

ISSUE

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CRITICAL MASS

THE EUROPEAN SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY REVIEW

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EXTENSIVE EASTERCON COVERAGE

UNREALITY CHECK

by Steve Green

One of the difficulties which much of horror fandom has refused to face during the past few months, as David Alton and his cronies lied their way towards the statute books, is that a great deal of the material threatened by Alton's attempted amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill is artistically and intellectually moribund, worthless even to an avowed enthusiast for the genre.

For far too long, horror cinema has grown dependent upon gross-out special effects and female nudity, at the expense of dramatic tension and atmosphere. This is not to say that either of those elements have no place in the genre — were they still available legally, I could recommend several 1970s British movies in which both figure prominently, and many of Universal's 1940s classics were considered extreme at the time — but outside of stylistic context, they remain cheap and tawdry gimmicks to titillate the teenage target audience.

The compromise hammered out between Alton and Home Secretary Michael Howard is, of course, totally unworkable, phrases such as "inappropriate role models" and "potentially damaging to children" so ill-defined as to be meaningless. Britain already has the most severe censorship laws in Europe, so harsh that BBFC director James Ferman recently sacked his team of 13 examiners after demands for their relaxation, and this latest development will merely tighten the noose.

Needless to say, horror fans will protest, point out that Professor Elizabeth Newson's much-publicised "Video Violence and the Protection of Children" is merely a nine-page summary of existing literature commissioned by Alton himself, remind us that "video nasties" *per se* are already illegal and have been since the Video Recordings Act 1984, tear to shreds (with police backing) claims that James Bulger's killers were inspired by CHILD'S PLAY 3, draw attention to the research (original for once) undertaken by Dr Ann Hagell and Tim Newbury for the Policy Studies Institute which concluded that young offenders watch no more (and possibly fewer) videos than non-offending contemporaries. They may even dust off the argument that Britain should enshrine free speech constitutionally.

And their cries of dismay will fall, largely, upon deaf ears. The tragic and despicable murders of James Bulger and Suzanne Capper left the British public stunned and in desperate need of an easy scapegoat; the tabloids were swift to resurrect the phrase "video nasties" and proffer that as the painless solution, much as American horror comics were crucified in the mid-1950s by the US Senate's subcommittee on juvenile delinquency. In an Observer-ICM poll of 518 adults, conducted days before the Alton-Howard deal was struck, 70% supported censorship of video violence and 77% backed a similar move for terrestrial tv (the figures dropped slightly for sex and "strong" language, 56/60% and 51/62% respectively), whilst only 34% agreed that "all censorship is wrong" and "people have the right to choose what they watch and read".

So it goes. Although horror films constituted just 3% of the £528M spent on rentals last year according to British Video Association estimates, their market share is proportionately greater in single outlets (already under strain) than the major chains. As the corner shops close and chains such as Blockbuster/Titles (estimated 22% market share) avoid the hassle by ditching horror completely, one can only wonder at the next choice of scapegoat. Computer games? Children's television? Single mothers? The groundwork's already been laid.

In the meantime, as Hammer rises from the ashes and Roger Corman announces plans to re-locate to the UK, perhaps now is the time for British horror cinema to return to its roots, to turn these repressive measures to its advantage and use any resulting damage to the import of American releases as an opportunity to bring a little style and panache back to British screens. I recognize it's a small consolation, but such is our diet these days.

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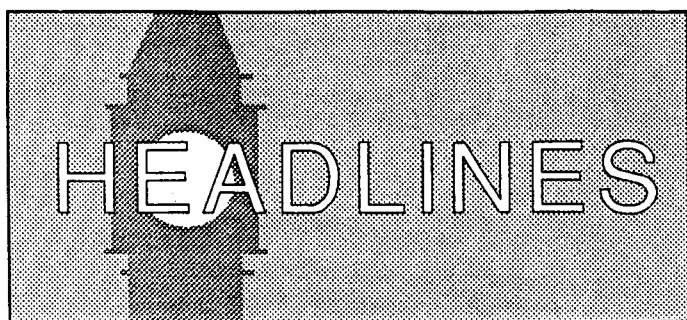
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CLARKE FOR NOON DEBUT WINS TOP UK AWARD FOR FIRST NOVEL

Jeff Noon, whose debut novel *VURT* marked Ringpull Press's entry into genre publishing, was presented with a £1000 cheque by astronaut Helen Sharman on 20 April after winning the eighth Arthur C Clarke Award.

Noon, the only nominee to attend the award ceremony, beat off competition from John Barnes' *A MILLION OPEN DOORS*, Nicola Griffith's *AMMONITE*, Neal Stephenson's *SNOW CRASH* (reviewed by Stephen Baxter on page nine), David Zindell's *THE BROKEN GOD* and Michael Swanwick's *THE IRON DRAGON'S DAUGHTER*. Organizers had earlier described the shortlist as "exceptionally strong", widely taken to be a guarded admission of a drop in quality last year, when the Clarke was controversially awarded to Marge Piercy's *BODY OF GLASS*.

Noon's second novel, *POLLEN*, is due out in hardback from Ringpull on October 21. The imprint is also moving heavily into sf, horror and fantasy, planning a major launch for its new line at next year's Glasgow worldcon.

BAN HITS BROSNAN MOVIE VIDEO CLAMPDOWN CLAIMS FIRST BLOOD

BEYOND BEDLAM, adapted from John Brosnan's horror thriller *BEDLAM* (written as "Harry Adam Knight"), has become the first victim of the compromise ban on "video nasties" hammered out by Home Secretary Michael Howard and MP David Alton.

Alton agreed to withdraw his amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill after Howard agreed to place a statutory duty upon the British Board of Film Classification to consider whether movies could cause "psychological damage" to children or contain "inappropriate role models".

As a direct result, *BEYOND BEDLAM* had its "18" certificate revoked just one week after gaining it, BBFC chair James Ferman promising a final decision once the Bill had passed into law.

The film was directed by Vadim Jean and produced by Metrodome's Paul Brooks, who stands to lose his home if the video deal falls through. The company, which previously backed the award-winning *LEON THE PIG FARMER*, also owns the film rights to Graham Joyce's novel *DARK SISTER*.

BRIT BSFA LANDSLIDE AWARDS TO EVANS, HOLDSTOCK, KILWORTH

Christopher Evans' alternative history *AZTEC CENTURY* headed a clean sweep for British authors and artists in this year's BSFA Awards, presented at Sou'Wester on 3 April. As well as Evans' victory in the "best novel" category, the "best short fiction" award went to "The Ragthorn" by Robert Holdstock and Garry Kilworth, whilst Jim Burns' cover for Paul McAuley's *RED DUST* was named "best artwork" (his tenth BSFA Award).

A special award was presented by the BSFA Committee to the second edition of *THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION*, edited by John Clute and Peter Nicholls, which also received the Eastercon Award for "best long text". Dave Mooring's "Contemplation" won the first Phlosque Award (for "cute artwork with significance"), Tim Broadribb's contribution to fandom was rewarded with the Doc Weir Award and Barbara Mascetti received the Ken McIntyre Award for the wedding invitation she designed for Gary and Linda Stratman.

The remaining Eastercon Awards went to Eric Brown's "The Time-Lapsed Man" ("best short text"), Malcolm Sutherland's adaptation of Iain Banks' *THE WASP FACTORY* ("best dramatic presentation") and *THE STREETS OF ANKH-MORPORK* by Stephen Briggs and

Terry Pratchett ("best artwork"). David Langford's monthly news-sheet *ANSIBLE* was apparently declared ineligible for the "short text" category despite receiving more nominations than all the other shortlisted works added together, on the grounds that it won last year.

Masquerade prizes were awarded to Rachel Bell ("child winner"), Bobby MacLaughlan ("best newcomer"), Jette Golde ("best experienced"), an anonymous group which presented "Servants of Avanthé" ("best performance") and Teddi ("best legs").

NOVACON 25 ANNOUNCES FOUR GUESTS BANKS JOINED BY ALDISS, SHAW, HARRISON

An unprecedented four guests of honour have been announced for Novacon 25, to be held at Birmingham's Chamberlain Hotel on 3-5 November, 1995. As well as special guest Iain M Banks, previously guest of honour at Novacon 17, invitations have been accepted by Brian W Aldiss, Bob Shaw and Harry Harrison, who were guests of honour at Novacons 10, 11 and 12 respectively. Memberships are £20.00 to Novacon 24 members, rising to £23.00 at Novacon 24 and to £25.00 afterwards.

ROBINSON WINS NOVEL NEBULA SEQUEL NOMINATED FOR HUGO AWARD

Kim Stanley Robinson's *RED MARS* was presented with the 1993 Nebula Award for best novel at the Science Fiction Writers of America's Nebula banquet in Eugene, Oregon, on 23 April. The first volume in a trilogy, its sequel *GREEN MARS* was on the Hugo Award shortlist announced that same weekend.

The other Nebula winners were "The Night We Buried Road Dog" by Jack Cady (best novella), "Georgia on My Mind" by Charles Sheffield (best novelette) and "Graves" by Joe Haldeman (best short story). A full listing of all nominations appeared last issue.

The remaining Hugo nominations for best novel are: *MOVING MARS* by Greg Bear, *GLORY SEASON* by David Brin, *VIRTUAL LIGHT* by William Gibson and *BEGGARS IN SPACE* by Nancy Kress. A complete breakdown of the Hugo shortlist will appear next issue.

ELLISON TO GUEST AT UK CON ANNOUNCES PLANS TO ATTEND TVSF FESTIVAL

Harlan Ellison, the controversial American author and editor whose acerbic lifestyle recently led fellow writer Charles Platt to launch an (only slightly) spoof victim support group, has accepted an invitation to attend Cult TV, an "appreciation weekend" being held at a Norfolk holiday camp in November, work commitments permitting.

Programmes being celebrated will include *STAR TREK*, *THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.* and *VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA*, all of which Ellison worked on. He may also reveal the latest news on the long-awaited anthology *FINAL DANGEROUS VISIONS*, the subject of Christopher Priest's forthcoming *THE BOOK ON THE EDGE OF FOREVER*.

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The cover artwork this issue is by David Carson, who also provided the cover for issue #14 and the feature portfolio in issue #19; enquiries regarding professional commissions should be directed to 1A Mountney Road, Old Town, Eastbourne, East Sussex (0323-732843).

Special thanks to John Richards, Steve Glover, John Dallman, Pete Cox, Dave Langford, Adam Bentley and all our contributors. And yes, we are aware a computer glitch inserted incorrect footer details on pages 9-12; unfortunately, the error was discovered after that section had been printed.

Our next issue, scheduled for June, sees the launch of a new regular column by Graham Joyce, a critique of Christopher Evans' BSFA Award-winning novel *AZTEC CENTURY* and the return of our telefantasy column.



IN PRINT

Ecological concerns and political satire are combined in Robert Silverberg's *HOT SKY AT MIDNIGHT*, due out in May as a £14.99 hardback from HarperCollins. The novel is set aboard Valparaiso Nuevo, a satellite world located in L-5 orbit above an Earth mortally wounded by pollution and corruption.

Pan is to follow up the publication of Simon Harding's debut novel *STREAMSKELTER* on 8 April, with the release next year of his second book, *CHANGELING HEARTS*. A newspaper editor based in Bristol, Harding used several incidents he has covered as a journalist as inspiration for episodes in *STREAMSKELTER*.

Meanwhile, Pan is forming stronger links with its American sister companies, St Martin's Press and Tor, the latter now responsible for 40% of US sf/fantasy sales. Since January, Pan's schedules include two Tor reissues each month, in addition to the large number of American titles it already publishes.

The British government plans to extend authors' copyright from the current 50 years, following a European directive last October instructing all member states to set a 70-year limit by 1 July 1995. The Trade Minister, Lord Strathclyde, made the announcement via a written reply in the House of Lords on 28 March.

Hodder & Stoughton's May releases include *SOLIS*, the latest sf hardcover from A A Attanasio, who received a Nebula Award nomination in 1981 for his debut novel, *RADIX*, and a World Fantasy Award nomination in 1992 for *HUNTING THE GHOST DANCER*.

Stephen Gallagher is reported to have turned in the manuscript of his new novel *RED ROBIN*, *RED ROBIN* to his agent, with an anticipated autumn UK publication.

Two of Terry Pratchett's pre-"Discworld" novels were re-released in hardback by Doubleday on 28 April, priced £14.99 each. *THE DARK SIDE OF THE SUN* (1976) and *STRATA* (1981), both originally published by Colin Smythe Ltd, were first issued in paperback by New English Library and enjoyed a second paperback release from Corgi in 1988, following the success of the "Discworld" sequence.

Dorothy M Kurtz's *INTERVIEWS IN FANDOM* and *INTERVIEWS WITH COSTUMERS* are both collations of postal questionnaires with US fans who, with a few exceptions (the Hugo-nominated artist Steve Fox, veteran Trekker Devra Langsam), will be largely unknown outside North America. Copies cost US\$2.50 (US only, \$4.00 elsewhere) from T16, Coachman Manor Apartments, Lindenworld, NJ-08021, USA.

THE SHIPS OF MERIOR, the second novel in Janny Wurts' "Wars of Light and Shadows" series, is out from HarperCollins in May, both as a £14.99 hardback and an £8.99 trade paperback. Wurts' other novels include the "Cycle of Fire" trilogy and, with Raymond E Feist, the "Empire" fantasies.

Feist himself appears on HarperCollins' June schedule, with the mystical fantasy *SHADOW OF A DARK QUEEN*, a £14.99 hardback. He's joined by Katharine Kerr's *A TIME OF JUSTICE* (£14.99, £8.99), continuing the "Days of Air and Darkness" sequence set within her Celtic "Westlands" cycle.

Latest addition to the growing ranks of horror movie fanzines devoted to the genre's "golden age": *CRIMSON HEROES*, with a tribute to Vincent Price, an overview of BBC2's recent season of double bills (hosted by "Dr Terror") and a Mummy filmography.

Copies are available from editor Paul Durkan at 67 Dryden Road, Scunthorpe, South Humberside, DN17 1PP, at £2.25 each.

Paul Kearney's fantasy *RIDING THE UNICORN* is released as a £15.99 hardback from Gollancz in August, whilst his earlier work *A*

DIFFERENT KINGDOM is a £4.99 June paperback. Other Gollancz spring releases include Ian McDonald's sf novel *NECROVILLE* (May, £15.99), Garry Kilworth's *ANGEL* (July, £4.99), Arthur C Clarke's *THE DEEP RANGE* (June, £3.99), Ian Watson's short story collection *THE COMING OF VERTUMNUS* (May, £15.99), John Whitbourn's *POPPES AND PHANTOMS* (August, £4.99), Gwyneth Jones' *NORTH WIND* (sequel to *WHITE NIGHT*, May, £15.99), Simon R Green's *DOWN AMONG THE DEAD MEN* (June, £4.99) and Collin Webber's comic fantasy *MERLIN AND THE LAST TRUMP* (May, £4.99).

James Steel has launched *THE DIGEST*, a newsletter intended to complement *Intersection*'s internal bulletin *TEACHING NESSIE TO TAP-DANCE* by opening debate on the Glasgow worldcon up to outside input. Copies are available for return postage from 15 Maldon Close, Camberwell, London, SE5 8DD.

Reed Children's Books launches a new series of horror paperbacks in June, aimed at young adults and all carrying a £2.99 price tag.

Nicholas Pine's *TERROR ACADEMY* introduces readers to Central Academy, an apparently normal New England school where suspense prowls the corridors and students quickly discover they have more to fear than missing their homework deadlines. The sequence continues with *LIGHTS OUT*, *STALKER*, *SIXTEEN CANDLES* and *SPRING BREAK*.

Veteran media fan Bjo Trimble is reportedly circulating a flyer warning Trekkers that Joel Engel's *GENE RODDENBERRY: THE MYTH & THE MAN BEHIND STAR TREK*, published in the US this month by Hyperion, is unauthorized and in the style of a "supermarket tabloid". David Alexander, she adds, is currently working on the official (and no doubt suitably reverential) biography for Penguin.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Simon Clark has sold two novels to Hodder Headline, *NAILED BY THE HEART* and *BLOOD CRAZY*. Clark's "Salt Snake", originally published in *PEEPING TOM* #12, has meanwhile been picked up by Karl Edward Wagner for his next *YEAR'S BEST HORROR* anthology.

Cecelia Holland has contacted the New York Author's Guild over similarities between William James' "Sunfall" trilogy and several of her own novels, reports the April edition of *ANSIBLE*. In a letter to editor David Langford, Holland says she is "convinced this guy sat there with my books open next to him on the table while he 'wrote' his", a suspicion apparently supported by the Guild.

The same issue continues its coverage of *SAMHAIN* editor John Gullidge's attempts to clear his name following allegations in the local press of links with "video nasty" distributors. A fund has been mooted by Paul Barnett to enable Gullidge to initiate legal proceedings; suggestions and donations should be forwarded to Barnett at 17 Polsloe Road, Exeter, Devon, EX1 2HL.

The British Science Fiction Association has restructured its research facilities following the resignation of longtime information officer Phil Nichols. The new BSFA Information Group will be headed by Paul Billinger, in association with Paul Allwood and Keith Walker; enquiries should be directed to 82 Kelvin Road, New Cublington, Leamington Spa, CV32 7TQ.

Despite a single-figure membership, the Canterbury SF Group is "still clinging to existence", reports Lawrence Dean, with meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at the city's East Station Snooker Club.

"There are now five of us, which makes for some interesting three versus two match-ups at the snooker table. Sometimes the date gets changed to the third Tuesday if more than one member can't make the second Tuesday. If anyone is thinking of paying us a visit, the best way to check is to ring Roy Hill on 0227-472147."

American horror author Poppy Z Brite, who toured the UK in early March, was among the writers to come under a bizarre attack from Guardian columnist Maureen Freely on 7 April — not for her literary talents (already acclaimed by the likes of Harlan Ellison, Dan Simmons and, gosh, Martin Tudor), but her "image-reinforcing name" (surely Orchid Z Darke would have been a better byline for *LOST SOULS?*) and for looking vampiric (in other words, short dark hair). No doubt Brite is already booking herself in for a bleach and perm, soon as she's come up with a Freely-approved pseudonym. /SG/

Bryan Talbot is reportedly near-completion on his latest graphic novel, *THE TALE OF ONE BAD RAT*.



The BBC2 arts programme ARENA focused upon the life and writings of Philip K Dick for its 9 April edition, contributors including Tom Disch, Paul Williams, Jim Blaylock, William Gibson, Brian Aldiss and Tim Powers, as well as several of Dick's wives.

The following evening, it was the turn of Clive Barker, whose inclusion in ITV's SOUTH BANK SHOW is indicative of its attempts to gain a more mass-market appeal.

Congratulations to Vicky Evans, daughter of conrunner Bernie Evans and a mean fundraiser for WAVE in her own right, who announced her engagement to Lee Nicholas on New Year's Eve; they plan to marry in August. Congratulations also to Novacon and MiSdemeanour's tournament supremo, Stephen Tudor, who has announced his engagement to Tracy Schofield; they plan to marry on 11 June. And finally, congratulations to Terry Broome and Adèle Hornsby, and Lawrence Dean and Nicky Retallick on their engagements.

CRITICAL WAVE also sends its best wishes to Roman Orszanski and Sue Peukart, whose son Dylan Peukart Orszanski was born at Calvary Hospital, Adelaide, on 23 February, to Leigh Palmer and Warren Janson, whose daughter Sarah Joan Leigh Janson arrived on 8 February, and to Irwin and Wendy Hirsh, whose son Kieran Alexander Hirsh was born on 26 January. Sounds like there was a severe lull in Australian fannish activity last spring.

OUT & ABOUT

Roger Corman, the prolific producer-director responsible for such classic "b-movies" as LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS (1961) and a string of Edgar Allen Poe adaptations featuring Vincent Price, headlines the guestlist for the first Festival of Fantastic Films on 9-11 September. Joining him at Manchester's Sacha's Hotel will be James Bernard, composer of many of Hammer's more memorable scores, and animation legend Ray Harryhausen, guest of honour at the first festival in 1988.

Movies already scheduled include THE PHANTOM CREEPS (1939), adapted from a serial starring Bela Lugosi, THE MAN WITH TWO LIVES (1942), THE RAVEN (1935), with Lugosi joined by rival Boris Karloff, and THE MUMMY'S HAND (1940). In addition, director Norman J Warren and author Stephen Gallagher will again be judging entries in the festival's amateur film contest; prospective competitors should contact Harry Nadler on 061-792-0991 (evenings only).

Attending membership is £35.00, rising to £40.00 on 1 July (with a £5.00 discount for members of the Society of Fantastic Films), with twin/double room rates set at £40.00 per night. For full details, send a reply-paid envelope to Tony Edwards at 95 Meadowgate Road, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN.

A major science fiction festival is being staged by Cheshire County Council's libraries and arts department. Following the official launch on 16 May by Terry Pratchett, "Meeting the Future" will incorporate appearances by authors, gaming promotions and writers' workshops.

Among those tentatively scheduled to speak are Bob Shaw, Ramsey Campbell, Colin Greenland, Peter Morwood, Brian Stableford, Roger Taylor, Philip Williamson, David Gemmell, Jim Burns, Tad Williams, Maggie Furey and Andrew Harrison. For further details, contact Cheshire Libraries, Arts and Archives on 0244-320055.

The future of Mexican is to be debated at Mexican 6 in May, following a groundswell of opinion during MiSdemeanour's closing discussion that the event has outlived its usefulness. Given Mexican's reputation for innovation, the fact that at least three of this year's programme items echo previous years is scarcely evidence for the defence.

GLITTERING PRIZES

The polls for this year's DUFF ballot, to choose Australasian fandom's representative(s) at the Canadian worldcon in September, closes on 30 April, although forms postmarked on or before that date will be accepted until 5 May.

The candidates are: Alan Stewart, whose publications include the Australian newszine THYME; Ron Clarke, editor of THE MENTOR; Lucy Sussex and Julian Warner (joint platform), respectively sf writer and former editor of THE SPACE WASTREL; Donna Heenan, conrunner and one of the main figures behind the Australian bid for the 1999 worldcon. CRITICAL WAVE will carry the results next issue.

Harlan Ellison's MEFISTO IN ONYX, published by Ziesing, has received Barry R Levin's 1993 "collector's award" as the most collectable book of 1993. Levin also named Michael Crichton as most collectable

author of the year and gave Arthur C Clarke a lifetime collectors award. Each will receive a spherical rock mounted on a lucite pedestal, following a voting process which manages to make Malawi elections appear the height of democracy.

Entries for this year's UPC Science Fiction Award must be with the judges by 20 July, with a prize of one million pesetas (nearly £5000) for the winning novella of 25,000-40,000 words. In addition, the judges have two discretionary awards of 250,000 pesetas (nearly £1250), for a work worthy of "special mention" and for the best entry from a UPC member.

Manuscripts (two copies) should be forwarded to the Consell Social de la UPC (clearly marked "UPC Science Fiction Award 1994") at Edifici ETSAB, Av. Diagonal 649, 08028 Barcelona, Spain. Entries can be accepted in English, Spanish, Catalan and French.

Although it was SCHINDLER'S LIST which gained Steven Spielberg Academy Awards for best movie and director, JURASSIC PARK received three Oscars of its own.

The winning categories were for best visual effects (Dennis Muren, Stan Winston, Phil Tippet, Michael Lantieri), best sound (Gary Summers, Gary Rydstrom, Shawn Murphy, Ron Judkins) and best sound editing (Gary Rydstrom, Richard Hymns).

Meanwhile, Britain's Nick Parks made Oscar history when THE WRONG TROUSERS took the award for best animated short. All three of Parks' films have been nominated for Oscars, A GRAND DAY OUT (a surreal lunar expedition featuring WRONG TROUSERS stars Wallace and Gromit) losing two years ago to his own CREATURE COMFORTS.

The fiction magazine BLACK TEARS is running a short story competition, with a £50.00 first prize and runners-up prizes of subscriptions to both BLACK TEARS and its forthcoming sister title VIOLENT SPECTRES.

Entries, "macabre, fantastic and terrifying", should be under 3000 words in double-spaced typescript; a £1.50 fee is payable, plus £1.00 for each further entry. Manuscripts should reach editor Adam Bradley at 28 Treaty Street, Islington, London, N1 0SY, no later than 1 October.

Tim Jones won the 1994 FFANZ ballot, which this year sends an Australian fan to New Zealand's national sf convention, Silicon. The event is being held at Bentley's Hotel (formerly the Algen Hotel) in Dunedin, over the weekend of 3-6 June.

Jones received 22 votes, against 11 for Murray MacLachlan and two (both Australian) for "hold over funds".

The Writers Bureau, the Manchester-based correspondence college for creative writing, is sponsoring a poetry and short story competition with first prizes of £200 in each format.

The judge for the prose category is Chris Kenworthy, founding editor of the small press imprint Barrington Books, whilst award-winning poet Alison Chisholm will judge poetry entries. The fee for each submission is £3.00, and the contest closes on 31 July; for further details, write to Department PC942, the Writers Bureau Ltd, Sevensdale House, 7 Dale Street, Manchester, M1 1JB (tel. 061-228-2362).

SOUND & VISION

Steve Ellis, whose thriller CRYISIS was among the shorts screened at last September's Festival of Fantastic Films in Manchester, plans to use the real-life 1960s "Bubblecar Murders" for his next project. For those who missed the earlier showing, Ellis will present CRYISIS in person in July, during Wincon III's film programme.

Graham Joyce's novel DARK SISTER has been optioned by the film company responsible for last year's low-budget comedy LEON THE PIG FARMER.

UFO, the deliberately non-PC sf spoof which marks stand-up comic Roy "Chubby" Brown's movie debut, is released on UK video rental by Polygram on 18 May.

A British video distributor and Japanese animé producer are reportedly interested in licensing David Britton's controversial novel LORD HORROR and its comic-strip spin-offs.

[Geoff Cowie's regular animé column appears on pages 15-16.]

BBC2 launched a six-week season of "classic" sf movies under the banner SPACED OUT on 11 April, hosted by RED DWARF's Craig Charles, although opening with the telemovie BUCK ROGERS implies an odd definition of "classic".

More news on page 18



WORLD CON NEWSLINE

[Following up last issue's unveiling of Intersection's fan room plans by co-chair Martin Easterbrook, our regular spotlight on the Glasgow worldcon this time falls upon Paul Kincaid and Maureen Speller as they discuss their aims for the event's literary programming.]

With 18 months to go before the Scottish convention, and only three weeks since we agreed to take on the literary programme, this article isn't going to contain much that's settled. That there is going to be a programme is about the only definite thing we can say at this stage; still, even that's an advance on how things seemed to be not so long ago.

When we first got involved in the worldcon programme, we were surprised at how much was happening. Good things, too. Things that weren't getting out to the rest of us, and it's about time that changed. Because if matters carry on the way they've started, this could turn out to be one of the most innovative, challenging, involving and entertaining worldcon programmes there has been.

We say that not because we are involved in organizing it, but because we are involved in only a very small part of it. The literary programme is one segment amongst many. The full programme also covers science, media, filk, fan, film, comics and more — and all those strands were in place well before we got on board.

Normally, such a multi-faceted organization would suggest something fragmented, each section going off into its own little corner with no interaction and producing, in effect, a cluster of separate conventions within the worldcon. But this doesn't seem to be happening.

The Scottish convention, like all enterprises of such a size, does seem to be generating its own jargon, some of which looks very very silly from outside (and probably is that silly on the inside). As far as the programme is concerned, the buzz-word is "synergy"; there seems to be an almost unspoken assumption that the different strands have to interact.

Brave words! Of course, such pious remarks are made before every big convention. But this time, there does seem to be a genuine desire on the part of all those involved that every part of the programme should feed off every other part. There are likely to be obvious interactions: filk around books discussed on the literary programme, a science programme looking at the effects created in a particular film. But we hope that the overall programme will go beyond such superficial links.

We don't know how all this will be presented on the day, but it would be nice if the con attendee wasn't even aware that there were different strands of programming. Instead, there should be one unified programme through which people can trace their interest, and find that at different times it might coincide with fan items or media items or comics or film or filk or science or literary or, more likely, some curious combination of these. There should be serendipitous discoveries; there should certainly be surprises.

If it works. We'll find out on the day.

But meanwhile, we have to think about that element within the programme which is literary. We like to think that books are central to science fiction, so we regard our segment of the programme as the core of the convention. Hopefully, all the other programme organisers have the same arrogance about their area of responsibility; a fight between equals is the best way of ensuring that only the strongest programme ideas survive.

Without giving anything away — at this stage, we have nothing concrete to give away — there are certain things which are central to the way we are approaching this convention.

The first is that this is a worldcon. Not a British convention, though it happens to be in Britain; not an American convention, though it happens to have a large number of American guests and attendees; not a European convention, despite the notable involvement of European fans. So we want to have an international approach, to reflect different cultures and to call upon a variety of different speakers, some familiar, some not.

At the same time, we want programme items to be more than just a showcase for famous names. We both have a background in Mexicans, and want something of that ethos to inform the way the programme is put together. So we will be looking for lively discussion, a genuine exchange of views and a chance to address controversies and challenge received opinions. A long row of people separated from the audience by a high table, with no more than a minute or two each to mouth familiar platitudes on a subject they have spoken about countless times before, is boring. A small group of people with strong opinions, arguing with themselves and with the audience, can be a disaster, but it can also be exciting and involving. We want to work to capture that excitement.

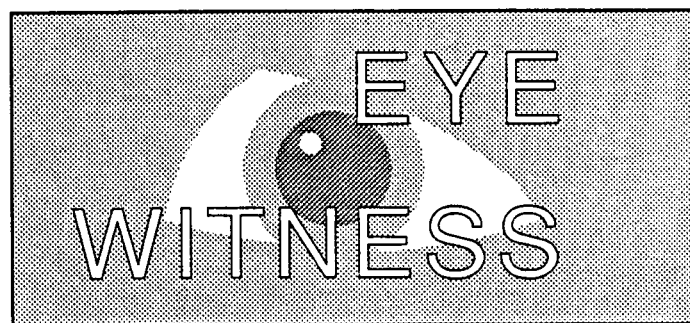
Of course, you won't get that excitement if the panellists and the audience are already over-familiar with the subject before the discussion even starts, so we want to come up with new subjects, or new angles on the familiar topics, or call on people who haven't necessarily been associated with the subject before now. That means getting ideas and knowing who to call on, which is more than two of us could manage. We have already started putting together a think-tank (more jargon, sorry about that) of people with very different interests and tastes to help us generate ideas and turn them into something worthwhile and useable.

But there's more to it than that. If you see one panel, replaced by another panel, followed by yet another, you are soon going to grow weary of it. We want to ring the changes, try different formats — there'll be panels, of course, but maybe also head-to-head discussions, debates, interviews, individual speakers, and any other format we can think of.

Not only that, but we're also thinking of varying the time slots. Hell, whoever is timetabling this thing is probably going to curse us for this — after all, nice neat slots of an hour or an hour-and-a-half really do make it easy — but if you sat down to watch an evening's tv and every single programme was the same length, you'd soon be tossing the set through the nearest window. When you're programming a worldcon, you're effectively programming something like five days and evenings, so it makes sense to try to ring the changes; an hour-long panel, followed by a half-hour talk, followed by a 90-minute debate, might actually work better. After all, not every idea can be conveniently stretched or squeezed into the same length.

In short, we have to remember that the programme is an entertainment. Like any entertainment, that word covers a multitude of sins; at various times, it should be something to make you laugh, something to make you think, something to thrill you, something to while away a wet afternoon, and so on and so forth. At the same time, this is an entertainment for something like 5000 people, or however many it is who will actually attend the con. There is no way that the same item will appeal to every one of them, but over the course of the con everybody there should have found at least one item they really want to see, and most people should enjoy a sizeable chunk of the programme.

That means we have to cover a lot of bases. Well, it's a challenge, isn't it? □



Sou'Wester
Liverpool, 1-4 April 1994
Report by Mike D Siddall

First things first, the ballroom at the Britannia Adelphi Hotel is *fantastic*; in fact, the rest of the Adelphi is pretty darned good, too, but that ballroom... I mean, there must be plenty of cons where there's an urgent need to prove that pigs can fly, but how many con-hotels lay on an aerodrome to try it out? What's more, the acres of carpeted floor meant everyone who wanted to could construct their giant-starfish, chairs-are-for-wimps, convention corners.

I'm told that a drawback of the Adelphi has always been pilfering, but as of this writing, I've only heard of two thefts, and one of those was before the con was up and running; this was partly due to the hotel laying on uniformed guards, but kudos to con security. Hell, kudos to everyone, as far as I could tell, the whole Eastercon passed off with notable serenity. This is probably a case of the proverbial swan, with a

lot of frantic paddling beneath the surface, and I feel sorry for the poor buggers on the committee when the inevitable cramp sets in. How well organized was it? The Gripe Session had to be abandoned early because there weren't enough of them. From fans? Really weird.

Sou'Wester had a variety of rooms available and this proved very useful in matching programme items to the size of the audience. I can't imagine anything more dispiriting than addressing what appears to be three men and a dog in a room the size of God's handbag.

Were there any major highlights from the programme? I don't really think so. It was a solidly constructed, broadly-based affair, with most of the items appealing to a reasonable number of people, but nothing that was of a "must see" nature. Personally, I fancied a couple of the longer-running pieces, like DIY colonisation and the Murder Mystery Workshop (attempting to solve "Who shot First Tiger Hobbes?"), but gophering duties meant I missed them. However, I don't think it's a great idea to stage an assassination just after the Mayor of Liverpool has complained his city has got a bum rap about its crime-rate; still, he was right about the Scousers being friendly, especially the hotel staff, some of whom entered the CyberGamesMaze (don't ask me if they ever got out again).

Two final points before we leave the programme. One, there's a rumour that Eileen Weston was seen at the belly-dancing workshop, and I think the Brum Group deserves fair warning; second, who was that devilishly handsome fellow on Simon Ounsley's left at the fanzine panel? [SG: Some fanzine hack called Sodall, or somesuch, apparently.]

Oh well, it can't all be praise, so what didn't I like? Compared to the Hall of the Mountain King available last year, the dealers' room was small and I ended up with a stiff neck from trying to see what the stock actually was, but the only solution to that problem would be to move to another hotel, which would be unthinkable (I mean, staff that could provide a plate of food for under £2.00, actual edible food). My other gripe occurred to me after the masquerade: why haven't I got a girlfriend heavily into PVC and handcuffs? Jeez, where's the committee when you really need them?

I also believe the hotel have a bone to pick with the convention; to wit, the real ale bar was not drunk dry. The Adelphi had served breakfast until 11am (Bernie Evans almost made it), so surely this was the least they could expect? [MT: In defence of a large number of hungover fans who gallantly attempted this task, I should point out that the choice of Double Dagger at 5% and Wobbly Bob at 6% made it rather difficult.]

I find it hard to sum up an entire convention, but something came to me on the Monday night at the Dead Dog Party. I'd traded in all my drink-tickets and constructed myself a monster single malt Scotch and decided to weeble the night away. About midnight, I got this feeling. I'd watched John Harrold feeding one of his favourite paint-strippers to an unresistant hotel manager, there were unanimous choruses of "Bye" from the floor of the ballroom as people tried to slip away, the staff had re-opened the real bar just because they were asked to, there were back-rubs; I folded my arms behind my head, lay back on the floor and gazed at the ceiling, where clusters of balloons bobbed gently, and felt... warm. I'd felt this way since Sunday, and I'd arrived on Friday wound up tighter than a four year-olds' shoelaces.

And that was the thing that sticks in my mind from Sou'Wester, a feeling of relaxed warmth permeating the whole thing. What created it? Hard work and good organization? Willing, friendly hotel staff? Probably all those things.

But I still think that ballroom had a lot to do with it. ☐

THE CLASSIFIEDS

ATTENTION MAGAZINE, ANTHOLOGY, STORY ANNUAL COLLECTORS. Peterborough SF Club intends to publish a tribute to John Hynam (aka John Kippax). Please check your collection and let us know of any of his works (especially reprints) you have for bibliography. Prizes offered. PSFC, 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 0RB.

CAN YOU WRITE? Quality horror, science fiction and fantasy fiction desperately needed for enthusiastic fanzine. Please send sae for submission details and rates of pay to: The Aliens Fan Club, PO Box 11, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 6YL.

GARRY KILWORTH, HOGFOOT RIGHT AND BIRD-HANDS, a collection of 13 tales of dark fantasy and sf from OMNI, INTERZONE, BBR, ZENITH and elsewhere. Introduction by Robert Holdstock. \$9.00 plus \$1.00 postage in the USA, \$2.00 to Canada, \$5.00 overseas. Edgewood Press, PO Box 380264, Cambridge, MA 02238, USA.

PLATFORM

[A schoolteacher and qualified hypnotherapist, Steve Bowkett adopted the name "Ben Leech" for his three adult horror novels, *THE COMMUNITY*, *THE BIDDEN* and *A RARE BREED*; the first was published by Pan last year, whilst the others will follow during 1994/5. His own name appears on a number of children's fantasy and science fiction novels and short stories, one of which, 1987's *DUALISTS*, has been optioned by Walt Disney.

[Here, Bowkett steps into our regular Speaker's Corner to outline his view that fantasy and horror should be perceived as vital elements in the educational process.]

It has always been something of a proud boast of mine that my writing career began, not because of the British education system, but in spite of it. Having studied Welsh for three years in the South Wales mining valley where I was born and brought up, I found myself dumped at age 12 into a French class in a new school, the family having been forced to move to Leicestershire for financial reasons. The teacher (the kids called her Mollie) despaired at my total lack of French, and told me to sit in the Naughty Corner and "get on with something". What I got on with changed my life forever.

I spent my time in those lessons writing short stories, poems and plays. The ideas were derivative, the style non-existent, the plots predictable and the situations clichéd (some editors would have me believe I haven't moved on since then); but those early efforts of exploration in the horror and fantasy genres were crucially important to me, for reasons which I'll elaborate below, and because they allowed me to cut-and-paste impossibilities and day-today circumstances together.

My first ever story was about how I saved the world from a voracious green alien blob (unofficially entitled "Attack of the Giant Sneeze"). More importantly, I rescued Linda Allsop from its clutches, whilst Richard Davies got ingested; at that time, I was desperately in love with Linda and harboured a white-hot hate for Richard for going out with her. The story performed several functions, therefore; it helped me to define my self-image, it boosted my self-esteem (and self-image and self-esteem always exist within the imagination!) and it gave me something enjoyable, purposeful and creative to do while the rest of the class was learning how to speak French very badly.

Ironically, my writing has over the years contributed very significantly to those feelings of self-esteem: ie, through money. It has also given me a true and lasting purpose in life, helping lead me into many areas of knowledge and experience I would otherwise have missed. And it has differentiated me from the thousands of people who would like to write, or who think that one day they might actually start on that book they feel sure they have inside them.

I continued to write after I dropped French, or rather it dropped me, initially for fun, but increasingly for fun and other more profound reasons. Apart from some intense DR WHO and BLAKE'S 7 adult stories written for fanzines in the mid-70s to mid-80s, my main output has been sf and fantasy for children. More recently, I've produced adult horror novels, whilst still maintaining my writing for children — what one eminent star of the fantasy-publishing universe naively, or perhaps patronisingly, has called "juvenile fiction". All this has been combined with a going-nowhere career as a schoolteacher, plus a growing involvement in teaching creative writing and espousing the cause of horror/fantasy fiction in schools, libraries and wherever else they'll let me in through the door.

Horror, fantasy, children and education are, therefore, subtly and inextricably linked in my thoughts and in what I do. So it seems to me rather serendipitous to be asked to contribute this essay at a time when a movie about dinosaurs has just broken all box-office records, when Jamie Bulger's agonised screams mingle with the jingle of the Christmas bells, when tv profiles of serial killers draw millions of viewers and at a time when an entrenched and — let's face it — powerful government is forcing the pace of change towards more traditional values. Lest any of us be accused of a kneejerk reflex in favour of, or in opposition to, these forward-to-the-past ideals, it would be as well to look, albeit briefly, at the issues.

Aspirant writers are often encouraged to "write what you know", a statement which at first glance is difficult to reconcile with a novel about shape-changing monsters being wiped out by a crossbreed member of their own race; or a story tracing the proliferation of intelligent but utterly alien parasites that make their home inside the bodies of ordinary self-respecting people; or the tale of a young boy who wishes he could fly, or turn time backwards, or be invisible... Naturally, I have never experienced any of these things; I don't "know" any of them, and yet they derive from what has happened to me. They help define the interface between my imagination and the world as it is; they express my perception of things, reflect my desires and fears, colour the landscape across which I move.

Of course, all that we do and say serves the same purpose. I write a story wherein a prostitute gets murdered. As I read through my first draft late one night, 15 miles away in the city a prostitute gets murdered. Is there fundamentally any difference between the impulse which drove me to write it and that which drove the murderer to do it? Is it enough to say, "There but for the grace of God..."? Does it all come down to social deprivation, to a lack of good education, to the collapse and failure of the family and the moral infrastructure of the country?

Yes, and no. When I was a kid, I used to love reading FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND and any other horror mag or comic I could get my hands on. I remember that we used to keep coal for the fire in a small bunker-like room adjacent to the kitchen. In this dark and private place, I used to subject the toy soldiers my parents bought me to ritual torture: I'd burn them, crush them, pull them apart, my head filled with horrified fascination of what it would *feel* like to go through that pain. When I was out playing on the hillsides with my friends, now and again we'd come across the carcass of a sheep. Like all kids, we were intrigued by this state of death, and more by the state of decay. It would not take long for one or other of us to be dared to turn the corpse over. It was always the same, as was our reaction — that ghastly thrill of seeing meat "crackling with maggots", to use T H White's memorable phrase.

Sometimes we'd go camping on those same hills, baking potatoes in the fire, lying out on the dry summer grass at night, gazing at the stars. If the wind got up and the clouds streamed over, we'd huddle in the tent with our flashlights propped in the corner and talk of demons and vampires, ghosts and werewolves. They'd be out there right enough, we were convinced of that, flying in the wind, ready to snatch us away to hell. And none of us, not for any money, could be dared this time, to go outside and take a peek.

These and, of course, thousands of other experiences helped define the framework of my life; the happenstance of finding myself in Mollie's Naughty Corner created the opportunity for me to start painting the picture in that frame. All of this built on the bedrock of a stable family: a father who brought home a wage, a mother who kept the home together, a brother whom I hated and loved as the mood took me. They were good years, setting me up to do what I'm doing now — which is largely to hark back to them and try to work out what it all meant!

At this point in my life, my conclusion is that fantasy, horror and education are intertwined in everyone's lives. Turning over the sheep carcass was part of my education. The simple wishful-thought of being invisible (so I could sneak up to Linda Allsop's bedroom or break Richard Davies's nose) was part of my education. Visualising the visceral demise of the prostitute was part of my education. It was all apropos of learning what's possible, what's acceptable, what will enable me to survive, what will destroy me.

People do things for an infinite number of reasons — as many reasons, indeed, as there are people. Why one person murders is never exactly the same as why another person murders. We are the product of all our years, each second contributing to what we have become at this moment. And, to borrow a metaphor from chaos theory, because the precise starting conditions differ for each of us, no one can possibly predict the long term outcome or consequences.

This is an observation, not an answer. Education is, supposedly, an answer. But let's define our terms. Education for me is not the political imposition of a chosen body of knowledge, followed by the narrow-focused testing of what facts I've remembered rather than what anything *means* to me (nobody can force me to appreciate ROMEO AND JULIET, or convince me that I'll be a better person for being told that all animals are equal). As far as I can see, education is all about awareness and control: self-awareness, self-control. That does not come about from any exclusively top-down system of teaching. All the constraints placed upon us, from God's words in stone to the keep-left-on-the-corridor rule — unless we can each think them through and come to an individual, independent assessment — can only ever be someone else's will dominating our own.

It seems to me, therefore, that education in its true and proper sense should aim to engage children with the meanings of things. This entails developing independent thinking, encouraging the expression of those

thoughts, making available frameworks of study to help explore and organise children's expressions of meaning, and establishing the practice of the skills necessary for those meanings to possess an individual as well as a general significance.

This has happened to me to some extent; to the extent, at least, where I see that thinking and writing about horror and fantasy are necessary and meaningful activities which enable me to come to terms with what's real. Horror and fantasy help me to wonder, help me to keep my capacity to be revolted by evil and violence alert and alive, help me to explore and explain the never-simple phenomenon of human cause and effect, and help me, last but not least, to curl up warm and cosy on a windy winter's night and think, "Thank God that's not happening to me."

Because it will always be true that there'll be the winners and the losers, the survivors and the lost. Starting conditions will inevitably be disadvantageous for some people; weakness and viciousness, greed and fury, are an integral part of the human psyche, and sometimes life leads to their helpless, explosive realisation — because sometimes that's the only door left open.

Horror and fantasy in their general sense are vital components of anyone's education, because they are inherent facets of the human imagination. To ignore them, to censor them or censure them *per se*, to stifle any healthy discussion they might provoke, is tantamount to tearing pages out of the Bible. What they mean to us depends ultimately on what we mean to ourselves. □

BACK ISSUES

The following recent issues are currently available, although some editions are becoming scarce and we recommend you order promptly to avoid disappointment.

For a limited period, issues #21-25 can be ordered for just 99p each (minimum order three copies); issues #27-35 are available at £1.95. These prices include UK postage; foreign rates and dealer discounts supplied upon request. Cheques should be made out to "Critical Wave Publications" and sent to 845 Alum Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 2AG. A leaflet listing all issues available may be obtained by sending an sae to this address.

CW#21: Trends in modern sf are discussed by ANNE GAY, IAN WILLIAMS, KEITH BROOKE, SUSAN BEETLESTONE, CHARLES STROSS; 1991 TAFF platforms; JOHN DOWIE on his stage tribute to PHILIP K DICK; IAN WILLIAMS on the banning of his debut novel; artwork by KEVIN CULLEN.

CW#22: ANNE McCAFFREY interview; BRUCE GILLESPIE's award-winning essay on PHILIP K DICK; artwork by DAVID A HARDY, BOB COVINGTON.

CW#23: STEPHEN BAXTER on "hard" sf; GRAHAM JOYCE on fantasy's roots; artwork by SYLVIA STARSHINE.

CW#24: RAMSEY CAMPBELL interview; UK horror and dark fantasy fanzine guide; PAUL McAULEY interview; artwork by RUSSELL MORGAN.

CW#25: ROBERT HOLDSTOCK interview; NICHOLAS ROYLE on the market's failure to support anthologies; JONATHAN AYCLIFFE on writing horror; IRWIN ALLEN profile; SPLIT SECOND set report; a tribute to the sf magazine FANTASTYKA; the hoax CHRISTIAN CRUSADE AGAINST SF exposed; artwork by DAVE MOORING.

CW#27: NORMAN J WARREN interview; ROGER KEEN on WILLIAM BURROUGHS, DAVID CRONENBERG and NAKED LUNCH; GEOFF RYMAN interview; STEVE SNEYD on early 1970s sf poetry; STAR TREK under fire; artwork by PER PORTER, STEVE SKWAREK.

CW#28: MICHAEL MOORCOCK interview; RAMSEY CAMPBELL, MARK MORRIS and others pay tribute to FRITZ LEIBER; DAN SIMMONS interview; artwork by DAVE MOORING.

CW#29: KIM STANLEY ROBINSON interview; STEVE SNEYD on late 1970s sf poetry; GRAHAM JOYCE on M JOHN HARRISON; artwork by SHEP KIRKBRIDE.

CW#30: BOB SHAW on writing sf; PETER F HAMILTON on creating future societies; artwork by KERRY EARL.

CW#31: NICOLA GRIFFITHS interview; DILIP ARAGWAL on WILLIAM GIBSON and BRUCE STERLING's THE DIFFERENCE MACHINE; KATHARINE KERR interview; artwork by TIM GROOME.

CW#32: JOHN GOSLING's history of Japanese animation, plus GEOFF COWIE on key films; LOUISE COOPER on her writing roots; IAIN M BANKS interview.

CW#33: KARL EDWARD WAGNER interview; ROGER ZELAZNY on his poetic roots; STEPHEN BAXTER interview; artwork by HARRY TURNER.

CW#34: STEPHEN BAXTER defends science; GRAHAM JOYCE interview; ROGER KEEN on WILL SELF; JACK KIRBY tribute.



UNDER COVER

SNOW CRASH by Neal Stephenson
Penguin/Roc; £8.99
Reviewed by Stephen Baxter

Will the cyberpunks ever grow up? The hero-protagonist of William Gibson's *NEUROMANCER* (1984) is called Case, a streetwise, aggressive, alienated computer hacker, living on his wits in a real world torn apart by information technology, and in a new virtual world made possible by that technology. Nearly a decade later, the hero-protagonist of Neal Stephenson's *SNOW CRASH* is called Hiro Protagonist, a streetwise, aggressive, alienated computer hacker, living on his wits in a real world torn apart by information technology, and in a new virtual world... and so forth.

SNOW CRASH has been much praised in the United States, comes with cover quotes from the likes of Gibson (and Timothy Leary!) and has been shortlisted for our own Clarke Award [see page three for coverage]. No book attracting this sort of favourable attention can be all bad, and indeed *SNOW CRASH* is fast, funny and, in places, vividly imagined. But the book's intriguing premise is wasted on a joky plot concerning a collection of stock adolescent-appeal characters, inhabiting a cyber-wasteland which today seems surprisingly old-fashioned.

SNOW CRASH is a cross-connection between neurolinguistics, Sumerian mythology and standard cyberpunk info-overload. The central premise is the Babel phenomenon: the fact that human languages tend to diverge. Why shouldn't they converge? Wouldn't this make life easier for us all?

Once, perhaps, we all shared a common tongue, but this led to a rigid and controllable society. Then, according to Stephenson's scenario, along came a Sumerian ur-cyberpunk called Enki, who devised a nam-shub — a kind of verbal computer virus — by means of which he was able to hack into the brain's deep neurolinguistic structures and make humans unable to recognise the common language. Thus, linguistic and cultural diversity was assured, and the modern world was launched.

This is all fairly wild extrapolation from history and legend, of course, and it's a shame that the Sumerian material is delivered in the form of an unusually crude info-dump in the middle of the book (speeches by a virtual librarian, interspersed by feeble jokes from Hiro), but Stephenson's premise struck me as an original and perfectly respectable sf speculation, and a basis for many fascinating questions — on the nature of human consciousness, the idea of religious belief as a virus, and so forth.

However, Stephenson doesn't delve seriously into any of these areas. Instead, the neurolinguistic premise is used to prop up a pacey, wise-cracking cyberpunk thriller-plot. A power-hungry monomaniac with the (resonant!) name of L Bob Rife is using Enki's nam-shub as a drug to provide total religious control, and as a computer virus which can cause both a complete systems collapse (the "snow crash" of the title) and, ultimately, worldwide "infocalypse". (Do info-neologisms like this have much power any more? Sadly, in 1994, I'm merely reminded of soundbites from BBC2's satire *THE DAY TODAY*.) Thus, the nam-shub is reduced to a mere plot coupon to be chased through a lawless world drenched with high-tech weaponry, and (in a now-hoary tradition dating back to Gibson and before) through a parallel metaverse; this time, the virtual reality is in the form of a street girdling the equator of an imaginary planet.

Some of the thriller stuff is vividly realised and enjoyable; I particularly enjoyed the comic verve of the early chapters (in which Hiro works as a super-high-tech pizza delivery boy), where the absurdity of high technology without any genuine purpose is exposed. But much of the book is disappointingly corny (for example, we have Hiro facing down L Bob Rife and the President of the United States in a helicopter for possession of a magic nam-shub clay tablet), and it's perhaps telling that the plot requires some fairly outrageous coincidences to keep going.

Worse, *SNOW CRASH* confronts us with shallow and stereotyped characters. As far as I could tell, none of the characters have any real regard for any other human being, save as a source of economic or other benefit, and therefore none of the depth and complexity of real life; they serve Stephenson's comic purposes, I guess, but they are info-adolescents (infolescents, perhaps). Hiro himself, for example, is presented as the

greatest swordsman in the world (I kid you not), a groovy hacker and part-time rock concert promoter. He figures out all the neurolinguistic stuff with stunning, yet convenient, alacrity, and is well into his twenties, yet has a supposedly-endearing teenage clumsiness around dames ("If we get out of this, will you be my girl?").

At the end of the book, we reach Hiro's apotheosis, as he chases down a villain through the metaverse on a virtual motorbike ("Hiro goes over the lip of the amphitheatre doing a couple of hundred miles per hour and soars out into space, in free fall, above the heads of a quarter of a million wildly cheering hackers..."). Thus Hiro saves the world; this is tongue in cheek, of course, but also the stuff of crude infolescent fantasy — and on both counts, fatally, the reader is distanced from the fiction.

Given its pre-hype, the book's most serious failing is perhaps the feebleness of its technological imagination. Gibson's 1984 cyberspace was genuinely visionary, an amalgam of virtual reality and the information society whose outlines have only become clear in recent years. Stephenson's metaverse, by comparison, seems terribly restricted, full of real-world rules: you can't walk through walls; you can't appear out of thin air; if you want to move from one place to another, you have to ride virtual train systems (!). Much is made of the computing power and technical wizardry required to realise this; for example, it takes as much processing power to depict the curl of virtual cigarette smoke as it does to model the climate of a planet. Perhaps, but what's the point?

There have been far stranger artificial realities in the fiction of Gibson et al, and — a more damning indictment — even the real world is surpassing Stephenson's cartoon modelling. Companies like Microsoft and Rank Xerox (even British Telecom, for heaven's sake) are dreaming up technologies which could have an impact on society — indeed, on the nature of human consciousness — far more profound than anything imagined in these pages.

SNOW CRASH has not, for me, lived up to its advance reputation. The impact of information technology on our world and ourselves has barely begun, and in our imaginings of such futures, it is time to grow out of our infolescence; perhaps Stephenson himself will be able to bring a more mature realization to his intriguing notions in future, rather calmer, works.

And I for one *absolutely* refuse to waste my time in any virtual reality where I can't at least fly like Superman.

THE BEST OF STAR TREK, THE NEXT GENERATION
Titan; £9.99

THE CITY by James Herbert, Ian Miller
Pan; £8.99

Reviewed by Steve Green

To paraphrase Voltaire, if Titan's latest trawl through DC Comics' ST:TNG spin-offs represents the best of all possible reprints, what must the other strips be like? Written, with one deliberately attention-grabbing exception, by TREK author Michael Jan Friedman, this lacklustre anthology contains little of the spark which kept fans watching even after the dismal pilot "Encounter at Far Point".

Not that the aforementioned exception, a "what if?" yarn credited to John "Q" de Lancie (but with "additional dialogue" courtesy of Friedman), is any improvement. To be honest, about the only recommendation I can give this selection is to point out that the Gold Key version of the original series was worse — but only just.

At least Herbert's opening shot in Pan's new graphic line is wholly original, you might think. True, even if it does constitute the fourth instalment in his "Rats" sequence, but that isn't to say it has any real merit once you remove Miller's acid-gothic artwork from the equation.

Perhaps it's the result of his years in advertising, but Herbert simply seems unable to grasp that comics writing involves more than coming up with a plotline slack enough to stretch over 64 pages and a string of non-event captions which achieve nothing but a statement of the bloody obvious ("The guard-beasts... are wary... as they approach... the city... or what is left of it..."). Maybe someone should stick Herbert in a room with a stack of comics by Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman, Will Eisner and the like; he certainly shouldn't be encouraged to approach the medium again until he's at least learned the basics of the craft.

GUARDIAN by John Saul
Bantam Press; £14.99
Reviewed by Alice Turner

Instinct tells me that if this book were a film, its style would be a cross between those of *RABID* and *GREMLINS*. This may be good or bad, depending on which of Spielberg or Cronenberg took on the job.

MaryAnne Carpenter, separated mother of two, becomes legal guardian to 13 year-old misfit Joey when his parents (MaryAnne's best friend and her husband) are both mysteriously killed. At first, these deaths are not associated with other *mysterious goings-on* in this rural, red-neck area; this, of course, means that they should be associated



straight away. Two-dimensional "characters" are gradually introduced and a lot of predictable bloodshed fills the rest of the book. I don't think this contradicts my view that the plot does actually have potential; it's just that the potential is well hidden. The novel is predictable, clichéd and each chapter ends with cliffhanging questions, like they used to have at the end of BATMAN; "Was it really safe to stay now that a monster was loose?", "Maybe she didn't know Joey as well as she thought she did", that kind of thing. Incidentally, Mary Anne is not the guardian of the title, but I won't spoil the one slight surprise of the book by saying who is.

Uncommon thing to say, I know, but I think I'd prefer GUARDIAN if it was made into a film. However, if it were, it would undoubtedly have a sequel; and within the decade, there would be a whole series of them.

SHEEP by Simon Maginn

Corgi; £4.99

Reviewed by Nicholas Royle

A first novel from a new writer is always an exciting prospect — given how increasingly difficult it is these days to get published — and Simon Maginn's SHEEP comes with fulsome advance praise from Ramsey Campbell, Peter James and Campbell Armstrong.

James and Adèle move into a dilapidated house on the coast of west Wales with their son Sam. James, a builder, has the job of rebuilding the house; Adèle can plunder the new surroundings for inspiration for her painting, but her eye is drawn first to their ruggedly handsome neighbour Lewyn, a quiet, nervous sheep farmer. Seven-year-old Sam helps his Dad dig ditches, draws pictures of burning houses and writes intently in his red exercise book. James and Adèle are hoping the change of scene will help them get over the loss of their daughter Ruth, who drowned in the sea, but as details emerge linking the house with devilish goings-on in the past, it begins to seem as if there is no escape from tragedy.

Thus an interesting premise is set up and Maginn's novel starts well. The reader is drawn into the lives of James, Adèle and Lewyn, and we remain intrigued by the book's title, whilst trying to guess at the role the sheep will eventually play. As things start to take a nasty turn, with animals being mysteriously mutilated and slaughtered, there is potential for dramatic tension. Who's been at the sheep? Adèle, who has started producing odder and odder canvases, may have flipped; Sam's inwardness and humming are a mystery to his Dad; is there more to Lewyn — who is scared of the beast in the lumber pile — than meets the eye? And as for James, could his refusal to introduce Adèle to his parents imply there might be other, darker secrets in his life? Note: readers who do not wish to have the story spoilt for them should skip the following paragraph.

By choosing to put Peter James' quote ("The best debut novel I have read since THE WASP FACTORY") on the cover, the publishers have given a clear indication of the identity of the sheep killer. Iain Banks' THE WASP FACTORY was the tale of an evil little boy who did unspeakable things to animals; Corgi has also gone for a cover illustration of a creature which is half sheep, half little boy. The publishers or author might argue that the question of the slaughterer's identity is not intended to be an opportunity for dramatic tension, but such a position would be undermined by having Adèle diagnosed as schizophrenic and incarcerated just over halfway through the novel. (Also down to Corgi: the curious decision to relate the back cover blurb in the past tense instead of the present, and an incorrectly keyed apostrophe in Campbell Armstrong's quote.)

Welcome back to those readers who either have already read SHEEP or have no intention of doing so, or belong to that alien breed who like to know what happens. Maginn handles his characterisation confidently and makes almost everyone likeable despite their faults; his ideas are interesting and obliquely presented, which makes a refreshing change from a lot of mass-market genre fiction (though emphatically not all). Indeed, the author might claim he's written a mainstream novel, but his publishers have gone down the "popular" route with a gold-foil embossed cover (which rubs off with disconcerting ease). The writing is generally fine, with occasional over-ambitious flourishes ("She gave him a brilliant, flashing smile, then put it away again") and the odd clumsy expression ("He soaped himself more than usually thoroughly", and "He... brushed the sour, gritty taste out of his mouth" — it would be a gritty sensation, not a gritty taste).

But these are minor faults which he, or his copy-editor, will no doubt work out of his system. The pace slows down in the middle of the book — it could be improved by losing, say, 75 pages — but speeds up again as we approach the finale, which is excellently staged. It will be fascinating to see what Maginn produces next.

MERMAIDS AND MAGIC SHOWS: THE PAINTINGS OF DAVID DELAMERE

Text by Nigel Suckling

Paper Tiger; £10.95

Review by Chris Gilmore

Paper Tiger/Dragon's World has a world-class reputation for technical standards, and a somewhat lower one for taste and editorial control. The same could be said of fantasy art generally, and this book, with its plodding text and failure to offer any comparative evaluation of the strands making up Delamere's oeuvre, illustrates the characteristic strengths and weaknesses of both extremely well.

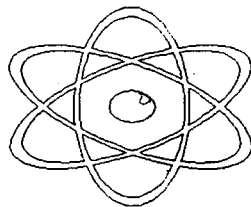
David Delamere is not the most accomplished artist they have ever featured; particularly after Boris Vallejo (LADIES) and Ciruelo Cabral (THE BOOK OF THE DRAGON), his skin-tones often look muddy or shellacked, his perspectives show the ill effects of too much working from photographs and many of the jokes are simply not very good. On the plus side, when he is engaged with his subject, there can be a genuine sense of looking into another world — one superficially like our own, but governed by very different rules. "The Masked Ball", an ambitious moonlight/firelight piece in shades of bronze, brown and yellow gives this impression, for example, and the sense of estrangement is strong enough to forgive the weak detailing on the ornamental bridge.

His characteristic strengths are particularly suited to his favourite subject of mermaids and sirens. These ethereal creatures, unrestricted by gravity but prey to strange lusts, are dangerous more for their lack of moral sense than any malice, their beauty having the self-absorbed quality of those whose greatest satisfaction lies in the mastery of outward show. "The Call of the Sirens" epitomises the spirit of the first and best two sections of this book: two gesture urgently towards a sailing ship, whilst below the surface seven others are enjoying a lesbian orgy. One knows instinctively that there's a shift system going, and all will share in whom-, or whatever, they ensnare; and because they live in the sea, his weakness with perspective is not a factor.

He's much less effective at the more common semi-animal forms, where the body is more or less human. The great problem with these is that compared to most mammals, humans have very slender necks vis-à-vis the skulls and torsos which they connect; Delamere appears not to have noticed the awkwardness of the transition (or to have despaired of

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doing anything about it), resulting in a stuck-on effect. This is especially, and even less excusably, apparent in "The Bath", quite a witty piece with a lady crocodile painting her toenails and listening to a wind-up gramophone; it's spoilt by the usual weakness of perspective (the record on the turntable looks quite elliptical), plus the impossibility of reconciling the limbs protruding from the water with any rational body beneath.

Once one begins to notice things like this, the illusion rapidly dissipates in favour of a compulsion to nit-pick. One notices that the woman falling from the sky in the puzzle picture "Paradise Lost" has no toes and her feet are more like paddles; this is not a subtle allegory, but the effect of carelessness, and makes the puzzle less interesting. Altogether, more care is needed; Delamere has a living to earn, deadlines to meet and a body whose natural functions must be tended, but none of these excuse skimping on the background.

It's regrettable that in his most recent work, the artist's vices are magnified at the expense of his virtues. "Circle Dance" (1990) and "The Green Apple" (1988) are rubbish, pure and simple, but this is the effect of laziness or haste, not declining powers. "Cinderella Awaiting Her Father's Ship" (1993) rivals Maurice Woodruff in its feeling for textile texture, and on this occasion Delamere overcomes his problems with perspective by using river mist; the face has more character than any Woodruff woman, but is still more like a shop-window dummy than the real thing.

Even so, you there at Paper Tiger, how about a collaboration? Delamere can design and do the drapery and waterscapes; Ciruelo can do the backgrounds and exteriors; Vallejo can do the faces, ornaments, firelight and weaponry. And if the collaboration disintegrates in bloodshed or insanity, just think how the unfinished folio will sell!

YESTERDAY WE SAW MERMAIDS by Esther Friesner

Pan; £3.99

Reviewed by Martin Tudor

In 1492, as three ships set sail from Spain under the command of Columbus, another vessel sets off on an urgent and mysterious mission to the new world, propelled by the magic of an ill-tempered genie. On board are a curious assortment of characters, including a gypsy witch, a beautiful Moorish princess, a terrified young Jewess (rescued from the not-so-tender ministrations of the Inquisition) and several nuns plucked unexpectedly from their quiet convent lives.

This is an unusual and entertaining tale of a land of myth and magic desperately trying to withstand the tide of history. Friesner blends together history and myth, faith and magic, into a stunningly original novel.

COMPLICITY by Iain Banks

Little, Brown; £15.99

Reviewed by Roger Keen

Banks' new novel is, more than anything, a thriller; however, there is plenty of WASP FACTORY-style gruesomeness and weird touches to keep horror fans happy.

The narrative takes the form of two main strands. First, we have a series of professionally-executed torturings and murders of high profile public figures: a judge, an ex-government minister, an industrialist, etc. The motive seems to be political revenge, as each is orchestrated as a "punishment" to fit the "crime" of the victim. Thus, the rape-orient judge is sodomized with a vibrator, whilst the industrialist who escaped paying compensation after a ship fire is himself burnt to death. These scenes are written in the second person, a device made famous by Jay McInerney in BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY; here, it works excellently, putting the reader right in the murderer's shoes while at the same time avoiding looking at who he is.

The other main strand concerns Cameron Colley, a hard-drinking, speed-snorting, kinky sex-loving, lefty journalist on an Edinburgh newspaper. Colley is a disciple of Hunter S Thompson and still retains the idealism of the '60s and '70s, wanting to set the world to rights through print. He is receiving tip-offs from a secret source about a giant conspiracy involving the nuclear industry — potentially the story of a lifetime. Later, though, Colley finds out he has been duped and put in the frame for the murders; the horror intensifies as he is taken to London, interrogated and shown videos of the carnage: "there's a man... and he has a gorilla mask on... and he has this fat little guy strapped to a chrome seat... and [he] holds up this huge fucking syringe like something from a nightmare from an old movie from a horror film and I can feel my heart beating wildly because *that's what this is...* this lunatic is making his own horror film and you can't even tell yourself Hell it's only a story aren't the special effects good it isn't real because that's exactly what it is... and I throw up half way through but they pause the video for me."

Like good thrillers, COMPLICITY is a real page-turner, full of surprises and vertiginous twists, but it still has room to pack in a serious message about the state of our culture. And once again, Banks proves his dexterity and versatility; whether he's writing a gothic number (THE WASP FACTORY), an intricate post-Peakeian fantasy (THE BRIDGE) or hard sf (USE OF WEAPONS), he consistently turns out a superlative product. After 12 substantial works of fiction in 10 years, who can ask for more?

FLOWERDUST by Gwyneth Jones

Headline; £16.99

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan

Jones' DIVINE ENDURANCE was first published in 1984; nine years later comes this novel, not exactly a sequel but an episode which might have happened part way through the original.

Divine Endurance and her companion Chosen are toys; they are also the ultimate in man's striving for perfection. While Divine Endurance is a cat, Cho is an angel doll, loved by all but made for one: Derveet, a bandit, a failed woman and the last of the Garudas. In the first book, Derveet was a visionary, an idealist who wished to free the people of the Peninsula from their rulers, a revolutionary who thought she could win without bloodshed; in FLOWERDUST, Derveet has virtually retired and lives in the crumbling Garuda palace just outside Ranganar. This novel takes its title from a powerful narcotic which has appeared in the city; Derveet believes she knows where it came from and sets out to retrieve it, but she is opposed by the women of the dapur, who also want the flowerdust.

In some ways, this book is less complex than its predecessor, dealing with only one narrative thrust; in other ways, it is more so, because its more leisurely pace allows opportunity to explore the culture of the Peninsular in greater depth and expands the social layering extant in the first. It also introduces new ideas which, although perhaps hinted at before, now have room to blossom, like the extent and nature of dapur magic. There is a much greater suggestion of history: before, we knew that the world had changed greatly since our time (Cho's existence is in part evidence for this), but there are hints here that the rest of the world is a desert, literally and figuratively, with only the Peninsular remaining lush and fertile.

If you are looking for straightforward adventure, you will find it in this book, but it is well wrapped with thought-provoking incident and excellent character development. Worth spending time on.

FIRE AND AIR by G G Davies

Nemico; £11.99

Reviewed by Tony Morton

Subtitled "The Master Pieces", this book consists of three stories, a triptych exploring the scientific premises of time travel, FTL and the nature of matter.

Davies begins with "Front Piece: A Search for Time", in which a young man recognises a stranger and discovers him to be a present day college friend returning from the future to tell his younger self the secrets of time travel. Somewhat paradoxical (where does this knowledge originate?), this was obviously redrafted several times before publication, producing a polished feel despite leaving the reader uneasy about the science.

"Centre Piece: A Space to Live" deals with another quandary, FTL travel. Here, a renowned scientist reveals at an interview that during a voyage he actually travelled faster than light, the experience transporting his "essence" into another body; this claim is supported by inventions which he claims are from his previous existence. The scientist is treated as an eccentric and disbelieved, but the story then slips into romanticism as he meets the woman he claims to have loved through previous existences. The result is mildly intriguing.

Finally, "End Piece: Mind Under Matter" is set aboard a space station orbiting Earth and run by a super computer which handles all the station's functions. Problems arise when the computer begins searching for an answer to the nature of matter; as there is no definitive solution, the computer devotes more and more of its capacity to the search and puts the station in danger. Davies again supplies an intriguing outcome.

Overall, this is an interesting trio of stories dealing with "impossible" scientific theory (at present) and the expression of ideas, well presented and written but surprisingly lightweight scientifically (from a fear of scaring off the casual reader?). Davies has attempted to link three scientific theorems, itself a worthwhile end, and develops the themes well enough to provide an entertaining and above all provocative book.

THE THIRD WAVE

PAUL J McAULEY,
1 Main Street, Strathkinness, Fife, KY16 9RX.

I appreciate Stephen Baxter's spirited defence of science [in CW#34] (How can I not? I'm a scientist), but jeez, shouldn't he lighten up a little? His jibes that sf featuring dear old Elvis is lazy stuff he hopes will be out of date in 10 years' time while his "current stuff is selling long beyond that date" is, well, a bit cheap, quite frankly. I mean, I hope his stuff is around in 10 years' time, too, but I also hope he didn't really mean to suggest that this would be at the expense of the work of Kim Newman and Jack Womack.

Meanwhile I can only wish him well in tackling slightly harder targets than his fellow sf writers — the Scientologists, say, or gun-toting redneck right-for-lifer Creationists.

CHUCK CONNOR,
Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wisset,
near Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0NF.

Well, er, thanks for the copy of CRITICAL WAVE #32, though, er, as I've never had copies with the reviews of THINGUMYBOBS #1 through to #6.5, or the Warner ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, I don't quite see how I got one now (apart from the review of #7 and #8, which is why I'm writing this).

[SG: It's our policy whenever possible to send a complimentary copy, or at least a tearsheet, to those publications we review; however, the cost and effort involved — given that our coverage has grown enormously since 1987 and that Martin still handles the bulk of the collation/distribution single-handedly — often presents us with the stark choice of mailing out dozens of free copies or concentrating our efforts on getting the next issue ready.]

Okay, so the comment was there that it was Helena [Bowles]'s opinion, but...

Re: FANZINE FANATIQUE. "If you already enjoy FF..." Er, there hasn't been an issue of FF since about 1987 and that includes such disguises as VIDEO FANTASTIQUE, VIDEO NEWS, BRIGHTON ROCK (with the terrible hand-drawn covers) or RADIO YESTERYEAR.

INTERMEDIATE VECTOR BOSONS is Harry Andruschak's apazine, with an extended mailing list for a few outsiders (check the top of the first page and you'll see the apa distributions).

THINGUMYBOB: "usual impenetrable mix" (as far as I know these two were her first — as she's not on the mailing list, nor were any marked "CW" — so where does the "usual" come from? And, hey, apart from signposting the different LoCcers in TB#7 by using a totally different typeface, then what else am I supposed to do?), rapidly followed by one hell of a misquote of something I quoted (please, if you're going to quote me at least put the thing in the right context, because it fucking highlighted something important in TB, but is a totally nowhere comment in CW); that was the piece that rankled in the review of TB — the fact that Helena couldn't be bothered to read the zine is evident from the intro and from her omissions (the RUSS L STREET is part of an ongoing series, and the TB#8 relationship thing was abandoned).

THE FANZINE SAMPLER: I thought that this was out for Mexican only? And three pieces for a fanthology?

RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY: no mention of the Fritz Leiber biography, written by his son, Justin, or the Joe Christopher piece on the recent trend of Future Histories (or perhaps CW's readership aren't interested in this sort of thing?). Slagging it for being printed on yellow paper is a bit tasteless in view of the fact that this issue is coloured bright yellow — which I suppose has nothing to do with the Japanese headlines. Maybe you should have sub-headed it "The Yellow Peril Issue!"

[SG: Thanks to Rog Peyton, WAVE recently located a source of relatively cheap A3 paper; the drawback is that we are limited to whichever colours are currently in stock. On that occasion, yellow was the only viable alternative, even if it did invite comments of that kind.]

Finally, HANDSHAKE: "The Eight Hand Gang" was a small in-joke between John Haines, Steve Sneyd, Andy Robson, Andy Darlington, John Howard, Pete Presford and myself, with reference to the first anthology of sf poetry (published professionally — see CWs with Steve Sneyd's pieces in it re. sf poetry) and the fact that we were the only people regularly publishing sf poetry during the late '70s and '80s (following in the footsteps of ZIMRI and the like — where the likes of Holdstock, Markam, Noiprox and, I think, Priest cut their teeth, obviously with shit "not worth publishing", but there again they still had yet to make a sale). Also nice to see that whereas Dave Langford and Bridget Wilkinson get the "reply-paid envelopes" comment, John (who has stressed that H is only available for SAEs) will now have to fork out money; again, RTFE or RTFF would have provided the wealth of knowledge that H is, in fact, a quickie market noticeboard. And nice to see that whereas Kench is okay with TOA, H is "sloppily produced" though it uses exactly the same production, and better reproduction in the form of photocopy — from short paste-ups that other people supply.

I'm sorry if the above sounds aggressive and bitchy (it would have been nice to have someone review the things who was actively involved in them), but as you can see from the above, there were an awful lot of errors and misconceptions, and, worst of all, stuff omitted, that I began to wonder if we were getting ready for KTF:TNG.

Helena asks for constructive criticism (though maybe her review column was designed to generate a reaction), so the first I would say is (a) start taking an active part in things (apart from articles for EMPTIES), and (b) why not try reading — as opposed to skimming or scanning — the things?

The reason I feel strongly about this is that I have just spent a year or so coaxing several people into fanzine fandom. They firmly held the belief that fanzine [fans] were clique-bound bitch-penned elitists with an ignorant attitude. To read this review column makes me wonder why I bothered in some respects, because CW has the larger audience which now has quite a nice, misguided image of what's out here in fanzine fandom. Sorry, but there you go...

[HB: Firstly, thank you for commenting. Feedback is genuinely appreciated and some of the points made were quite justified. Some, however, I can't agree with. I will take these in order.]

[INTERMEDIATE VECTOR BOSONS is an apazine, but it is also mailed out on editorial whim; how would we have a copy otherwise? THINGUMYBOB: I think I'll have to disillusion you here. I realize it may be painful for you to think that there might be those on your mailing list who might be willing to give up your golden prose, but such exist. Fanzines may be wantonly bought at fanzine sales/auctions, regardless of editorial displeasure; people also lend and swap. Re. the contents, I can't give a full contents list for every zine I review — there isn't enough space. I quote what I feel is interesting — me, personally. It's the only way I can write an honest review. I deliberately misquoted your quote to make my own point. I did miss the sentence about the theme idea being dead. I apologize. I am, however, only human.]

[The fanzine sampler was available on request to non-Mexican members after the con; I think that makes it a fanzine. RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY: I hated the yellow CW as well, and told Martin at the time it induced migraines. I am limited by space, but mentioned the main thrust of the zine; again, I don't do contents lists. If HANDSHAKE was an "in-joke", I can't really be expected to see the funny side. ANSIBLE and FANS ACROSS THE WORLD: tell me how to meaningfully review a one-sheet newsletter and I will do it.]

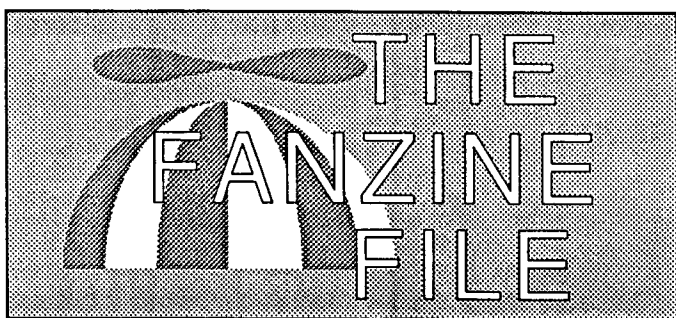
[I didn't realize that the definition of an active fan is one who is on your mailing list. I find the comment about reading rather than scanning very insulting and somewhat redolent of sour grapes.]

[I also refute the charge of elitism. How can I be elitist when I slight your fanzine, but in #34 praise newcomers such as Mike Siddall, Ann Green and Dave Wood? You are also being a little inconsistent; I don't see how I can be (a) elitist, as well as (b) ignorant and uninvolved.]

JACKIE DUCKWORTH,
25 Wycliffe Road, Cambridge, CB1 3JD.

I really think that you should take "Market Reports" off the cover as the only one you've had in since I subscribed was hopelessly out of date by the time I received CRITICAL WAVE. Since I originally subscribed because of the market reports, I find this very frustrating, though I do enjoy reading the rest of the magazine. Best wishes — good luck with cash flow.

[SG: The cold truth of the matter is that there are virtually no paying markets for short genre fiction left in the UK, a fact I touched upon in last issue's editorial. As a result, there's frequently insufficient material to merit a full column on the topic, although one was carried as recently as CW#32, whilst the "On The Racks" column in CW#33 carried details on more than a dozen UK and US magazines currently taking fiction, albeit not all paying. In the meantime, such new markets as we become aware of will tend to be included in our regular news.]



by Helena Bowles

I'm spotlighting two fanzines this issue, both perzines, but there the resemblance ends. Tony Berry's *EYEBALLS IN THE SKY* #8 is his first perzine since its first issue, whereas Dave Hicks' *MORIARTY'S REVENGE* (latest in a series of first issues) is his first true perzine; they write in very different styles, Berry with a kind of low key deadpan humour hiding an insecure intensity, Hicks with a quite overt passion leavened by slightly surreal humour.

EYEBALLS provides a strangely compelling meander through Berry's everyday life, with random musings on such subjects as a fanzine renaissance ("If there isn't a fanzine renaissance, what's all this stuff which keeps landing on my doormat?"), model-making and collecting as a child ("Some of my kits had a death wish. I lost count of the number of times I bought the Tiger Moth; no matter where I put it, the thing would end up in pieces on the floor, where someone would finish it off by treading on it."), Novacon film programmes and, most memorably, his father's death.

This is a short but moving piece written with deceptive simplicity: "On Tuesday morning my phone started ringing at a ridiculously early hour. I was easing myself back into Work Mode and feeling delicate after [Novacon 23] so I let the answering machine take it. But whoever it was kept ringing. And I ignored it until I was fed and watered and felt ready to face the public. I went upstairs and listened to the messages. It was various relations trying to contact me to tell me that my father had died during the night.

"Welcome back to reality."

Superficially, the article has the same theme as Ian Sorensen's in *BOB* #6, but in this case the writing is merely restrained rather than empty. Berry's compassion for his mother and his attempt to come to terms with the loss are moving without being self-pitying.

Counterpoint is provided by humour, most obviously his account of the Christmas dinner he hosted: "I had to go [to the supermarket] and buy the bulk of the consumables. [...] There were at least 143,000 people in that supermarket (I did a quick head-count). [...] If you've seen film of the faithful going round the shrine in Mecca, you'll know what it was like. This vast sea of humanity shuffled along in the same direction, emptying shelves as it went. The shelf-stackers fought bravely to keep up with the onslaught, but they were losing the battle. Occasionally someone would stop for a second too long and get a trolley in the back as a reminder to keep moving. I even saw someone try and go against the flow, but they were quickly overwhelmed and sank from sight, trampled into the tiling."

Dave Hicks writes about "things" rather than general life and manages to be both knowledgeable and amusing, especially on his "subject", art: "Mondrian went on to form the Bauhaus school in the Weimar Republic, along with the likes of Oscar Schlemmer and Paul Klee, and is probably better known to you who have ever visited the Tate for his paintings consisting solely of vertical and horizontal black lines with the odd primary coloured rectangle dotted about on plain white backgrounds. He had a mate called Theo Van Doesburg who thought along similar lines (so to speak), but who eventually started to experiment with diagonal lines. Mondrian never, ever, spoke to him again. And you thought all that nonsense about 10 years ago on the relative merits of quarto versus A4 was petty."

The production of *MORIARTY'S REVENGE* was inspired by Hicks' attendance at the small MiSFits convention MiSdemeanour, which "buzzed... People twitched all weekend with strange forgotten urges, 'gonna do a fanzine' they muttered to one another. It was infectious and I started to believe again. So potent was this atmosphere that it wouldn't surprise me to receive a fanzine from one of the bar staff, hotel cleaners, or anyone who just happened to walk past the hotel that weekend."

One of Hicks' influences is the late, great *GOON SHOW* and Spike Milligan in particular, which places *MORIARTY'S REVENGE* slap in the middle of the most traditional fanwriting. Hicks writes of the show: "There's a quintessential Englishness about the Goons. They're

the absolute antithesis of the wide screen, cast-of-thousands Cecil B De Mille school of production, all about making-do, the product of a lone eccentric."

Sounds a lot like fanzine publishing.

Showing what can be done with a single A4 sheet on a regular basis is Dave Langford's *ANSIBLE*, with more news, gossip and humour. It's counterpointed by another A4 single-sheeter, Alasdair Hepburn's *BEER CAT SCRATCHINGS*, which features one very short article and a large number of not-very-funny footnotes — neither interesting nor informative.

THE DOG FACTORY #3, from Dave Wood and Les Escott, is devoted to music and musical issues, ranging from the original score for 2001: *A SPACE ODYSSEY* to two very good interviews, the first of which is, it has to be said, a touch incestuous, being an interview with Wood about sf and music.

The second is with a member of an independent (but *not* indie) American group of music makers. Michael Chokolac has some interesting and original views, including this on audio cassettes versus CDs: "I don't like CDs. [...] I really don't like digital at all even if I do have a sampler and a DAT. [...] For consumers digital got popular because it's quiet. No hiss. But what is usually touted as 'crisp' and 'sharp' sound reproduction sounds too harsh and almost grating to my ears. Like a glaring light in your eyes. Digital is on-off reproduction in steps and bar graph progression. I don't care what anyone says, if you do it 'on-off' you're going to lose something as opposed to the all-encompassing sweep of analog. It may be infinitesimal, but it's lost."

THE DIGEST is produced by Intersection's James Steel and is "a cross between some form of fanzine and an informal progress report on the 'Creative' bit of the con". This is a good forum for anyone with suggestions and/or comments that are a little more constructive than my own wail of "It's all going to be a disaster..."

CYBERSPACE is the impressively dtp'ed newsletter of the South Hants Science Fiction Group. Fan articles, columns, book reviews. [SG: Although ostensibly a groupzine, *CYBERSPACE* has long been run as a genzine by current editor Keith Coslett and will shortly be relaunched under those colours.]

DRAGON'S BREATH is impressively subtitled "the International Small Press Review And Monthly Newsletter" and is credited to, ahem, "Zine Kat" (aka Tony Lee). Thumbnail reviews and quality ratings ("anal", "anorak", "mutant", "cool" and "groovy").

Just as we all got used to the sight of con-kids, a new phenomenon blossoms. *CYBRER BUNNY* is "a fan anthology selected by and for Tara and Robert Glover", Tara and Robert being, of course, the offspring of Leeds-based fans Jenny and Steve.

This is an excellent selection, based mainly around wildlife, with articles from Caroline Mullan and Getsu-shin, a short story by Jenny and a short article from Harry Payne on anime which was, perhaps, a little patronising, due to being so deliberately aimed at children. Junior faneds — what next?

Don Fitch brings us a short perzine entitled *FROM SUNDAY TO SATURDAY*: short, punchy articles on fannish copyright, homophobia (in respect of Orson Scott Card), reviews. Thoroughly enjoyable.

Another new Scottish fanzine comes from Alison Freebairn, a friend of newcomer Jackie McRobert and old-timer Ian Sorensen; *FROM THE KELPIE'S POOL* is nicely produced but indifferently photocopied, and belongs in the "women's magazine" school of fanzine layout. By this, I mean plenty of pullquotes, fillos, headings and sub-headings, mock adverts and enticing snatches of text between heading and articles.

Copying problems ignored, this is actually very good, containing light and amusing fanwriting on the reasons for doing fanzines and pursuing careers — though I do think she is being worryingly naive about Intersection ("This is so big and so exciting that we should be shouting it from the rooftops. Who cares if it is still 18 months away?").

ETRANGER II strikes a very different note. Steve Glover has produced a fanzine which contains only two articles remotely interesting or intelligible to us old Homo Sapiens — as opposed to Homo *E-mailiens*. I'm sure the Net is useful and a good tool to the actifan, but to hear its exponents talk, you would think it was going to provide a cure for cancer as well as feeding the Third World. Guys, this is getting a bit obsessive.

The two articles worth paying attention to are both by Glover himself. The first is "Cabs, Cruelty and Children" (with the self-

explanatory subtitle "Idealism and Morality in the Instrumentality of Mankind"), an excellent long critical essay. The other has Glover writing about his childhood and appalling experiences at boarding school; it is cathartic and for that reason disturbing to read, the experiences including physical and sexual abuse from older/bigger pupils, unnoticed by teachers and adults who perhaps didn't recognise the signs of an extremely disturbed adolescent.

Martin Tudor is back on a reasonably regular publishing schedule with **EMPTIES** #13, which has the theme "Superstitions, the Supernatural and Luck — good and bad"; it is far shorter than #12 and thus far more coherent. The shining article is Mike Siddall's "Me and Egbert", relating how his adolescence was blighted by a cursed condom; wonderful stuff.

EMPTIES is stylishly produced and illustrated, #13's cover being another Shep Kirkbride cartoon. This guy has a real flair for illustrating fanzines, judging from this and previous covers for **EMPTIES** and **GAIJIN**. Why is he so underused?

ERG QUARTERLY #125 celebrates its 35th anniversary; reviews, letters and general articles, as well as a book catalogue and some nice fillos.

FILM AT ELEVEN is a perzine from Tony Chester which basically brings readers up to date on recent events in Chester's life using a News at Ten format. Original, but more style than content.

Last Novacon, a slightly inebriated (okay, totally rat-arsed) Bridget Hardcastle thrust two small fanzines into my hand. The blanket title was **OBSSESSIONS**, the first on chocolate, the second (subtitled "Beermat") alcohol. They were very good small zines; I thoroughly enjoyed them, planned to review them, got slightly inebriated (okay, totally rat-arsed) in the post-convention committee piss-up and lost both in the evacuation of the ops room.

Now we have **OBSSESSIONS** #3: **MORE CHOCOLATE**, which is, yes, about chocolate. The flagship of chocolate fandom! Anecdotes about chocolate, reviews of books about chocolate and, well, chocolate, with a bit about Rocky Horror and alcohol. Interesting to anyone who likes chocolate.

ONE DAY #1 comes from David. David who? I don't know. Let's call him David Pretentious, for that is what this zine is. Ninety per cent of it is cobbled together from other magazines: "I've been to the University library and checked out all the trendier current journals and magazines on display. I photocopied interesting articles, and scanned them to pick out the few paragraphs that expressed interesting new ideas, then cut them out and tried to arrange them in some new and semi-logical manner, a little like a Burroughs-esque cut-up, only a little more rational and more graspable".

What we actually have is a mish-mash of pseudo-intellectual oblate spheroids with no discussion or rational linkage. Call this a fanzine?

[SG: For the record, it's David Haden, editor of the '80s fanzine **RABBITS TEND TO EXPLODE**.]

ONE THIRD OF AN UNWELL OCTOPUS is another one-pager from Ian Sorensen, with the usual competent light humour and a D West cartoon which is probably the funniest and one of the most accurate of the criticisms being bounced around about Intersection.

Simon Ounsley brings us a third **PLATYPUS**. Short, fun, but ultimately not displaying his talents to the full; however, he does recommend the same chocolate as Bridget Hardcastle.

As I've said before, Tibs' **READING MATTERS** is like over-hearing several fannish conversations at once. As someone who is not participating in the conversation, I would have appreciated longer extracts from the letters, or rather the extracts not to be split up so much, but it's still very enjoyable.

In **SOUTHERN GOTHIC**, Lucy Huntzinger comes across as a fannish Cynthia Heimel, especially when writing about false fingernails ("This, my friends, is nothing short of Female Empowerment. For every girl who was a tomboy or an irredeemable nail biter, having false fingernails is a major piece of personal mojo."). Definitely. Other than fingernails, Huntzinger writes with style about rodeos ("No Levi's, only Wrangler jeans") and working as a travel agent. This is probably one of the most professional and self-assured fanzines I have reviewed.

There's a nice surprise from Jackie McRobert with **THE STARTLED BUNNY** #2 ("In the Bleak Midwinter") and #3 ("The Easter Bunny"); both are immeasurably better than the first, as McRobert

seems to have more of an idea of the direction of each. The name of the game seems to be feisty antagonism to the fannish "establishment". Fandom's own Julie Burchill?

There is more about her current workplace, and I have to agree with Ann Green — I thought it was only senior doctors who made such, er, idiots of themselves. Apparently solicitors do to. Must be something to do with being a professional.

Something completely new is **STITCHTHROUGH TIME**, Giulia De Cesare's "fanzine for costumers". It is short and has a couple of articles on wigs and corsetry that were even interesting to me as a non-costumer; possibly more detail would be better, but upcoming issues may provide this.

Tommy Ferguson's **TASH** #9 has a long loccol and an amusing article about being towed from London to Ireland after a breakdown. Other material crosses over slightly to **GOTTERDAMMERUNG V** territory, but is better done.

Chuck Connor's **THINGUMMYBOB** #11 has the vague theme of sexuality, with all three outside articles about sex in the S&M arena. There's Steve Green on the appalling "Spanner" case, Bernard Earp on how he discovered his girlfriend's daughter had been physically abused by her father and its effect upon his own S&M behaviour with her mother, and Caroline Mullan on her reactions to a lesbian S&M publication; all are interesting and well written. Even Chuck proves he is capable of grammatically coherent prose in his article on body piercing; it is a shame his editorial can't follow similar guidelines.

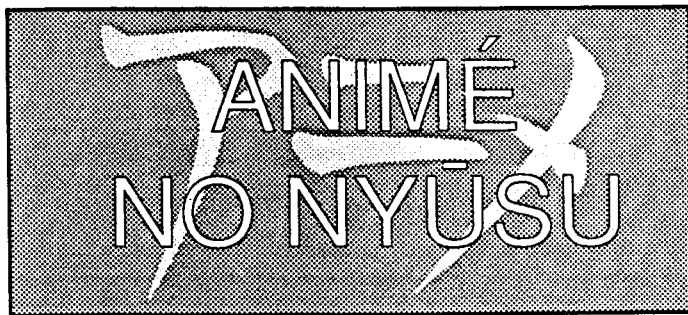
Fanzines are available for "the usual" unless otherwise stated; this includes trade, show of interest (with reply-paid envelope) and/or contribution: EYEBALLS IN THE SKY, 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 4EP; MORIARTY'S REVENGE, Top Flat, 8 Dyfrig Street, Pontcanna, Cardiff, CF1 9LR; ; ANSIBLE, available for a reply-paid envelope from 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU; BEER CAT SCRATCHINGS, 123C Chobham Road, Stratford, London, E15 1LX (usually available at the Wellington meetings — if you're quick — but you might be lucky if you ask nicely); THE DOG FACTORY, 1 Friary Close, Marine Hill, Clevedon, BS21 7QA; THE DIGEST, 15 Maldon Close, Camberwell, London, SE5 8DD; CYBERSPACE, 12 Crowsbury Close, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 7TS; DRAGON'S BREATH, available for a reply-paid envelope from 13 Hazely Combe, Arretton, Isle of Wight, PO30 3AJ; CYBRER BUNNY and ETRANGER, 16 Aviary Place, Leeds, LS12 2NP; FROM SUNDAY TO SATURDAY, 3908 Frijo, Covina, CA 91722, USA; FROM THE KELPIE'S POOL, Police House, Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire, Scotland, PA13 4LG; EMPTIES, 845 Alum Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 2AG; ERG, available in the UK for three second-class stamps from 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, North Yorks, YO12 5RQ; FILM AT ELEVEN, 44 Brook Street, Erith, Kent, DA8 1JQ; OBSSESSIONS, 13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London, NW3 6PX; ONE DAY, available for trade/£1.00 or US\$2.00 plus IRCs from 104 Freer Road, Aston, Birmingham, B6 6NB; ONE THIRD OF AN UNWELL OCTOPUS, 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton, ML3 7HY; PLATYPUS, 25 Park Villa Court, Leeds, LS8 1EB; READING MATTERS, £3.00 hardcopy or £1.00 on e-mail from 11L 30 Falkland Street, Glasgow, G12 9QY; SOUTHERN GOTHIC, available for trade/ letters of comment from 2305 Bernard Avenue, Nashville, TN 37212, USA; THE STARTLED BUNNY, 75 Balmalloch Road, Kilsyth, Glasgow, G65 9NS; STITCHTHROUGH TIME, 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, RG3 2RP; TASH, 42 Ava Drive, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT 3DW; THINGUMMYBOB, Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wissett, near Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0NF.

Also received: FANS ACROSS THE WORLD #35, available for a reply-paid envelope from Bridget Wilkinson, 17 Mimosa, 29 Avenue Road, Tottenham, London, N15 5JF; THYME #96, also available for A\$12.00 per year from PO Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia. ☐

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by Geoff Cowie

Rumiko Takahashi is becoming an increasingly familiar name to British comic and media fans. Now one of the richest and best-known women in Japan, she first became well known as the author and artist of a manga comedy series, URUSEI YATSURA, which ran for years in the weekly boy's magazine SHONEN SUNDAY and was later adapted into a long running tv series (218 25-minute episodes) and five films, followed by a "final movie" and sundry videos.

Takahashi followed this with RANMA 1/2, another long-running manga comedy, also made into a tv series and two video films. MAISON IKKOKU, a manga aimed at an older audience, also proved popular and followed the familiar route into tv and a "final movie". Her shorter works were equally popular and a number of them, actually unconnected, were made into videos under the group title "Rumic World"; these include FIRE TRIPPER, LAUGHING TARGET, SUPERGAL (MARIS THE CHOJO), MERMAID'S FOREST and MERMAID'S SCAR.

Most of this work is available in the West in some form. The URUSEI YATSURA movies and videos are being released (subtitled) by AnimEigo in the USA and by Animé Projects in the UK; the RANMA 1/2 tv episodes and new OVAs are being released in the USA, dubbed into American accents; the "Rumic World" videos are available subtitled from the USA, while mass-market versions are currently being released here by Manga Video. In print, US editions of URUSEI YATSURA and RUMIC WORLD have been seen here, and the US editions of RANMA 1/2 and MAISON IKKOKU appear monthly in good comic shops; try the hard-to-put-down RUMIC WORLD book for about £10. For Japanophiles only, the collected volumes of the original Japanese manga for all these titles can be found in London.

These titles have been reviewed elsewhere [see also John Gosling's profile of Takahashi in CW#32's anime special], but if you haven't yet had the pleasure of knowing the tenants of Maison Ikkoku, Lum the green-haired alien girl, or the gender-changing Ranma, lose no time in remedying this and finding out why Rumiko Takahashi's work is so much loved!

ONLY YOU

Animé Projects; £12.99

REMEMBER MY LOVE

Animé Projects; £12.99

Two LUM / URUSEI YATSURA movies — if you only buy one anime video this year, get one of these! Both are subtitled romantic comedies, 101 and 93 minutes respectively, in which a bikini-clad alien princess with awesome powers falls in love with skirt-chasing teenager, trouble on a large scale ensues. It's fairly sophisticated humour, with a large cast of bizarre characters; an unmissable fan hit.

BATTLE ANGEL ATILA

Manga Video; £10.99

BATTLE ANGEL

A D Vision; US\$34.95

Two contrasting versions of GUNNM: RUSTY ANGEL and GUNNM: TEARS SIGN. GUNNM is superbly-realised cyberpunk sf, set in a bleak future where cyborgs and bounty hunters battle in a trash-heap and industrial wasteland, under the shadow of the floating nirvana-city of Zalem. Atila, brought back to life by Ido, a brilliant cyber-doctor, has no memories of her past, but soon reveals that she is programmed with extraordinary combat powers. She also has a human heart.

The vividly-realised settings and designs, the black humour of the cyborg scenes, the excitement of the battles, the deep rumbling effects under the looming aerial city and the perceptive depiction of human emotions combine to make this a great video, and the sombre song "An

Insignificant Girl" between the two episodes (missing on Manga's PAL version) perfectly sets the mood for the human tragedy to follow. A masterpiece.

The 55-minute PAL mass-market version is unfortunately decidedly flawed by dubbing with voices which introduce a levity unsuited to the dark theme of the video, and also uses a different and freer translation compared to the subtitled 60-minute NTSC version (the latter also retaining the heroine's original name, Gally). The PAL version's sound effects are nevertheless impressive on a multi-speaker stereo system.

MACROSS II, Volume 3

Kiseki Films; £10.99

All three 50-minute volumes of this likeable sf space battle series are now available (this contains episodes five and six). The invading Marduk spacefleets have the upper hand, Ishtar is back with the Marduk fleet, and Hibiki and Sylvie are in hot water with UN Spacy; Hibiki is imprisoned for making an unauthorized broadcast in which he reveals the truth about the aliens and the war to the public. Meanwhile, an epic space battle is in progress and the UN Spacy forces are losing. As the mad Marduk emperor Ingues moves in on Earth for the final confrontation, he orders the "Song of Death" to be sung by the "emulators", the normal-sized females who control the Zentradi slave-warriors.

The designs in MACROSS generally look good, and bits of it are very pretty indeed. There is more action in the concluding episodes than in much of the earlier four and the storyline is fairly well plotted. Also noteworthy are the repeated reference to "culture" and the idea that learning from other races, interbreeding and making peace with them is generally a good thing. The use of songs in the plot is certainly rather odd, but it makes a pleasant change from large guns and excessive violence. Indeed, although we see various spacecraft destroyed, we don't see anybody killed on screen.

The hifi stereo soundtrack sounds good, and the songs, mostly Japanese and subtitled, are quite pleasant. Though the script is a little juvenile, MACROSS seems no more silly than most tv sf, and I have found that a liking for this series has grown on me as I have watched the preview tapes in succession. Verdict: a charming series, recommended for family viewing.

CAT GIRL NUKU-NUKU

Crusader Video; £12.99

This is a very funny 90-minute sf comedy in which an inventor estranged from his wife makes a cute girl android with a cat's brain to look after his small son; the wife wants her boy back and mayhem results. Recommended.

GOLGO 13: THE PROFESSIONAL

Manga Video; £12.99

A rather good hired-assassin thriller in which the eponymous anti-hero appears quite a sympathetic character, as repeated counter-attacks on himself and his helpers follow a successful killing. There are a few sf/fantasy elements, but the computer-animated helicopter sequence may be of particular interest to CRITICAL WAVE readers. Its 93 minutes are very violent and brutal, containing scenes of sexual violence; not for the squeamish.

LAUGHING TARGET

Manga Video; £8.99

Based on a Takahashi manga and inspired by Japanese tales of demonic possession, this human story becomes darker as it progresses. The lives of young archer Yasuru and his girlfriend Sutomi are disrupted when his beautiful but disturbed cousin/childhood sweetheart Asizar comes to live with him, and demands that he fulfils childish promises. Gripping.

GUNBUSTER, Volume 1

Kiseki Films; £10.99

This 52-minute tape contains the first two episodes of the fan favourite, in which cute schoolgirl Noriko, attending the Space High School for Girls in the shadow of her famous father, is pushed through a catch-'em-young space jocks training course and has a lot of trouble with the giant robot-suits. It features fine characterization, plenty of

mecha interest, comedy, cuteness, action, and even a super-deformed "science" lesson. Recommended.

KAMASUTRA

Masayuki Ozeki; £12.99

No prizes for guessing what this video is about. It's from an original story by Go Nagai, well-known in anime circles as the creator of such videos as DEVILMAN. On the sleeve, ANIME UK editor Helen McCarthy is quoted as saying "He knows what he likes. He likes sex. He likes violence and this has both." Actually, as applied to KAMASUTRA, which isn't particularly violent, this is a little misleading, though it sums up the rest of Go Nagai's work well enough.

The hero is archaeologist Ryu Aikawa, a 19 year-old Japanese, handsome but sexually inexperienced, with at least two women eager to complete his education. The story is set in modern India, and concerns the unfreezing of the beautiful Princess Syria, who has been encased in ice for over 1500 years but is brought back to life by a cup filled with sexual fluids; however, evil forces are plotting to seize the princess and the love cup. The action is fairly amusing and attractively animated, and whilst the English in the subtitles is sometimes a little odd (apparently, it was handled by one of the Western Connection directors, a former Yugoslav), this does not detract from one's enjoyment.

The sex in KAMASUTRA is, well, explicit, but there is nothing nasty and no sexual violence; in fact the "18" certificate seems entirely due to British prudery. Not an anime classic, but if you're broadminded, why not give it a try?

THE GUYVER, Volume 1 (of 12)

Manga Video; £6.99

The Guyver is a mysterious, alien bio-engineered armour; a school student finds it, then gets mixed up with some bad guys who transform into bio-engineered bipedal monsters. Scenes from the original "Hellcat" comic strip appear inside the box sleeve. These 28-minute tapes, being released monthly, are well-animated but avoidable.

AMBASSADOR MAGMA

Kiseki Films; £12.99

This 90-minute tape contains the first three episodes of the self-consciously "retro" series styled after manga and anime pioneer Osamu Tezuka's original strip. It's a Good vs Evil superhero/supervillain set-up and should appeal to the young, or those who hanker for the days when animation meant cardboard stuff for kids. Personally, I prefer the subtlety and complexities of more recent Japanese animation.

UROTSUKI DOJI III, Volume 1

Kiseki Films; £10.99

UROTSUKI DOJI III, Volume 2

Kiseki Films; £9.99

A superb hi-fi stereo soundtrack, good dubbing and some fine visuals fail to compensate for an incoherent script and poor, derivative characterization. These latest episodes (47 and 42 minutes respectively) occasionally look great, but they're mostly a great load of rubbish, not that anyone attracted by the title and the "18" rating is likely to care overmuch, though there is less kinky sex than in the first two series. Subtitled versions are promised later in the year for sad persons who take this kind of stuff seriously.

All these titles are dubbed into English unless otherwise indicated, and are available from Cybertek in the Agora Centre, Bletchley, Milton Keynes (0908-274850).

KAMASUTRA, mentioned above, is yet another example of a little-known and recent video being picked up by a British video company (in this case, Western Connection) in the hopes that it will appeal to British tastes. A lot of the UK releases seem rather odd choices; why no Miyazaki, for example? The reason is that UK companies simply cannot afford the huge licensing fees demanded for the really good stuff (eg., £2 million for the complete GUNDAM package).

Finally, a note to laserdisc-player owners: with Pioneer now entering laserdisc anime in a big way, a lot more fine American-subtitled anime laserdiscs are now available, at prices which sometimes compare favourably with tapes (you can also order Japanese laserdiscs via specialist dealers, at horrible prices); this is assuming that you bought a PAL/NTSC player and not one of the limited PAL-only units. ☐

COVER NOTES

The following list details books received for review since late February and does not preclude a full review in this or a subsequent issue of CRITICAL WAVE. Dates shown indicate the approximate first availability in Britain, either as UK first edition or US import. A number of codes are also utilized: a (anthology), c (collection of short fiction or poetry), f ("fix-up", a book constructed from material initially published elsewhere, usually in sf magazines), g (graphic novel), n (novelization of movie, comic strip or tv show), p (art portfolio), t (genre-related non-fiction text), s (audiotape).

HARPERCOLLINS / GRAFTON / FONTANA / FLAMINGO: CHAOS MODE by Piers Anthony (1994), £15.99; STRANGEDREAMS ed by Stephen Donaldson (a, 1946-90, includes Garry Kilworth, M John Harrison, Franz Kafka), £5.99; THE MOAT AROUND MURCHESON'S EYE by Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle (1992), £5.99.

MICHAEL O'MARA: COLIN THE LIBRARIAN by Rich Parsons, Tony Keaveny (1993), £3.99.

LITTLE, BROWN/MACDONALD/ORBIT/FUTURA/SPHERE / WARNER: PERSONAL DARKNESS by Tanith Lee (1993), £4.99; DARKNESS, I by Tanith Lee (1994), £15.99; WHITE GHOST by Shaun Hutson (1994), £15.99; THE MAGIC OF RECLUCE by L E Modesitt Jr (1991), £5.99.

SWAN PRESS: IDENTIFYING THE OBJECT by Gwyneth Jones (c, 1988-92), USS3.75.

TRANSWORLD / CORGI / BANTAM PRESS / SPECTRA / DOUBLEDAY: SHADOWS by John Saul (1992), £4.99; THE DARK SIDE OF THE SUN by Terry Pratchett (1976), £14.99; GUARDIAN by John Saul (1993), £14.99; STRATA by Terry Pratchett (1981), £14.99; THE WOLF OF WINTER by Paula Volsky (1993), £4.99; THE COLOUR OF MAGIC by Terry Pratchett (1985 but shown as 1983, s1993, read by Tony Robinson), £7.99; THE LIGHT FANTASTIC by Terry Pratchett (1986, s1993, read by Tony Robinson), £7.99; EQUAL RITES by Terry Pratchett (1987, s1993, read by Tony Robinson), £7.99.

GOLLANCZ / VGSF: RED DUST by Paul J McAuley (1993), £4.99; PASQUALE'S ANGEL by Paul J McAuley (1994), £15.99; NURSERY TALE by T M Wright (1982), £4.99; SHADOW'S FALL by Simon R Green (1994), £5.99; THE WEIRD COLONIAL BOY by Paul Voermans (1993), £4.99.

HODDER HEADLINE / HODDER & STOUGHTON / NEW ENGLISH LIBRARY: CADWAL CHRONICLES, THROY by Jack Vance (1993), £5.99.

ORION / MILLENNIUM: SEAQUEST DSV, FIRE BELOW by Matthew J Costello (1994), £14.99; HEART READERS by Kristine Kathryn Rusch (1993), £4.99; GLOBALHEAD by Bruce Sterling (c, 1985-92, "Are You for 86?" original to this volume), £4.99; THE BLACK GRYPHON by Mercedes Lackey, Larry Dixon (1994), £9.99; FACADE by Kristin Kathryn Rusch (1993), £4.99.

PAN / MACMILLAN / SIDGWICK & JACKSON: STREAMSKELTER by Simon Harding (1994), £4.99.

TITAN: STAR TREK, PERRY'S PLANET by Jack C Haldeman II (1980), £4.50.

BOXTREE: WARHAMMER, IGNORANT ARMIES ed by David Pringle (a, 1989, incl. Kim Newman, Stephen Baxter, William King, Nicola Griffith), £3.99; THE DEEP SPACE LOG BOOK by Mark A Altman, Edward Gross (1994), £9.99.

SIMON & SCHUSTER: STAR TREK, THE NEXT GENERATION, DARK MIRROR by Diane Duane (1993, s1993, read by John de Lancie), £7.99.

DRAGON'S WORLD/PAPER TIGER: MERMAIDS AND MAGIC SHOWS by David Delamare, Nigel Suckling (p, 1994), £10.95; HORRIPILATIONS by J K Potter, Nigel Suckling (p, 1994 but shown as 1993), £12.95.



by Steve Green

Given the eagerness of the British Board of Film Classification to adopt Michael Howard's ludicrously ill-defined guidance on video violence even before the Criminal Justice Bill reaches the House of Lords, and its chairman's willingness to apply such rules retrospectively [see page three], it's debatable whether this particular column — or its predecessors, for that matter — serves any purpose. After all, it may be that much of the material I'm about to discuss will be pulled back off the video shelves under legislation which endangers any release stronger than *THE JUNGLE BOOK* (speaking of which, shouldn't the pyromaniac King Louis be considered an "inappropriate model" for young children, and what of the arch scrounger Baloo?).

I had intended to open with a tribute to Nigel Wingrove and the Redemption crew, for their efforts in resurrecting many of the movies which typify the best Eurohorror has to offer, frequently triumphs of style over budgetary limitations, of atmosphere over viscera (not that there isn't enough gore to ensure a large number of tapes would fall foul of the Howard-Alton carve-up).

There is a fair amount of crap in here as well, to be sure. *VIRGIN WITCH* (1970), for instance, contains little of interest other than full-frontal appearances by thespian siblings Ann and Vicky Michelle (the latter best known these days for the WW2 sitcom 'ALLO, 'ALLO); the devil worship scenes were certainly more effectively handled by director Norman J Warren on *SATAN'S SLAVE*, released six years later. Equally, I fail to see how the reputation of the late Mario Bava will be enhanced by the rescuing of *ECOLOGIA DEL DELITTO* (1971) under its UK title *BAY OF BLOOD* (aka *BLOODBATH*), the few striking sequences (a swimmer's encounter with a floating corpse, the cynical twist ending) failing to compensate for the tedium of the production line homicides. I know I'm also out of step with a large section of horror fandom in finding Jean Rollin's *LE FRISON DES VAMPIRES* (1970) hilariously camp, with over-theatrical camera tricks pinched from the far better *NOSFERATU: EINE SYMPHONIE DES GRAUENS* (1921, and coincidentally also reissued on the Redemption label).

On the other hand, any company which can track down an original cut of Dario Argento's thriller *PROFONDO ROSSO* (1975, aka *DEEP RED*) deserves applause, even if the "widescreen" tag on the sleeve credits sadly proves a hollow promise. A taut cinematic maze, in which David Hemmings reprises his *BLOW-UP* role as the unwitting witness (ingeniously, a distinction which Argento contrives to extend to his audience), it ranks alongside *SOTTO GLI OCCHIELLI ASSASSINO* (1982, aka *TENEBRAE*) as the director's best work. Full marks, also, for making the exquisitely surreal *LISA AND THE DEVIL* (1972) available again in the version with which Bava captivated that year's Cannes festival, rather than the dire *HOUSE OF EXORCISM*.

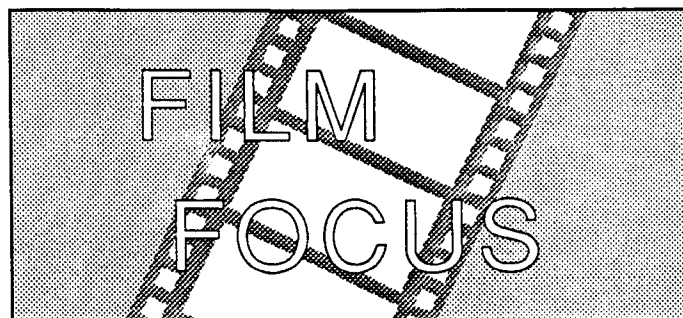
There are some genuine oddities here, too. *FLAVIA THE HERETIC* (1974, aka *REBEL NUN*) features Florinda Bolkan as a 15th Century cross between Maria von Trapp and Lorena Bobbitt, finally striking back against religious and sexual repression by donning armour and leading a Muslim rape gang into her former retreat; the fantasy sequences are only slightly more restrained than those designed by Derek Jarman for Ken Russell's *THE DEVILS* and the flaying sequence at the film's close is unlikely to endear it to Alton and his fellow-(non)thinkers.

But even the most dismal of the European horror movies released during the 1970s and early 1980s usually has more to offer than the current die-cast output from America's studios. Despite the promise implicit in its title, the most disturbing aspect of *JASON GOES TO HELL: THE FINAL FRIDAY* isn't its lame plot (we discover Jason Vorhees had a sister, just as Michael Myers had in *HALLOWEEN II*, and that he intends to resurrect himself via his grandchild, much as Freddy Krueger endeavoured in *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 5: DREAM CHILD*) or run-of-the-mill sfx, but the dispiriting inner certainty that the cycle will stumble on regardless (cue hint in the fade-out). The horror, the horror — or rather, the tedium, the tedium.

MAN'S BEST FRIEND, written and directed by John Lafia, is slightly more fun, as insane geneticist Lance Henriksen manufactures the ultimate mongrel, part dog, part leopard, part snake, part chameleon, with a dash of owl to taste. Enter somewhat dimwitted reporter Ally Sheedy, whose professionalism isn't exactly displayed at its best as she fails to notice the rogue mutant chomping its way through the local population. Worse, a sequel looms ahead, like dog turds on a London pavement.

And so, with boundless (if misplaced) optimism, we turn to Dario Argento's *TRAUMA*, co-written with author/editor T E D Klein and available just one year after its Stateside release (some kind of record for an Argento). And just as unswervingly, we come to the conclusion that for many directors (John Woo and George Slusser, please take note) the only way to protect their reputations is to keep them as far away from the Hollywood sausage machine as possible.

A seance ends in murder, with the sole witness (Asia Argento) unaware of exactly what she's seen; a series of murders follows, rooted to a past injustice; the young girl must solve the mystery, save her boyfriend from decapitation and then spend several years with a speech coach to avoid dubbing if her daddy isn't directing next time. In other words, it's a mosaic of his past successes, with heavy liftings from *PROFONDO ROSSO*, *PHENOMENA* (aka *CREEPERS*), *SUSPIRIA* and *OPERA*, but bizarrely few of the visual flourishes which distinguish even his more absurdly convoluted movies. On this evidence, pandering to Hollywood commerciality is even deadlier than having your head sawn off; more movies like this and Alton won't have to worry about adult videos falling into the hands of children, because there won't be a big enough audience to warrant making them in the first place. ☒



by Geoff Cowie

Not to be confused with *GUNDAM*, *THE GUYVER* or *GUNNM*, *GUNHED* is a live-action sf release, directed by Masato Harada and set to tour major cities until May 14; a video release is likely later in the year.

As the movie opens, a group of armed treasure hunters are flying to a remote Pacific island, 8JO, where lie the remains of a vast industrial complex. Awaiting them is Kiron 5, a supercomputer which 13 years previously tried to seize control of the Earth. After 373 days of combat, during which the computer defended itself with levitating "air robots", the war ended in an apparent draw, with most of the war machines destroyed. The computer ceased operation, the island was declared a contaminated area and the last of mankind's "Gunhed" adaptable tank/robots lie damaged.

The opening scenes see most of the intruders killed, leaving a treasure hunter and a woman Texas Ranger, plus two child survivors of the war, to fight it out with the computer and a rogue cyborg. The treasure hunter, Brooklyn, finds Gunhed 507 and repairs it.

Prospective viewers should be warned that unless they arm themselves with a synopsis beforehand, they will find it almost impossible to follow anything that is going on in this movie; the original Japanese/American co-production had Japanese and English dialogue (subtitled in Japanese) and was intended for an audience who had read the comic. Harada's directorial style is oriented to showing off the sets and effects rather than explaining anything and it's impossible to follow the geography of the action, with even the Gunhed tank only half-seen.

The result looks quite extraordinary. I've never seen anything quite like it, except in *TETSUO* and *TETSUO II*: industrial sets, guns, shadowy characterization. Billed as a popularist film, the experience is at times more akin to an art movie; there are frequent flashes, explosions and shots of gun muzzles firing, intermittently overlain with computer graphics messages and bits of pseudo-science. At any rate, the makers seem to have taken it all quite seriously.

GUNHED was well-panned by Joe Public on Channel Four's *MOVIEWATCH*, scoring five points out of a possible 40! Personally, I don't think it's any worse than your average direct-to-video sf movie, and must say I rather enjoyed it. ☒

IN BRIEF

The long-awaited **FANTASY TALES** swansong [see last issue] was released in early April under the title **THE ANTHOLOGY OF FANTASY AND THE SUPERNATURAL**. Although produced by Robinson, the entire print-run has been sold to Tiger (whose name appears on the spine) for distribution via bargain bookshops, the £9.95 price tag reduced to £3.99.

Bob Shaw has been appointed editorial consultant for Allison & Busby's new sf list. He produced **HOW TO WRITE SCIENCE FICTION** for the company in 1993, a commission he discussed in **CRITICAL WAVE** #30.

Dean Cain, currently donning tights and cape in **THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN** (the UK title for **LOIS & CLARK**), is Britain's most popular superhero, according to a BARB poll in April. The series' outings on BBC1 are watched by 7.5M viewers, easily beating **CAPTAIN SCARLET**'s resurrection on BBC2 (2.4M) and **BATMAN**'s comic-book capers on Channel 4.

Bruce Gyngell, former head of TV:AM and now chair of Australia's Nine Network, joined the pro-censorship lobby at the annual Cannes tv fair in April, welcoming laws requiring video games distributed in Australia to be certificated. This from the man who exposed Britain's youngsters to Roland Rat.

Among the shows being promoted to international buyers at Cannes was **SPACE POLICE**, a live-action series from Gerry Anderson, whose most recent telefantasy ventures were **TERRAHAWKS** and **DICK SPANNER**. It's scheduled for a BBC airing next year, following up the channel's success with **THUNDERBIRDS** and **CAPTAIN SCARLET** (with **JOE 90** imminent).

May sees a handful of events celebrating the Peterborough Science Fiction Club's 18th Birthday. They include "an evening of literate fantasy" on 18 May ("ie. *no elves*"), held at the Great Northern Hotel in conjunction with local small press outfit Dedalus. Guests should include editor and author Brian Stableford, publisher Eric Lane and author Robert Irwin (**THE ARABIAN NIGHTMARE**). Admission will cost £3.00.

For further information about this and other events, contact Pete Cox at 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 0RB.

Intersection, the 1995 Glasgow worldcon, has launched a series of public meetings at the Wellington public house, near London's Waterloo Station, London. The sessions are scheduled for the third Friday of each month — which means an comfortable choice for convention staff who also belong to the Birmingham SF Group, which has met on that night for more than 20 years.

Although Tim Burton will forego the directorial reins on Michael Keaton's third outing as Batman (reportedly joined by Robin Williams as the Riddler), he is set to helm the spin-off movie **CATWOMAN**, with Michelle Pfeiffer reprising her **BATMAN RETURNS** role as the acrobatic anti-heroine.

Burton's current project, **ED WOOD**, features Johnny Depp as the transvestite director of **PLAN NINE FROM OUTER SPACE** and **GLEN OR GLENDA**; Patricia Arquette co-stars.

TRANCERS 4: JACK OF SWORDS, now available on video from Columbia TriStar, sees Tim Thomerson back in the role of zone trooper Jack Deth, this time hunting vampiric zombies across the fantasy landscape of Orpheus.

The same company releases **TICKS** on 4 May, under the banner "They'll make your skin crawl"; directed by Tony Randel (**HELLRAISER II**), the movie was exec-produced by Brian Yuzna (**SOCIETY**, **BRIDE OF RE-ANIMATOR**).

Keanu Reeves, Ice-T and Dolph Lundgren feature in **JOHNNY MNEMONIC**, adapted from a William Gibson short story. Filming began in Toronto in February.

LIFEPOD, the sf thriller recently released by High Fliers, has a longer history than most of its genre — it's adapted from the storyline Alfred Hitchcock and Harry Sylvester created for Hitchcock's 1944 drama **LIFEBOAT**.

UPDATES

CONVENTIONS ROUND-UP

[In the following listing, certain abbreviations are used for brevity: "tba", to be announced; "att", full attending membership; "supp", supporting membership (usually converted to full membership upon payment of the cash difference); "TM", toastmaster; "MC", master of ceremonies; "con", convention; "GoH", guest of honour; "AGoH", artist GoH; "FGoH", fan GoH; "stc", subject to other commitments, usually acting; "feb", room rate includes full English, rather than continental, breakfast; "relaxacon", event with limited programme; "filk", music by sf/fantasy fans; "tbc", to be confirmed.]

6-8 MAY 1994: VIRTUAL FUTURES. "A Philosophical Conference", University of Warwick. Guests Pat Cadigan and Bruce Sterling. Att. £10 (£12 after 30 April). Contact: CRPL, Department of Philosophy, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL.

13-15 MAY 1994: ELSTERCON. Leipzig, Germany. Att. 40 DM, contact: Manfred Orlowski, Koernerstrasse 49, 04107 Leipzig, Germany.

20-22 MAY 1994: MEXICON 6 — THE PARTY. Herford Park Hotel, Stevenage. Celebrates tenth birthday of MEXICON and twentieth anniversary of Tynecon. Friday is party night, with the formal programme beginning Saturday and ending early Sunday morning. Att. £9.50, room rates £22.50 (single) or £19.50 per person (if sharing). Contact: Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH.

20-22 MAY 1994: CORFLU NOVA. The Crystal Gateway Marriott hotel, Arlington, Virginia, USA. Eleventh annual relaxacon. Contact: c/o 4030 8th Street S., Arlington, VA 22204, USA.

26-29 MAY 1994: EUROCON. Timisoara, Romania. Att. £15.00. Contact: ARSFan (Romanian SF Association), Str. Paris nr.1, 1900 Timisoara, Romania. Optional 'seven-day advance tour of historic Transylvania'. British agent: Bridget Wilkinson, 17 Mimosa, 29 Avenue Road, Tottenham, London, N15 5JF.

27-30 MAY 1994: FURRYCON '94. Old Ship Hotel, Brighton. Annual gaming convention. Att. £12.00 (non-gamers, £1.00). Contact: SFC Press, 42 Wynnendale Road, London, E18 1DX (tel. 071-358-1613).

27-30 MAY 1994: INCONCEIVABLE. Tudor Court Hotel, Draycott, near Derby. Second "humour in sf and fantasy" convention from the people responsible for Inconsequential. Att. £25.00, (£23.00 to members of Octarine or ZZ9). Contact: 12 Crich Avenue, Littleover, Derby, DE23 6ES.

28 MAY 1994: WRITERS' GATE. Peterborough SF Club 18th birthday event, Great Northern Hotel, Peterborough. Guests: Gary Russell, Jim Mortimer, Gareth Roberts, Justin Richards, Adrian Rigelsford. Att. £5.00 (£4.50 unwaged). Cheques payable to "Mr A Adams" to Flat 4, 101 Park Road, Peterborough, PE1 2TR.

3-5 JUN 1994: HAMBURG PHANTASTIC 1994. CANCELLED.

10-12 JUN 1994: SHOTS ON THE PAGE. Forte Crest Hotel, Nottingham. Mystery/detective event. Att. £40.00. Contact: Broadway Media Centre, 14 Broad Street, Nottingham, NG31 3AL.

18 JUN 1994: PROJECT L-KON. Animé con, Liverpool University, 9.30am-late. Att. £5.00 in advance, £10.00 on the door. Contact: c/o LUSF, University of Liverpool, Guild of Students, 2 Bedford Way, Liverpool, L69.

22-23 JUN 1994: STSF '94. Barcelona, Spain. International workshop on science and technology through sf. Contact: Miquel Barcelo, Facultat d'Informatica, Universitat Politcnica de Catalunya, Pau Giargallo 5, E 08028, Barcelona, Spain.

24-26 JUN 1994: BALTICON (LITHUANICON). Vilnius, Lithuania. Att. \$25.00. Contact: SF Club Dorado, G Beresnevicius, Antakalnis 65-33, 2040 Vilnius, Lithuania.

1-3 JUL 1994: PARCON. Banska Bystrica, Slovakia. Contact: Parcon 94, Bemolaková 33, 974 05 Banska Bystrica, Slovakia.

1-3 JUL 1994: MUTATION. Eurocon, Teplice, Czech Republic. No longer combined with Parcon. Status very uncertain. Contact: Frantisek Hlouš, SFK Duna, Leninova 233, 41731 Teplice-Novosedlice, Czech Republic.

1-31 JUL 1994: KOMARINAYA PTESH ("Mosquito Spot"). Tuzla, Kertch, Crimea. Russian/Ukrainian style relaxacon, held annually since 1984, completely informal, bring own food/cutlery/tent/etc. No need to book in advance. Contact: Andrei Tzemenko, Borzenko 25-45, 334514 Kertch, Ukraine.

2-3 JUL 1994: 7TH SF DAYS NRW. Dusseldorf, Germany. Contact: Heinrich Sporck, Am Sonnenberg 38, W-4630 Bochum 5, Germany.

9 JUL 1994: CAPTION '94. Third annual Oxford comics convention, Oxford Union Society, St Michael's Street, Oxford. Guests: Hunt Emerson, Pete Loveday, Carol Bennett, Erica Smith. Att. £10.00 (£6.00 unwaged, £12.00 on the door). Contact: 25 Hart Street, Oxford, OX2 6BN.

22-24 JUL 1994: DIMENSION JUMP. Red Dwarf con, Angel Hotel, Northampton. Att. £25.00 (until 1 June then £30.00). Send "two stamps" to Garden Cottage, Hall Farm, Scottow, Norwich, NR10 5DF.

29-31 JUL 1994: WINCON III. King Alfred's College, Winchester. GoHs Algis Budrys, James P Hogan, Writers' Workshop with Colin Greenland. Multi-

stream event organized by the South Hants SF Group. Att. £23.00, supp. £16.00. Contact: Keith Coslett, 12 Crowsbury Close, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 7TS.

29-31 JUL 1994: VOYAGE 1994. Novotel, Sheffield. The first British VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA convention. GoHs tbc. Att. £30.00. Contact: 15 Fullers Court, Exeter, Devon, EX2 4DZ.

END JUL 1994: ATLANTYKRON. Romania. Sf workshop cum camp/relaxation, with emphasis on creation not consumption. Contact: Sorin Repanovici, Str Mihail Sadoveanu, nr.10 gi.10, ap.2, Loc Cemavoda, Jud, Constanta, Romania.

12-14 AUG 1994: INTERCON 94. BLS Conference Centre, Oslo, Norway. Guests: Brian Aldiss, CJ Cherryh. Att. £10.00/110 NOK before 15 July. Contact: Box 121, Vinderen, N-0319 Oslo, Norway.

25-28 AUG 1994: BOHEMIACON. Ustinad Labem, Czech Republic. Contact: SFK Nazca, P.P 17, 400 01 Usti nad Labem 1, Czech Republic.

26-28 AUG 1994: B'HAMCON/DEEPSOUTHCON 32. Radisson Hotel, Birmingham, Alabama, USA. GoH Lois McMaster Bujold, FGoh Bob Shaw, TM Mike Resnick. No further details supplied. Contact: B'hamcon Registration, 8325 7th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL-35206, USA.

1-3 SEP 1994: NATIONAL FRENCH SF CON. Sophia-Antipolis, in the Antibes. Contact: William Waechter, 56 Bd Joffre, Toulon 83100, France.

1-5 SEP 1994: CONADIAN. 52nd world science fiction convention, Winnipeg Convention Centre, plus downtown hotels. GoHs Anne McCaffrey, Barry B Longyear, AGoh George Barr, FGoh Robert Runte. No further details supplied. Contact: Helen McCarthy, 147 Francis Rd, London, E10 6NT (UK office), or Post Office Box 2430, Winnipeg NB, Canada, R3C 4A7 (main address).

9-11 SEP 1994: FIFTH FESTIVAL OF FANTASTIC FILMS. Sachas' Hotel, Piccadilly, Manchester. Guests: Roger Corman, James Bernard, Ray Harryhausen. Att. £35.00 rises 1 July £40.00. Contact: Tony Edwards, The Society of Fantastic Film, 95 Meadowgate Road, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN.

30 SEP-2 OCT 1994: FANTASYCON 19. Annual British fantasy convention. Venue and price tba. GoH Brian Lumley, MC Graham Joyce. Contact: Peter Coleborn, 46 Oxford Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 6DT.

30 SEP-2 OCT 1994 (tbc): CHUMATSKYSHLYAH. Kiev, Ukraine. Ukrainian national convention. Contact: Alexander Vasilkovsky, Poste Restante, General Post Office, 252001, Kiev-1, Ukraine.

1-2 OCT 1994: OCTOCON '94. Fifth national Irish sf con, Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin, Eire. Guests: Robert Holdstock, Paul Peart, Michael Carroll, Storm Constantine, Morgan Llywelyn, Tom Matthews, Bob Monks, Robert Rankin, Michael Scott, Kelly Strom, Stephen Walsh, James White. Att. £12.00, supp. £5.00 until 1 May, £16.00/£10.00 until 1 September, £20.00 on the door. Contact: 20 Newgrove Avenue, Sandymount, Dublin 4, Eire.

7-9 OCT 1994: HISPACON '94. Burjassat, near Valencia, Spain. Spanish national convention. Contact: Grupo Gandiva, Apdo Corres 70, 46120 Alboraya (Valencia), Spain.

21-24 OCT 1994: ALBACON '94. Central Hotel, Glasgow. Att. £25.00, supp. £15.00 (both rise 30 April). Contact: Michelle Drayton, 10 Atlas Road, Springburn, Glasgow, G21 4TE.

28-30 OCT 1994: HANSECON. Luebeck, Germany. Contact: Eckhard D Marwitz, Postfach 1524, D-W-2070 Ahrensburg, Germany (tel. 04531-86106).

28-30 OCT 1994: WORLD FANTASYCON '94. LA Hotel, New Orleans. GoH and dates tbc (as Halloween falls on a Monday). Membership is limited to 1000. Contact: Post Office Box 791302, New Orleans, LA-70179-1302, USA.

29-30 OCT 1994: WHO'S SEVEN. Queen's Hotel, Crystal Palace, London. DR WHO and BLAKE'S 7 event, with "very full and original programme". Att. £35.00 (£30.00 for hotel residents). Contact: 131 Norman Road, Leytonstone, London, E11 4RJ.

29 OCT 1994: TRANSYLVANIA '94. Hammersmith Novotel, London. The second convention organized by the ROCKY HORROR SHOW club Timewarp. Att. £25.00 until 31 May 1994 and then £30.00 (cheques should be accompanied by four reply-paid envelopes). For details of the convention or of Timewarp itself (membership £7.50/year) write to 1 Elm Grove, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9HE.

4-6 NOV 1994: NOVACON 24. Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham. Annual Birmingham SF Group con. GoH Graham Joyce. Att. £25.00, supp. £8.00 (includes Nova Award vote and all publications, but no guarantee of conversion to attending, as membership limited to 380 by fire regulations). Contact: Carol Morton, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS.

11-13 NOV 1994: UNIFICATION '94. Grand Hotel, Birmingham. Multi-media convention; QUANTUMLEAP, STAR TREK, ROBIN OF SHERWOOD, STAR WARS, etc. Contact: Clifton House, 27 Clifton Place, Newton Bar, Wakefield, WF1 3JH.

11-14 NOV 1994: CULT TV. TV appreciation weekend at Pontin's Seacroft Holiday Village, Hemsby (near Great Yarmouth). Guests: Sylvia Anderson, Annette Andre, Sophie Aldred, Victor Pemberton, Barry Lettis, Deborah Watling. Att. £27.50 before 31 May, £30.00 until 31 August, £35.00 from 31 August. Three nights bed, breakfast & evening meal £69.00. Contact: PO Box 1701, Peterborough, PE1 1EX.

27-29 NOV 1994: HILLCON V: CONSEAL. Dorint Hotel, Eindhoven, Netherlands. Att. 50f until 1 July, then 55f until 1 October. Contact: p/a Richard Vermaas, James Wattstraat 13, 1097 DJ Amsterdam, Netherlands.

EARLY DEC 1994: DRACON. Annual event, Dum rekreace, nr Brno Lake Dam, Brno, Czech Republic. Contact: PO Box 111, 612 00 Brno, Czech Republic.

EARLY DEC 1994: NORDCON. Gdansk, Poland. Contact: Gdanski Klub Fantastyki, PO Box 76, 80-325 Gdansk 37, Poland.

4-5 MAR 1995: MICROCON 15. Exeter University, details tba.

14-17 APR 1995: CONFABULATION. 46th British national sf con, Britannia International Hotel, London. GoHs Lois McMaster Bujold, Bob Shaw, Roger Robinson. Before 31 December att. £20.00, supp. £10.00, children (born on or after 13 April 1981) £10.00, "small children" (born on or after 18 April 1987) free. Contact: 3 York Street, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH.

27-30 APR 1995: FRANCON '95. Francophone con, Maison d'Ailleurs, Yverdon les Bains, Switzerland. Att. 50 Sf until 15 September then 75 Sf. Contact: c/o Amis de la Maison d'Ailleurs, Case postale 74-CH 1400 Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland.

24-28 AUG 1995: INTERSECTION. 53rd world sf convention, Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, Glasgow. GoHs Samuel R Delany, Gerry Anderson. FGoh Vin Clarke. Att. £60.00/US\$95.00, supp. £15.00/US\$25.00, junior (born 24 August 1980 or later) £15.00/\$25.00, child (born 24 August 1988 or later) £5.00/\$10.00 until 30 September 1994. UK contact: Admail 336, Glasgow, G2 1BR, Scotland. US contact: Theresa Renner, Post Office Box 15430, Washington DC, 20003-0430, USA.

OCT 1995: BOUCHERCON 25. World Mystery Con, Nottingham. Contact: c/o Broadway Media Centre, 14 Broad Street, Nottingham, NG1 3AL.

5-8 APR 1996: EVOLUTION. 47th British national sf con, Metropole Hotel, Brighton. Guests: Vernor Vinge, Colin Greenland, Bryan Talbot, Jack Cohen. Att. £20.00, supp. £12.00. Contact: 13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London, NW3 6PX.

29 AUG-2 SEP 1996: LACON III. 54th world sf convention, spread over the Anaheim Convention Center, the Anaheim Hilton and the Anaheim — in Anaheim, California. GoHs James White, Roger Corman, Takumi Shibano, Sachiko Shibano, Elsie Wollheim, TM Connie Willis. Non-pre-supporting, non-voters att. US\$75.00 until 15 August 1994. Contact: c/o SCIFI, Post Office Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409, USA.

OCT 1997: WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION. Britannia International Hotel, London Docklands. Celebrates centenary of Bram Stoker's DRACULA. No memberships will be taken until October 1994. Contact: Jo Fletcher, 24 Pearl Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 4QZ.

27 DEC 1999-2 JAN 2000: MILLENNIUM. Venue tbc, but definitely in Northern Europe (probably a Benelux country or UK). Att. £3.00/f10.00 per year, to be deducted from eventual rate (which will be announced before 1997). Contact: Malcolm Reid, 2/R, 9 Airlie Street, Hyndland, Glasgow, G12 9RJ.

[Our thanks to SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE, SHARDS OF BABEL, THYME, ANSIBLE, BRUM GROUP NEWS and Fans Across the World for assistance in the compilation of the above listing. Please mention CRITICAL WAVE when responding to listings or advertisements.]

[We would remind organizers that in order to guarantee inclusion in this section, full details of events should be sent to Martin Tudor at 845 Alum Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 2AG. Discounted advertising rates are also available to fannish events; send a reply-paid envelope for full details.]

CARD, COMIC, FILM & RECORD MARTS ROUND-UP

Birmingham: Comic Mart, Carrs Lane Church Centre, 4 June. Opens noon. Contact: Golden Orbit (CW), 9 Stratford Way, Huntington, York, YO3 9YW.

Brighton: Comic Mart, Brighton Centre, 29 May, 29 August. Admission 10am-noon £1.50, Noon-5pm £1.00. Contact: Vinylman Enterprises, 46 Sydney Street, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 4EP, (tel: 0273-608806).

Cardiff: Comic Mart, Central Hotel, St. Mary's Street, 30 April, 25 June, 3 September. Open noon, admission 50p. Contact: 0222-473266.

Cheshunt: SF TV Mart, Grundy Park, 5 June. No other details supplied.

Leeds: Comic Mart, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merriam Way, 25 June, 30 July. Opens noon. Contact: Golden Orbit, as above.

Leicester: Comic Mart, YMCA, Granby Street, 12 June. Opens noon. Contact: Golden Orbit, as above.

Liverpool: Film Fair, Central Hall, 28 May. No other details supplied.

Liverpool: Record Fair, Bluecoat Chambers, 7 May, 11 June, 2 July. Open 11am, 60p admission. No other details supplied.

Liverpool: Comic Mart, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, 26 June. Opens noon. Contact: Golden Orbit, as above.

London: Card Mart, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, WC1, 19 June, 21 August, 16 October, 4 December. Opens noon, admission free. Dealers contact: Rob on 071-476-1810.

London: Comicbook Marketplace, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, 22 May, 24 July, 30 October 1994. Opens noon, entry free, refreshments supplied.

London: Special Comic Mart, Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, 1 May, (August tba), 20 November. Opens noon, entry free. Contact: Barrie Roness (081-871-2773).

London: Westminster Comic, Film, SF Mart at the Methodist Central Hall, (5 minutes from Westminster tube station), special guest signings tba, 18 June 1994. Open 11am-4pm (no pre-admissions. Stallholders 8am-10am. Admission £1.00).

Manchester: Film Fair, Manchester Dominions, 30 April. No other details supplied.

Manchester: Comic Mart, Parkers Hotel, Corporation Street, 28 May, 23 July. Opens noon. Contact: Golden Orbit, as above.

Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Centre, 15 May. No other details supplied.

Newcastle: Comic Mart, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road, 14 May, 16 July. Opens noon. Contact: Golden Orbit, as above.

Nottingham: Comic Mart, Victoria Leisure Centre, 21 May, 6 August. Opens noon. Contact: Golden Orbit, as above.

Sheffield: Main Hall, Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, 30 April, 2 July. Opens noon. Contact: Golden Orbit, as above.

Stoke-on-Trent: YMCA, Harding Road, Hanley, 7 May. Opens noon. Contact: Golden Orbit, as above.

[The above details are correct to our best knowledge, but we advise readers to contact organizers if possible before travelling; please mention CRITICAL WAVE.]

It's DEFINITELY time to join...

NOVACON 24


Guest of Honour : GRAHAM JOYCE

Date : 4, 5 and 6 November 1994

Venue : The ROYAL ANGUS
THISTLE HOTEL
BIRMINGHAM

Rates to Join :	Up to 1st October	£25.00
	On the Door	£30.00

For Further
Details Contact : CAROL MORTON
14 Park Street,
Lye,
Stourbridge,
West Midlands,
DY9 8SS

 : 0384-825386
(Before 8.30pm please)