Diana L. PAXSON *White Mare, Red Stallion* (OEL, pbk)
David PRINGLE *Modern Fantasy: The Hundred Best Novels* (GRAFTON, hbk)
Bruce ROBERTSON *Techniques of Fantasy Art* (MACDONALD ORBIT, hbk)
Joel ROSENBERG *The Sleeping Dragon* (GRAFTON, pbk)
Fred SARRIEN *Woundhealer's Story* (ORBIT, pbk); *Berserker Man* (VGSF, pbk)
Pamela SARGENT *The Shore of Women* (PAN, pbk)
David SAUNDERS *Encyclopedia of the Worlds of Doctor Who, A-D* (ONIGHT, pbk)
James SCHMITZ *The Witches of Karres* (VGSF, pbk)
Bob SHAW *Ship of Strangers* (VGSF, pbk)
Susan SHAW *Queenblade* (PAN, pbk)
James SILKE *Frank Frazetta's Death Dealer, Book 1: Prisoner of the Horned Helmet* (GRAFTON, pbk)
Robert SILVERBERG *Star of Gypsies* (ORBIT, pbk)
Clifford D. SINAK *Off-Planet* (METRUE, hbk); *City* (METRUE, pbk)
John SKIPP & Craig SPECTOR *The Screams* (BANTAM, pbk)
Cordwainer SMITH *The Rediscovery of Man* (GOLLANCZ, hbk)
SPEEDING *A Cloud over Water* (UNWIN, pbk)
Bruce STEELING *Involution Ocean* (LEGEND, pbk); *Islands in the Net* (LEGEND, hbk & pbk)
Peter STRAUSS *Koko* (VIKING, hbk)
Sheri S. TEPPER *Jinlan Star-Eye* (CORGI, pbk)
J.R.R. TOLKIEN *The History of Middle Earth 6: The Return of the Shadow - the History of the Lord of the Rings Part One* (UNWIN, hbk); *Tree and Leaf* (including the previously unpublished poem *Mythopoeia*) (UNWIN, hbk); *The Shaping of Middle-Earth* (UNWIN, pbk)
Jack VANCE *The Book of Dreams* (GRAFTON, pbk)
Margaret WEIS & Tracy Hickman *Forging the Darkworld* (BANTAM, pbk)
Colin WILSON *Spider World: The Delta* (GRAFTON, pbk)

MISCELLANY

The Daily Telegraph reports: "The man who co-designed the infamous Deleks, the enemies of Dr Who who wandered the universe with a sore throat and a one word vocabulary of 'exterminate', was this week appointed as design director to give a new look to London Transport. The mind boggies at what light turn up in the tunnels when Jeremy Bewse-Deleks, 48, gets to work."

[Judith Hannal]



Media News

Compiled by John Peters

The BBC's release of old radio shows on cassette, which has already produced boxed sets of *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*, could prove to be a windfall for fans of radio SF. Scheduled for release next spring is *Journey Into Space*, the adventure series that ran for several years during the mid-1950s. Three serials have survived in the BBC archives, *Red Planet*, *Operation Luna* and *World in Peril*. They were written by Charles Chilton, a staff producer at the BBC, so the corporation automatically owns the copyright, though they still have to obtain the permission of actors such as David Jacobs and Andrew Faulds who appeared in the programmes.

CBS-Fox Video have released two new films in this country.

Nightflyers is based on a story by George R.R. Martin and features a team of scientists aboard the spaceship "Nightflyer" who find themselves at the mercy of the ship's computer. The captain of the ship is Michael Praed of *Robin of Sherwood*, and the cast also includes John Standing and Catherine Mary Stewart. But the real star of the show is the special effects, which comes from one of the most experienced teams in Hollywood. Visual effects were produced by Gene Warren Jr and Leslie Munby of *Gremlins*, *The Terminator* and *Critters*; props and make-up come from Robert Short of *Cocoon*, *Splash* and *ET*; pyrotechnical stunts came from Roger George of *The Terminator* and *Death Race 2000*; and the "flying" effects came from Bob Harrison and Bob Weisinger of 2001 and the *Superman* films.

Maximum Overdrive marks the directing debut of Stephen King, who also wrote the script from his short story "Trucks" which appeared in his first anthology, *Night Shift*. It concerns trucks that have come to threatening life at a small truck stop, and stars Emilio Estevez and Pat Hingle.

Fahrenheit 451 the Musical? Ray Bradbury has apparently just completed writing a musical version of his novel, in association with composer David Neebe and lyricist Georgia Bolof. The world premier will be in Fort Wayne, Indiana on 11 November.

Film rights to Margaret Atwood's Arthur C. Clarke Award winning *The Handmaid's Tale* have been sold to an unnamed production company.

Cherryholme, the movie based on Frederik Pohl's novel, has been cancelled due to the Hollywood writers' strike.

After the success of *Little Shop of Horrors*, Frank Oz is to make *Benjamin Button*, starring Martin Short, the hyperactive nerd in *Innerspace*. The story deals with a baby that is born as an adult and then regresses back to childhood over the years.

And now for the unbelievable: look out for these forthcoming titles: *Hack 'em High*; *I was a Teenage Sex Mutant*; *Space Sluts in the Slammer*; *Alone in the T-Shirt Zone*; *I was a Teenage Zombie* (I was young, reckless and in love ... then I was dead, young, reckless and in love); *Slime City*; *Sorority Babes in the Slimeball Bowl-o-rama*.

Sean Connery has pulled out of Terry Gilliam's *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* after his role had been reduced by budget cuts. It seems that he might now be Indiana Jones' dad in the next *Raiders* film which is currently in production.

Arnold Schwarzenegger's next film, after *The Running Man* which is due for release any day now, is *Red Heat* directed by Walter Hill. Schwarzenegger plays a Russian detective sent to Chicago to work with the local cops.

Mel Gibson is both producer and star of the big-screen version of *The Avengers*, but Patrick Macnee will make an extended cameo appearance as John Steed.

The new television series of *The War of the Worlds* will be preceded by a two-hour telemovie, and it will be syndicated to American stations in exactly the same way as *Star Trek: The New Generation*. No cast details have been finalised as yet.

Sequelitis continues unabated. We can expect sequels to *Robocop*, *Back to the Future* (with Michael J. Fox), *Cocoon* and *Splash* (as a TV movie without any of the original cast or director). Troubled Cannon Films have announced *Superman 5* and *Masters of the Universe 2*. *Halloween IV* hits our screens in October, but John Carpenter is not involved, he's busy making *They Live*, an alien film. And the third *Romancing the Stone* movie is *The*

Crimson Eagle with Michael Douglas, though as yet neither Kathleen Turner nor Danny DeVito have signed contracts. Oh, and George Lucas has denied rumours that he's started pre-production work on the next *Star Wars* film.

There are remakes in the air also. *The Golem* will, aptly, star Charles Bronson, and also listed are *The Tigger* and a \$20M version of *The Blob*.

Cartoon characters are coming to life. How do you fancy James Belushi as Fred Flintstone and Rick Moranis as Barney Rubble in a live action version of *The Flintstones*? And Steven Spielberg apparently wants to make a live action version of Hergé's *Tintin*. Meanwhile Hanna-Barbera are planning a full-length animated film of *Tom and Jerry* to celebrate their 50th birthday.

And there's always Batman. After years of rumour, filming has started in England on *The Batman* for release next year. And Ivan Reitman, who directed *Ghostbusters*, is planning to make a film of Frank Miller's graphic novel, *The Dark Knight Returns*.

Anthology series have been doing so badly on the US networks that *Ray Bradbury Theater*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Outer Limits* and *Twilight Zone* have all been cancelled. But cable and video distributors have bought up the rights to all these series and moved production to Canada, where it is cheaper.

Stephen King is obviously the man of the moment. Not only has he just directed his own *Maximum Overdrive* (see above), but it is due to become a mini-series on TV, and there's also going to be a series about Christine, produced by Glenn Larson who made *Battlestar Galactica* and *Buck Rogers*. Meanwhile Anthony Perkins is to star in a series called *Ghostwriter* about the adventures of a Stephen King-type writer - one can only assume that this means super rich and hyperactive.

Robert Englund is to host a horror anthology series based on the same format as the *Nightmare* on Elm Street films. He is also directing a horror movie called *976-EVIL*.

Moontrap is a new \$3.6M SF adventure film set on the Moon and starring Walter Koenig and Bruce Campbell (from *Evil Dead*). Koenig plays an astronaut who discovers the relics of an ancient civilisation on the Moon.

A recent US fan survey made John Cleese the overwhelming favourite to play Dr Who in the proposed new film. Second was Dudley Moore, and third was Tom Conti - a very mixed bunch. As yet, however, no Doctor has been signed, nor is there a director for this \$12-15M film which is optically scheduled for release in mid 1989. The only firm details seem to be that the script will be written by Johnny Byrne, who has written for the TV series, and the Doctor's companion will be played by Caroline Munro as a TARDIS engineer from Gallifrey.

There are plans for a three-hour mini-series about the Challenger shuttle disaster. It will deal with the training and flight, and will also look at the way Morton Thiokol engineers tried to cancel the flight.



Competition Corner


As you will see, we have not published the results of last issue's Competition. When I spoke to Elizabeth Sourbut recently, we agreed that it would be better to wait until the backlog of post had been cleared, to give a fair chance to those entrants whose letters got caught. Consequently, *Matrix 79* will publish the results of two competitions. This issue's competition is slightly different in style, and I would be grateful for comments, as well as entries. My thanks go to John Fahey and Paul Kincaid for compiling the competition. Entries should be sent to the editorial address by the next deadline.


SPACESHIPS


This is a space-age version of that old favourite: battleships. A fleet of alien space-craft are approaching Earth, and the radar is down. However, we know how many ships there are, how big they are, and that they all appear on this grid. It is 26 squares by 26, with the letters A-Z from left to right across the top, and from top to bottom down the side. The clues will give you the name of a book, and all you do is take the initial letter of the title (ignore "the"), and the initial letter of the author's surname. The title will give you the position across the grid, and the author the position down the grid. Plot them all and you should have spotted all the spaceships. Thus, for instance, if the clue was: "The first book to feature Hari Selden's psychohistory", the answer would be *Foundation* by Isaac Asimov, which would give you A-F, as below.

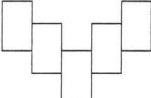
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
A									
B									
C									
D									
E									
F									

There are 16 craft in all, 2 ramjets which occupy 10 squares each, 2 FTL Cruisers which occupy 5 squares each, 4 STL Cruisers which occupy 2 squares each, and 10 Scout ships which occupy 1 square each. The scout ships are small and nippy, so you score 10 points for every direct hit; while the ramjets are large and slow, so it's only 1 point for a hit. The shapes and scores are shown below, so see how many you can get.

 Scout ship
1 square - 10 points

 FTL Cruiser
5 squares - 3 points

 STL Cruiser
2 squares - 5 points

 Ramjet
10 squares - 1 point

Clues

RAMJET 1:

- i) The Generic General
ii) Collection including "Paingod" and "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes"

ii)

- The first novel about Elans
A family saga set on the arid world of Seresunar

v)

- Novel set in the same universe as *Bloodhype* and *The Tar-Alyn Krang*

vii)

- The third espionage novel featuring micro-man Matthew Dilke

viii)

- Second in the Ozark trilogy
Fifth volume of the Riverworld series

ix)

- The adventures of interplanetary mercenaries in the 30th century
A 1979 novel by the author of *What Entropy Means to Me*

RAMJET 2:

- i) The book of the Baldy series
ii) A malfunction prevents the settlers on a new world from receiving the education they need

iii)

- A first novel that features an invasion by giant spiders

iv)

- First of a trilogy featuring Ransom
First novel by the pseudonymous Carroll Copps

v)

- The second book of the Eternal Champion
A collection of Known Space stories

vii)

- Second of the Chronicles of Counter-Earth
Mark Keniston's adventures on Helene

ix)

- The story of Winston Smith

FTL CRUISER 1:

- i) Dogs inherit Earth
ii) Collection including "It Wasn't Syzygy" and "Bianca's Hands"

iii)

- Carnody wins an intergalactic sweepstake
Giant wasps invade a shattered Earth

iv)

- First solo novel from a co-author of *Windhaven*

FTL CRUISER 2:

- i) A short story collection by the creator of tribbles
ii) American title of *A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!*

iii)

- A collection of Future History stories
Collection including "Lords of Misrule" and "Strange Great Sins"

v)

- Third novel about Ted Quattrill after the apocalypse

STL CRUISER 1:

- i) The novel that introduced Buck Rogers
ii) The first Nosteen Storm novel

STL CRUISER 2:

- i) Second of the Apprentice Adept books
ii) Dominic Flandry meets the supernatural

STL CRUISER 3:

- i) Bill Graham saves Earth from the Vitons
ii) Adventures of the survey ship Sarafand

STL CRUISER 4:

- i) Nexialism in space
ii) Second in the Golan trilogy

SCOUT SHIPS

- i) Pedino's adventures in worlds of games
ii) The daughter of the founder of the Institute for Advanced Robotics Research

3:

- Also known as *The Persistence of Vision*
Also known as *Dr Strangelove*

4:

- The sequel to *Mythago Wood*
In which Tom Lynn relives Tam Lin

6:

- Collection including "A Question of Re-Entry" and "The Lost Leonardo"

8:

- Third Amber novel
Collection including "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" and "The Women Men Don't See"

10:

- Howard Mann's adventures in City Earth

selling the books they produce. (There's a slight misconception here! - JKHB) Anyone who pays £30 to the convention funds can take part. Of course, the cost of travel there and back and living expenses during the con are at everybody's own charge. The organisers of the con, as I understand it, only arrange the booking of hotel rooms for the participants.

The focus of the con is a group of editors, publishers and more or less prominent SF writers. In this year's con, there were several dozen such people, while the total number of participants was about 5,000. (Note: the first Convention was held on the eve of World War II, some 400 people took part, plus about a dozen editors, publishers and professional writers.)

There are several Guests of Honour invited to the Convention who stay there wholly at the con's expense. At this year's, the 45th, Convention, the guests of honour invited were: Doris Lessing, a writer almost unknown here, but extremely popular in England; Alfred Bester, an SF writer quite well known to our fans (but he didn't make Brighton owing to ill-health); Arkadi and Boris Strugatski, known, obviously, not just to the readers of *Bratsky sledopit*; the film director Ray Harryhausen and the artist Jim Burns; among the fans: Mr and Mrs - Ken and Joyce - Slater, and Dave Langford. All the guests of honour were introduced by the well-known writer Brian Aldiss. (Erik Simon of the *DOR* who kindly rendered this into English says, "I suppose (but am not sure) that Aldiss was the toastmaster, and that's what is meant" - JKHB)

We found it very odd that as the "nickname" of the 45th Convention the term "Conspiracy 87" had been chosen. The "87" was clear enough, but why "Conspiracy"? (There's a Russian equivalent recognisably close in sound - JKHB) It turned out to be a joke. They took the first syllable of "convention" and formed a slogan out of it. I asked our host Malcolm Edwards, a director of the well-known publishing house Gollancz, "Won't such a provocative name attract the attention of the Intelligence Service?"

Malcolm just waved his hand and answered, "Oh, they're used to it by now. Even without us they're up to their necks in trouble anyway."

In fact the whole Convention was - to us - an uncouthly large, noisy and rather confused show. Everybody sat everybody else, everybody talked to everybody else (the language of the con was English), and the most astonishing thing was: everybody felt at ease. I even remember "conspiring" with all, or so it seemed to us, understood one another even when they had scarcely two words in common.

Besides the English and Americans, there were fans from Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, gathered in Brighton. There was even a Tamil from Ceylon (Sri Lanka); Arabs, negroes, mulattoes, mestizos. We were fascinated and heartened by the ease with which they all talked to one another, by the casual way they dressed, by the astonishingly modest standard of living they were prepared to put up with. (This is an attempt to render "astonishing modesty of demands towards living conditions". Relying on what Arkadi said during the con, I think what he had in mind was that many fans slept on friends' floors or even on the beach, and survived on what the fast-food tables had to offer, just so long as they could stay the whole weekend - JKHB) And then, the burning, genuine interest in what was going on, and also the tireless, heartfelt desire not only to attend as many events as possible but also to lend a strong helping hand to the con organisers. As I saw it, the Convention was extraordinarily well-organised, though the professional (paid) staff was very small and engaged mainly in taking care of the give of honour and the "senior" participants in general. (There's an obvious misunderstanding here. I'm hoping to see Arkadi again in Poland at the end of September and will try to set him right - JKHB)

The events:

A marvellous fancy-dress ball at which practically no con participant showed up without being dressed as some popular hero of SF movies, comics or animated films.

Public interviews where some of the convention organisers interviewed a well-known writer, film director, actor etc., in the presence of 300-400 fans.

Numerous film shows.

Numerous "parties" (in English in the original - JKHB) - informal gatherings in the con rooms, in bars or simply in hotel rooms.

And so on.

To Boris Nathanovich and myself the high spot of the Convention was a gigantic exhibition cum sale of SF literature. Imagine several halls, none of which is smaller than the big hall in the Sverdlovsk Car Workers' Cultural Centre (well known to those who have taken part in the annual "Aelita" award festival). (The major Soviet SF award - JKHB) But why am I

saying "not smaller"? Twice as big, real hangers, giant rooms with windows on two levels, where there were countless stands and shelves, all overlooked with hundreds of thousands, or maybe millions, of books (all in English). And not just books. There were also magazines, comic collections, SF games ... Some stands held souvenirs: puppets of all sizes, depicting popular book, movie and comics heroes.

Boris Nathanovich and I spent nearly all our spare time at this extraordinary fair, slipping away only for short walks to the canteen (in fact it was a restaurant, but we treated it as a canteen).

As far as we could tell, this treasure-hoard of publications - the brand-new as well as the second-hand - covered virtually the entire history of English-language SF (or rather SF in English) from the first editions of Wells, back at the end of the 19th century, up to tomorrow. This is not a slip of the tongue - there were books and magazines on sale which had not yet appeared in English and American shops.

That's how it looked. And we were consumed by envy. By the way, one of the conditions of our being invited was that for about an hour and a half we had to promote the brand-new edition of our *Prisoners of Power* (Penguin Books, London) in one of the halls. To our enormous surprise, in that hour and a half we sold about a hundred copies. I don't know how it was with Boris Nathanovich, but I had blisters on my fingers from signing autographs.

What else were we doing? We appeared at three public interviews (see above). We gave a dozen interviews to individual reporters and radio correspondents. We kept explaining left and right that in accordance with the laws of our country we cannot sign contracts privately and that foreign publishers and interested persons should contact the VAP (is the Copyright Agency of the USSR). We went to a party given for the publishers and editors by the writers. We went to a party given for the writers by the publishers and editors. We ate several dinners given us by publishers as well as by writers.

That seems to be all the official activities of the two Soviet guests of honour at the 45th Convention. You might well agree it's quite a lot for two old men who for the first time happened to be in a capitalist country.

I must say we were received very cordially. Boris Nathanovich, being a sceptical yet a cautious man, tends to ascribe this to the somewhat exotic status of the con participants. But I feel the cordiality is also explained by genuine interest in what's going on in the Soviet Union in general, and especially as regards Soviet SF. To this point I'd cite the questions we were posed with: about *perestroika*, about Afghanistan, about our view of Soviet-American relations - and of course about the future of joint space research. Nonetheless the majority of the questions (it was after all the World SF Convention) concerned matters to do with publications in the SF field, Soviet readers' interest in SF and fantasy, the situation of Soviet SF fans. I confess we spoke quite openly. And when Boris Nathanovich stated that not more than 10% of Soviet readers' desire for SF is satisfied, a fabulous groan of dismay went through the room, followed by a moment of silence which immediately brought to my mind a minute of silent remembrance.

Back home in Moscow I was asked over and over: so what problems were resolved at the Convention? Well, I tell you straight out, comrades: bar a few contracts signed in fringe deals by individual writers and individual publishers, the Convention did not raise or resolve any problems. The Convention (and this is another feature it has in common with the Sverdlovsk "Aelita" festival) is a free and friendly interchange between several thousand people interested in science fiction literature from all over the world. It offers a free exchange of opinions, of information, of books, an opportunity to make new acquaintances, and, of course, a chance to get enjoyably high through communicating with like-minded people. I hope Arkadi won't take too great exception to the way I've rendered what in the German version stood as "a possibility to get high spiritual pleasure" - JKHB)

Naturally a Convention is not the healthiest way for two old men to spend their time. It was very tiring. We slept 5-6 hours a night, not more. We drove ourselves to exhaustion. Nonetheless I feel extremely grateful to the organisers of the con for their friendly invitation, for their unparalleled hospitality, and for giving us a chance to see for ourselves what the young SF fan is like in the West: a very good type. (It came to me as "figure"; I think this is a fair rendering - JKHB)

And one more thing. At the 45th World SF Convention Boris Nathanovich and I received an award from the World SF Organisation inscribed: "For Independence of Thought."

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Local Fanomena

The Clubs Column

by Keith Mitchell

We kick off this month with a follow-up to some information missing from last issue's column. Having made a brief field-trip to the other side of the country, your roving columnist has more to report on west coast of Scotland fandom.

The current venue for **The Friends of Kilgore Trout** is **Galina** pub, on Miller St, off Argyll St. They meet there every Thursday night, from about 8.30 pm, and the contact is Mark Meenan, at "Burnawn", Stirling Rd, Dumbarton G82 2PJ, tel: 0389 65313.

Alternative Glasgow fandom, known variously as **The Red Army Choir**, **CretinFandom** or **The Friends of Admiral Benbow**, is still going strong at **The Bull and Bear**. This can be found at the corner of Buchanan St and Nelson Mandela Place, and they usually meet from about 9pm onwards. If you feel you might fit in with one of these factions (or would like to start your own!), contact Sandy Brown, 16 Gordon Terrace, Blantyre, G72 9NA, or John Mooney on 041-952 9286.

Outside of Glasgow, **S.O.S. the Saltcoats group**, meets every Wednesday night in **The Crown Inn**, Chapelwell St, Saltcoats, Ayrshire. For more information, phone Dave Ellis on 0294 603164.

Now that Central Scotland has been more than comprehensively covered, it's time to move on to other parts of the country. First off is the Chester and District SF Group, **CADS**, which meets on the first and third Sundays of each month in **The Old Custom House Inn**, Watergate St, from 8.30 pm. Contact Allison Scott at 2 Craithie Rd, Vicars Cross, Chester CH3 5JL, tel: 0244 42396. Alison says that the meetings are fairly informal affairs, and the two main activities appear to be chatting and the consumption of Marston's Pedigree.

Beer consumption seems to be a favourite activity at many groups, and for discerning beer drinkers like myself, it's nice to know what varieties there are at your local group's venue, if they meet in a pub. If you can tell me this when letting me know about your group, then I can include it in the listings.

For example, at **FORTH** we have McEwans 80/- and Younger's No.3, a consequence of Milne's being owned by Scottish and Newcastle. It could be best described as "inconsistently mediocre". Fortunately, Scottish licensing laws permit us to move on after 11pm, which at least lets us drink such things as Belhaven and Caledonian 70/- and 80/- (I won't say anything about the beer drunk at Glasgow meetings in case they don't buy me any more.)

I am very grateful to Martin Tudor for filling me in on lots of fan activities in the Midlands (and elsewhere). Most notable amongst these are the formal meetings of the long-established Birmingham Science Fiction Group (**BSFG**). These are held in the **Penguin** (formerly) Ladbroke Hotel in New St, Birmingham, on the



third Friday of each month at 8pm. Their guest speaker in September was John Jarrold of Futura Books, and coming up in their program are a Debate with the Birmingham University SF Society in October, and Gwyneth Jones speaking in November. Attendance for these meetings is £1.50 for visitors, £1.00 for members. You can join by sending £5.50 to the treasurer, David Wake, at 160 Beaumont Rd, Bourneville, Birmingham, B30 1BY, tel: 021-451 2287. Cheques are payable to the BSFG, and your £5.50 also entitles you to receive the regular BSFG Newsletter, edited by David A Hardy.

Also in the Midlands is the BSFG-affiliated Leicester SF Group, whose meetings are on a generally smaller scale. They meet at the **Rainbow and Dove** pub, at 155 Charles St, in Leicester. The meetings are held from 8pm on the first Friday of every month. For more information contact George Clark at 71 Wolverton Rd, Leicester LE3 2AJ, or tel: 0533 823405

Groups which are in the process of starting up include a new SF and Fantasy film society in Manchester. This is being organised by Harry Nadler, whom you can contact at 15 Fennel St, Manchester, tel: 061-835 1055, if you are interested.

Jonathan Cowie's attempts to start a group in Darford have resulted in two meetings so far. Meetings take place on the 2nd Thursday of each month, at the **Phoenix** pub in Lower Hythe Street, which is three minutes north of Darford Station, under the railway bridge and then look around. For further information, contact Jon Cowie at 5 Charlieville Rd, Erith, Kent, DA6 1HJ.

I had hoped to run a listing of University/College/ Polytechnic group this issue, but unfortunately haven't had information from any, which I think has more than something to do with the postal strike. While I do have listings of some groups, an unfortunate property of information about local groups is that it generally gets out of date very quickly. I apologise therefore if I'm asking you for information which you have given before, but it is better to have up-to-date listings, rather than send people on a wild goose chase. Hopefully, next *Matrix* will see a full list of these groups. In the meantime, thank you to all who have written, and I'm still keen to hear what's new.

EXTRA NEWS

by Maureen Porter

Just a round-up of bits of information which have come to me, rather than Keith.

First of all, apologies to the Tolkien Society for omitting to mention that they meet on the first Saturday of the month.

Lawrence Dean has recently moved to Canterbury, Kent and would be keen to hear from other SF fans in the area, to see if a group could be brought together. Contact Lawrence Dean at 47 Forrester Close, Canterbury, CT1 1DZ. Tel: 0227 458509.

On a slightly different track, for anyone in the Greater London area who is interested in spaceflight and astronomy, and would like to meet other like-minded people, **ASTRA London** is now meeting on the first Saturday of every month. It is planning talks on a wide range of astronomical and astronomical subjects. For further information, please contact Del Cotter on 01 769 7287.

I've also had a note from Michael Bernardi about **Earthlight SF & F Zine**, which is a newsize edited by Michael and others, published by Epub (part of the British Association of Computer Clubs) and accessible on the Prestel database. Effectively, the readers form a nationwide electronic club, hence the mention here. They also have occasional get-togethers, such as at the Worldcon last year. Anyone who is a member of Prestel can write for Earthlight, which Michael describes as a combination of Matrix and Paperback Inferno. Contact Michael Bernardi at 145 Maple Drive, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 8DE, or Prestel Mailbox no: 919994136

I've also received some information from John Peters about the **Drake Science Fiction Association**. This club meets twice a month, roughly first and third Saturdays, 8pm onwards, at The Stonehouse Vaults, just off the centre of Plymouth. John describes them as a general interests club, with a strong media bias, usually showing a video once a month, alternating films and tv series. They also produce a quarterly clubzine, called **Drake's Drum**, which caters to the club members' literary and artistic leanings, printing fiction and articles, reviews and artwork, and anything else available. They have about 40 members, covering a wide variety of age groups, and anyone interested in SF is welcome, especially any local BSFA members. Membership fees are £10 per annum - full member, £7 unengaged or occasional attendee, and this includes copies of the clubzine when published.

Contact John at 299 Southway Dr, Southway, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 6QN, tel: 0752 785853

The Periodic Table

Not quite a convention - Sci-Fi Fairs are holding an event at Stanwell Village Hall, Stanwell, which is five minutes from M25 Junction 14, specialising in film and television collectables, toys, games, records, etc. Further details from Sci-Fi Fairs, Longclose House, Common Road, Eton Wick, Nr Windsor Berks, SL4 6QY, enclosing see, please. Tel: 0753 862637 (day) or 0582 391328 (evening). Anyone who attends - a report to *Matrix* would be appreciated.

Just a reminder that Hatfield Poly SF Group - PSIFA for short - is holding its tenth anniversary convention - DECAID - over the weekend of 21-23 October. Guests are Gwyneth Jones and Lorna Mitchell, and the weekend will include a preview of the new film, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, starring Walter Koenig and Bruce Campbell. The artist guest will be Shez, and Dave Larnit, leading light in the society, will be shaving off his beard for charity. See the con listing for membership details.

I've also received information about the Tyneside International Science Fiction (sic) Festival, which is to be held in Newcastle over the week of 9-15 August, 1989. This is being organised by a science fiction/fantasy/horror group called Morph, which has been in existence in the area for about a year.

According to the literature so far received by the BSFA, it is to be a week long festival with planned events such as book signings, film premieres, marathon film showings, marathon roleplaying games, visits by major celebrities, and much more.

The group claim that it is going to be bigger than Worldcons, although it has to be said, given the fact that an average Worldcon takes upwards of four years to organise, this may be a little ambitious. For further information, contact: Amanda Cable, 30 Wilkinson Court, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear, NE32 3NQ.

Belgian fans are getting in on the convention act, with an informal get-together, admission free, on Saturday 22nd October. The venue is The Drum public house, 25 Avenue Auderghen, 1040 Brussels, Belgium, from 11.30 am onwards. The hope is to provide videos, books for sale, and a quiz, among other things. For further information, contact: Graham Andrews, Square Marguerite 13, Boite 24, 1040 Brussels tel: 734 1694 or David Stewart, Ch de Wavre 1715, 1160 Brussels tel: 675 0128.

NICON has won the bid to host the 1989 Unicon. Unofficially known as uNicon, it will be held over the weekend of 11-13 August in Belfast, at the Queens University Halls of Residence and Student Union. Guests so far announced are Iain Banks and Terry Pratchett (who was apparently invited long before his other con appearances). The cost is as follows - Attending membership is £5 until the end of the year, and non-attending membership is £2. Cheques should be made payable to Nicon, and sent to Joe McNally, 106 Somerton Rd, Belfast, BT15 4DG.

With regard to the filkcon, Contable, The Transatlantic Fish Fund, also known as the Flying Fish Fund has been set up to bring over a prominent American filksinger. Leslie Fish, the premier American filker, has been invited. Donations to the fund are welcome, and should be sent to Gytha North, 18 Glynde Rd, Brighton, BN2 2YJ.

CONVENTION ROUNDUP

compiled by Maureen Porter

Please enclose an see when writing for information. Most cons run on a tight budget and this is always appreciated. If you are running a convention or know of one which I've missed, please send information to the editorial address. All listings are free, and will continue until the convention has taken place.

1988 CONVENTIONS

DECAID - Shoestring Con 10; 21-23 October, Hatfield Polytechnic. Guests: Gwyneth Jones, Lorna Mitchell and others. Membership: £6 attending, £1 supporting, discount for past and present PSIFA members. Contact: Jez Hildred, DECAID, PSIFA, c/o Students Union, Hatfield Polytechnic, Hatfield, Herts. Cheques made payable to "HPSDF", all proceeds to convention charity.

HANSECON - 27-30 October, CVJM Haus, Grosse Petersgrube, Lübeck. Contact: Dieter Schmidt, Haidrath 33D, D-2055 Wohltorf, West Germany.

CONCERT 28-30 October, Grosvenor Hotel, Edinburgh; Guests:

Tanith Lee, Ed Bishop. Membership: £15 attending, £8 supporting. Contact: Jette Goldie, 97 Harrison Rd, Edinburgh, EH11 1LT. Film & TV inspired convention.

WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION - 28-30 October, Ramada Inn, London. Guests: James Herbert, Diane Wynne Jones, Clive Barker, Michael Foreman. Membership: Attending £50, supporting £15. Contact: World Fantasy Convention, 130 Park View, Wembley, Middx, HA9 6JU

NOVACON 18 - Annual Brum Group Convention; 4-6 November, Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham; Guest: Gerry Kilworth. Membership: £10 (£15 on door); Contact: Novacon 18, c/o Bernie Evans, 7 Grove Avenue, Acocis Green, Birmingham, B27 7UY

THE EIGHTH LEONARD NIMOY CON. - 18-20 November, Queens Hotel, Leicester. Membership: Attending £12, supporting £150. Contact: Carol Davies, 77 The Ridings, Ealing, London, W5 3DP

KRINCON

25-26 June, Oslo, Norway

Reviewed by Wilf James

AS CONS IN BRITAIN GO, IT WAS SMALL AND VERY INFORMAL. BECAUSE of its smallness, almost everything took place in a single largish room which was on the upper floor of the Kingsjå students' club. Adjoining rooms were used for the fan room, crashing and talks.

The programme included a panel (?) on humour in SF, during which the infamous story of the "Poor Norwegian Fen" was recounted. The organisers of an American Worldcon (Seattle?) some time ago offered (as a joke) membership for a quantity of nuts and fruit. Anara, the Oslo SF society, sent a letter saying they were very poor so were taking up this offer. With the cooperation of a fan/friend in a shipping agency they prepared bills of lading for two containers of fruit and nuts, giving ship, time and date of departure, and estimated time and date of arrival in an American port. Copies of these bills and membership applications were sent to the con committee. Needless to say, no fruit and nuts were sent, and the American reaction was left to the imagination.

There was a panel in which the woman's view of SF was discussed. I caught some of it (the Swedish and some of the Norwegian). There seemed to be only one general conclusion - there are no men in fandom - only little boys.

The athletic event was The Great Typewriter Throwing Competition in the discus throwing cage of the nearby sports field with a heavyish portable donated by Egil Stenseth which had to be repaired with brown parcel tape to prevent it disintegrating. I had a go but could only reach about half the winning distance.

There was a picnic on Saturday evening about half a mile away from the shore of Sognsvann (Gogn's water). Anders Holmström wore a dress suit and Heidi Lyshol wouldn't have looked out of place in an Edwardian setting, and we were very well entertained by some extremely fannish filk in the Swedish style.

Later that same evening I came second in a Grotty Tie Competition with a erotic tie presentation.

There was a debate about a Scandinavian bid for Worldcon which seemed to run on the lines of "Denmark or Bust". (There isn't really anywhere other than Copenhagen which could hold a Worldcon and possibly attract enough fans.) In passing, the debate covered the possible arrangements for a proper Scandinavian con (Swedish feuds permitting).

After the auction on the Sunday there was little else happening and the con started to fade away. However, all was not lost; a dead dog party was scheduled for those who could spare the time and could be accommodated at Johan Schimanski's mother's apartment. There, on the balcony, I was able to watch the sunset merge into a sunrise.

NASACON 9

2-3 July, Stockholm, Sweden

Reviewed by Wilf James

THE CON SEEMED A BIT DISORGANISED AT THE START BECAUSE the talks were given in the same hall as that used for the bar. Byvind Myhre from Norway was the first GOG to speak and I had hoped to record his talk. Sod's Law prevailed. The plug and I missed a game of Meteorball (a sort of rounders/softball) while I tried to fix the mike socket with a bent paper clip.

In the middle of the afternoon there was a panel

discussion featuring Øyvind Myhre, Klaus Johansen and Sam J. Lundwall. I found it very interesting to hear the three Scandinavian languages being used by the panelists without any concession being made to their Swedish audience.

There was a questionnaire on SF with the programme book which I filled in as best I could. I was surprised to find that I came a very poor third on the list when it came to the time to announce the winners. Then I discovered that the top three were required to take part in a quiz on SF. Needless to say I still came third.

The next event of any consequence was a beer tasting. I had brought a quart bottle of Ruddies from England which went down very well and was generally considered among the top three of the dozen beers on offer. The beer tasting was held outside until an unexpected heavy shower of rain interrupted the proceedings for a while and the bits of paper we used to take notes became soggy and unreadable, so there wasn't a proper count of votes at the end.

Then there was a musical presentation by Steffen Mossige Norrheim, using backing tapes he had recorded himself with the aid of a synthesiser and a big mixing desk. I was very impressed by his musical ability and the range and content of his songs - which mostly used SF themes. The show was one of the really memorable highlights of Nascon 9.

I crashed in a quiet corner on my sleeping bag. At around 5.30am I was rudely awakened by a Swedish policeman prodding me with a stick. I tried in my best Swedish to explain who I was and why I was there. This seemed to satisfy him. He and his mate went on to discover other sleeping bodies which were scattered in odd corners but they didn't wake anyone else up. In the end they went away mumbling about the odd habits of science fiction fans.

Sunday began at midday (approx). There was an auction, and a talk by Klaus Johansen about Scandinavian fan publications. The next event was the Peanut Competition. This is similar in many ways to a pork pie race but on a smaller scale. The biggest entry was left until last. It consisted of an IBM PC, two colour monitors, an electronic interface box, a powerful twin servo amplifier, a large motor which had a horizontal disc of thimbles attached to it, and a tablespoon fixed to its shaft. The magazine rotated, the peanut was caught by the spoon which then spun from 3 o'clock back to 12 o'clock and threw the peanut about 8 feet. I doubt if I will ever see such a brilliant mixture of expensive machinery, excellent software, and sophisticated showmanship devoted to such a ridiculous cause again. It was mad but fun to watch, and almost worth going to Stockholm to see for its own sake.

Anything after that had to be an anticlimax.

WINCON - UNICON 9
19-21 August, Winchester

Reviewed by Jane Killick

THIS YEAR'S UNICON WAS HELD AT KING ALFRED'S COLLEGE, WINCHESTER and proved again that one of the most appropriate places to hold a convention is on a campus.

Guests were Michael De Larrabetti, Geoff Ryan and Patrick Tilley. At least, that's who they were supposed to be.

Fire & Hemlock

MAGAZINE LISTINGS

Compiled, with comments, by Maureen Porter

A little shorter than normal, as the post has eaten a lot of zines. Do keep sending them.

DEFINITIONS

A *genzine* (g) tends to have more than one contributor, contents might include articles, reviews, fiction, letters. A *perzine* (p) usually has one author, contents vary. A *chubzine* (c) is produced by a group or society, containing a mixture of items. *Mediazines* (m) and *Fictionazines* (f) are self-explanatory, as are *critical journals* (cj), *reviewzines* (r) and *newszines* (n). Anything else is probably indefinable (i). The usual (tu) varies: a letter of comment (loc), a contribution, the promise of either, a stamp. Trade means their zine for yours. Simply asking nicely often does the trick.

Review copies are appreciated, though please send two copies if Paul Kincaid or myself are on your mailing list. I don't use my own copies for reviewers.

Wincon could count as the first convention ever to lose a guest. Rumours of the real reason for the disappearance of Patrick Tilley soon became the main feature of the con and so did the "Where's Patrick?" badges. (See news column - Ed)

But to the programme itself. Items were a little sparse, but what there was was above average. Geoff Ryan's speech on "The Wizard of Oz" was definitely the highlight, receiving an unprecedented round of applause from the audience crammed into the room. Also great fun was "Time Assassin" where J.R.R. Tolkien, the creators of Superman, Gene Roddenberry and some truly awful children's writer I've never heard of pleaded for the assassin to go back in his time machine and destroy them before they had the chance to inflict their creations on the world. In an amusing panel, Superman lived to save the universe.

There was an excellent room/corridor/kitchen party on the Saturday night which typified the "feel" of unicons for me - small, but very friendly.

All this with B&B for £10 and student union bar prices - what more do you want?

GREENWOOD II - THE ROBIN OF SHERWOOD CONVENTION
27-29 August, Shepperton

Reviewed by Jane Killick

I ARRIVED AT THE CONVENTION ON THE SATURDAY MORNING AND WITHIN the first half hour found my hotel room, found a friend of mine, found a guest talk progressing in the main programme and managed to ask the question I had planned. It was going to be a good con.

This was my first media con and I wasn't there so much for the show (although it must rate among the best SF TV programmes of the past few years) but for the convention itself. However, much of the best programming was Robin related, notably the guest talks. In fact there were so many guests at one point that it was virtually impossible to walk into the bar without bumping into an actor! The writer, stuntmen and actors that attended were all excellent. Perhaps most memorable was Nick Grace (The Sheriff of Nottingham) getting the entire audience to sing Gilbert and Sullivan with him.

If that didn't interest you, "The Arrow and the Sword" were displaying their skills out on the lawn and letting the punters have a go - 50p for six arrows. It was great fun and I managed to knock down two targets. Next to them were "The Hawk Conservancy" flying birds of the feathered kind across the lawn (and even inside the main hall during the medieval banquet). Plus, inside for the devoted, a video programme played every Robin of Sherwood ever made.

Everyone seemed to have a good time, including the guests (you are going to invite me back next year, aren't you?) - Richard Carpenter (the writer of the series) stayed for the entire weekend. Plenty of people were in beautiful costume, the hotel (Shepperton Moat House) was marvellous (having hosted many a mediacon before). If there were any complaints, the evenings were a little dead and the rate for a single room a bit pricey, but I went home with that warm feeling of having had a good con.

LISTINGS

THE CAPRICIAN #3 - Lillian Edwards (1 Braehead Rd, Thorntonhall, Glasgow, G74 5AQ) and Christina Lake (47 Vessex Ave, Borfield, Bristol, BS7 0DE) (g/tu) Includes a description of a weekend in Wales, con reports, wedding reports, and a clever article from Zy Nicholson, analysing the new breed of naefan.

EMPTIES #9 - Martin Tudor (121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH) (g/tu or £5 - a joke?) A themezine this time, concentrating on friendship, including articles from, among others, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Ken Lake, Dave Wood, Bob Shaw (not to mention, me). A meaty and absorbing read, good writing.

A FREE LUNCH #3 - Mike Christie and Sherry Goldsmith (Ty Llyn, Ilanogor, Powys, Wales, LD3 7UD) (g/tu). Good thick issue with plenty of thought-provoking reading.

LARIXIN #17 - Perry Middlemiss (GPO Box 2708X, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia) & Irwin Hirsch (2/416 Dandenong Rd, Caulfield North, Victoria 3161, Australia) (sort of genzine/tu). Cheerful zine, a good read, maybe confusing if you don't know some of the people involved.

MAVERICK #7 - Jenny Glover (16 Aviary Place, Arnsley, Leeds, LS12 2NP) (g/tu). A5 production filled with a myriad small articles. Value for money, so to speak.

Members' Noticeboard

Advertising in the Member's Noticeboard is free to all members of the BSFA. It is also possible to have a repeat advert should you so require. You are welcome to advertise short wants lists, items for sale, requests for information, penfriends, anything which seems reasonable, but the editor does reserve the right to refuse any advertisement. All ads should be sent to Maureen Porter, 114 Guildhall St, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 1ES

• • GENERAL • •

Do you enjoy collating? Give just a little of your time to the BSFA by helping to collate its magazines at mailing sessions. Mailing takes place every two months at the Stats Department Annex at Reading University, under the aegis of Keith Freeman. We can promise tea or coffee, plus an extra month on your subscription for giving a hand each day. It's good fun (honest), you get to meet other BSFA members, and Committee members do turn up regularly to help. You are making a most valuable contribution to the running of the British Science Fiction Association.

Next session is

3/4 December 1988

See you there? Contact Keith Freeman for more information
(address inside front cover or phone 0734 666142)

GAP - The Gay Amateur Press Adminisitrator: M Stewart, 51
Cambridge Rd. St. Albans. Herts AL1 5LE.

Gay or Bisexual in Fandom? If you are interested in joining a gay apa, aimed at starting communication between members of the Gay Community in Fandom, drop us a line. The apa operates on a monthly basis. Minimum activity is 2 sides A4, every three months. Each member contributes 15 copies of their article and are charged only for the their monthly mailing costs

THE LINCOLN TANK GROUP is researching the first military tanks built during WWI at Fosters & Co, Lincoln. Terry Broome hopes to extend the material has so far gathered, and would appreciate hearing from members who have information, photos or records relating to FLIRT II or its production in Lincoln. Contact: The Lincoln Tank Group, c/o R E Hooley, Technical Reference Section, Ruston Gas Turbines, Fifth Rd, PO Box 1, Lincoln.

OCAM'S CHAINSAW - Martin Smith (73 Mount Pleasant Rd, New Malden, Surrey). (p/tu) A slim volume, but highly entertaining, with yet another discussion about sf and new fans. obviously the burning topic of the moment.

ONOMA #5 - C R Laker & G A Bryant (121 Rue Jean pauly, B-4300, ANS Belgium) (mostly fiction/tu)

PIRATE JENNY #2 - Pat Mueller, 618 Westridge, Duncanville, TX 75116, USA. (g/editorial whim). News and articles from the Hugo Award-winning former editor of the Texas SF Inquirer. Worth reading.

TASH #4 - Tommy Ferguson (c/o Queen's University of Belfast Science Fiction and Fantasy Society, Students' Union, University Rd, Belfast, BT7 1PE, ND (g/tu or £1 for several issues) The repro is lffy, with a slight outbreak of lanky duplicator and wrinkled stencil, whilst pages 12 & 13 are just not there. However, contents include a reprint of Bob Shaw's *Campus Fugit*, his Serious Scientific Talk from the Worldcon, Tommy himself discussing fanzines, Kev McVeigh reviewing books and lettercol. Not high art, but a good effort and interesting read.

TIMBRE #5 - Tim Jones (20 Gillespie St, Dunedin, Aotearoa, New Zealand) (p/tu?) Highly superior dtp production, and the contents look quite interesting too, though maybe a little too much white space. Worth a look, I think.

• • FOR SALE • •

CONSPIRACY FAN ROOM PUBLICATIONS

NOW READ ON - A Collection of Recent British Fanwriting ed. Rob Hansen

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by Rob Hansen

PLATEN STORIES by Dave Langford. A collection of Dave's writings. Each of these publications costs £2

ENDRYOTIC JOURNALS comp. Graham James. A representative collection of fan writing over the last 50 years. Price £1. All the above items are available from Greg Pickersgill at 7a Lawrence Rd, South Ealing, London W5. Cheques should be made payable to Conspiracy, and there is a flat rate of 50p postage per order.

IMAGINATION UNLIMITED - Third list now available. Many fantasy and science fiction paperbacks, secondhand and review copies for sale at reasonable prices, plus a selection of secondhand hardbacks. Contact: Maureen Porter, 114 Guildhall St, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 1ES. Return postage appreciated.

WORKS #1 A new quarterly magazine of speculative and imaginative fiction, poetry and art. 52 pages, £1.25 each, or £4.50 for a year's subscription (post inclusive in UK). Cheques payable to 'Works'.

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Huddersfield, HD7 5UQ

THE TRANSATLANTIC HEARING AID by Dave Langford. A report of Dave's trip to the 38th Worldcon in Boston in 1980, as TAFF winner. A must for any fan of his writing, and the ideal introduction for anyone unfamiliar with Dave's fannish work.

Available for £2.25 (£2 to TAFF, 25p for postage) from
Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU

40 SF hardbacks at £1.50 each (Readers Union SF Book Club) or £40 for the lot, plus postage (Chevy). Also: Astronomy hardbacks for sale. For full lists contact: Joseph Jagla, 92 Fir Tree Estate, Thurgoland, Sheffield, S30 7BG.

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SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY AND HORROR BOOKS. Large collection of hardcovers and paperbacks, including signed copies, first editions, secondhand etc. A5 size SAE for list to: David Griffiths, 182a North View Rd, Hornsey, London N6 7NB

• • WANTED • •

MIDWORLD and With Friends Like These by Alan Dean Foster -
copies wanted. Contact: Andy Buchan, 20 Grammah Avenue, Port
Erin, Isle of Man. Tel: 0624 832339

THE JOSHUA FACTOR by D D Clayton. Any edition will do. Contact: Martyn Fogg, 44 Hogarth Court, Fountain Drive, London, SE19 1UY. Tel: 01-670 1984

SP ENCYCLOPAEDIA 1978 Any reasonable price paid for a copy of this. Contact: Wilf James, 105 Jarden, Letchworth, Herts, SG6 2NZ. Tel: 0462 637007.

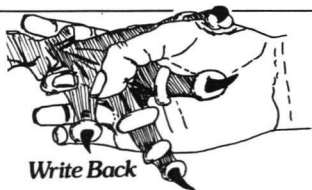
Does such a thing as a souvenir magazine for the film Brazil exist, and if so, would anyone be willing to sell a copy to Britishers at St. Gordon Palace, Chesham, Bucks. MK18 2PP?

Also, he is interested in any books on science fiction art, featuring the work of Chris Foss, Tony Roberts, Colin May, Peter Elson, Jim Burns, Jeff Ridge, or John Harris. He would particularly like to obtain "21st Century Foss" by Chris Foss, and "Spacegraphix" by Stewart Cowley.

DISCOWORLD FILMS - Do you write filmsongs. Have you thought that you might like to write a filmsong but can't think of a subject? Why not write a song about Terry Pratchett's Discworld?

I am compiling a book of Discworld Filks for publication sometime in 1989. Choose any aspect you like, e.g. whether girls can be wizards, the sex life of Great A'Tuin, sapient pearwood, Bel-Shamharoth, Formidable Ankh-Morpork curries etc., and send the song to Valerie Housden, 'Mines Istarion', 2 Duncan Gate, London Road, Bromley, Kent, RP1 3SG.

I would prefer songs set either to tunes that are out of copyright, or that are original, and if you don't know musical notation, then send me a tape of it as well.



WELCOME TO ANOTHER LETTERS COLUMN, STILL SOMEWHAT CURTAILED, because of a page shortage, and because of a lack of letters. The next deadline is:

FRIDAY 11th NOVEMBER

Cecil Nurse's Soapbox article - *Maybe Science Fiction is Dead*, has drawn a good response, taking into account the postal strike.

Peter Tennant

9 Berry Cross Close, Shipdham, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 7LQ

Trends come and go, in literature as in everything else, but I think the current ascendancy of fantasy owes more to the idea of escapism than Cecil is willing to concede. Escapism was, as Cecil argues, once a dirty word, but sought after by a great many people for all that. The problem with fantasy in its purest form was that, with its obvious relationship to the fairy story, it laid readers open to accusation of childishness. Serious minded people (for which read "adults") were not supposed to be unduly interested in the adventures of wizards, elves and the like. That was for kids. Science fiction, on the other hand, provided similar thrills to fantasy and also, by virtue of the science and future extrapolation involved, a pretext for adult interest. Nobody likes to be thought childish and I think the attitudes of many science fiction readers in the past were dictated, subconsciously at least, by the desire to avoid being seen in this light.

But the times change, and in recent years, fantasy appears to have been thoroughly rehabilitated. In part, this may be due to the phenomenal success of Tolkien (who is the fantasy equivalent of H O Wells), but perhaps also, we should take into account the worldwide spirit of youthful rebellion, with its questioning of given values and rejection of adult rôle models. In such a climate, the lovers of escapism for its own sake can come out of the closet and shamelessly indulge themselves on fantasy in its pure form, instead of making do with the diluted version offered by science fiction. Before moving on from the subject of fantasy, I should add that I read and enjoy a lot of it myself. I am aware that there is a lot more range and diversity to the genre than my sweeping generalisations seem to imply. Nothing I have said is intended to denigrate fantasy and I don't consider it any way childish.

Cecil is right in saying that our attitudes towards science itself have changed. We have lost faith in science as the answer to all problems, perhaps even see it as the root cause of many. We enjoy the benefits of technology as individuals in our everyday lives, but at the same time we are aware and healthily concerned about the threat technology, unchecked, may represent to our survival as a species. The prevalent attitude is one of 'handle with care', and it's a sensible approach to take, far more so than the old one of 'full speed ahead, and damn the consequences'. If science fiction has played a part in making us think more about what we are doing and why, then it's to the genre's credit.

Cecil accuses the genre of losing its optimism, a complaint echoed by Charles Platt in a recent *Interzone* (though he considers the sickness to be a purely British malaise). I think they overstate the case. Yes, optimism has been part of science fiction, but not to the extent Cecil suggests. The dystopian strand has always been present, and perhaps ultimately more influential. Optimism has a place in both science fiction and real life, but we must not allow it to blinker us to things as they actually are. Nothing is achieved by pretending to ourselves that everything in the garden is coming up roses, that the scientist need only wave his magic wand for all our troubles to go away. Such delusions are irresponsible unless presented as pure escapism. Real optimism, as opposed to the fictional hybrid, may consist of painting the blackest picture possible, in the hope that we'll have the sense and will to avert the reality.

In answer to Cecil, I don't think science fiction is dead at all. I think the genre has grown up and accepted its responsibilities.

And for a few observations on the nature of genre:

Ms G J K Rooke

Southview, Pilgrims Lane, Chilham, Kent, CT4 8AB

The classification of fiction into genres has only happened within the last thirty years or so, as the amount published, and particularly the number of authors, began to grow. There are so many authors now that not even the most dedicated reader could hope to keep track of everyone writing the kind of novel he likes, without a little help from librarians and bookshops. This was the intended purpose of dividing books according to content, and they were all originally novels of literary merit according to the merit of the author, whatever the subject. Unfortunately, as soon as the books were labelled for the convenience of their readers, a lot of hack writers moved in to the categories, started to formulaise them, and genres were born. I'm not saying that good authors avoid genre. After all, they have to write something, and the categories were intended to take in all forms of fiction. But there is a difference between someone writing in a category because that is the way they think and feel, and they can put across their message most clearly in that form, and someone writing in that category because the ground rules are easy to follow, and the readership will appreciate it done just this way.

Cecil Nurse bemoans the demise of 'hardware' fiction, and suggests a pessimistic reason for it. I'd like to give an alternative possibility, several even. The problem with the earliest science fiction is that it has been overtaken by fact. The great thing about science now is that everything gets smaller, handier, more everyday. 'Bigger is best' died almost overnight. SF, for the most part, tried to adjust its size, but somehow the idea of a spaceship travelling round the human cardio-vascular system doesn't have quite the same appeal, to my mind at any rate. I would rather do without the space ship altogether. And I think that is what the category of SF has done, moving from Hardware to Software. Only the die-hard look for anything new in Hardware. Software, as speculative fiction, breaks down the interface between the interior and exterior of the human body in a way that Hardware has never attempted to do. Men were men, and aliens were lizards. Now we have beings who are half men, half computer, living half in the real world and half in an existence dreamed up by the author. The writer is forced willy-nilly into the very speculative and amorphous realm of psychology. So the genre has altered.

Ian Mundell

5 Sunnyhill Lane, Oare, Marlborough, Wilts, SN8 4JG

... I am now going in circles which is where, even with the best intentions, most attempts to put a diffuse subject such as SF under definition end. The term should be recognised as a generalisation, and treated as such; there will always be exceptions and grey areas, and these just have to be accepted when using the term.

Dylan Dykins

64 Elm Drive, Yr Wyddgrig, Clywd, CH7 1SG

I don't think categories matter, or contribute anything to a work which is good enough to get pedants arguing over what the publisher's blurb should define it as. As a reader it doesn't help me explore a book if someone comes out with precise definitions for it. I'm interested in what the author wanted the book to convey, the themes which, even subconsciously, leave a distinct impression in my mind which is remembered whenever I think of the book after putting it down. It's that nameless, trans-sensual impression which is, ultimately important in defining the book, in telling me if I liked it or not.

Patrick Lee

24 Ousden Drive, Cheshunt, Herts, EN8 9EL

The dictionary usually regards SF as concerned with futuristic stories, and yet science fiction can be set not only in the present, but in the past as well. I don't think that SF should be defined as "speculative fiction", because it sounds too long, and presents a fiction to think about or make guesses. For most people, science fiction IS escapism because, in reality, overall, nothing ever happens, and there are some things we can't do. So, we imagine all the things we wish we could do through science fiction. Fantasy is the same, except that it ignores most laws of science, and doesn't attempt to explain itself.

And now for a brief miscellany of comments on a variety of subjects, starting with a final few words on the 'political balance' issue. This correspondence is now closed.

James Parker

18 King William St, Old Town, Swindon, SN1 3LB

As a longtime SF reader, I have hopefully cultivated an open, tolerant, relaxed attitude to different social and cultural traditions. Nothing is truly alien when you abandon ill-founded fears based on ignorance and prejudice. This has been SF's legacy to me, and I hope, many others. And attempts by the present or any future editor of *Matrix* to prescribe the sincerely held views of BSFA members being expressed in the pages of *Matrix* would cause this particular member much anxiety - especially if such a policy was instigated in the interests of such a dubious concept as 'balance'.

Kevin McViegh

37 Firs Rd, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7QF

I'm a little surprised to see that so much of the BSFA membership is considered to be left-wing socialist. Where did this impression come from? Looking back over a few issues, there has been the South African debate, where consensus seemed to oppose a boycott - a boycott which the left is in favour of, and Ken Lake's complaints about feminism and SF in *Vector*, which prompted a multi-political reaction against Ken rather than in favour of a particular ideology. It is true that there are a lot of socialists in the BSFA, but it doesn't seem disproportionate, unlike the current make-up of the House of Commons, for instance.

Marina McDonald

172 Bonasins Rd, Hartley Vale, Plymouth, PL3 5SE

I am one of those rare specimens, a Tory fan: a Western Area official, no less, but there is no point in having a political argument per se in the BSFA, so I didn't say so specifically before. How about a critical journal on Libertarian/Authoritarian future societies, or even one on politics in SF, with representatives from each side: much better than accusing a hardworking BSFA official of bias from the ease of an armchair.

Tom Jones responded to Andy Sawyer's Soapbox in M76 - I was rather surprised that more people didn't.

Tom Jones

14 Haywood, Haversham Park, Bracknell, RG12 4WG

I had missed the Green Paper on public libraries and am grateful that Andy Sawyer decided to write about it. I can see no practical reason for privatising/hiving off bits of the library service, but unfortunately, privatisation does seem to be a political theology, at times having little to do with improving service to the public. Yes, I am a socialist of sorts, but I do accept that some privatisation schemes were worthwhile. Privatising libraries seems to make little sense.

Changing tack entirely, Jessica Yates wonders if anyone can help solve a mystery.

Jessica Yates

14 Norfolk Avenue, South Tottenham, London, N15 6JX

Watching children's tv on Channel 4, one morning, halfway through May, I noticed an unusual advertisement. It began with two housewives folding sheets, and comparing their whiteness. Then the screen went round and round, very quickly, and up on the screen, with slightly fuzzy definition, came an Alien Monster announcing "Do not adjust your set. We have broken in on your transmissions to send you an urgent message from the planet Zerg, where we are dying of thirst. Only one source of liquid will do, the drink you Earthlings call Quosh. Please save us, if only for the sake of our children." Then he held up a jar with tiny fish or tadpoles in it. He then announced that their rocket-ships were all ready to take off to travel to Earth, gave the slogan for the campaign, and poured a carton drink in his ear, which looked like a fin. Then the screen went round and round again, and we were back with the two housewives folding their sheets.

We watched ITV for the rest of the week to see if the advertisement would be repeated, but it wasn't, and we saw it just once, the week before half-term. Thundercats comic, issue

64, contained a full page advertisement for Quosh, advertising a T-shirt by mail order, and we have also seen a few posters of the alien on billboards, but these have now been removed. So - was the advert killed? Did parents complain? Did people take it too seriously, like Orson Welles' radio version of *The War of the Worlds*? Why kill a terrific advert which children really enjoyed without fear?

And over to Peter Watts for some comments on fanzines. Please note that Peter has moved since I listed his fanzine.

Peter Watts

Flat D, 51 Oxford Gardens, London W10 5UF

The second paragraph of Thomas Ferguson's Soapbox (M76) would seem to suggest that the quality of a fanzine is determined primarily, if not entirely, by factors like design, rules of grammar and spelling. Where I would agree that these are important, I think these can be divided into two categories; the essential, and the cosmetic. Basic legibility and literacy are essentials. Beyond that, sophisticated layouts and such are cosmetic, and subservient to literary quality - and an awful lot of literary quality needs to be added for something to be worth reading. *Hamlet* on the back of envelopes remains; if it is legible it can be read with the same satisfaction as a hardback copy. A beautifully augmented, full colour Fire Instructions leaflet may have artistic appeal, but not a scrap more literary appeal than its original hanging on the wall.

So what determines literary quality? I believe it to be broadness of appeal. Something that wins the Nobel Prize for Literature clearly appeals to the judges. Mills and Boon novels appeal to Mills and Boon readers. Statistically, there are more Mills and Boon readers than Nobel judges and others who might read the honoured tome. The book that is better than both of these is the one which appeals to the readers of both.

From even the small number of fanzines I have so far read, it would seem that the only common factors between all of them are that they are non-commercial, and that they have roughly the same target, fandom. These limits could be said to define a fanzine. I would strongly resist any suggestion that there should be additional factors - such as an "assigned" role, common to all. Certainly nothing I might write is going to be influenced by such a notion in the slightest.

Possibly the major threat to fanzine health is this very concept. People should write about what the hell they want to. I was initially impressed at what seemed the progressive attitude of fandom, but since, I've been perplexed at some blinkered attitudes. For example, my own Lincolnshire Rewinds received bemoaned comments on its title. What did it mean? I presume these correspondents did not complain to the Radio Times about a comedy programme they sat through, anticipating a circus with a python. Rather than being prepared for something avant-garde, their response was more unimaginative than it was to a product of the mass media. If fans can't see past a surreal title, then if a future James Joyce is a struggling fan writer, he can forget it. This is presumably a recent development, as people don't seem to mind learning about zines from an item mischievous enough to call itself "Fire and Heslock". Ironically, M76's copy gives details of a titleless zine, which rather makes Rewinds look orthodox.

Not necessarily, but it might reflect the fact that I don't know what the title of the zine is. I do know that it has one, but I still don't know what it was. Nothing avant-garde in a lack of legibility.

I think there are two other threats to fanzines. The first is desktop publishing. Those lucky enough to be able to produce hi-tech zines will do so, and humbler efforts may be thought automatically inferior. Cosmetic appeal may be deemed more important than literary quality. The second threat is recursiveness. Zines that consist of nothing but zine reviews and reports on cons where everyone discussed nothing but similar zines and smaller cons, and lose on the way all expressed in an increasingly arcane terminology incomprehensible to aspiring newbies. I can see fandom forming a kind of event horizon, with audiences stuck on the outside and established fans stuck on the inside, with the latter eventually disappearing into a different universe altogether.

And that's all for this time. Just the eternal plea to you to write to me, bricks and bouquets, plus the usual reminder that the next deadline for *Matrix* is: FRIDAY 11th NOVEMBER. Don't let me down, and make a postman feel loved and wanted.

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