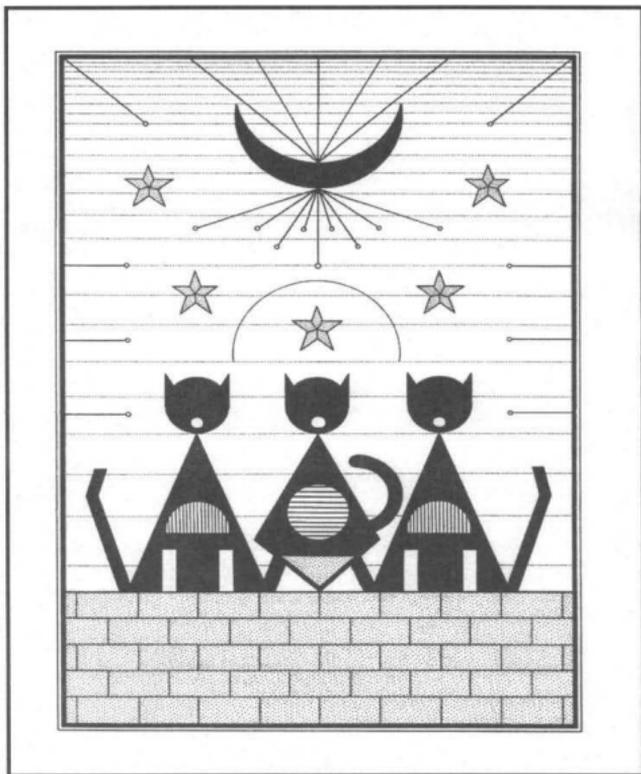


The news magazine of the British Science Fiction Association £2.25

Matrix

Issue 144

July/Aug 2000



Awards Special

***Galaxy Quest* Reviewed**

Fanzine Reviews

Book & Media News

Matrix

Issue 144 • July/Aug 2000

The bi-monthly news magazine of the
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Association**

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by Seán Russell Friend.

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Editorial

The recent cinema release of the universally panned *Battlefield Earth* once again leads me to wonder whether Hollywood can 'do' SF. Okay, maybe *Battlefield Earth* isn't a good example, being a spectacularly bad film made from an equally awful book, but each month there are is no shortage of similarly dismal or just plain mediocre SF/fantasy films clamouring for your attention at the multiplex. If, like me, you're a regular movie-goer then you'll, no doubt, go and see some of these films anyway and leave the cinema feeling mildly entertained. Just occasionally you may be pleasantly surprised (c.f. Gary Wilkinson's review of *Galaxy Quest* elsewhere in this issue). Very rarely will you come away from a film with that almost visceral intellectual thrill which, for want of a better phrase, we call 'sense of wonder'. Sadly it happens far too infrequently, even in written SF, but

it's even rarer in SF cinema.

As in all kinds of Hollywood films big SFX budgets and dumb ideas that were old hat in written SF 40 years ago are made to stand in for quality script-writing and simple imagination. The two films with fantastic elements that have most impressed me in the last couple of years have been *Pi* and *Being John Malkovich*. Neither are strictly SF films, but anyone who's seen them will recognise the genre sensibility that lies behind them.

Tellingly, both these films are low-budget independent efforts whose success largely depends on the imagination invested in their original concepts and scripts (although *Pi* also manages to look visually striking on a budget of a little over \$60,000). Equally tellingly, both productions are based on original screenplays, not adaptations of existing books or stories. Filming any kind of book is notoriously difficult, but it seems that SF has a particularly bad track record (*Dune*, *Freejack*, *Johnny Mnemonic*, *Total Recall*, etc., etc.) amongst its few successes, e.g. *Bladerunner* (even if that film distils the look of a PKD novel, rather than its intellectual heart).

As part of its remit to cover the SF field *Matrix* will, of course, continue to review all kinds of SF films (the good, the bad and the ugly). To demand that the film industry produces more *Pis* than *Battlefield Earths* is, of course, futile. After all, money and mass appeal talk, and films like *Pi* are always going to be a minority taste. However, it would be nice to think that in future we might be able to look forward to a better class of genre film when we visit our local fleapit.

Corrections

Those pesky URLs...

Robert Newman of ZZ9, the Official Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy Fan Club, would like us to point out that the website address given in last month's *Internet Exploiter* column is incorrect. They can be found at www.zz9.org

Gremlins also ensured that the address for Chaz Brenchley's Outremer website was rudely truncated. It should, of course, be www.outremer.co.uk

Novacon 30

at the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham,
from 10th-12th November 2000



Attending membership costs £32.00 (or £35.00 on the door), cheques payable to "Novacon 30" to: Steve Lawson, Registrations, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ, England, e-mail x15@zoom.co.uk, or for further information check out our webpage at <http://www.cooky.demon.co.uk/n30/n30.html>

News

Books, people and events making the headlines

Award to honour memory of James White

A literary competition in honour of the late Irish SF author James White has been announced. The James White Award will be given for the best science fiction short story selected by an international panel of judges which includes Morgan Llwyll, Michael Scott, Michael Carroll, David Pringle and David Langford. The author of the winning story will receive a trophy and the story will be published in *Interzone* magazine. The closing date for entries is August 23rd 2000, with the winner being announced before the end of the year.

The competition is open to any non-professional writer anywhere in the world. Each writer may submit a maximum of three stories, none of which have been published before. Stories must be in English and between 2,000 and 4,000 words in length. There will be an administration fee of £3/54 per story entered. Full rules and writers' guidelines are available from the Award administrator, James Bacon at 211 Blackhorse Avenue, Dublin 7, Ireland or from the Award's website at www.jameswhiteaward.com.

Wolfe in the fold

A conference on the work of Gene Wolfe is due to take place on Saturday 26th August 2000, at the Department of English, University of Birmingham. Although the deadline for submission of papers will have passed by the time you read this, those interested in attending should email or write to the address below to be put on the mailing list for further details as they become available.

From June 2000 the university website will also be hosting Ultan's Library - an electronic journal dedicated to studies of Wolfe. Further details are available from the address below. Organiser: Jonathan Laidlow, Dept. of Modern Languages & Classics, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT; e-mail: j.m.laidlow@bham.ac; ukultan01@yahoo.com Conference webpage: <http://members.tripod.co.uk/laidlow/ultan/>

Banks to break

Iain (M.) Banks recently announced that he will be taking a year long break from writing following the publication of his latest Culture novel *Look To Windward* this

August.

Le Guin receives Los Angeles Times Book Prize

At the end of April, Ursula K. Le Guin received the Robert Kirsch Award, recognising her as a highly acclaimed author living in the American West. The award is named for the Times literary critic who died in 1980. Jonathan Kirsch, the critic's son, presented the award of a citation and cash prize of \$1000. He described Le Guin as an "anthropologist of the post-nuclear world," introducing readers to "whole new races and places of her own device, filled with people who pulse with plausible life, fleshing out her self-invented worlds with languages and cultures, politics and folkways, dreams and terrors of their own."

There were a total of eight book prize recipients chosen from 40 finalists reviewed by anonymous panels of judges.

Another Sad Demise

Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine has sent notice that issue 50 will be the last. Issue number 48 of the quarterly magazine is currently at the printer. They are no longer reading manuscripts and will refund any money paid for issues beyond that as soon as issue 50 is in the mail. The magazine will be out of business by the end of 2000. *MZBFM* is a large format magazine that was first published in the summer of 1988. For most of its run, it was edited and published by Marion Zimmer Bradley, who passed away in September of 1999. This is the second recent genre magazine closing, since in February, Sovereign Media Co. announced that they were discontinuing *Science Fiction Age* with the May, 2000 issue.

SF Chronicle enters DNA Stable

In mid-May *Science Fiction Chronicle* Editor/Publisher Andrew I. Porter sold *SFC* to Warren Lapine, whose DNA Publications already publishes or handles the business end of several small press SF/fantasy/horror magazines, including *Aboriginal SF*, *Absolute Magnitude* and *Weird Tales*. Porter remains with *SFC* as news editor, but the sale will enable him to concentrate on some of the things he does best, including gathering, organising and writing the news. DNA publications ultimately intend to increase the frequency from the current

bi-monthly back to monthly, and provide a wider base, with the other DNA magazines, for consumer-oriented advertising campaigns.

Ticonderoga Launches Aussie Webzine

Russell B. Farr's Ticonderoga Publications launched new webzine Ticonderoga Online on 6 May 2000. The site features original fiction, articles and essays. It can be found at www.sf.org.au/ticonderoga.

SCI Fiction Portals now open

'SCI Fiction', Ellen Datlow's new SF area on Sci-fi.com, had its debut on May 19th. The plan is to show an original story each week and one classic 'reprint' every other week. Initial stories are an original novelette, 'Freeing the Angels' by Pat Cadigan and her husband Chris Fowler, and the classic Robert A. Heinlein story "...And He Built a Crooked House". The schedule for June included stories by Kim Newman, Howard Waldrop and Kristine Kathryn Rusch.

Brooks signs to Earthlight

John Jarrold has brought bestselling fantasy writer, Terry Brooks, to Earthlight, Simon & Schuster UK's science fiction and fantasy imprint. He has bought five books in a major deal from Teri Henry at Ballantine Books. It marks Brooks's return to his most famous and bestselling Shannara sequence - the five books will make up a new and independent Shannara series. Earthlight will rush through Book One for an October 2000 publication and will publish a new book every year until 2004.

This is the latest in a sequence of major deals made by Jarrold in recent months. It follows hot on the heels of his well-publicised acquisition of *Hersey*, a first novel by 17-year-old Anselm Audley.

Stableford's fiftieth

Welsh independent publishers Sarob Press are due to launch their new Sarob Science Fiction & Fantasy imprint with the publication of Brian Stableford's fiftieth novel *Year Zero*. The book will be available in a limited edition of 300 copies, signed by the author. Further details from: Sarob Press, 'Brynderwen', 41 Forest View, Mountain Ash, CF45 3DU; <http://home.freeuk.net/sarobpress>

Awards Special

More gongs than you can shake a stick at

The BSFA Awards

For details of this year's awards, presented at Eastercon see Chris Hill's column on page 15.

Sterling wins Clarke

The Arthur C. Clarke Award for the best science fiction novel published in Britain in 1999 has gone to *Distraction* by Bruce Sterling.

The Award was presented in a packed ceremony at the Science Museum, London, on Wednesday 17th May. Tricia Sullivan, the previous winner, made the announcement. The Award, which consists of an engraved bookend and a cheque for £1,000, was collected by Malcolm Edwards of Orion, Sterling's British publisher. Edwards, in his 'thank you' speech, made a point of praising the other books shortlisted.

The complete shortlist was:

Time by Stephen Baxter

The Bones of Time by Kathleen Ann Goonan

Silver Screen by Justina Robson

Cryptonomicon by Neal Stephenson

Distraction by Bruce Sterling

A Deepness in the Sky by Vernor Vinge

The judges were: Claire Brialey and Gary Dalkin representing the British Science Fiction Association, Doug Millard representing the Science Museum, Caroline Mullan and Kim Newman representing the Science Fiction Foundation. The Administrator and Chairman of the Judges was Paul Kincaid.

Among those present at the ceremony were previous winners Pat Cadigan and Paul McAuley, and previous shortlisted authors including Christopher Priest, Gwyneth Jones, James Lovegrove and Mary Gentle. Others present included Sir Arthur's brother, Fred Clarke, and niece, Angie Edwards, former judges including John Clute, Farah Mendelsohn, David V. Barrett, Maureen Kincaid Speller and Mark Plummer, and representatives from every major publisher of science fiction

in Britain

In his speech, the Administrator, Paul Kincaid, praised all six novels for using science fiction "to address complex and difficult questions that perhaps could be addressed in no other genre".

In an e-mail to *Matrix* the ever forthright Sterling said:

"On the subject of the Artie, I was touched, pleased and surprised... As it happens, Arthur Clarke was the first science fiction writer I ever met, in my teenage years in India. I went up to Sir Arthur after he did a lecture in Madras, and had him sign some Pan paperbacks of his. I'd bought them with my hoarded rupees.

Living under that long shadow of British publishing as I was, British SF had a huge formative influence on me. For years I had more books in print in Britain than I did in the US - I even wrote a column for Interzone. Now it's as if that experience has gone full-circle and I've happily received an SF award which properly belongs to some Briton. I try to keep in mind that the Texan SF community has already sacrificed two fine women to your cause - Lisa Tuttle and Leigh Kennedy. Y'all Brits got the best of the bargain, so send more bookends."

The judges for next year's Award will be Paul Billinger and Gary Dalkin for the BSFA, Doug Millard for the Science Museum, Caroline Mullan and Lisa Tuttle for the Foundation.

Baxter wins PKD Award

Our very own Vice-President Stephen Baxter has won the 1999 Philip K. Dick Award for *Vacuum Diagrams* (Harper Prism, previously published in the UK by Voyager). The announcement was made in April at Norwescon 23 in Seattle WA. The award comes with a prize of \$1,500.

A special citation and \$500 was given to Jamil Nasir for *Tower of Dreams*

(Bantam Spectra). Neither winner was present.

Nebula Award Winners

The 1999 Nebula Awards were presented at the 2000 Nebula Banquet, on May 20th, in New York City.

Best novel: *Parable of the Talents*, Octavia E. Butler (Seven Stories)

Best novella: "Story of Your Life", Ted Chiang (*Starlight 2*)

Best novelette: "Mars Is No Place for Children", Mary A. Turzillo (*SF Age* May 1999)

Best short story: "The Cost of Doing Business", Leslie What (*Amazing Stories* Winter 1999)

Best script: *The Sixth Sense*, M. Night Shyamalan (Buena Vista, August 1999)

As announced last issue the following awards were also presented:

Grand Master Award: Brian Aldiss
Author Emeritus: Daniel Keyes

A 'Service to SFWA Award' was also made to George Zebrowski & Pamela Sargent.

Stoker Award Winners

The 1999 Bram Stoker Award Winners, nominated and voted on by members of the Horror Writer's Association were as follows:

Novel: *Mr. X* by Peter Straub

First Novel: *Wither* by J.G. Passarella

Long Fiction (Tie): "Five Days in April" by Brian A. Hopkins; "Mad Dog Summer" by Joe R. Lansdale

Short Fiction: "Aftershock" by F. Paul Wilson

Fiction Collection: *The Nightmare Chronicles* by Douglas Clegg.

Anthology: *999: New Stories of Horror and Suspense*, edited by Al Sarrantonio.

Nonfiction: *DarkEcho Newsletter*, written and edited by Paula Guran.

Illustrated Narrative: *Sandman: The Dream Hunters* by Neil Gaiman.

Screenplay: *The Sixth Sense* by M. Night Shyamalan.

Work for Young Readers: *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* by J. K. Rowling.

Other Media: *I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream*, (Audio) by Harlan Ellison.

Lifetime Achievement Award: Edward Gorey; Charles L. Grant (Gorey's award was announced before his death earlier this year).

Specialty Press Award: Ash-Tree Press, Christopher & Barbara Roden.

Lambda Award

The Lambda Literary Foundation announced this year's Lambda Literary Award winners for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender fiction in Chicago on June 1st.

The winner for Gay Science Fiction/Fantasy was *Minions of the Moon* by Richard Bowes (Tor Books).

The other finalists were:

Night Shade by Victoria Brownworth & Judith Redding (Seal Press)

The Annunciate by Severna Park (Avon-Eos)

The Gumshoe, the Witch, and the Virtual Corpse by Keith Hartman (Meisha Merlin)

Through a Brazen Mirror by Delia Sherman, Cortney Skinner & Ellen Kushner (Circlet)

Hugo Award nominations

The nominations for the 2000 Hugo Awards, voted for by members of the World Science Fiction convention each year, are as follows:

Best novel

Darwin's Radio, Greg Bear (Harper

Collins UK; Del Rey)
A Civil Campaign, Lois McMaster Bujold (Baen)
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, J.K. Rowling (Bloomsbury; Scholastic/Levine)
Cryptonomicon, Neal Stephenson (Avon)
A Deepness in the Sky, Vernor Vinge (Tor)

Best novella

"Son Observe the Time", Kage Baker (*Asimov's* 5/99)
 "The Astronaut From Wyoming", Adam-Troy Castro & Jerry Olition (*Analog* 7-8/99)
 "Hunting the Snark", Mike Resnick (*Asimov's* 12/99)
 "Forty, Counting Down", Harry Turtledove (*Asimov's* 12/99)
 "The Winds of Marble Arch", Connie Willis (*Asimov's* 10-11/99)

Best novelette

"Stellar Harvest", Elanor Arnason (*Asimov's* 4/99)
 "Border Guards", Greg Egan (*Interzone* 10/99)
 "The Chop Girl", Ian R. MacLeod (*Asimov's* 12/99)
 "The Secret History of the Ornithopter", Jan Jars Jensen (*F&SF* 6/99)
 "10¹⁶ to 1", James Patrick Kelly (*Asimov's* 6/99)
 "Fossil Games", Tom Purdom (*Asimov's* 2/99)

Best short story

"Macs", Terry Bisson (*F&SF* 10-11/99)
 "Sarajevo", Nick DiChario (*F&SF* 3/99)
 "Hothouse Flowers", Mike Resnick (*Asimov's* 10-11/99)
 "Ancient Engines", Michael Swanwick (*Asimov's* 2/99)
 "Scherzo With Tyrannosaur" Michael Swanwick (*Asimov's* 7/99)

Best Dramatic Presentation

Being John Malkovich
Galaxy Quest
The Iron Giant
The Matrix
The Sixth Sense

Best professional editor

Gardner Dozois

David G. Hartwell
 Patrick Nielsen Hayden
 Stanley Schmidt
 Gordon Van Gelder

Best professional artist

Jim Burns
 Bob Eggleton
 Donato Giancola
 Don Maitz
 Michael Whelan

Best semiprozine

Interzone
Locus
The New York Review of Science Fiction
Science Fiction Chronicle
Speculations

Best Fanzine

Ansible
Challenger
File 770
Mimosa
Plotka

Best Fan Writer

Bob Devney
 Mike Glyer
 Dave Langford
 Evelyn E. Leeper
 Steven H. Silver

Best Fan Artist

Freddie Baer
 Brad Foster
 Teddy Harvia
 Joe Mayhew
 Taral Wayne

John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer (not a Hugo)

Cory Doctorow*
 Thomas Harlan
 Ellen Klages*
 Kristine Smith
 Shane Tourtellotte*

* second year of eligibility

Media News

Gary Wilkinson & others
round up the latest on film
& TV

There can be only one

The *Highlander* series is to be revived at the cinema. The original, starring Christopher Lambert, was a cult classic but unfortunately spawned some truly abysmal sequels. There was, however, a successful small screen spin-off with Adrian Paul as Lambert's distant relative. The new film *Highlander: World Without End* will see the two plot lines merge with Paul taking over for any further cinematic outings. It sounds spectacular - they are flying in lots of Hong Kong sword fighting specialists for the fight scenes.

Creepy crawly

Dean Devlin and Rolan Emmerich, producers of the recent *Godzilla* remake, are going back to monsters with *Arach Attack*. It will be an SF comedy about... giant spiders caused by a nuclear waste spill. The film is budgeted at a relatively slim-line \$30m. As most of this will be going on effects it will probably be staring nobody you will have heard of. "The physical prosecution of the movie," says Devlin "is a Volkswagen with a Porsche engine." - hope this isn't a reference to the deliriously bad *Giant Spider Invasion* which used a Volkswagen draped with a spider costume as one of its major 'special' effects.

J becomes E

Rapper LL Cool J has signed on to reprise James Caan's original starring role of Jonathan E in John McTiernan's remake of the 1976 sf classic *Rollerball*

Murphy shrinks

Eddie Murphy has annoyed he is to remake the Richard Matheson classic *The Incredible Shrinking Man*. Expect slightly more slapstick than the original. The question is, can his ego fit in a body that size?

Fantasy roundup

Neil Gaiman has announced he will direct a film version of his DC/Vertigo

Comics miniseries *Death: The High Cost Of Living*. It looks like relatively unfancied Chris Columbus has managed to grab the directing job for the forthcoming Harry Potter film. Rosie O'Donnell has been approached to play Harry's mother, with Ron Weasley as the boy himself. Other rumours suggest that Dame Maggie Smith could play Professor Minerva McGonagall, Harry's headteacher at Hogwarts.

Vampires, Vampires and more Vampires

Aaliyah (*Romeo Must Die*) - no I've never heard of her either - has signed on to the title role, that of Akasha, in the adaptation of Anne Rice's gothic *Queen Of The Damned*. This news comes in just as Wes Bentley (*American Beauty*) has announced he has dropped out of playing Lestat in the Warner Bros production. Filming begins on August 21st under the direction of Michael Rymur. It sounds like the film will incorporate events from *The Vampire Lestat* as well as the eponymous novel.

The rather cool British vampire miniseries *UltraViolet* will air on the Sci-Fi Channel in America beginning July 31st. Fox plans to produce a pilot for a U.S. series based on the vampire show for this autumn. Why can't we produce a new series?

Christopher Plummer is to play vampire hunter Von Helsing, in the forthcoming film *Wes Craven Presents: Dracula 2000*. In this modern-day retelling, Von Helsing is a London antique dealer who journeys to America to rescue his daughter from the clutches of Dracula. Patrick Lussier directs from a script by Joel Soisson, the film is to begin production in June in Toronto for a winter 2000 release. No doubt Craven has got something to do with it somewhere...

Wesley Snipes is putting the fangs back in for *Blade 2: Blood Hunt* returning as the half human/half vampire killing machine. Kris Kristofferson is also back (didn't he die in the last movie? Never mind...). Good news is the director is to be ace Mexican Guillermo Del Toro, whose bug flick *Mimic* didn't get the attention it deserved but whose stylish cult hit *Chronos* was simply mental.

X-Files Threesome

Dana Scully is set to have a new partner in the next series of *The X-Files*. David Duchovny has agreed to return as Fox Mulder for series eight but only in a limited number of episodes. Chris Carter is currently writing a replacement to team up with Gillian Anderson when her original partner is absent. Also supporting characters such as Agent Skinner and baddie Krycek will see their roles expanded. Not much news on the new cast member expect that he likely to be "a man" and "a sceptic". There have been rumours that the series was about to end but in a recent web interview Carter announced that "I still think there are lots of stories to tell" and says the new role is very important for the future of the show.

Danger! Danger!

Frank Darabont is to escape from his habit of directing adaptations of Stephen King prison novels set in the past (*The Shawshank Redemption* and *The Green Mile*) and is now expected to direct New Line Cinema's remake of *Forbidden Planet*. There has been a lot of discussion on the internet that the producer will not be sufficiently reverential to the original film (and *The Tempest*). He has made assurances that he will be, but remember this is the man who gave us the *Lost In Space* remake a while back...

Hanks goes north

Tom Hanks in discussion to produce and star in *Polar Express* based on the 29-page book by Chris Van Allsburg, a kids' classic in the States. It concerns a small boy who is taunted by other kids because he still believes in Santa Claus. Tom Hanks will be playing the conductor of a magical train who takes them all on journey to meet the real Santa himself. Ahhhh...

Buffy goes Red

In the madness that is Hollywood there comes this. Disney has apparently spent upwards of six figures developing a sequel to *Red Riding Hood*. Set ten years after the events of the fairy tale it will feature Red determined to finally rid the forest of the big bad Wolf. And whose is rumoured to play the red hooded one? - *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* Sarah Michelle Geller. What's Oz going to think?

"Never give up! Never Surrender!"

Gary Wilkinson sees *Star Trek* spoofed in *Galaxy Quest*

Sometimes you enter the cinema with great expectations only to have them cruelly dashed but sometimes you enter with low expectations and find them pleasantly confounded, discovering a real gem. *Galaxy Quest* is just such a cracker.

Star Trek seems an easy target for comedy. However most previous attempts have fallen flat - some sketches in the *Airplane II*, Russ Abbot doing jokes about Klingons (shudder), Shatner's famous 'Get a life' sketch. *Galaxy Quest* goes in a different direction; instead of obvious *Spaceballs*-type gags, this film is more a comment on the predicament of actors who are only remembered for appearing in one short-lived show they did years ago and have been forced to live off ever since along with the hard-core fans who give them that living. Though there are specific references and lots of in-jokes, for the most part the humour comes from character and situation. If anything the film is rather an affectionate tribute to the show.

We start with the *Galaxy Quest* logo then dive straight into the climax of an episode of the show. At the point of the cliff-hanger, and as the credits role, the camera pulls out to reveal the costumed audience at a frantic convention; this 'rare' episode forming an introduction to the appearance of the show's stars. However the cast are soon whisked away by real aliens, Thermians from the

Klaatu Nebula (who believe they have been watching 'historical reconstructions'), in order to save their people from an evil galactic overlord. The hack actors are forced into becoming the real thing.

The film is more an ensemble piece with nobody really hogging the limelight, though there are some great individual performances.

Tim 'Home Improvement' Allen gives an unexpectedly fine and subtle performance as William Shatner...er, sorry, Jason Nesmith / Commander Taggart - on the outside revelling in his 'star status' as the captain but underneath aware at how deeply sad that makes him. Alan Rickman is on fine form as a cynical former Shakespearean actor who plays with undisguised loathing a Spock-like alien forced to speak gobbledegook dialogue ("By Grabthar's hammer, I shall avenge thee!") for years. Sam Rockwell has great fun with a character who expects to die at any moment as he was originally saddled with the role of Crewman #6, not making it past the first address in the one episode he appeared in. It is just a pity that Sigourney Weaver and her amazing bra was not given more work to do as *Working Girl* and *Ghostbusters* has shown that she can be a fine comic actress. There is heavy irony in the fact that her character complains she was only there for decorative value and to repeat what the computer says

when Weaver is given scarcely much more to do. The Thermians are great - a fine physical comic performance, especially the virtual newcomer Missi Pyle as a completely off the wall love interest.

Although, perhaps predictably corny in parts, the plot is actually a great deal better than many of the recent *Trek* films and had some real surprises to it. It actually gets quite serious in parts but the emotional bits stay just the right side of pathos. The special effects are flawless and the film has real wide-screen magisterial sweep to its design. There are some great 'retro' designs especially with the shuttle craft which looks like it has flown straight off 40s magazine cover.

Maybe a couple of the jokes fall flat, or are over silly and some of the character motivation of the large cast have been left on the cutting room floor, but these are minor faults indeed. As the cast give their final bows and you leave the cinema you can only feel just a little bit sad that we do not have an actual *Galaxy Quest* TV series to go and watch. Overall its great unpretentious fun and after seemingly endless bodily fluid based 'teen' comedies, a couple of exceptions aside, its fantastic to finally have a comedy with is both funny and does not insult your intelligence.

And why *do* all spaceships have ducts?

Alphane Moon

Greg Pickersgill on fanzines

Science fiction fanzines are produced by science fiction fans. Well, that's obvious isn't it?

Once upon a time, back in the Twentieth Century, fanzines were invented by people with a common interest in science fiction. They came to know of each other through the letter columns of the SF magazines and Hugo Gernsback's Science Fiction League, which was an ambitious idea to spread the popularity of SF and interest in and understanding of science, across the world. Unsurprisingly, those early fanzines were often amateur imitations of the professional magazines, frequently filled with science fiction stories which were mercifully as short as they were bad, and the race-memory of fiction in fanzines being almost invariably rubbish stems from this time. They were, though, 'amateur' in its true sense - those fans were devoted to the magazines as they were by and large the only source of SF in the middle part of the last century, and when they weren't producing appalling imitations of G. Peyton Werthenbaker they were also writing loads of Stuff about SF itself - reviews, opinions, commentary and news. Then as now SF was the glue that holds the science fiction community together - the only thing that we all genuinely have in common, the only thing that actually matters within our community.

Along about this time the average BSFA member is thinking along the lines of "Fanzines - rubbish! Don't know don't care nothing to do with me". I deeply hope that some of those may still be reading this far down this column, because they have a valid and important point about the content of fanzines. Unless you're a particularly brilliant writer no-one except your established pals are going to be particularly interested in what you did down the pub last night, or on your holidays, but incredibly that sort of material (OK I'm simplifying dramatically here) is often what fills the pages of fanzines. I'm certainly not saying that there is no time and space for personal essays, reflections and commentary in fanzines - far from it; some of the best writers fandom has produced have done little else - but there is a point where one finds oneself thinking 'what the hell has this got to do with me, where's the shared

experience. That shared experience is often expressed through writing about other fanzines and fanwriters, about events such as conventions, but most importantly in writing about the one thing that genuinely binds us all together, an interest in science fiction itself.

The true science fiction fanzine (of which *MATRIX* and *VECTOR* are fine examples - yeah, really, these *are* fanzines, you know...) is the backbone of the fanzine world. There is occasionally loose talk from people who are old enough to know better that Real Fans don't read SF anymore, but you and I know that's just silly. Real Fans, people who take a genuine interest in SF, frequently become much more discriminating and fussy about what SF they read and why they read it, and read widely outside the field, as indeed they should. They also tend to become as interested, if not more so, in reading about SF as in reading the source material itself. (I certainly feel this - SF, like all fiction, is Just Made Up, isn't it? - it is more satisfying perhaps to read *about* the writers, the magazines, the history of the subject itself)

Over the last few decades (OK, I know this seems like ancient and irrelevant history to you if you've just been a BSFA member for eighteen months, but believe me the SF community has a substantial backstory; it's a virtual community with a culture, history, pantheon and literature that some countries would aspire to) there have been genuinely wonderful science fiction fanzines like the British *SPECULATION* (edited by Peter Weston 1963-73), *SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW* (Richard E. Geis in the USA, 1955-86) and Bruce Gillespie's *SF COMMENTARY* from Australia (1969 onwards - presently suspended due to lack of cash). And these are only some of the best and brightest. But it has to be said that, apart from scattered articles in well-edited general-content fanzines such as *BANANA WINGS*, there has been a distressing shortage of genuine SF fanzines in recent years, excepting *VECTOR*. Not that there's been any shortage of need, want, talk and planning. Now, thankfully, out of all that woolly hopefulness has come, on cue as its title implies, *STEAM ENGINE TIME*, a stand-up straight-up science fiction

fanzine like what they used to have in the old days, edited by an equator-spanning combo of the BSFA's own Paul Kincaid and Maureen Kincaid Speller and the aforementioned Australian superfan, Bruce Gillespie.

I could go on and on about the wit, erudition, style, intellectual rigor and conviction of *SET* but what's the point? To a degree you will know exactly what I mean by saying it's like an issue of *VECTOR* but a damned sight more so. If you want to read people who know the field inside out talking seriously - but with genuine infectious enthusiasm (this is not a *FOUNDATION* clone - it's a genuine science fiction fanzine produced for Love not for academic credit), then you will be right now looking for the address from which to get a copy. The first issue, published in April, includes articles on Cordwainer Smith's *Instrumentality* series, Olaf Stapledon, R. A. Lafferty, Iain Banks, a collation of recommendations for the Essential SF of the last twenty years, and a variety of general commentary on SF from the editors. And every bit of it excellently written, informative, enthusiastic, and exciting. It made me want to read more books. And it's a neat, elegant, and attractively published package too, exactly what we'd expect from Bruce Gillespie. Every BSFA member should be reading *SET* - it would be incredible to imagine that you have no interest in informed commentary about SF, wouldn't it? Get *STEAM ENGINE TIME*, it's Good.

Back in the Olden Days, before *INTERZONE*, science fiction magazines often recognised science fiction fandom. (Mind you there are those who think of *INTERZONE* as just a rather pompous and flashy fanzine itself, but that's another story...) It seems incredible now to think that the professional magazines regularly carried columns of fanzine reviews and news and commentary on the fan world, but they did, and a lot of it was good, frequently more entertaining than the fiction, and in consequence has weathered well, coming up time to us with more content and information than *SPORK CONQUERS THE URINALS* by Bengo Olsen. Anyway, in the 1950's there was

(Continued on page 11)

I want my DVD

Gary Dalkin rounds up some more new releases

You have to admire a man who wanted to enter a profession that didn't exist, so set out to invent it. Ray Harryhausen was inspired by a youthful viewing of *King Kong* to pursue a life in stop-motion animation. In doing so he has left us a legacy of classic films. It was his 80th birthday on June 29th, and without actually making a fanfare, Columbia Tristar have been releasing some of his best work on DVD - an 8 or 9 video box-set is to follow in August, which will include an approximately 90 minute interview/documentary. Very nicely packaged in overgrown CD jewel-boxes come *Jason and The Argonauts* (1963) and *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* (1958). I've been waiting for weeks for a review copy of the latter to arrive, but if it is as well done as the *Jason* disc, it will be worth the wait. These are Harryhausen's two best films, indeed two of the finest fantasy films ever made. Of course they are dated, and of course they are Americanised, but for all that there remains about these movies a fantastic sense of spirited adventure, a real dynamism, fun and nostalgia intertwined to an indispensable degree. If you are around my age you grew up with these films on morning TV, and if you may have been fortunate to grow-up with them in the cinema. Forget *Gladiator* for a moment, here is rousing swordplay and action where you can see what is going on.

Jason now looks, perhaps inevitably, a little grainy and in need of some minor restoration, but even so the transfer has been done very well, keeping the look of real film and almost preserving the original 1.85-1 aspect ratio. For all the film's faults, the remarkable stop-motion animation is still terrific, with the climatic duel with the skeletons one of cinema's great set pieces. So much so, last year's *The Mummy* paid lavish tribute in its own finale. The sound may be mono, but Bernard Herrmann's bold score still comes a-gleaming with clarity and power. The DVD includes a 57 minute documentary, the original trailer and a separate interview with Harryhausen. It's an excellent buy, and I expect the *Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* disc to be as good.

Also from Columbia Tristar is the first Stephen Spielberg film to be released on UK DVD. Some might argue *Hook* is a strange place to begin, but ignore them. *Hook* is a shamefully under-rated film, far superior to *ET* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* combined, the other Spielberg films it most closely resembles. The film is none of the things it is usually described as: a box-office failure, an Americanised remake of *Peter Pan*, a sprawling shambolic mess. The movie was less successful than expected for a 'popular' Spielberg release, but still an enormous hit by anyone else's standards. It is not a remake of *Peter Pan*, but a very rare thing, a genuine sequel-by-another hand which (like Stephen Baxter's *The Time Ships*) imaginatively extrapolates decades after the original into interesting new territory. The film offers a reaction against the greed-is-good ethos of the Reagan years, a profoundly unfashionable endorsement of family, and

perhaps more importantly from the point of view of the BSFA, a really imaginative enquiry into an interesting question: what would happen to the boy who was never going to grow up, if he grew up? Visually *Hook* is a masterpiece, easily Spielberg's best looking film, and his last really big film since he started shooting everything small in 1.85-1 rather than 2.35-1. This is a film about imagination, about childlike wonder, and how to retain, or regain, that sense while functioning as a hopefully well-balanced adult. Surely essential viewing for SF and fantasy fans? The structure is complex, and not everything works, but this is a rich tapestry of a film. The DVD transfer is superb, capturing all the detail and luminous look of Dean (The Thing, Apollo 13) Cundey's glorious cinematography. The increasingly disappointing Robin Williams here gives his best performance, and there is strong support from Julia Roberts, Maggie Smith, Bob Hoskins and Dustin Hoffman. As extras there are trailers, photo galleries and a 'featurette' on the DVD, but nothing especially compelling. Alongside *Legend* and *Labyrinth*, *Hook* is one of the few great modern fantasy films, and with *Jaws* and *Schindler's List*, belongs with Spielberg's best work.

Now a brickbat for Columbia Tristar, and an indication of how much the company's product has improved. Their early UK Region 2 release of *Starship Troopers* is a featureless flipper. Yes, you have to turn the wretched disc over halfway through. The American Region 1 import does the job far better, with a fine single-side 1.85-1 ratio transfer. All the extras are on the reverse of the disc. These include screen tests of the principle stars, theatrical trailer,

assorted behind the scenes material including sections on how the main special effects sequences were developed, and five deleted scenes which show that the finished film might have been a slightly softer, more romantic movie than the one which eventually reached the screen. There is also an enthusiastic, entertaining and informative commentary by director Paul Verhoven. None of this material is on the UK disc, so avoid it like you would a gigantic acid-spitting alien bug. A cracking monster flick and worthy companion to the rather more serious *Alien Legacy* DVD box-set.

All three discs are anamorphically enhanced for widescreen TVs.

Jason and the Argonauts: 1963, Produced by Charles H. Schneer, Associate Producer and Special Effects by Ray Harryhausen, Directed by Ray Chaffey, starring Todd Armstrong and Nancy Kovack. DVD transferred at 1.85-1. Mono. Columbia Tristar CDR 90037.

Hook: 1992, Produced by Kathleen Kennedy, Frank Marshall & Gerald R. Molen, Directed by Steven Spielberg, starring Robin Williams, Julia Roberts, Maggie Smith, Bob Hoskins and Dustin Hoffman. DVD transferred at 2.35-1. Dolby Digital. Columbia Tristar CDR 13187

Starship Troopers: 1997, Produced by Alan Marshall & Jon Davison, Directed by Paul Verhoven, starring Casper Van Dien, Dina Meyer and Denise Richards. DVD transferred at 1.85-1. Dolby Digital. Columbia Tristar 71719 (Region 1 version)

More DVD reviews from Gary next issue (ed.)

Alphane Moon (Continued from page 9)

the grandly titled *VARGO STATTEN SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE*, of which much has been said, mostly condemnatory. But like many bad things it was not without good somewhere within. OK, it may have been simple lack of money to buy anything better that made its shadowy editor run a series of columns titled *FANFARE AND SUCHLIKE* by one 'Inquisitor' chronicling the fans, fan activities and fanzines of that Golden Age, but we here like to think that it was at least in part inspired by a genuine recognition of fandom (a concept alien to the editors of *INTERZONE*, despite the fact that the magazine sprang from, and was initially financed by, fans and fandom).

Whatever, the *VARGO STATTEN* magazine ran its short course, changed title a few times, and was more or less forgotten. Until someone remembered, noticed, or was told that the 'Inquisitor' was in fact one A. Vincent Clarke, a British fan who was active and important for much of the latter part of the last century. A Great Man and personal hero of mine, if truth be told. So some time back the Banana Twins (Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer, brilliant writers and commentators themselves, editors of *BANANA WINGS*, the Best Fanzine of its Generation, and Guests of Honour at the 2001 Eastercon) collated together the *FANFARE* articles along with a variety of other fan-oriented material from the *VSSFM* and reprinted it all as *THE INQUISITOR - FAN COLUMNS FROM THE VARGO STATTEN SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE*. And it is truly a Wonderful Thing.

In this collection you will read about things that happened and fans that flourished maybe before you were born, but that should be no obstacle to SF fans whose concerns and imaginations habitually range boundlessly through time and space. OK, it's all the best part of fifty years old, but the point is these guys were Just Like Us, they had the same concerns and interests of SF fans today; they cared about books, fanzines, magazines, the cinema, the way the universe is. We can hear their little voices talking to us through these pages and we know that we are them too, because we genuinely do have the same world view. It's also a wonderfully produced item, reprinting all the same illustrated headers, and some of the cartoons and advertisements from the original magazines - it's somehow more

real and approachable to me than the original magazines, and I've had *them* in my collection for years. This isn't history, this isn't something about a time or people you know little and care nothing about, it's about SF fans writing about what's important to them - science fiction and fandom. I can't - I don't want to - believe that most, if not all, of the people who belong to the BSFA will not be sufficiently stirred to want to read this lovely collection. Or, for that matter, *STEAM ENGINE TIME*.

STEAM ENGINE TIME - MAUREEN KINCAID SPELLER, 60 BOURNE MOUTH ROAD, FOLKSTONE, KENT, CT19 5AZ

THE INQUISITOR - CLAIRE BRIALEY, 26 NORTHAMPTON ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY, CR0 6JE (NB a contribution of £3 to help cover publication costs is encouraged - payable to MARK PLUMMER)

Some other fanzines recently received and thoroughly recommended include -

BANANA WINGS 15 - CLAIRE BRIALEY & MARK PLUMMER

QUASIQUTE 2 - SANDRA BOND, 46 STIRLING ROAD, LONDON N22 5BP

OPUNTIA 44.1 - DALE SPEIRS, BOX 6830, CALGARY, ALBERTA, T2P 2EZ, CANADA

BENTO 11 - DAVID LEVINE & KATE YULE, 1905 SE 43rd AVENUE, PORTLAND, OREGON 97215, USA

NO AWARD 7 - MARTY CANTOR, 11825 GILMORE STREET, NUMBER 105, NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA 91606, USA

The simplest way to get any fanzine is to send the editors a few First Class stamps (and maybe a self-addressed envelope to be really helpful) if they're in the British Isles, or a five US dollar bill (easily obtainable via banks and exchange bureaux) if they're elsewhere. Or just a letter telling them Greg sent you...oh, it *might* work...

If you're just generally curious about fanzines and want to see a few samples contact Greg at the editorial address, by e-mail at MH@gostak.demon.co.uk, or via the MEMORY HOLE WEBSITE at www.gostak.demon.co.uk

Guest Column

by Stephen Baxter



In April 2000 I attended a 2-day conference at King's College, London on the evolution of the mind. The conference, sponsored by *New Scientist*, was open to the public - a mark of a civilised society which we ought to encourage.

I'm a complete novice in the subject, but the conference was relevant as a research exercise for my current and future projects (relevant enough for me to claim back the costs from the tax man anyhow). It provided me with two days of stimulating, reasonably relevant material in a calm environment where my mind was free to roam. When I research I am foraging for new material, not analysing, and my mind has to be encouraged to set off at tangents - and at sessions like this I find room to think sideways. (Similarly, at a short course on screenwriting a couple of years ago, I spotted John Cleese in the audience. It turned out the great man came along to the same course every year with a notebook and an open mind, seeking to

spark new insights into his current projects. Unfortunately on that occasion the screenplay he was working on was *Fierce Creatures*, which only goes to show that nothing works all the time.)

The conference itself was fascinating. The material was tough, the delivery uncompromising - but the scientists treated sometimes naïve questions from the lay audience members with respect, which sadly doesn't always happen.

But it was also frustrating. As we don't understand how minds work - either our own or the animals' - you won't be surprised that our grasp on the *evolution* of the mind is shaky at best. There was rather more philosophy than actual science, and the whole subject seems riven by factional infighting (for some reason everybody seems to have it in for evolutionary psychologists).

The meaning of the experiments that were described, involving rats pulling levers and budgies sliding bits of wood about, tended to elude me rather. But I did sympathise with the experimenters - how do you devise a definitive test for one state of mind over another?

But I have to admit my eyes glazed over some time on the second day when a questioner pointed out that a lively and enjoyable spat between two heavyweights, about whether rats

have 'beliefs' or not, couldn't actually be resolved one way or the other by any conceivable experiment - and if you can't do that, you ain't doing science.

I did wonder at times if the scientists were being rather anthropomorphic. We tend to peer into the eyes of an animal, not to see what it is like, but to seek ways it is like us - can it master a language? does it plan, hope, dream? - and then judge it harshly when it doesn't match up to our standards.

One presenter told stories of behavioural loops. For example two hamsters in opposing corners of a cage were given a large cracker. They nibbled their respective corners, but periodically one would come out to steal the other guy's corner - thus turning the cracker around and leaving the situation exactly as it was. We all had a gentle laugh at the poor baffled critters, but I wondered how it would be to live in a world in which there were non-human creatures as smart as we are, or smarter. Would they mock *our* behavioural loops - our addictions and fads, our destructive ideological disputes that span generations?

Maybe we should study what the animals can do rather than what they can't - but that might not preserve our comfortable smugness.

PULPitations: Glenda Pringle asks 'whither SF magazines?'

Dear *Loyal Science Fiction Age* Subscriber...the issue you're holding in your hand is the last issue of *Science Fiction Age*. Well, knock me down with a feather! What's going on here? This is a big, glossy, American SF magazine with, by their own admission, "a healthy core readership" and, as one can gather by flicking through its pages, a pretty hefty advertising income. With all these seeming indicators of success, how in the world can it die?

The publisher, Mark Hintz, tells us because they've found it increasingly difficult to find new subscribers over the past three years. Scott Edelman, the editor, blames the fall in readership of SF magazines generally; while, at the same time, he sees his newfound freedom an opportunity for him to begin submitting short stories to other SF magazines again. How's that for optimism?

While I'm the first to agree that people these days probably have plenty of other things to do than read SF magazines, I'm still somewhat sceptical of the use of declining readership as the main excuse for closing this particular magazine. How did I reach this conclusion? Well, as I still have several issues left to go on my *SFA* subscription, the publishers are kindly offering me the choice of the following magazines instead: *RAMPAGE Wrestling Magazine* (I don't think so somehow...); *SCI-FI, The Official Magazine of the Sci-Fi Channel* (Oh you mean the US/cable/satellite channel that I don't have/want access to?); *Military Heritage Magazine* (Hmm, could be a possibility...); or *Country's Best Log Homes Magazine* (You can't be serious!). Should I want none of the above, I will receive by default *SFA's* sister publication *Realms of Fantasy* (which apparently "remains strong"). Is Sovereign Publishing seriously trying to tell me that all of these publications of theirs are doing better than *SFA*? Log cabins sell, but good SF literature doesn't? Give me a break! I'm left feeling pretty cynical about the purported reasons that have been given

for closing the magazine.

I'm also somewhat mystified by the fact that *Realms of Fantasy* is doing just fine, thank you. How? Where's this healthy core readership coming from? At least with SF, you have plenty of incentive to pick up a magazine. Bombarded with it on TV, the cinema, the internet and the toy/game shops, one would be hard pressed to find someone who didn't know (a) what the genre was and (b) that it comes in a variety of guises (e.g. *The Matrix* – Web stuff, *Star Wars* – space stuff, *Jurassic Park* – science stuff, etc., etc.). Whereas, even I am ignorant enough to think that fantasy in whatever medium consists of one man, woman dwarf, elf, hobbit, etc. in search of their destiny which happens to involve overcoming the bad/evil guy. In other words, various permutations of a single "theme." (Obviously, I'm going to have to peruse my copy of *RoF* when it arrives so that I can come back in a future column to eat my words.)

OK, so it's no use flogging a dead SF magazine but, scattered amongst the diatribe, I am trying to make a point here – Whither SF magazines? Are they really going to disappear because people don't have time for them anymore or will they mutate into something more commercially viable? Edward L Ferman, the publisher of *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, said the following in, of all places, the magazine's 50th anniversary issue:

These are challenging times for the magazine business. Newsstand distribution and sales continue to drop. Readers are less responsive to direct mail subscription offers. And the competition for your time from cable TV and the Web is a concern. Magazines will no doubt survive, but I think we will have to change. In the near future, perhaps we will publish fewer, bigger issues; in the far future, F&SF may come to you in some electronic form.

It's a scary thought, but I think he could be right and moreover this probably

applies to SF magazines generally. In the coming months/years, more magazines are going to die unless they adapt in some way. I don't particularly want to have to read anything, let alone my beloved SF magazines, in electronic form but if it saves them I'll overcome my prejudices, forego the pleasure of reading them in the bath, and plunk myself down in front of a screen. However, I'm more alarmed at the prospect of them being reduced in length. The competition to get published will get extremely fierce (are you listening, Mr Edelman?) and a lot of good/new stuff will never reach our eager eyes.

Self-publishing on, say, one's own website is a possible solution, but how are we going to find new talent if it's not collected in one location by editors we can trust? (Notice I am not confining myself to the use of the terms "short story" or "novella" here – I've also got in mind the artwork, cartoons, science fact articles, book reviews and so on that can currently be found in these magazines.) The growing number of web sites generally has to my mind made things harder to find, rather than easier. Sure, you can find lot of "stuff" but most of it is superficial and even "portals" can't promise to be comprehensive. There's still a lot of work to be done before any of them have got me hooked enough to log on eagerly with the expectation that I'll get as much satisfaction as I do from a good old paper magazine. Better get busy, guys – it looks like you may need to deliver sooner than you think.

Magazines for review, including small press, should be sent to Glenda Pringle, 22 Mead Way, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 2BJ; email: chris@kidlington66.freeseerve.co.uk

Books

Forthcoming books and
publishing schedules,
compiled by Janet Barron



Key

HB = hardback
TPB = trade paperback
PB = paperback
MW = Millennium SF Masterwork

NOIP Now out in paperback

= Reissue

= nonfiction

*** Watch out for these

All others, first UK edition. Unless references
are given, all quotes are from the publisher.

*****Iain M. Banks** *Look to Windward*
(Orbit Aug HB 352pp)

James Barclay *Noonshade*
(Victor Gollancz July TB £9.99
496pp)

NOIP **James Barclay** *Dawnthief*
(Millennium July PB £6.99 596pp)

Stephen Baxter *Saddlepoint* (Voyager
Aug HB £16.99)

Stephen Baxter *Space*
(Voyager Aug HB £16.99 400pp)
The second volume of the *Manifold*
series which started with *Time*.

NOIP **Stephen Baxter** *Time*
(Voyager Aug PB £6.99 400pp)

Ray Bradbury *Dandelion Wine*
(Earthlight July PB £5.99)

John Brunner *Jagged Orbit*
(Victor Gollancz SF Collectors Aug
TB £9.99 400pp)

Orson Scott Card *Earthborn*:
Volume 5 of *Homecoming*
(Orbit July PB £5.99 448 pp)

Mark Chadbourn *World's End*
(Millennium Aug PB £6.99 432pp)

Sara Douglas *Sinner, Pilgrim and
Crusader: The Wayfarer Redemption
Trilogy*
(Voyager Aug PB £6.99 800 pp)

David and Leigh Eddings *The
Redemption of Althalus: A new single
volume epic*
(Voyager July HB £17.99 752 pp,
deluxe, leather-bound slipcase and
signed edition £100)

Maggie Furey *The Heart of Myrial*
(Orbit PB July £6.99 432pp)

Terry Goodkind *Faith of the Fallen*
(Victor Gollancz Aug £17.99 608 pp)

Ed. Gardner Dozois *The Mammoth
Book of Best New SF 13*
(Robinson Aug PB £9.99 671pp)

#**M. John Harrison** *Viriconium*
(Millennium July PB £7.99 672pp)

#**Robert A Heinlein** *Door Into
Summer*
(Victor Gollancz SF Collectors Aug
TB £9.99 192pp)

Kate Jacoby *Black Eagle Rising*
(Victor Gollancz July TPB £9.99
440pp)

J V Jones *A Fortress of Grey Ice*
(Orbit July TPB £12.99)

Katharine Kerr *The Snare*
(Voyager PB £5.99 352 pp)

Mercedes Lackey, Larry Dixon
Owl/kenight
(Victor Gollancz, July HB £16.99
388pp)

NOIP **Mercedes Lackey, Larry
Dixon** *Owlsight*
(Millennium July PB £6.99)

#**CS Lewis** *Out of the Silent Planet*
(Voyager July PB £6.99 208 pp)

#**CS Lewis** *Perelandra* (Voyager July
PB £6.99 224 pp)

#**CS Lewis** *That Hideous Strength*

(Voyager July PB £7.99 480 pp)

George RR Martin *A Storm of
Swords: Book Three of a Song of Ice
and Fire*
(Voyager July HB/TPB £11.99
£16.99 608 pp)

NOIP **Juliet E. McKenna** *The
Gambler's Fortune*
(Orbit Aug £6.99)

NOIP **Julian May** *Orion Arm*
(Voyager July PB £5.99)

Walter M. Miller Jr *The Best of Walter
M. Miller Jr*
(Victor Gollancz TPB £12.99)

L.E. Modesitt Jr *Darksong Rising*
(Orbit Aug PB £7.99 624 pp)

Elizabeth Moon *Change of Command*:
Book 6 of the Serrano legacy
(Orbit July PB £5.99 432 pp)

Caiseal Mor *Song of the Earth*
(Earthlight July PB £5.99)

Terry Pratchett *The Gods Trilogy*:
Pyramids / Small Gods / Hogfather
(Victor Gollancz July HB £16.99)

Martin Scott *Thraxas and the Elish
Isles*
(Orbit Aug PB £5.99 256pp)

Olaf Stapledon *Sirius*
(Victor Gollancz SF Collectors Aug
TB £9.99 200pp)

A. & B. Strugatsky *Roadside Picnic*
(Victor Gollancz SF Collectors Aug
TB £9.99 160pp)

Sheri S Tepper *The Awakeners*
(Voyager Aug PB £6.99 512 pp)

David Weber *The Honor of the Queen*
(Earthlight July PB £5.99)

David Weber *The Short Victorious War*
(Earthlight Aug PB £5.99)

**Margaret Weis and Tracy
Hickman** *Well of Darkness: The
Sovereign Stone Trilogy Book One*
(Voyager Aug HB/TPB £16.99/
£11.99 400pp)

***John Whitbourn *Downs-Lord Noon*
(Earthlight Aug PB £5.99)

Editor's comments

Some heavyweight Brit SF contenders this summer as Iain M. Banks again tips his hat to T.S. Eliot in the title of the new Culture novel *Look To Windward*. Make the most of it folks - as reported in the news section after its publication Banks is taking a year-long break from writing. Meanwhile Steve Baxter follows up the mind-boggling vistas of his first 'Manifold' novel, *Time* with its logical successor, *Space*. He also has a new collection bringing together his 'Saddlepoint' sequence of stories in one volume.

Elsewhere, beyond the realms of High Fantasy, reprints seem to be the order of the day. Millennium's splendid series of Fantasy Masterwork re-issues continues with the particularly welcome return to print of M. John Harrison's enigmatic, disturbing and funny Viriconium stories. Gollancz's SF Collectors series brings back that publisher's fondly remembered yellow jackets to the shelves, but at a cost. If their Millennium imprint can produce SF Masterworks at six or seven pounds a throw (with excellent cover art) why on earth are we being charged ten pounds for these volumes? That said it's good to see classics like Heinlein's *The Door Into Summer* and Stapledon's *Sirius*, as well as a personal favourite of mine, the Strugatsky Bros. *Roadside Picnic*, back in circulation.

Finally, fans of the short form will no doubt snap up Gardner Dozois' massive *Year's Best Science Fiction* anthology, still published in this country under the clunking title of *The Mammoth Book of Best New SF*, to catch up on what's been happening in the field and argue over his choices.

BSFA Awards

Chris (not Colin) Hill rounds up the latest news

The 1999 BSFA Awards

Presentation

The 1999 BSFA Awards were presented at the Central Hotel, Glasgow on Sunday 23rd April. The results were:

Best Novel:

The Sky Road - Ken MacLeod

Best Short Fiction:

"Hunting the Starque" - Eric Brown from *Interzone* 141)

Best Artwork:

Darwinia - Jim Burns (Cover of *Darwinia* by Robert Charles Wilson)

So, congratulations to the winners and my sincere commiserations to all the losers. Two of the winners, Ken MacLeod and Eric Brown were at the ceremony to collect their trophies. Jim Burns' trophy has been sent on to him.

As always, some 'thank-yous'. Firstly, of course, thanks to everyone who sent me nominations and votes this year. It could not happen without you! Now, some individuals: firstly, thanks to Colin Odell and Mitch LeBlanc for doing their usual sterling job of designing the trophy. Secondly thanks to Martin McGrath for his splendid ballot paper design. Next thanks are due to Tony Cullen for substituting for me in collecting the ballot papers and counting the votes at Eastercon. Finally, an especially big 'thank you' to the hero of the hour, Andy Butler, who managed to get everyone together for the award ceremony under particularly trying circumstances. I owe you many, many drinks, mate!

The 2000 BSFA Awards

Remember that nominations are now open for the 2000 BSFA Awards. Firstly, a reminder of the rules for nomination:

Nominations for any of the categories can be sent at any time during the year. Please remember that it is the items with the most nominations on the closing date for submissions that will be shortlisted. So if you want something to appear on the shortlist then nominate it **even if it is already in the list of nominations.**

The eligibility rules are as follows:

Best Novel. First published in the UK in the calendar year 2000.

Best Short Fiction. First appearance in the calendar year 2000, irrespective of country of origin (thus stories in non-UK magazines and original anthologies are eligible).

Best Artwork. First appearance in the calendar year 2000.

I do not yet know the closing date for nominations, but as soon as I do I will let you know. In the meantime, start sending in those nominations! Remember if you are not sure if something qualifies, send me the nomination anyway and I will check.

Best Novel

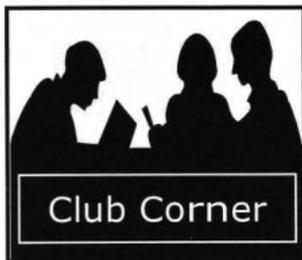
Revelation Space - Alastair Reynolds
Under the Skin - Michel Faber
redRobe - Jon Courtney Grimwood
Perdido Street Station - China Miéville

Best Short Fiction

"Colours of the Soul" - Sean McMullen (*Interzone* 152)
"La Vampiresse" - Tanith Lee (*Interzone* 154)
"Adventures in the Ghost Trade" - Liz Williams (*Interzone* 154)

Best Artwork

Cover of *Neosis* March/April 2000 - Mark A. Garlick



Belfast Science Fiction Group

Alternate Fridays 8.30pm at the Monaco Bar, Rosemary St. Belfast.
Contact Eugene Doherty 01232 208405
tinman@technologist.com

Birmingham: Brum SF Group

Second Friday of the month on the second floor of the Britannia Hotel, New St. Membership is £15/year.
Contact Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, W. Midlands WV13 1HX.
bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk

Forthcoming guests:

14th July 2000: Andy Lound from the Planetary Society will be speaking to the Group.

Cambridge SF Group

Second Monday of the month in The Cambridge Blue, Gwydir St, Cambridge.

Cardiff SF Group

First Tuesday on the month 7.30pm in Wellington's Café Bar, 42 The Hayes, Cardiff.

Colchester SF/F/Horror Group

Third Saturday of the month at 12.30pm in The Playhouse pub, St John's Street.
Contact Des Lewis 01255 812119.

The Croydon SF Group

Second Tuesday of the month, 8pm in The Dog and Bull, Surrey Street (by the market), Croydon, Surrey. We are

sometimes upstairs or out in the garden. Contact Robert Newman on 020 8686 6800.

Glasgow SF/F Writers' Circle

Second and fourth Thursdays at 8pm at Borders bookstore. Contact Gary Gibson at Borders or garygibson@skiffy.freereserve.co.uk

Hull SF Group (*note change)

Second and Fourth Tuesdays, 8.30 to 10.30pm at The New Clarence, Charles Street, Hull (from Jan 2000)
Contact Ian and Julie on 01482 447953, or Dave and Estelle on 01482 444291, or see: <http://www.mjckeh.demon.co.uk/hullsf.htm>

Leeds Alternative Writers

Second Saturday at 2pm in central Leeds. For venues and details contact Ian on 0113 266 9259 or Sean 0113 293 6780.

London BSFA meetings

Fourth Wednesday of the month (except December) from 7pm at the Florence Nightingale ("Dead Nurse"), Waterloo/ Westminster tube. Check Ansible for details and guests, or organiser Paul Hood on 0181 333 6670
paul@auden.demon.co.uk

London Circle

First Thursdays at the Florence Nightingale (see above) from around 5pm.

Manchester: FONT (*note change)

FONT meets on the second and fourth Thurs of the month at The Goose on Piccadilly from about 8.30 onwards.
Contact Mike Don on 0161 226 2980.

North Oxford

Last Thursday of the month at The Plough, Wolvercote from 7.30pm. Irregular and just starting, so contact Steve and Vikki on 01865 371734 or peverel@aol.com for details.

Peterborough SF Group

First Wednesdays at the Bluebell Inn, Dogsthorpe and third Wednesdays in the Great Northern Hotel, opposite station Contact Pete on 01733 370542.

Portsmouth/South Hants SF Group

Second and fourth Tuesdays at the Magpie, Fratton Road, Portsmouth.

Reading SF Group

Each Monday from 9pm at the Hop Leaf, Southampton St. Reading.

Southampton: Solent Green (NEW ENTRY)

Every third Thursday, 7pm, at The Duke of Wellington, Bugle St. Contact Matt 01703 577113
werkhaus@tcp.co.uk

International

The South African Science Fiction Society is still looking to make contact with SF fans/organisations in the UK. If you're interested in receiving recent copies of the SASFS's clubzine *Probe*, please send an A5 SAE with 39p stamp to Nick Wood, 22 Victoria Road, Mill Hill, London, NW7 4SB or e-mail him at NikWood@compuserve.com.

Members' noticeboard

The *Matrix* Members' Noticeboard is open to anyone wishing to advertise wants/swaps or requests for help (within reason!).

Please send any ads for inclusion to the editorial address.

Forthcoming Conventions & Events

27-31 July 2000

2000 Millennium Hand & Shrimp
(3rd Discworld Convention)
CANCELLED. For refunds contact PO Box 189, Patchway, Bristol, BS32 8YE.

Replaced by...

28-30 July 2000

Clarecraft Event

Warren Farm, Wetherden, Suffolk. Guests of Honour: Terry Pratchett & S. Briggs, more TBA. £5 registration, in advance only. Contact The Collectors' Guild, Unit 1a, Woolpit Business Park, Woolpit, Suffolk, IP30 9UP.

28-30 July 2000

ESE European Smoffing Event

Darmstadt, Germany. Contact European Conventions, Fiona Anderson, 129 Colegrave Road, Stratford, London, E15 1EA; fiona@intersec.demon.co.uk

2-6 August 2000

Eurocon 2000

Tricity (Gdansk, etc.) Poland. Guests of Honour: Kir Bulychew, Walter Jon Williams. Membership \$35 at door. Contact Krzysztof Papierkowski, Chlopska 7/107, 80-362 Gdansk-Przymorze, Poland; papier@gkf.3misato.pl. UK agent: Bridget Wilkinson, Ground Floor Flat, 8 West Avenue Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 9SE; bjw@cix.co.uk

18-20 August 2000

Lexicon (Unicon 2000)

Exeter College, Oxford (note change of venue). Guest of Honour: Philip Pullman. Membership £28 reg. £15 student/unwaged, £18/day. Contact 18 Letchworth Avenue, Bedfont, Middlesex, TW14 9RY; unicon2000@smof.com; www.smof.com/unicon2000/

8-10 September 2000

FantasyCon XXIV

Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. Guests of Honour: Storm Constantine, Stephen Lawhead, Stan Nicholls, Doug Bradely from *Hellraiser*. Membership £50 to 31 July 2000, then £55. Contact FantasyCon 2000, Beech House, Chapel Lane, Moulton, Cheshire, CW9 8PQ; howe@which.net; www.herebedragons.co.uk/bfscf24.htm

21-22 October 2000

O2K: Octocon 2000

Royal Dublin Hotel, O'Connell Street, Dublin. Guest of Honour: Michael Marshall Smith. Membership £17 to 30/9/00, IRE25 at door. Contact Dave Lally, 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX. Sterling cheques payable to "Dave Lally No. 2 A/C"

26-29 October 2000

World Fantasy Convention

Omni Bayfront Hotel, Corpus Christi, Texas. Guests of Honour: K. W. Jeter, John Crowley. Toastmaster: Joe R. Lansdale. Membership \$105 to 12/10/00, then \$125. Contact WFC 2000, Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755, USA; fduartejr@aol.com; http://2000.worldfantasy.org/

27-29 October 2000

BATS 2000

Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow. Theme: multi-media horror/SF. Guests of Honour: Storm Constantine, media guests. Membership £50, £15 supporting. Contact bats2000@burble.com; www.burble.com/bats2000

10-12 November 2000

Novicon 30

Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham. Guest of Honour: Christopher Priest; Special Guest: Rog Peyton; Artist: David A. Hardy. Membership £35.00. Rooms £42.50 and up. Contact Steve Lawson, Registrations, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ; pat@cooky.demon.co.uk; www.cooky.demon.co.uk/n30/n30.html

29 December 2000 – 1 January 2001

Hogmanaycon

Central Hotel, Glasgow. Guests of Honour: Spider & Jeanne Robinson, Sydney Jordan, Archie Roy, Vince Docherty, Oscar Schwighlhofer. Membership: ask for current rates. Contact Hogmanaycon, c/o 26 Avonbank Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2PA; john@gelsalba.demon.co.uk; www.members.tripod.co.uk/Chris_Boyce/cpage.htm

13-16 April 2001

Paragon: Eastercon '01

Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. Guests of Honour: Stephen Baxter, Lisanne Norman, Michael Scott Rohan, Claire Brailey & Mark Plummer. Membership £25 advance, then

more. Contact Paragon, c/o S. Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ; members.paragon@keepsake-web.co.uk; www.keepsake-web.co.uk/paragon

25-27 May 2001

Second (Secon 2)

Currently negotiating with The DeVere Hotel, Swindon. Membership £20; may rise in November. Cheques payable to "Secon". Contact Secon, 19 Hill Court, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 3JJ.

28-29 July 2001

ConStruction (con-running)

Somewhere in UK. Contact ConStruction, 136 Kendal Way, Cambridge, CB4 1LT, Con_Struction@lycosmail.com; members.xoom.com/con_struct/

30 August – 3 September 2001

Millennium Philcon/Worldcon 59

Pennsylvania Convention Center & Philadelphia Marriott, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Guests of Honour: Greg Bear, Stephen Youll, Gardner Dozois, George Scithers. Toastmaster: Esther Friesner. Membership currently \$145, \$40 supporting, but check for latest rates. Contact Philcon, Box 310, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006, USA; phil2001@netaxs.com; www.netaxs.com/phil2001

1-4 November 2001

World Fantasy Convention

Delta Centre-Ville, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Guest of Honour: Fred Saberhagen, others TBA. Membership: ask for current rates. Contact WFC, Attn. Bruce Farr, 7002, N. 6th Ave., Phoenix, AZ, 85021, USA; bruce.farr@intel.com; www.worldfantasy.org/wf01.html

29 August – 2 September 2002

ConJosé (60th Worldcon)

San José, California. Guests of Honour: Vernor Vinge, David Cherry, Bjo & David Trimble, Ferdinand Feghoot. Toastmaster: Tad Williams. Membership: \$120 after 15th July 2000. Contact P O Box 61363, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-4128, USA; UK Agents 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, RG30 2RP; www.sfscf.org/worldcon/

Please send any notifications and corrections for forthcoming conventions/events to the editorial address.

JO's Timewasters Matrix Competition 144

Competition 143 - results

A large bag of correct entries - and one wrong one. The first use of the hat for some time results in a prize for Garry Selvage.

Author: Brian Aldiss.

Works: *Billion Year Spree*; *Cryptozoic*; *Report on Probability A*; *A Soldier Erect*; *The Saliva Tree*; *Frankenstein Unbound*.

Competition 144 - Naming of Parts

(based on an idea by Dave Langford)

The following titles have something in common. Identify this, and name novel and author in each case. If you can't complete, remember others may have done worse!

1. Andrew Westley.
2. The Book of Credit.
3. The Book of Going Forth.
4. Book Three.
5. The Cascades.
6. Danlo the Wild.
7. Dark Night.
8. Encounters at the Moebius Strip.
9. Festival Night.
10. The Garden-of-Eden

11. Configuration.
12. His Maculate Origin.
13. Nicole's Journal.
14. The Red-Haired Woman.
15. The Shadow Nest.
16. The Six Points of Departure.
17. The Wrath-Bearing Tree.

Answers to:

Competition 144, John Ollis, 49 Leighton Road, Corby, Northants NN18 OSD.

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ken@opfantast.demon.co.uk

New and used ('previously enjoyed') hardbacks and trade and mass market pbs, including a listing of the highly

recommended Liverpool University Press series of SF publications (see *Vector* 204 onward for reviews of several of these).

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Credits issue 144

Matrix 144 was, once again, edited and produced by **Andrew Seaman**, in between Euro 2000 matches, to the strains of "Jerusalem" by Fat Les (only kidding!)

Thanks again to all contributing editors and the newhounds of the BSFA, including Elizabeth Billinger, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Mark Plummer, Tony Cullen and anyone else who hasn't been mentioned.

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