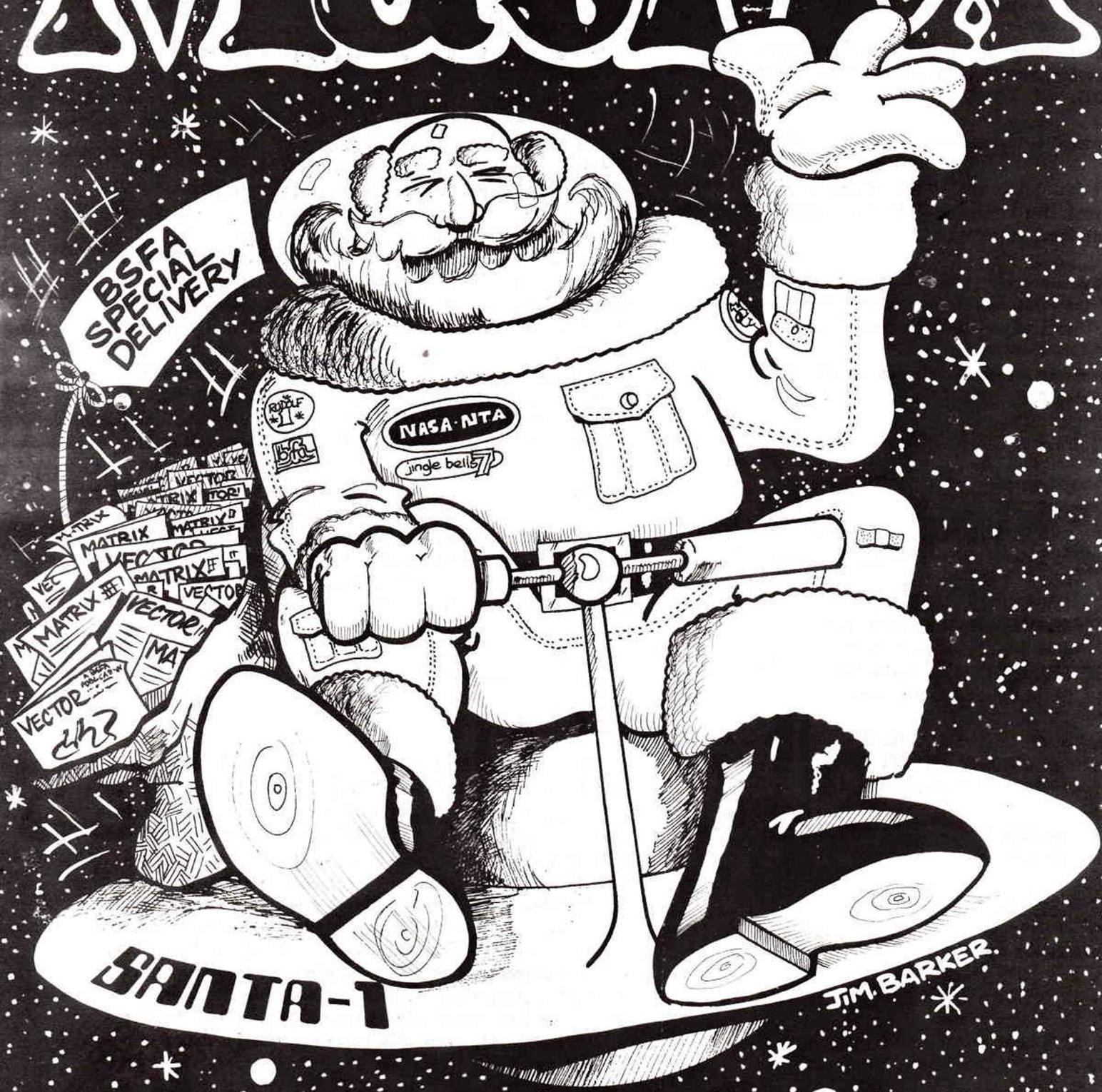


BUMPER CHRISTMAS NUMBER

# MATRIX



Season's Greetings

MATRIX 15.....Dec. 1977.....ISSN 0307-3335

EDITOR: Andy Sawyer, 59 Mallory Rd, Tranmere, Birkenhead, Merseyside L42 6QR (Tel. 051-645-0426)

Membership Secretary: Dave Cobbledick, 245 Rosalind St, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9AZ

Vice-chairman: Tom A. Jones, 39 Ripplmere, Harmanwater, Bracknell, Berks RG12 3QA. Tel Bracknell 50003.

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Thanks to everyone who helps especially those hard-working Collators.

Proofread by Dave Cobbledick.

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FROM ALL OF US  
 TO  
 ALL OF YOU..

A MERRY YULETIDE & A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

((Before I start - a letter. I'm putting this here as it is not a loc but deserves perusal - and I know you all read editorials, one or two of actually got as far as not being able to guess the reason for the title of these ramblings (This issues's CLUE is look at the surname on the end of this column and add on the fact that I'm beginning to want to escape from civilization) -the main reason however is that it affirms by faith in human nature...but let Alan Fraser tell the story... ))

In about the last-but-one BSFA mailing (I think it was with VECTOR 81) there was an SF questionnaire concerning an exhibition to be held during September by the Paperback Shop of Broad St. Oxford. Despite the geographical separation I decided to fill one in since there was a prize of 3 SF paperbacks for the first 5 questionnaires drawn from a hat.

Eventually I received a letter from them telling me that I was one of the lucky 5, so I compiled a list of about 10 books I've been able to find around here, and sent it off with no regard as to whether the books were actually in print or not.

Anyway, instead of telling me to choose something more readily available, they've done some digging around and managed to turn up 3 from my list, even sending the first one ahead in a separate mailing to let me know they were still trying. What's more, they're still trying with some of the others.

Since they have put themselves out for me, and I wasn't even a paying customer, I'd be grateful to you if you'd give them a small plug. Even those bookshops round here that carry a reasonable stock of SF are pretty unhelpful if you ask about something they haven't actually got in or on order.

((And now...back to the Island.))

MY BACK PAGES...

It occurred to me that I told you very little about myself in my inaugural editorial (say that ten times, rapidly!) so I thought that I'd remedy that by using this editorial to give a few brief facts about myself...Unfortunately Keith told me that a 64 page MATRIX was Not ON. So here are one or two lifelines and you can fill in the gaps yourselves.

In 1974, at Essex University, I co-produced, with Mike Kapusniak, a fiction zine of great gall and uncertain quality, entitled ANOTHER EARTH. This lasted the traditional one issue before the pressures of children, jobs, and geographical separation disrupted the Editorial Team. Later, I managed to track down that most elusive creature, the BSFA and inflicted my presence on it, eventually being rewarded(?) with my present post at a time when I was vaguely thinking of reviving ANOTHER EARTH, in a different format. I still intend to do so...some-time. But I'm in no hurry at the moment.

I'm a librarian by trade, which gives me less time to actually read books than some people might think - however, I do come across some interesting pieces now and again...such as the books used by the local adult literacy scheme, one being a collection of three stories by Peter Young entitled

ONCE UPON A SPACE (Schoffield & Sims 'Data' series) and others being the adventures of a couple of misfit aliens who rejoice in the unlikely names of Zig and Zag, also chronicled by Peter Young. As SF, these volumes at times reach the dizzy height of 'mediocre', which is sad as linguistically they seem quite OK - One of the 'Zig' books is in fact rather fun, related in a kind of doggerel verse. I'm not sure as to how much they would really grip peoples' interest as stories, though.

#### I SAW A FILM TODAY, OH BOY....

I was going to actually write a proper review of SILENT RUNNING, directed by Douglas Trumbull who worked on 2001, but never got round to jotting down more than a few quick impressions. The film is one of the many which never got proper distribution over here, why, I don't know. The plot concerns a fleet of 'arks' in orbit which contain the last of Earth's greenery. The fleet is ordered to jettison the domes containing the forests and abandon the project. One man, appropriately named Freeman Lovell (Bruce Dorn), rebels. The film seems to owe much to 2001 - two scenes, the first slow shots of the great spacecraft to musical strains and the ships passage through the outer rings of Saturn, are very reminiscent of similar scenes in 2001. In many ways, however, it differs from Kubrick film - less of its mythic, 'poetic' power and more humour, especially in the scenes between Freeman and the two robots he dubs Huey and Duey, teaching them poker, patching one up after an accident, etc. Not a perfect film - the robots (one source for R2D2 and CPO3??) are a bit arch for my taste and the conservationist theme is extremely simplistic (but I'm not going to fall into the trap of dismissing a cause because it is expressed simplistically). But it is enjoyable and after seeing it I'm amazed that SILENT RUNNING never attained commercial release in this country.

Oh yes, and my wife - who slept most of the way through 2001, liked it too!

#### STATION TO STATION

I'm pleased that more people seem to be making use of the Member's Noticeboard this time round. The BSFA after all is about 500 people who collectively must be pretty knowledgeable about SF, so if anyone has any queries, or wishes to pursue a particular topic, you can draw on this accumulated knowledge by asking for help in MATRIX.

#### CH-CH-CH-CHANGES

Not many planned - but I'm hoping to institute changes in the magazine notices, featuring fewer actual reviews, of mags, issues of particular interest mainly, and contents lists of as many zines as I can.

I will, of course, need YOUR help and response in this.

#### DELIVER THE LETTER, THE SOONER THE BETTER

Finally, a personal plea: My wife is having a baby at the beginning of March and its room has not yet been decorated. In fact, as things stand, it will be sleeping with the MATRIX typer. Therefore, could I ask for all contributions, letters, etc for MATRIX 16 to reach me by 4 weeks from the receipt of this mailing. This will enable me to start producing M16 at a reasonable time and hopefully avoid that mad last editorial rush. (Who am I trying to kid...? I love it really...nearly as good as the knotted nylons & bamboo canes...WHAT AM I SAYING???) I'd better sign off....

((Andy Sawyer))



\*\*\*\*\*  
\* VICE-CHAIRMAN'S REPORT Tom Jones \*  
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Quite a few things have happened so first I'll report on what was decided at the council meeting held on 5.11.1977 at the Angus Hotel, Birmingham, during the Nova con weekend. (The following were present: Tom Jones, Les Flood, Bob Shaw, Jim White, Dave Kyle. The Council invited the following to sit in to provide information: John Stewart Keith Freeman & Bram Stokes.)

1) Life Membership.

Council very rarely awards life membership of the BSFA to people who have provided great service to the BSFA and/or British SF. It is some time since any were awarded but we felt there were now 2 suitable candidates and I'm thus pleased to announce that life membership has been awarded to the following:

John Brunner for the conscientious way he undertook the chairmanship of the BSFA some years ago (but anyone who knows John would expect nothing else) and for his unexcelled contribution to British science fiction.

Keith Freeman for his many services to the BSFA as magazine chain organizer, vice-chairman, treasurer, for producing all our duplicated magazines (a time consuming task) and still being happy to help at collating sessions.

2) BSFA AWARDS

Although the BSFA award has been made for several years now no physical awards were given for the past 4 years; this was rectified at Novacon where Dave Kyle (the toastmaster) presented the awards for 1973 to 1976. Thanks, Dave. Thanks also to Rob Carter who produced these awards - a marble base with column topped by star and flame - at such short notice. Everyone was very impressed with Rob's work and we received many compliments to pass on to him. Having got the record straight we'll ensure we don't get out of step again.

3) NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

Andy Sawyer, editor of MATRIX, and Chris Umpley, treasurer, were co-opted on to the Council, welcome both.

4) SIZE OF MEMBERSHIP

Our articles of Association limit our size to 500. As we're rapidly approaching this figure it was agreed we'd increase it to whatever maximum we were legally allowed.

5) SIZE OF COUNCIL

The 1976 AGM gave council permission to increase its size from 15 to 21; council discussed this and decided to do so.

6) VECTOR

We have received the resignation of Chris Fowler as editor. Chris felt the job was taking so much time he could do little else and although he was willing to continue if the magazine was typed by a professional bureau the committee decided we could not afford this.

Chris was one of the group who got the BSFA going again after the crash and the immense amount of work he's put into VECTOR has put it into the forefront of critical SF magazines. I'm sure we'd all like to extend our thanks to Chris for the job he's done.

Stepping into Chris' shoes is Dave Wingrove, who I'm sure will bring his own ideas and personality to the magazine. You'll find Dave's first issue with this mailing and if you're very lucky it'll have a piece by me.

Due to increases in production costs we have slipped into the red on the VECTOR account (but fear not, our main and deposit accounts are healthy) and we wish to rectify it. Thus the present VECTOR will be a duplicated one. The saving we make by this should allow us to be back to 17th next issue. I hope you'll forgive this temporary drop in production standards but trust you sympathise with our reasons. There will be changes in VECTOR to ensure we don't fall into this trap again (but don't worry, this won't effect production standards).

7) MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Dave Cobbedick has kindly offered to take over as Mem Sec from Dave Wingrove and has been doing the job for a month now and people still seem to be joining so he can't be too bad!

Dave's address is 245 Rosalind st. Ashington, Northumberland NE 63 9AZ.

8) NEW POSTS FOR OLD

Because of the amount of work involved we've split the VECTOR business manager bit off from the BSFA Business Manager job. Phil Stephensen-Payne is doing and Trevor Briggs has started looking after this - thanks, Trev. Trev's address is 6, The Plains, Crescent Rd, Chingford, London E4 6AU.

Bill Little has taken on the Club Liason Officer job (helped by the Stoke-on-Trent SF Group) and is also helping in the area of producing a directory of articles in the science fiction field. Bill's address is 183 John St., Biddulph, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs.

9) THE 1979 EASTERCON

As you'll no doubt know Britain won the bid for the 1979 Worldcon which will take place in Brighton in late August. There must be a good Eastercon that year and the BSFA intends to actively support a bid that'll be put forward by Bram Stokes of "Dark they Were..." bookshop for London in '79. This convention will be for all kinds of SF fans, and we'll try to cater for ALL kinds: serious reader, film







## ADAM THE ANTIGEN

a  
complete  
short- short novel

by  
Cyril Simsa

### CHAPTER 1: THE GARDEN

Immediately that Adam shot his own grandfather he ceased to exist, and so logically, he found himself in the Garden of Eden. Not that he'd ever been in the Garden of Eden before, you understand; it just looked so Eden-like. Another reason that he thought it might be the G of E was the lady standing under the apple tree, clad only in a leather figleaf...

Now, Adam had never been one for having much of a leather fetish, but the desire welling up within him was rapidly turning into an irrepressible torrent, that not even he could nip in the bud.

Adam was not noted for the absence of a certain circumlocutory turn of parlance, but, for once, he had no difficulty in coming to the point:

"Gosh, what - ..! I mean, may I hold your hand, please?"

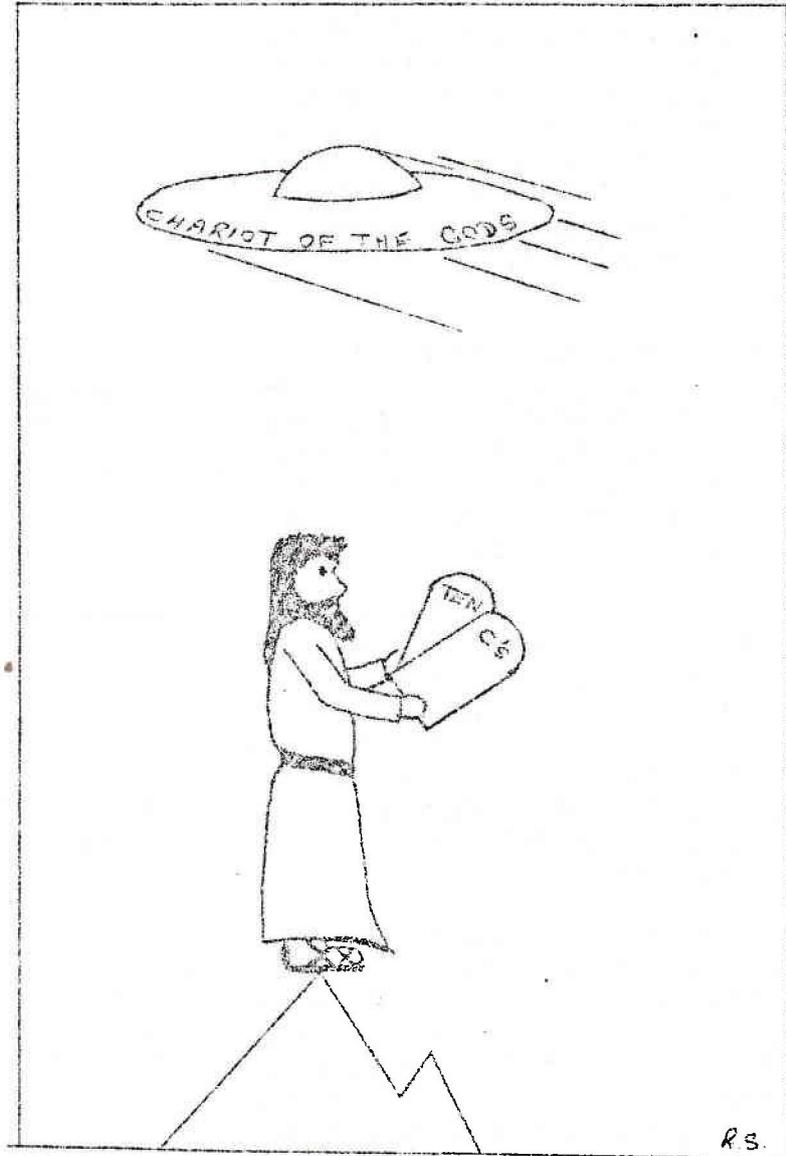
"Why, I hardly know whether that's proper, us being alone, it would not be seemly to be found, but then, when one considers the probability of our being discovered, the chances are so slight that I am sore tempted," replied Eve, who wasn't noted for brevity of speech either.

"Oh, Eve," affirmed the adulatory Adam, "You're so...intellectual!"

"You only want me for my psyche," she wept.

"Oh no, I do love you..Eve...let me take you away from this place. I think we might be able to attain some other locale, if we try hard enough, even though we must assume simultaneous chronicity to overcome relativistic impediment phenomena, as regards Einstein's estimate of the speed of time. Are you game?" he entreated.

"Why, Adam, this is so sudden," she rebuked.



"Oh, come with me, do! All you have to do is flex your hemi-metachronic empathy of the cortical neurons a little. Here, it's easy, follow me..." And, so avowing, he vanished without further ado. But she did not follow for she couldn't. Because Adam did not exist anymore, whereas she did.

And as a result, Adam was fated to become a lone wanderer amongst the reefs of time!

### CHAPTER II: THE FALL

Shortly after arriving in the central temple-palace complex of Atlantis, Adam was arrested for loitering with intent by two policemen-physicians in white tunics, and was dragged before Iluu the Technician, King of Atlantis, High

Priest of the Order of the Machine, First Prestidigitator of the Technos.

"Heh, heh heh, \*heh\*. Heh," came Tluu's greeting. Kneel in the presence of the Holiest High Priest in Atlantis. Hah - ah."

Now, Adam was a reasonable chap, and when in Atlantis one does as the Atlanteans do, no matter how strange it may seem (after all, he reasoned with himself, hadn't he got his job as an official of the Arts Council when he had started going around renovating Renoirs by removing them from their frames and replacing them with freshly-fried pancakes). But he was also a Proud Man, with a fair quantity of self-respect and dignity, and he could not abide this man's off-hand manner. Who did he think he was?

Seeing his hesitation, the two men in white smocks came out and grabbed him by the arms.

This man thought he was King of Atlantis, realised Adam. Having resolved his identity crisis, he proceeded to identify with a prisoner before the King of Atlantis - he knelt.

"\*Oh!\*" said Tluu in a shrill voice, "you know, I always wanted to be a pile-driver, but daddy said I had to stay in the trade. So now I'm a screwdriver on the Holy Machines, I \*fasten the nuts on the Weapon Too Deadly To Use\*!" The last few words had a slight echo, since he'd stuck his head into a little hole and was turning it round and round. The men in the white coats came and dragged him away from the machine.

"\*Oh, sorry\*," he squeaked, "it's because all priests have to be psychotic - it's a rule of the guild... Since I was little, I've had to swallow a ratchet every week - except when I was a Good Boy, then I could have a washer as well. \*And no laxatives allowed\*! Ah, they toughened you up, in those days - and broke you \*do-o-o-wn\*!" He made another lunge for the machine, but was restrained. "Ah-\*hah\*! If you made it to being a priest, you really had to have it in you, heh, heh."

"Gosh," said Adam, "but did I really hear you mention" (pause) "the Weapon Too Deadly To Use?"

"Yes! yes! YesyesYesyes\*Yees\*."

But you must not complete it. You see, I am a traveller through the Chronos, and I know that Atlantis will be destroyed. Because - even though the Weapon Too Deadly To Use is too deadly to use? some lunatic will use it and destroy us all!"

"Aaargh! I'm not a luna\*tic\*. I've only got a small psychosis. A little, weeny one."

"Oh, Your Highness, I did not mean to imply that you personally are in any way unstable..."

"I am unstable, I have to be. What do you \*mean\* by - telling me I'm not unstable..."

"I, er..."

"\*Oh\*. Very well, you're pardoned..."

But, at that instant, the floor gave way under the High Priest's feet, because their knowledge of their future caused a temporal implosion in which Atlantis was destroyed. And Adam was hurled into the future with such force that he exceeded the Einstein limit, and his trans-temporal psi-powers transcended space also. For he grew immensely large, and he watched the world that had been Atlantis shrink to the size of nothing more than an atom emitting gamma-rays before his very eyes, until he found himself on a whole new world of which Atlantis was only one tiny particle. And he reflected that it was kinda lucky that he'd eaten his porridge that twentieth-century morning before going back in time to destroy his grandfather just as he was...well, marrying his grandmother at Stonehenge, or he might not have had the energy required to leap through time by telechronicity. Come to think of it, it was kinda lucky he had psi-powers in the first place.

### CHAPTER III: THE TRIANGLE

When he had finished watching the world shrinking to the size of an atom, he looked up and found himself in a cavern, very similar to the chambers of Atlantis. And some more of the white-coated men were running around, except that they were green-skinned, and they bore the sign of a triangle on their lapels. Perhaps it was a case of parallel evolution. The funny thing was, he could sense a high radioactivity count around him (his mother had always told him that it makes your hair fall out and stunts your growth).

Suddenly the ceiling above him opened up and he saw a clear blue Caribbean sky above him. And in that sky appeared - a flying saucer! The saucer landed next to him, and some more of the green-skinned people came out.

"Greetings to thee, Earthling, from we who are of Mars, the name that you have given to the planet fourth in line."

The tongue was strangely alien, and yet Adam could understand its sweet poetical lyricism, as if he had always spoken that way.

"We brought you to Bermuda, and ourselves from 'tween the stars, to offer explanation here, our sunken Inca mine."

"Our snow-bound correspondent in the highest Himalayas, sent an ethergram to us, forecasting awful doom, And having always loved mankind, we answered mankind's prayers, by coming at our Yeti's call, we'll help dispell the gloom."

"Because, in aeons past, we dropped our refuse on  
your barren sphere,  
and in time it had evolved beyond our expectat-  
ions,  
A race akin to ours was spawned, that suffered love  
and love and fear,  
God was a Martian space-shit, falling from orb-  
ital stations.

"But lo! What is this doom espied? this blot on the  
horizon?  
a nuclear armageddon rears its ugly little  
head,

Uranium is the atom with Atlantis' fires on,  
and by those fires, if loosed again, mankind  
is cremated.

"A myriad worlds exist in parallel to one another,  
and you have been on many with destruction at  
you heels,  
Oh, Adam, you're not evil, you're the Devil's re-  
formed brother,  
you're a mixed-up little deity whose bad fort-  
une spiked his wheels!

"Adam, you're an antigen in society's veins,  
precipitating trouble, whenever you reach a  
novel shore,  
But we will antibodies be, we'll cure Earth's  
dying pains,  
we will neutralise your antigen, and Earth  
shall live some more!!"

And suddenly there was roundabout Adam, a multitude  
of the Martian host, emerging from a space-ark bearing  
the name of Lowest Common Denominator, singing their  
praises to a new era of prosperity and happiness on the  
Eath.

CHAPTER IV: THE EPILOGUE

And then he woke up, and found that it had all  
been a dream.

??

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\* RECORD REVIEWS \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

FLASH FEARLESS VERSUS THE ZORGWOMEN PARTS 5 & 6

There's been a lot of talk about SF music in MATRIX  
but as yet no one has mentioned FLASH FEARLESS VERSUS  
THE ZORGWOMEN PARTS 5 & 6, so I will.

I'll start at the beginning; way back in 1974 the  
New Musical Express distributed an advertising gimmick  
in the form of a slim cartoon leaflet the size of an  
album (12" by 12"). It was called FLASH FEARLESS VS  
THE ZORGWOMEN PARTS 5 & 6 (surprise! surprise!) and  
concerned the exploits of Flash Fearless, his space-

ship "Argo" and his crew (Swede, Flash's right-hand man,  
the Professor, and Dulla). The cartoon pretends to be  
part of a continuing series - it starts "You remember  
last week's exciting episode..." I'm not going to tell you  
the story because it would take too long and it just  
wouldn't be funny if I told it; needless to say it is  
very corny and really funny. The cartoon could be a relic  
from the 'forties (there are portholes in the "Argo" and  
we see Swede in the engine room with a spanner at one  
point!) At the appropriate points in the narrative,  
various characters sing and the lyrics of the album are  
printed.

So having read the cartoon and realizing that there  
was an album with all the songs on, I did sod all about  
it. Then recently in my pathetic little local record  
shop I saw the album on a half-price stand! The reason  
it was half-price was that no-one had bought it and the  
shop was trying to get rid of it.

The album isn't by a particular group or band but a  
one-off collection of artists. It features Alice Cooper,  
Elkie Brooks, Jim Dandy, James Dewar, John Entwistle  
and Maddy Prior. Various other musicians also appear:  
Nicky Hopkins, Eddie Jobson, Keith Moon and many more.  
For those less knowledgeable about rock music there are  
members of the Who, Curved Air, Roxy Music and Steeleye  
Span contained in those lists, as well as Nicky Hopkins  
who has played piano with the Rolling Stones, notably on  
their album EXILES ON MAIN STREET.

The tracks are as follows:- "Trapped", "I'm Flash",  
"Country Cooking", "What's Happening", "Space Pirates",  
"Sacrifice", "To the Chop", "Georgia Syncopator", "Blast  
Off", "Trapped"(reprise). And let me tell you, this  
album is excellent. It's happy, skilled, inventive rock  
music.

For those interested, the album is recorded on the  
Chrysalis label. Let me leave you some of the lyrics  
of "I'm Flash" (sung by the inimitable Alice Cooper)...

"I'm Flash, I'm the hero  
I'm the bopper who's the poppa of the crew .  
I'm Flash and I fight evil,  
And my spaceship flies the red white and blue.  
I'm Flash, a lightning streaker  
You'll find me cruising out among the stars,  
And I'm feared by every outlaw  
Every renegade from Jupiter to Mars.  
The jails are full on Saturn and I can tell you why,  
'Cause I'm the full blasting protoplasting hero of  
the sky...."

(David Strahan)

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USELESS REAGIOLDS LTD -----

Several times recently BSC radio have pronounced Uranus  
to rhyme with 'who-ran-us'. Is this to avoid embarrassment  
when discussing the newly discovered rings????

THE KING OF ELFLAND'S DAUGHTER

Chrysalis CHR 1137

Written & produced by Bob Johnson & Peter Knight.

- Christopher Lee.....King of Elfland
- Mary Hopkin.....Lirazel
- Frankie Miller.....Alveric
- Alexis Korner.....A Troll
- P.P. Arnold.....The Witch
- Derek Brimston )
- Chris Farlowe ) .....Villagers of Earl

This is a story album based on the book THE KING OF ELFLAND'S DAUGHTER by Lord Dunsany and consists of 9 songs linked by Christopher Lee's narrative. I've not read the book but my wife tells me it's basically faithful to the story.

Johnson and Knight until recently were members of Steeleye Span (guitar and violin respectively) and were undoubtedly behind the group's move to a 'poppier' sound. The tracks on this album reflect this mix of traditional style narrative with "folk-rock" style music.

This is a gross oversimplification as each track has an individual style from the fast "The Coming of the Troll" (making effective use of Alexis Korner's gruff voice) to the semi-sung, semi-spoken "Rune of the Elf-King" (Christopher Lee's dramatic presentation of this making it impressive rather than pretentious). But on the whole, the music is up-tempo without being harsh.

The story basically is that the people of Earl are bored and want some magic so the King's son Alveric is sent to Elfland, receiving a magic sword from a witch on the way. He duely captures the King of Elfland's daughter, Lirazel, who, of course, eventually falls in love with him. The King of Elfland releases a rune and a troll rescues his daughter; the people of Earl are then constantly troubled by magic creatures. Lirazel asks for Alveric to be brought to her and the only way this can be done is by bringing Earl into Elfland. The Chinese have a curse "may you live in interesting times" - that seems to sum up the moral of this story.

That summarises the plot; now for the characters - Christopher Lee is excellent as narrator and 'singer', a natural for this kind of role.

I've always liked Mary Hopkins' voice though she's been stuck with too many trite songs in the past. Here her voice is clear and pure, a real joy.

Frankie Miller is the one let-down, whether he is trying to 'effect a style' I don't know, but it sounds as though he can't make some of the notes.

Alexis Korner is a tremendous singer and comes over well.

P.P. Arnold's 'shrieking' style of singing is not my favourite but here suits the song and the role well.

Derek Brimstone plays his villager part with a slight cockney accent which is most effective,

Chris Farlowe's 'broken' style I have always liked and he deals with his track 'The Request' very well.

I like folk and folk-rock and am a fan of Steeleye Span so it's not really surprising that I like this record but I think it'll appeal to most people who like gentle, melodic rock.

(Tom Jones)

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SCIENCE FICTION IN CANADA...Part 2. by Daniel Farr

In continuing the examination of SF in Canada, we come to the topics of writers, books, cons and the miscellaneous.

There are a few good writers who live in Canada, who write SF and have some degree of recognition.

Spider Robinson, an American SF writer and his wife Jeanne moved to Canada several years ago, and settled down in Nova Scotia. Spider has written many successful short stories, and his first novel TELEMPATH (Longman) since moving to Canada.

For several years Spider has been the book reviewer for "Galaxy", where he has had a chance to showcase his wit and wisdom. Spider uses a light, flip style when writing, which gained him immediate popularity. In TELEMPATH, it proves to be the novel's saving grace.

TELEMPATH's plot laid out bare, concerns a scientist who releases an airborne chemical agent which increases the human sense of smell a hundred fold. Cities disintegrate as the people rush to the countryside.

What follows are attempts by one group to re-create a non-pollutant industrial technology, and another to avoid all malodorous technology. Thrown in for good measure are the muskies, ghostly creatures who gave rise to legends of ghosts and spirits. The muskies are now detectable because their musky odour is perceivable.

TELEMPATH is a fast-paced novel, with lots of humour but too many ideas. Recommended.

Spider's wife Jeanne Robinson is coming into her own; her first story received the Analog cover, and she and Spider are collaborating on several more.

Another American writer who moved to Canada is Judith Merrill. After living in various parts of the U.S. the U.K. and Europe, Judith finally decided on Canada,

where she has taken out citizenship.

She has been very active within, and outside the Canadian SF community, lecturing and writing on SF. Recently she reviewed a number of SF books in the prestigious book review section of the Toronto Globe and Mail.

Some time ago Michael Coney moved to Canada from the U.K. Since taking up residence in British Columbia Michael has taken a job as an accountant, and produced a series of successful books, his latest being BRONTO-WEK.

A.E. Van Vogt was born in Canada, and lived here during the first part of his life. His first story, "I lived in the Back Streets" was sold to True Story in 1931. Throughout the Depression, Van Vogt sold confession stories, and radio scripts to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

In July 1939 Van Vogt's first published SF story, "Black Destroyer", appeared in Astounding. Van Vogt continued on in SF after that, even having the first SF story he wrote published - "Vault of the Beast", A.E. served in the Canadian National Department of Defence during WWII. After which he turned to writing full-time and moved to Hollywood where he has lived ever since.

Brian Moore is a Canadian novelist who lives in California. Brian writes mainstream fiction, and even his foray into fantasy is styled for a general audience.

THE GREAT VICTORIAN COLLECTION is a lavish book, in the sense that the author has spent a considerable amount of time on it. The plot concerns a young man who is depressed, while travelling along the coast of California. He stops at a motel for the night, and during the night he dreams of a fabulous collection of Victoriana. When he awakens the next morning, there it is in the motel parking lot.

At first he's overjoyed, but dreams can turn sour, as he quickly realises the forces that bound him and the collection together. THE GREAT VICTORIAN COLLECTION (McClelland & Stewart). Recommended.

H.A. Hargreaves is best known for his single author collection NORTH BY 2000 (Peter Martin Associates Ltd.) Most of the stories were originally published in the U.K in various SF books.

The stories dwell on the central theme of survival within American-Canadian, a social-political union of Canada and the U.S., with each story taking place in what is called "Old Canada". The various stories range from "Cainn" which is a study of a young murderer who is sent to a rehabilitation centre in the foothills of Alberta, to "More Things in Heaven and Earth", an exploration of group ESP through a mystery story concerning an English professor who teaches Shakes-

peare to 60,000 students on a T.V. network. The book will hold your interest and makes an excellent addition to any library.

Richard Rohmer is an untypical, hard to pinpoint existence in Canadian SF. Richard started out writing a mainstream novel, ULTIMATUM, which dealt with a future/speculative political situation, and somewhere along the way it became SF. It then became a runaway bestseller, because of some pretty darn good ideas; its only fault being that Rohmer is a good writer. But Richard plugged away, never calling his novels SF; after ULTIMATUM (1973) and its sequel EXXONERATION (1974), he wrote EXODUS U.K. (1975) and its sequel SEPERATION (1976). Good or bad these books deal with such familiar topics to Canadians as Canadian/U.S. relations, immigration, Quebec separation, Arctic energy and native people's land rights etc.

Well, there they are, more or less, the people who write SF in or about Canada. Now some more good news - yes, Canada may get a great semi-pro SF magazine.

Stardust, a small digest-sized zine has been kicking around for some time now, managing to produce three issues (no.s 2 & 3 were doubled together). But what issues - colour covers, offset printing, on quality paper, and some exceptionally good stories.

Issue 4 spells it out. Stardust, the Canadian SF magazine. It's 60 pages, with a beautiful professional-looking cover, and inside three good stories, the best of which is "The Night The Acturians landed" by Chris Dorian. The story was originally published with a different ending in Unearth, here it is in its original form. The prose and the timing are both tight and good.

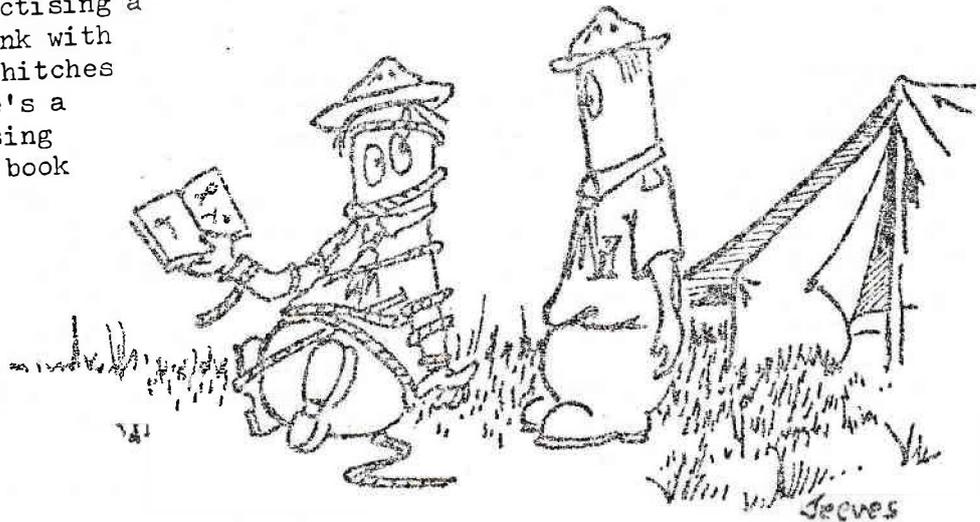
"PFSD", by Mackenzie Bell is the longest story, and could have been the best if Bell had spent more time polishing a few minor weak spots which disrupt the reader. Still, it is a good readable story. "Gloops" by Dena Bain is a very datable exploration into drugs, counterculture and sex. The story is good, jarring, bad, silly, tasteless and someday Dena may be able to take it and turn it into something special instead of a copy of the weird fantasies of the late sixties.

Editor Forest Fisco Jr. could do with some advice though; a) have the magazine typeset, b) go after advertising, c) advertise Stardust in the leading semi-pro and pro markets, d) fill up the pages more. Too much blank space makes the reader feel he's being cheated.

Stardust, 47 Vermont Ave, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6G 1X8. \$1.50 or \$5. (4 issues) quarterly. Stardust pays 1¢ a word for fiction. Give it a chance and watch a flower bloom.

Cons  
This year Vancouver hosted Westercon (a con held annually on the West Coast). Next year Los Angeles will be the host city.

I was practising a  
sheep-shank with  
two half hitches  
but there's a  
page missing  
from the book



### THE "WHO GETS WHAT WHERE" QUESTIONNAIRE

In MATRIX 8, Dave Lewis asked members to fill in a questionnaire for a survey he was doing concerning the reading habits of BSFA members. The results are below. Conclusions are hard to draw because of the low response rate - something under 7% of the then membership - and any deductions are therefore tentative in the extreme. However, I think one or two interesting points do arise, even if in some cases it is just a matter of 'proving the obvious'. I would like to point out that all the hard work in collating and tabulating the figures was done by Dave Lewis and any errors of extrapolation are probably mine, as I don't know the first thing about statistics except the old story about the 100-year old man who said that he was going to live forever because statistics proved that very few people indeed died between the ages of 100 and 101. But enough of such foolery...the BSFA Questionnaire, in which members were asked to how many books they had read and where they obtained them, during the year of 1975.

SCOURCES	BOOKS READ TOTALS OF CATEGORIES		BOOKS READ STRAIGHT AVERAGE OF TOTAL INDIVS.		BOOKS READ STRAIGHT % OF TOTAL		AV. BASED ON INDIV'S UTILIZATION OF EACH CLASSIFICATION	
	H-back	P-back	H-back	P-back	H-back	P-back	H-back	P-back
<u>Books Bought:</u>								
Local Bookshops	84	853	3.01	36.773	2.25	22.87	21	44.895
Large chainstores	4	294	0.18	13.364	0.107	7.88	2	18.364
Newsagents	11	119	0.50	5.409	0.294	3.19	5.5	9.917
Specialist Dealers	105	438	4.77	19.909	2.81	11.74	17.5	36.5
Jumble sales	25	99	1.136	4.50	0.67	2.65	3.57	11.9
Other sources	115	643	5.227	29.227	6.999	17.24	14.375	21.444
Total new	261	1600	11.86	72.727	6.99	42.90	18.643	72.727
Total 2nd-hand	83	847	3.77	38.50	2.22	22.71	9.222	56.467
Combined total	344	2447	15.64	111.27	9.22	65.62		
<u>Books Borrowed:</u>								
Local Library	679	82	30.884	3.727	18.2	2.19	67.9	16.4
B.S.F.A. Library	24	9	1.09	0.409	0.64	0.24	12	9
B.F.S. Library	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Friends	31	104	1.409	4.724	0.83	2.78	4.429	8
Other sources	0	10	0	0.455	0	0.26	0	5
Total	734	205	33.364	9.318	19.68	5.49	56.462	13.667
Total read	1078	2651	49	120.5	28.9	71.09	49	120.5
Combined total	3722	2652	68.04	130.77	48.1	136.71	105.424	134.172

## CONCLUSIONS

As has been said, any deductions are tentative, but bearing in mind that confidence limits can only be in the order of 50% with the size of sample in question, one or two indications may be worth noting.

Considering that a total of 3729 books were read by such a small sample, we can justifiably claim that BSFA members read a considerable more than the national average (one survey has claimed that 76% of people read two or less books in a year. As would be expected, a clear preference was shown for paperbacks when it came to buying books - 1600 (new) paperbacks (42%) as opposed to 261 hardbacks (just under 7%). The main source of hardbacks was the library - 679 or 18.2% of the total read - a gratifyingly (from my point of view as a librarian) high library use. Altogether over 20% of books read were borrowed from the local library. This brought up the total of hardbacks/paperbacks read to 28.9%:71.09% $\frac{1}{2}$

42% of paperbacks were bought new as opposed to just over 2% borrowed from the library. The latter percentage could be expected to increase as more libraries buy paperbacks to eke out book-funds hit by inflation and cutbacks, but at the moment bookseller's don't need to worry too much. The 22% of paperbacks bought second-hand, though, suggests that the rising cost of this format is making itself felt.

It is interesting perhaps that more hardbacks were bought from specialist dealers than other retail outlets - a reflection no doubt of the wider range of material which can be obtained from dealers. The high proportion of hardbacks classified under 'other sources' may well be accounted for by the SF Book Club.

So for some general conclusions: over half the sample bought hardbacks. Everyone bought paperbacks. Naturally, the largest number of books read came from the local bookshop, with the local library coming second, but note the importance of specialist dealers for what we can justifiably guess to be less obtainable books such as imports, or newly-published works. Jumble sales are an important source of books and nearly half as many books are bought second-hand as new (in fact, the figures break down to almost half new (1861), a quarter second-hand (930) and a quarter borrowed (939))

The BSFA library, sadly, seemed to be under-used. Is this the high cost of postage? Over half the sample borrowed books from friends - nearly 31/2% of all books came from this source, certainly more than from the BSFA library - unless we, too, come under this category!

So the Average BSFA member (if such a thing exists)

buys around 18 hardbacks /72 paperbacks new a year, and around 9 hardbacks /56 paperbacks second-hand. As well, 56 hardbacks and 13 paperbacks are borrowed from various sources. Counting a hardback as £2.50 and a paperback as 50p new, and 50p and 30p respectively second-hand (a no doubt unrealistically conservative estimate) this means that your mythical average BSFA member spends £111.70 on books per year. So we put quite a lot into the pockets of publishers.

A few questions to end up with. Do people think this represents them? Note that the time covered was 1975 and we are now (at time of typing) coming to the end of 1977. Has inflation made a difference to your book-buying? Perhaps people who responded to the questionnaire could reply to this - ((certainly in my case this is true; I buy far less and a greater proportion is second-hand, although to be fair there are other factors which mean shortage of cash.))

Thanks to all who took the time to respond and to Dave Lewis for the Hard Work.

Postscript - 'Other Sources' of books given were:

SF Book Club  
Squadron library  
Market Stall  
Readers Union  
Second-hand bookshop  
Books given as presents  
School bookshop  
Woolworths' remainders counter  
convention bookrooms  
Review copies.

(Andy Sawyer)

\*\*\*\*\*  
ROUND THE CLUBS with DAVE COBBLEDICK  
\*\*\*\*\*

### 'BREAKAWAY' - The Norwich SF Society

Initially, the Norwich SF Society took on the appearance of 'Discovery', so named because of the deep sense of discovery of SF and each other (the membership) and was very informal in its inception. Unfortunately, because of that dreaded disease 'apathy', it was decided that those who were still interested in SF (as SF) would form a rival group and thus....

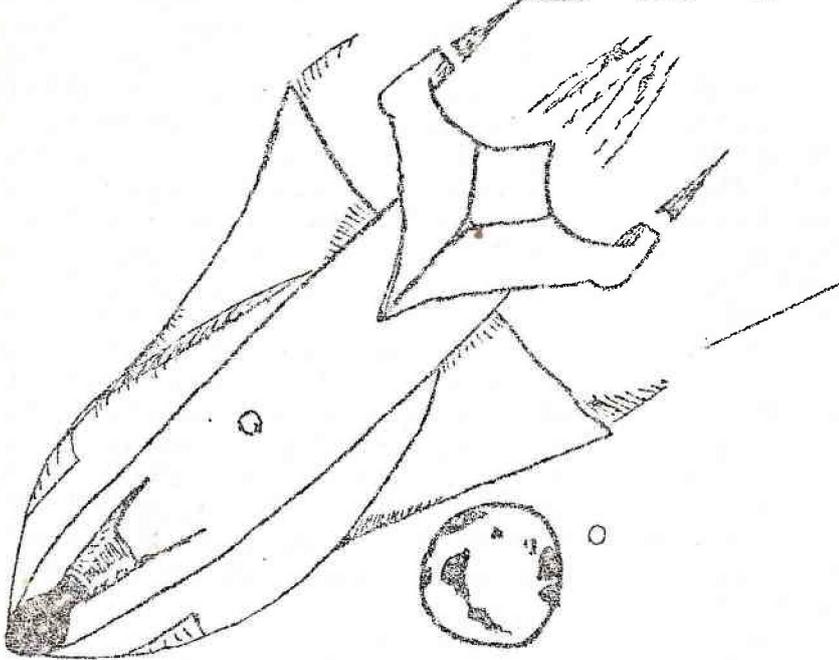
'Breakaway' was formed (titled because of the dissension) and was based upon the ideas of Lionel Fanthorpe, Mike Bootman, Sherry Ward, Peter Tyers, Roger Campbell and Stuart Andrews. (It was later that these people formed the formal committee and another was added later in the form of Alan Marshall who replaced Peter Tyers as secretary). The hope was to produce a group which would remain lively and, of course, be a continuous source of interest to its members and so the above people took on the dire responsibilities for the initiation of such plans.



# NEWSHOUNDS

OF THE

## BSFA



NO NEWS  
THERE

VISION, by Robert Scholes and Eric S. Rabkin. This may be interesting but was slammed by Brian Aldiss in the T.L.S. 16/11/77.

For those who prefer the Real Thing, NEL have in their January lists POLICE YOUR LOCAL PLANET, by Lester del Rey and reissues of THE WORLDS OF ROBERT HEINLEIN and Brian Aldiss's SCIENCE FICTION ART. New editions of John Wyndham's JIZZLE and Heinlein's REVOLT IN 2001 and SPACE CADET are also scheduled.

From Pan: THE LOST TRAVELLER by Steve Wilson and BRONTOMEK! by Michael Coney.

The third volume of Trevor Hoyle's 'Q' series is set for January publication from Panther - titled QUEST FOR THE NAKED SINGULARITY. (previous volumes are SEEKING THE MYTHICAL FUTURE and THROUGH THE EYE OF TIME. Trevor Hoyle is also at work on a lengthy TV series to be produced late next year and published simultaneously in hardback by Weidenfeld & Nicholson.

Star books publish Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle's INFERNO. (75p).

From Sidgwick & Jackson in January: THE MAGICIANS by James Gunn. And non-fiction(?) scheduled for later this year ((I think)) is Immanuel Velikovsky's RAMASES II AND HIS TIME.

Critic Auberon Waugh, when reviewing SILMARILLION, said that he would give up reviewing if the book sold more than 100,000. By now it has far exceeded that figure; could it be, bye-bye Auberon? (But according to the Library Association, although extra copies of the book are being ordered for public libraries, they are being returned with all but the first ten pages suspiciously untouched by human hand...)

Some book news: From Abbe Mowshowitz comes a book called INSIDE INFORMATION: COMPUTERS IN FICTION (Addison-Wesley, £6.40). This discusses various frameworks of computer technology, and discusses relevant SF works by Heinlein, Asimov, Brunner, Aldiss, etc.

The Oxford University Press have published a book entitled SCIENCE FICTION: HISTORY, SCIENCE,

BANANAS from Quartet : a selection from the magazine of the same name which features material from such writers as J.G. Ballard and Angela Carter.

A recent childrens' SF novel, BUZZBUGS by Bruce Carter (Dent, £2.95) features this years most original plot.... giant insects terrorizing the countryside.

PHILIP JOSE FARMER'S latest 'Riverworld' novel has just been published in the DS: title is THE DARK DESIGN. There will be a fourth to finish off the series, which it is hoped will be out next year.

Roger Elwood is editing a series of STARSTREAM comics, containing stories in strip form by well-known names, such as Sturgeon.

A new UK prozine is set to appear the first week of December. Entitled STARBURST, it is produced by the 'Mad Magazine' people and the first issue is based around, would you believe, STAR WARS.

Rumour has it that the zine STAR FORCE is being sued by 20th-century Fox.

DENNIS WHEATLEY, author of many books featuring the occult and borderline SF, such as BLACK AUGUST and THEY FOUND ATLANTIS, died on November 11th aged 80.

SOLARIS was shown by the BBC2 on Saturday, Nov. 12th, followed by THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN on the 27th Nov. 'HORIZON' on the 25th was devoted to the works of Erich von Daniken, who by his own admission features photographs and statements which he knows are false 'to stimulate the reader'. He still holds to his thesis - but True Believers should take note of the carved pebbles, thousands of years old, depicting heart transplants and the like, which von D. was shown in a museum in South America - and which 'Horizon' conclusively proved were carved by a man in the next village from contemporary magazines!

Perhaps adding support to vonD's theory, what is his and belongs to no-one else, was the warning by Virillon of Ashtar Galactic Command which cut into a Southern TV New programme on November 27th. Not to worry: this was a hoax by a group of students and electronics experts who have already 'hijacked' the airways twice before. They used a pirate transmitter powered by a car battery in the back of a van near an IBA transmitter.....at least, that's what we're told.....!

However, Eric Gairy, Prime Minister of Granada, wants the UN to set up a department to study UFOs. He himself has seen one and was 'overwhelmed' by the experience.

A Conan film is in the making, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger as our favourite barbarian.

Kenny (R2D2) Baker's next role is as a Womble in the W's full-length feature film.

Mark Hamill was saved to work on the sequel to STAR Wars by a car crash which smashed up his face - seems he was under contract for five years on a TV series called 'Eight is Enough', but felt that this obscure SF film he'd just finished might offer him a better chance of fame and fortune. An injunction was threatened, so on the Friday before the first episode was to be shot, Hamill returned to the series. Then he got in his car, went out on the freeway, over an embankment and smashed up his face. After which he was released from his contract. Meanwhile, Hamill's new film is STING RAY, about motor racing.

STAR WARS has reached the list of the top ten American films voted by the 16,000 members of the American Film Institute. It came eighth overall, which just beat 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY by one place. It came second in a poll organised by 'Star' magazine. Top film in both polls was - GONE WITH THE WIND. STAR WARS is breaking box office records in Italy and it STILL hasn't been shown in the UK. Would it be cynical to suspect that everyone will have bought their STAR WARS comics, T-shirts, jigsaw force-beams, etc. and will feel that they know the movie so well they won't bother going to see it?

Gene Roddenberry has signed William Shatner, James Doohan, Walter Koenig, Nichelle Nichols, and Majel Barret, from his original STAR TREK, for the new series. Leonard Nimoy will not be returning as Spock; instead Roddenberry is looking for an actress to play an alien who comes from a planet where "they are hairless except for their eyebrows and eyelashes. And extraordinarily sensuous". Would she surpass Leela, though???

Nichelle Nichols, who plays Lt. Uhura, recently spent five months touring the States to recruit women and members of minority groups for the space shuttle programme planned for the 1980's. During her stint, NASA recieved over 1,500 applications.

A recent US festival of animated films featured "Superman vs. the Mechanical Monsters" (Max Fleischer, 1941), "Cosmic Cartoon" by Steve Lisberger and Eric Ladd, a "lengthy, elaborate and whirling montage of outer-space-like images", and Cat Stevens' "Moonshadow".

STAR WARS POSTER MAGAZINE no. 1 is written by John Hay and produced by John Trux and Mike Marten, designed by Richard Adams. It is published by Galaxy Publications Ltd, 252 Belsize Rd, London NW6 - features a giant poster inside 8 x A4 size.

After hearing OLIVIA OF SUNHILLOW (solo album by Jon Anderson, Lead singer of YES), Anne McCaffery was so

Impressed that she got in touch with Jon with a view to him providing music for her 'Dragon' poems.

Radio 4's FIVE-SIXTH OF THE WAY TO THE MOON featured ITN's science editor Peter Fairly discussing telepathy and the paranormal - broadcast on Nov. 29th.

FUTURE TENSE was a season of SF films organised by the Science Fiction Foundation for the National Film Theatre, 7th November - 31st December. December programme is:

5th Dec	A BOY & HIS DOG.
6th "	HOUR OF THE WOLF
7th "	THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS.
8th "	MIGHTY JOEYOUNG.
8th "	THE SUBMERSION OF JAPAN.
9th "	THE CRAZIES.
10th "	THE BED-SITTING ROOM.
11th "	CARRIE.
11th "	NO BLADE OF GRASS.
12th - 16th	THX 1138 (Matinee)
12th Dec.	DR. STRANGELOVE.
13th "	BWG.
14th "	SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE.
16th "	WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE.
17th "	THE TENTH VICTIM.
18th "	SOLARIS.
19th "	CRIMES OF THE FUTURE.
20th "	THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR.
21st "	CHOSEN SURVIVORS.
22nd "	GLEN AND RANDA.
23rd "	JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF TIME.
27th "	WESTWORLD.
27th "	FUTUREWORLD.
28th "	JUST IMAGINE.
28th "	THE FINAL PROGRAMME.
29th "	DARK STAR.
30th "	GAS-S-S-S
31st "	SOYLENT GREEN.

Late-nighters -

16th Dec.	ITS ALIVE
23rd "	FLESH GORDON.

Two professors at Yale University have tuned in to the music of the spheres. 350 years ago, Kepler worked out the laws of planetary motion and an elaborate hypothetical music based on them. Willie Ruff and John Rodgers calculated the motions of the planets over a 100 year period, applied Kepler's laws and musical notations, and produced a program to feed into a music synthesizer. One listener commented that it sounded like motion sickness.

The world's first animated hologram, a 15th-

century tale of knights and dragons, has been created by James Britton Zabka, a former mural artist from San Francisco, who first became interested after reading LORD OF THE RINGS.

Robotics is becoming big business: The Commerce Department in Washington DC 'employ' a robot 'mail mobile' nick-named Roby. He can deliver mail five times a day as opposed to human employees' four, and was the first robot in Washington, although other floors of the Commerce Building now have their own robots. The Pentagon now has its own robot and there is one employed by the US Geological Survey. Quasar Industries of Rutherford, New Jersey are a leading firm of Robot manufacturers. They specialise in Sales Promotion Androids for stores and trade conventions, but are working on the prototype of a domestic robot which is expected to be in mass production in two years. More sinister is the Century One, which the US army is reportedly interested in. It is seven feet tall, weighs 650 pounds and can be programmed to kill. There is also the Century Two: "When he's out on program, nobody can stop him."

Uri Geller claims (again!) that the Russians are working on psychic war-machines - he says he was offered a large sum of money to go to a huge secret lab run by the KGB.

UFO records over the last ten years are being re-examined by NASA on White House orders to determine whether the Government should launch another full-scale inquiry. And the French Society for the Study of Spatial Phenomena is installing two computers in its' research centre to investigate UFOs.

Maybe they come from the series of rectangular rock formations discovered in the south polar regions of Mars by Mariner 9 five years ago, which a recent news item suggested was the ruins of an ancient city....but then again, maybe not.

10 out of 43 American astronauts who flew in space were born under the sign of Pisces. Is this a proof of astrology? The incredible odds have been calculated as being 571 to one against such a number having the same birth sign - which doesn't seem that incredible if you think about it.

In his new film THE MEDUSA TOUCH, Richard Burton plays a man with telekinetic powers.

"THE INCREDIBLE HULK" shown on American TV in two parts. Bill Bixby plays Bruce Banner and Lou Ferrigno plays Ol' Green-skin himself.

THE PEOPLE SHAPERS by Vance Packard tells us that the 'Brave New World' of Aldous Huxley is almost on us, with advances in cloning, transplants, and genetic engineering.

BUCK ROGERS revived for a series of one-hour TV programmes on NBC, who also plan QUARK, a science-fiction comedy series.

Dino (KING KONG remake) Laurenti's reported building a yeti, and suing producers of a new Yeti film - stole his idea.

PETER NICHOLLS HAS RESIGNED FROM THE SF FOUNDATION as from January 1978. A recent ad in the Times Literary Supplement asked for both an administrator and a research assistant. Apparently Peter Nicholls wants to be a freelance writer...((I'm sure that we all wish him luck, thank him for his work in the past, and hope that his successor will keep the Foundation running to the standard of achievement Pater has set. Peter Nicholls has done a great deal for SF in this country.))

The Polytechnic of North London School of Librarianship is running a seminar for Librarians on February 8th: "Science Fiction - its place and use in libraries." The course is intended for librarians engaged in acquisition and use of SF. According to the programme, "It is meant to show what is involved in building a comprehensive stock suited to the differing needs of the user of science fiction either as a literature for pleasure or for study." The programme consists of "The nature of SF", "The publishing and distribution of SF", "Bibliographical control of SF." and a discussion panel. Course organiser is Antony Crogan who once had the dubious privilege of trying to drive the arcane mysteries of Library Classification into the thick skull of Your Editor. He writes: "This is probably the first course on SF to be aimed specifically at librarians. This aim is an assertion that SF has a proper place in the world store of knowledge that is itself an idea in much of SF." Also taking part in the course is Ken Slater.

Film Society Notes:

Apart from one-off 'seasons' which are usually in London anyway, many people find it difficult to actually get to an SF film; distribution of many good SF films is not what it should be. One way of getting round this is joining a local film society or becoming friendly with a member - you can't usually turn up and expect to see a film but members are allowed one or two guests. The following films are being shown in the Merseyside area:

DON'T LOOK NOW	Jan 27	Heswall Film Soc.
THE FANTASTIC PLANET	Apr. 16	Frodsham " "
THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH	Apr. 8	Merseyside Film Institute. (MFI)
SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE	Feb 3	MFI
SOLARIS	Feb 25	MFI
YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN	Mar. 3	ELMSMERE PORT.
	Apr. 13	Birkenhead.

((Further information from other areas will be gratefully received.))

An SF "All-nighter" organised by the Stage One Arts Centre and the Little Ilford Film Society in the London Borough of Newham on 19th November featured THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN, ZARDOZ, SILENT RUNNING and THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD.

BOOK NEWS: New and reprinted paperbacks...

OMEGA SF in Milan have published an Italian translation of Gordon R. Dickson's SLEEPWALKER'S WORLD - IL MONDO DEI SONNAMBULI.

From SPHERE;

15th Dec. 1977  
 THE MAN WHO MOKE....Laurence Manning (85p)  
 THE PEOPLE OF THE WIND.... Paul Anderson (85p)  
 THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION.... Samuel R. Delaney (75p)  
 BABEL 17.... Samuel R. Delaney (75p)  
 REPORT ON PROBABILITY A.... Brian Aldiss (85p)

26th Jan. 1978  
 FLOATING WORLDS....Cecilia Holland (£1.50)  
 A KNIGHT OF GHOSTS & SHADOWS....Paul Anderson (85p)  
 PRIME NUMBER.... Harry Harrison (85p)  
 TO LIVE FOREVER....Jack Vance (85p)

23rd Feb. 1978  
 THE EARLY WILLIAMSON....Jack Williamson (95p)  
 JOURNEY OF JOENES....Robert Sheckley (85p)  
 THE MEN IN THE JUNGLE....Norman Spinrad (95p)

From NEL:

1st Dec. 1977  
 THE WANDERING WORLDS....Terry Greenhough (85p)  
 NO MAN FRIDAY.... Rex Gordon (90p)  
 STARSHIP TROOPERS.... Robert A. Heinlein (85p)

From FUTURA:

1st Dec. 1977  
 THE PRIMITIVE.... E.C. Tubb (65p)  
 PERRY RHODAN 29 (A World Gone Mad)....Clark Darlton (65p)

From Ballantine:

1st December 1977  
 TO CONTROL THE STARS....Robert Hoskins (65p)

From CORGI:

OX....Piers Anthony (85p)  
 PLANET OF JUDGEMENT (A Star Trek novel)...Joe Haldeman. (70p)

From FONTANA:

29th Dec 1977  
 MASKE THEORY....Jack Vance (75p)





FEATURES:

MACHISMO ON BYRONIA.....Martin Gardner (Mathematical Puzzle.)  
THE SF CONVENTIONAL CALENDAR.... Erwin S. Strauss.  
OH BOOKS:.... Charles N. Brown.

COSMOS SF & FANTASY: Nov. 1977

NOVELLETTES:

BITTERBLOOMS.... George R.R. Martin.  
WHEELS WESTWARD.... Robert Thurston.

SHORT STORIES:

THE ALPHABET SYSTEM.... Mary Jean Tibbils.  
AT THE DIXIE APPLE.... Michael Bishop.  
O YE OF LITTLE FAITH.... Robert Chilson.  
THE OTHER EYE OF POLYPHEMUS.... Harlan Ellison.  
SIR RICHARD'S ROBOTS.... Felix Gotschalk.

FEATURES:

STAR WARS....Samuel R. Delany:  
BOOKS.... Robert Silverberg.  
MEDIA.... Harlan Ellison.  
A FAN'S NOTES.... Ginjer Buchanan.  
COLOUR CENTREFOLD.... Eddie Jones.

FANTASY & SF Nov. 1977

SERIAL (Part 1 of 2):

WOLFHEAD.... Charles L. Harness.

NOVELLETTE:

FROM DOWNTOWN AT THE BUZZER.... George Alec Effinger.

SHORT STORIES:

ON ACCOUNT OF DARKNESS.... Barry N. Malzberg & Bill Pronzini.

THE ISLAND.... Elizabeth A. Lynn.  
SPIDER LOVE.... L. Sprague de Camp.  
FUTHER DEPONENT SAYETH NOT....Edward Weilen.  
THE HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING....Jeffrey Bullock.  
LETTER TO THE EDITOR.... Richard Frede.

FEATURES:

BOOKS... Algys Budrys. FILMS... Baird Searles.  
SCIENCE: (The sons of Mars revisited).... Isaac Asimov

ANALOG: Oct. 1977

SERIALS:

OF FUTURE YEARS (Part 1).... Mack Reynolds.  
THE WONDERFUL SECRET (Part 2 of 2)... Keith Laumer.

SHORT STORIES:

DOG DAY EVENING....Spider Robinson.  
THE ULTIMATE ARBITER.... Eric Vinicoff & Marcia Martin

FEATURES:

LASER WEAPONS - A STATUS REPORT.... Jeff Hecht  
THE LASER BMD.... P.J. Nahin.  
BIOLOG (Mack Reynolds).... Jay Kay Klein.  
THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.... Barry N. Malzberg.

(Compiled by Roger Waddington)

\*\*\*\*\*  
FF

FALLIBLE FREEMAN....

A long time ago since I jotted something down for MAI 14 - but I won't go into the CECTOR hassle - suffice to say although you might only have seen the last FF a short while ago, for me there's been a long gap.

Old faithfuls still appear - such as the highly recommended DELAP F & SF REVIEW (monthly, \$1.50 each) - 11863 West Jefferson Blvd, Culver City, California 90230, USA:

and FORTHCOMING SF BOOKS (bi-monthly, 75¢: Joanne Burger, 55 Blue Bonnet Ct, Lake Jackson, Texas 77566, USA. British cheque for 45p would be acceptable.

Haven't seen a LOCUS lately, but that's probably my fault. It's 6 weekly (or thereabouts), 40¢ from Charlie Brown, 34 Ridgewood Ln, Oakland, CA94611, USA.

The most regular and frequent of the British zines is ERG, 6 issues for £1 from Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Rd, Sheffield S11 9FE.

DELAP's contains a lot of longish book reviews plus articles FORTHCOMING is, I hope, self-explanatory, LOCUS is the American newszine and ERG generally has an article or two, some short reviews and letters.

Now, taken at random:

SCOTTISHE 74 - Nov. 77: Ethel Murray, Courage House, 6 Langley Ave, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 6QL. Six monthly. Short reviews of books (average 4 or 5 lines, 52 books), followed by some interesting letters then, Ethel gives excellent potted reviews (like this, only far better) of nearly 50 fanzines. Last, but by no means least, are the 3 pages of "Matterings".

GRAPO 31 & Oct 77: Graham Poole, 23 Russet Rd, Cheltenham GL51 7LN. A one sheet (one shot?) announcement of what Graham did in the USA and his plans to publish a trip report (not on his own - he asks for help from others who made the SunCon trip). Worthwhile effort and I look forward to seeing CEOTFK (50p pre-publication price). Profits to TAFF (can't help feeling this is the kind of effort that's supposed to be made by the TAFF winner....)  
Graham also publishes CYCLOTROM (15p) wherein he tries to help budding writers - tips, market reports etc.

NATIONAL FANTASY FAN -V37 No 3: Joanne Burger (address above). Free to members of

the NFFF. Even more inward looking, in many ways, than MATRIX. It's generally good, though I can't get worked up over the people running for office!

INTERPLANETARY NEWS Vol 14 No 1 - an ISTRA publication, 15 Nealden St, Stockwell, London SW9 (QX). Sub-titled "Britain's Space Monthly" (sic) this magazine costs 50p. It contains some articles on rocketry, newspaper cuttings on the same, and a lot of UFO/Bermuda triangle guff. Amuses me that it contains so much advertising where the prices are in dollars. Just to convince me I hate it there's fiction.... If you're a UFO freak try it, otherwise spend your money on something else....

DAISYKIDS - Sep 77: Don West, 40 Norman St, Bingley, W Yorks BD16 4JT. No mention of money or periodicity. Two sides of foolscap covered with D. West's meanderings. Can't help feeling I've 'done' this zine before - it has an identical taste to its predecessors. If you think it's funny, OK - otherwise the kindest thing one can say is that it's drivel, and occasionally malicious drivel.

CHANDELIERS & CANDELABRAS 2 Aug. 77: Richard McMahon, 287 South Lane, New Malden, Surrey. No price, irregular. A personalzine with letters. Apart from finding it difficult in places to distinguish where a letter leaves off and Richard restarts I found it interesting. Can't help feeling, however, that in several places Richard prints someone's statement and then demolishes another point instead. Maybe I should read it with more concentration.

CHECKPOINT 83 & 84 - Aug 77: Peter Roberts, 38 Oakland Dr, Dawlish, Devon. 5 for 50p. A newszine is only useful if it's regular and full of news. Checkpoint has some news, but where's No 85? Peter's back from his TAFF trip - I saw him at Novacon - but is strangely silent. No doubt he'll make me eat my words by revealing that he's working on the TAFF trip report to end all TAFF trip reports...

AMOR 21 - Aug 77: Susan Wood, Dept of English, Univ. of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada V6T 1W5. Subtitled 'an infrequent letter substitute'... As well as what Susan's been doing this issue has the words of a fannish musical - "Apa Queue!" A point of view removed from both the British and the main American scene.

TWLL DDU 8 & 9 - Sep 77: Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave, Reading, RG2 7PW. No price no frequency stated (to nit-pick (and Dave will, you can be sure) several frequencies are mentioned - but none that give any glimmer of how soon another TWLL DDU will appear). Dave has a style of his own - but to confuse everyone I think he tries to be different in each issue. If that doesn't make sense then you'll realise how TWLL DDU strikes me (usually rolled up and wielded by Dave

Langford...) He says I should recommend it... I do...

GET FOKT 1 - NOV 77: Bob Shaw, Top Flat Left, 11 Barrington Dr, Kelvinbridge, Glasgow G4. 25p plus 3AE. No frequency. The Friends of Kilgore Trout are the Glasgow SF group and they've put together a good genzine. After Bob's short editorial and a cartoon (by Stan Firth) Cordon Johnson tells how librarians spend our money buying books. Bob Shaw then takes over again with a long and interesting tale of his trip to see the last Apollo launched. Jimmy Robertson has a light piece on "unfamy" and then, once again, Bob Shaw re-appears, this time to review a model of the Me163B 'Komet'. I'll pass over the quiz which revealed my woeful ignorance to Sam McKay's piece on why malcontents happen. A piece of poetry leaves me cold but I found Sandy Brown's tongue-in-cheek description of finding FOKT amusing. A good issue, for a first issue very good.

TRICIDE 25 - Sep 77: Eric Bentcliffe, 17 Riverside Cres. Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 7NR. Quarterly, 50p per copy. Eric says words of wisdom about fanzines, then goes on to fans, then returns to TRICIDE history and nostalgia. Mal Ashworth's "We honked like Seals" (a reprint??) recalls his problem of book storage. Eric, next, tries to make sense out of a questionnaire he distributed at Eartercon on fan humour; he doesn't, perhaps make sense - but it is interesting. Eric Mayer tells how he didn't make music and Eric Needham gives us a shaggy goldfish story. Some film news and then letters... strangely loaded with Americans (which may say something about TRICIDE or about British fandom). Last item is Terry Jerves (who produces TRICIDE on his trusty dupper) who gives us the lowdown on his recent European tour. Recommended very highly.

ANDROMEDA: TIT Science Fiction Club, H-1113 Budapest, Bocskay ut 37, Hungary. All in Hungarian, so I'll pass up any comments. The editor would like copies of British fanzines - so any fanzine editor reading this, how about putting this on your list. A supplement (in English) comes with ANDROMEDA and I found this both interesting and entertaining.

TARDIS 6 - Aug 77: Gordon Blow, 41 Mountfield Rd, East Ham, London E 6 15p. Quarterly(-) This is the Dr. Who fanzine. Reproduction is not, in places, good, and some of the articles tend to be esoteric (History & Purpose of UNIT) and very much 'in-group' (Report on the Longleat Exhibition) but generally welcomed by Dr Who followers.

YANDRO 240 - July 77: UK agent Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Rd, Hoddesdon, Herts. Irregular. 45p each, 5 for £7.85, 10 for £2.90. After the Coulson Columns the main items are book reviews, letters, and a humorous take-off by Duane Stewart. Well worth the money.

THE PANELOGIST 8 Sep/Oct 77: George Barnett, 3 Coleford Bridge Rd, Mitchett, Surrey GU16 6DH. Frequency "as often as possible", 25p per issue. Basically a comic newszine it also has articles

(on comicart) letters and strips. The layout is far more imaginative than the usual SF - zine... and the art work is generally better. If you're into comix this is definitely recommended.

CIDEREAL TIMES 2 - Sep 77: Allen J Boyd-Newton, 42 Church La, Bicknoller, Via Taunton, Somerset. Quarterly (4) 15p. A mock interview serves to introduce Allen to his readers in a pleasant if unexceptional way. The next few pages are taken up with book reviews - again pleasant but unexceptional is the phrase that comes to mind... Keith Seddon then takes over with an attack on today's standards of literacy - its not the first time this has been done, nor, I'm sure, will it be the last - it's still valid, however! John Lang, in an article "Why SF?" fills a page... as a prelude to a controversy it might be OK - but I'd bet there will be no response worth talking of. Three pages of letters bring us to two other short articles on Nostalgia and Women in SF. News and Matter of the Somerset group and an afterword by the ed. bring this to a close. Improving though, for my taste too few too short articles.

TABEBUIAN 33 July 77: UK agent Alan Dodd, address above. Irreg (near enough quarterly it seems). 12 issues for \$3. A peculiar size, a peculiar fanzine. I like it, but it seems the kind of fnz that you either like or hate. This issue goes on about the Florida Keys Con Dave & Mardee were running (have run), Conan, book reviews and a couple of letters. Not much? For 25¢ it's worth it...

META 1 - Autumn 77: Brum SF Group, 33 Scott Rd, Olton Solihull, Warwickshire B92 7LQ. Irreg. No price. Three editors have their say, Rog Peyton gives a little background material and then an interview with Chris Priest - informative and entertaining - takes 4 pages. A half-page filler - a rehash of a New Scientist article on Isaac Asimov leads to 4 pages on music by Hawkwind live and on record. A 1p. round-up of SF bookshops (would have helped to indicate which sold by mail-order), then 7 pages of book reviews by the editors. Another first issues that shows promise but really needs more contributors... shows the Brum group are back on the zine-scene, anyway.

SKYCON PR1 & PR2: Skycon. if you don't already know, is next year's Easter SF Convention. Supporting membership (£2) should be sent to SkyCon, 5, Acton Close, Pangbourne, Berks. RG8 7LG. For this you will receive all the published material and it will, naturally, be deducted from the cost of attendance if you go.

ZEALOT 1 - Aug 77: Forlaget Bactrianus, Solivein 37, N 1370 Asker, Norway. Irreg. Price...try the equivalent of a kroner? A Norwegian fnz, as can be seen from the address - but in English. My main moan is the format - A4 stapled in the centre, so

that the pages are long and skinny... until the centre wherein 3 sheets are printed right across, so to read them you have to unstaple them... With that proviso here we have a second issue (the first having been labelled 0) commencing with some fiction by Andy Darlington (fair) something (-) by Gunnar Iversen. There are, perhaps I should say, editorial interjections throughout these pieces and the rest, which are; The Ballad of Billy Cop, book and fanzine reviews, an article on Norwegian fandom (longest and most interesting piece in the fnz). Very last item is a very nice strip cartoon. I honestly don't know whether I can recommend this fnz - but would urge British fnz eds to send a copy of their fnz and suggest those fans who try not to be insular should try to get hold of this Norwegian fnz.

1978 CALENDAR Not a fnz but something for you to hang on the wall and admire. Four illustrations by Dave Rowe. Profit (if any) is going to a charitable cause and your copy can be got for 50p: write to Dave Langford (address above).

My deadline's past - a few fanzines have arrived over the last few days - but they'll have to go in the next column..... Merry Christmas.

FF

ESCAPE.....Steve Cowpeethwaite

We climb through the atmosphere,  
Layered with noctambulent clouds  
That waltz above the vast necropolis below.

As the opiate takes effect  
We think in slurred images  
Of the nebulous delusions and vague ideals  
Peddled, continuously, by the politicians.

Until it was too late

And the mushrooms grew.

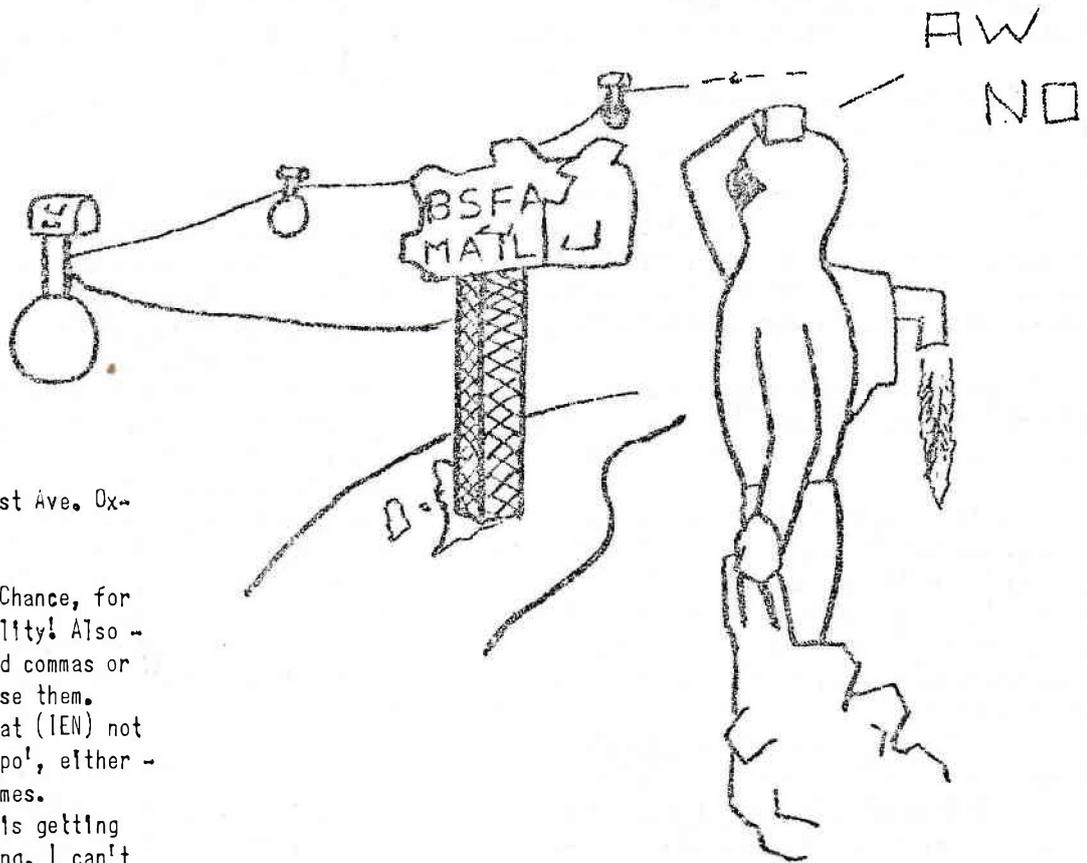
We are snatched by tentative mental goodbyes  
As our metal redeemer carries us skyward  
Towards something more,  
Or something less...

Slumber encroaches  
And we find no congruity in our thoughts  
We sleep....

\*\*\*\*\*

SILMARILLION has now sold more than one and a half million copies, more than any other hardback in history except for the Bible. Eat your heart out, Auberon Waugh! Paperback version won't be due out until round about 1982.

# LETTERS



CHARLES BRENCHLEY; 70 East Ave. Oxford OX4 1XP.

First, sack the Gods of Chance, for breaking the Laws of Probability! Also - please - if you open inverted commas or brackets, do remember to close them. And Tolkien is spelt like that (IEN) not -ein. Don't try to plead 'Typo', either - you did it at least three times.

((One of besetting sins is getting JRRRT's name consistently wrong. I can't wriggle out of this one. Dyslexia lures KO.))

Sorry to go on, but this just happens to be one of my buttons - like 'Whitehouse', 'toursists' and 'polittics'.

By the way, I don't approve of starting your editorship with an 'Aploogia' - wait till people start complaining before proffering your excuses - getting in beforehand smacks of feelings of insecurity, uncertainty, etc.

As regards the BSFA awards it should be voted for (from a shortlist) by the members, with a minimum requirement of, say, 50% of the voting slips to be returned, or else "No award, due to lack of interest."

I don't quite understand what J.S. Cairns is offering - could this be due to the typos? A clarification would be welcome.

Somebody ought to tell Andy Darlington that the

phrase "I am alone" is getting to be a little bit of a cliché in 20th century, and particularly amateur, poetry. I realise it may be difficult to express a state of personal solitude in a more original way, but I'm afraid I found the whole work somewhat trite and failing 'to disguise its banality' - as indeed I did the rest of the poetry in this issue.

I don't want to appear totally negative in this, my maiden loc - so may I say I enjoyed "Gongo" even tho' I haven't yet read Thongor & Co.? Oh, good. I enjoyed "Gongo", even tho'...

The Nicholls interview made interesting reading (didn't know the fellow was Antipodean), though I rather resent his statement that "there's something infinitely depressing about reading SF all the time." He obviously doesn't read the right sort. ((But he's not paid to read the 'right sort', whatever that is. He obviously has to keep abreast of the entire field, that must lead to reading some godawful stuff at times.)) All the same, some big nob should write the man

a note of appreciation for looking after the BSFA library before he gets cheesed off with it and does something we might make him regret.

Another thing - would it be possible to extract relevant bits from these interviews and print them while they are still relevant? If I'd known about the September film season before October (which I swear I didn't), I'd have moved to London for a month. 'A BOY AND HIS DOG' - how could I miss it? ((If anything relevant appears on the files I'll certainly comb it over in search of news items which would be outdated before it appears.))

"Oh Mother..." sounds well worth seeing. There's too little SF drama around at the moment probably due at least in part to poor box-office response; for example, a brilliant piece entitled 'By The Shores of the Sea of Dreams' by a then-amateur who for reasons of modesty must remain unnamed, went almost unnoticed by the thousands who attended this year's St. Andrews Arts Festival.

To continue - please - does anyone know the editorial address of 'Cosmos'? Oxford bookshops/newsagents don't seem to have heard of it.

Now, if I may, I should like to devote myself to Mr. D.M. Wilson, who came perilously close to pressing my 'Whitehouse' button with his 'Opinion'. If he doesn't like those areas of SF which Harlan Ellison refuses to designate as 'New Wave', well, okay, that's his privilege. He's missing a hell of a lot of brilliant and beautiful work, but I'm not going to argue. However, I feel I must comment on his third paragraph, in which he appears to be complaining about the use of such words as fuck, cunt, and shit in SF. Does Mr. Wilson honestly believe that anybody buys and reads SF for the sake of these words, rather than the rest of the story? If anyone does, then I agree that there are other works that would satisfy them more; but the fact that these words are used in 'pornographic' works and frowned upon by Ms. Whitehouse and her cronies (oh Ghu, someone has pressed my button!) does not and must never preclude any other writer from using them as and when he sees fit. It is his prerogative, Mr. Wilson, to tell his story however he finds it good so to do, and if this includes the use of 'offensive' language, then I accept and welcome it, and I don't think you or anyone else has the right to say 'Nay'. You can always close the book and turn to Perry Rhodan instead.

I personally appreciate the 'Newshounds' columns, since the BSFA is my only contact with What Is Going On In The Real World, as opposed to the fiction they fill the papers and TV with - and an old hat is a lot better than no hat at all.

Will people please shut up about politics? There

is nothing more boring, from whichever aspect you care to view it.

TOM JONES: 39, Ripplesmere, Bracknell, Berks.

Cover: A good one from Dave Lewis but the caricatures... sacred blue! My ears do not turn out like that, and I'm thinner, damn it. And I know Dave Wingrove is larger than life but that's ridiculous! But he's managed to catch you to a tee.

I'm pleased to see you're keeping to my standard of typos, but where are all the spelling mistakes? You're letting the side down. ((Well Charles Brenchley (last letter) picked up on a gorgeous one...and I've just noticed a typo in the last paragraph which I'll keep in, just for you, Tom.))

The interview with Pete Nicholls by Trev Briggs is excellent, well conducted by Trev and candidly answered by Pete. There's one area where I must take Pete to task. Certain members of the committee were worried about the security of the library in a Polytechnic and used a resolution at the AGM to discuss this. I would have thought Pete would have been pleased we cared enough about the library to want to be assured it was safe. Yes, we don't thank the librarian or Vector editor but we don't thank anyone because we all know we're working hard, not just the Librarian & Vector editor. As for the tape library Pete is wrong, it's not a BSFA service but a private facility Gerald Bishop kindly lets BSFA members use, for a price of course. Maybe we'd cease to worry about the library and be more grateful if Pete produce an occasional report (I'm sure Andy would print it in MATRIX.) I'd certainly like to know that the library is being well used and is "our most popular service".

My general feelings on the Foundation is that it is on the whole an excellent institution doing a good job. But, as Pete says, its' job is largely an academic one whilst we, the BSFA, deal with the general readers, writers, publishers, etc. So on the whole there are few areas of contact but we will always be willing to consider working with the Foundation on specific projects of mutual interest.

The letters: I think Steve Cowperthwaite sums up what are my feelings on SF in school after considering all the arguments, that is, SF should not be taught but should be readily available along with other genres.

The British are terribly insular, especially within Literature (in some ways due to our dislike of learning a foreign language - I am a major culprit) and we should inform our members of SF in other countries; perhaps some of our overseas members could come through with reports for MATRIX? ((Well, you heard him - I shall expect some info from overseas for the next MATRIX!.....please!))

In discussing after-the-catasrophe films/TV may I recommend THE DEATH OF GRASS from the John Christopher novel. This was recently on TV and I was surprised at how good and realistic this film was. It did not paint a pleasant picture but I fear it was a truthful one. And the film made SURVIVORS look like Andy Pandy. I'm surprised this

excellent film has not had the acclaim (and frequent showing at conventions and film festivals) it deserves.

Dave Cobbledick and I would now appear to agree in general on TVSF. I shall remain highly critical of most TVSF (as I am of most film SF) but in a constructive way, I hope. But another letter makes a valid point that maybe things like SPACE 1999 are meant for kids and I shouldn't judge it harshly by adult standards. Up to a point I can go along with this though I think we must apply good critical standards to juvenile SF (literature/TV/film). ((Right.)) And on an emotional level, which is where it always rests, I'm just not entertained by most TVSF so I'll shout against it and I suppose those who are entertained will shout for it - c'est la vie.

Summary: In a nutshell; nice one, Andy. A nicely balanced issue (better than 13 I thought). Keep it up and come your third issue no one will remember me (you sod!)

T.W. FRANCIS: 32 Studley Rise, Trowbridge, Wilts BA14 0

I found my first Matrix quite an experience. I liked the interview with Peter Nichols conducted by Trevor Briggs for it brought back memories of my school days. ((I publicly apologise and will try to ensure that it won't happen again)) You see whenever I had the opportunity to open a book of my own choosing, invariably it was a history of World War II. I had this thing about War back then. I think I looked upon it as something glamorous (too many John Wayne War films in childhood you say), yet the more I read about War, the more I came to realise just what an abhorrent thing War is. During a library period I cracked the pages of an H.G. Wells book - a collection of his novels. The first taste of written SF I ever had was THE TIME MACHINE.

At the time (Is that a pun? No? Ah Well!) I found it unreadable. Ha! I bet you thought I was going to say it was the best thing I ever read. No, I just couldn't finish it. Not surprising, really. In those far off, youthful days, when I was filled with vibrant energy, I found it difficult to finish books of any kind. However the mere fact that I was given a choice of what I could read was something I feel very grateful for.

Which brings me to about a decade ago. One fine day I purchased, as was my wont, a Dracula comic, on the back of which was a NEL advert for several SF books. How lucky I was, when upon answering the ad I received the cream of the Gods with my first swig. Yes, the first SF books I ever read fully were - wait for it - STRANGER IN

A STRANGE LAND, DUNE, OCTOBER COUNTRY, and Van Vogt's QUEST FOR THE FUTURE.

Ambrosia indeed to my parched lips. I followed this up with the 'FOUNDATION' trilogy. Lucky indeed to have come across such treasures right from the start.

From that momentous beginning through a subscription to 'Galaxy', up to today when I try to keep up with most of the other SF mags as well, I've never looked back. That's why I can agree wholeheartedly with Dan Farr when he says 'Cosmos' is a good magazine. "Yea brother, we're stepping into Eden."

Another good thing in MATRIX 14 was the section on BSFA Newshounds, though some of the items are a bit dated others proved of interest. The letters section, always an intriguing area, even those published in 'Analog', more so in such an intimate zine as MATRIX. I wonder if I'll ever have my comments published therein. ((You have. Welcome to the BSFA!))

DAVE LEWIS: 1 Aldis Ave, Stowmarket, Suffolk.

Jackson's Island. Does this mean Rob Jackson has extended his sphere of influence from east to west coast or has he signed for Tranmere Rovers after his success in Athletic Gannet? ((Not a bad try, Dave, glad someone had a bash, but you missed the mark...though come to think of it, Rovers are doing well this season...))

Sorry to hear about Chris Fowler, hope he finds inner peace and physical health real soon. Although I did not altogether like his brand of heavy VECTOR preferring the mix lightened with a few feature articles.

Editor's forward...to the firing squad presumably? A pleasant bit of trivia. Fannish even! Light, trite & satisfying, Wingrove please note. We wanna lighter Vector Hector!

Ultra big nose P.N. tells all & sundry why a one man band can't keep it up for long. Carry on groaning Pete you may make the top 20 yet.

Oh mother you'll never believe this. Don Farr says nothing over two whole pages. I know Matrix is supposed to be light entertainment but Don has gone too Farr. His perusals say nothing whatever. No opinion, nothing objective, no reasoning, no style. He detects style in 'Cosmos' with the air of making a great discovery but in his joy neglects to say what this style is!

Unfortunately, 'Newshounds' has suffered due to the late mailing. The SILMARILLION has been out for 3 months and even I have finished reading it. A bit different in tone to LOTR but enjoyable none the less. If one accepts it is written as a simulated collection of myths & legends similar to the Old Testament in formation, i.e. odd bits and pieces put together by various scholars long after the event. A tragedy of epic proportions as the Elves battle the old enemy losing all in doing so, a bitter victory when it comes. ((I must admit to being somewhat disappointed by SILMARILLION: only in parts were there any true narrative strengths and a lot of it was,

to me, lacking in any real visualization of his world. Maybe it's a book to be dipped into, rather than read all the way through. As a 'simulated collection of myths and legends' it undoubtedly works but it lacks much of the invention which marks LOTR. (I prefer 'genuine' myths to pretend scholarship - but I expect everyone will have their own opinions)).

1990 has come and gone; a chilly reminder of the way we could be going & handled very well except for the copout ending. Bureaucrats rule OK, but the radical journalist triumphs in the end by flooding Britain with super ration books & the county's stock of privileged goodies is exhausted in a two day binge by the rebellious populace. Ah well, the rest of it was authentically downbeat in tone with our hero harrassed at every step.

The Lox drone on predictably & on about the latest issue: SF in schools, and TVSF.

To me all politicians belong to the same class & are totally divorced & unaware of the problems confronting ordinary folks, we would be better off if a latter day Guy Fawkes succeeded in blowing their fat arses sky high.

Freeman is as concise as ever but covers the same old ground. What about the offar Fanzines then?

Less art than usual. But a promising fish in the tradition of the Jones boy. Carry on editing.

SIMON R. GREEN: 37 St. Laurence Rd., Bradford on Avon, Wilts.

Congratulations on your first Matrix; you struck just the right balance, though a little longer letters column would be appreciated.

Regarding the 2000AD reviews, I have to say I'm very much in agreement with you over the inherent brutality in the comics. I've seen the '78 annual for this comic and gave it a look over. I admit to being thoroughly recalled. Lets take it strip by strip, as the reviewers did. Dan Dare first, of course. As Jim Barker said, my first introduction to SF was through comics, with Captain Condor originally, (some of the early strips circa 63 being fully the equal of Dan Dare under Hampson,) and that snotty-nosed little Cadet in 'Ranger', plus, of course, the magnificent 'Fall of the Yrigan Empire' series in the same comic.

But 2000AD... first off, the Dan Dare strip is a rip-off disaster. Cutesy moralising added to turgid writing. The artwork is adequate but to my mind uninspired.

INVASION is perhaps the worst strip of all. The artwork is atrocious, the writing not much better.

And the violence is graphically stomach-turning and totally gratuitous. With people like Bill Savage fighting to free Britain, I think we'd be better off with the Volgs.

FLESH was a non-starter and MACH 1 a rip-off. A quick word about the violence in this last strip. At the end of one episode Mach 1 kills off the bad guys by turning a rocket on them and letting its jets fry them slowly to death, and all this with a merry quip on his lips. A few more adventures like that and they'll have to start giving away a free brown paper bag with each issue.

HARLEM'S HEROES is a 'Rollerball' rip-off that glorifies the violence the film deplored. JUDGE DREDD wasn't too bad. The artwork was...unusual. (That's my way of saying that whilst there was nothing actually wrong with it, it was a bit too stylistically weird to suit my taste.) Jim Barker was right in saying that basically it doesn't take itself too seriously, but even its campy approach allows for the maximum of violence in the minimum of space.

The rest of the annual was filled with short stories along the EERIE/CREEPY style, with the art ranging from very good to abysmally poor. One story actually had an ending based around the idea that "There are Things we are not meant to know!" This, in a science fiction comic? Come on!

Overall, I found 2000AD to be a rather nasty experience. I realise the annual is not necessarily representative of the comic, but it is supposed to stand as a kind of sampler, and I therefore feel justified in saying that 2000AD looks all set to do for comics what Lost in Space and 1999 did for television. Namely. put people off SF for life.

((I must remain ambivalent, at least, about this comic. Whereas I have no wish to censor or act as a Whitehouse-type {Guardian of Morals' I do dislike the prevailing tone of 2000AD, which seems to say nothing more than 'Violence is fun'. Whether this is actually corrupting, or whether the less overt (but more insidious?) influence of the comics you and I grew up on is just as bad, I don't really know. I well remember the harsh criticism of the comics I used to read, on pretty much the same grounds. And of course it's had no effect on me, and if you say it has I'll kick your teeth in!))

In the lettercol, I think Keith Warwick was a little hard on VORTEX, which was potentially quite a good magazine. He quite rightly pointed out the major faults; mediocre fiction and art that ranged from the excellent Cawthorn to some bloody awful hackwork. When Vortex first appeared I was quite enthusiastic; unlike Keith, I approved of the glossy format (a damn sight more long-lasting than pulp paper) and some of the fiction seemed very good. Unfortunately the Moorcock serial didn't live up to its promise and the Christchild segments were OK on first reading, but don't stand up to re-reading. The supporting fiction varied widely from issue to issue, but never touched any real heights. One major problem seemed to be that Vortex was trying to create a mystique about itself on the same order as Moorcock's New Worlds at its pyrotechnical height. Unfortunately

this takes a long time to build up and must be done with great skill and tact. I've no doubt there is a market for the kind of fiction Mr. Seddon seemed to favour, but it doesn't appear to have been a mass market. With a new magazine like Vortex, you need large sales as soon as possible, and the editorial policy at times seemed dedicated to the exact opposite. A noble, but fore-doomed experiment.

ANDY PRATT, 6 Victoria Park Rd, Exeter, Devon EX2 4NT

I'm new to the BSFA, joining in the thick of the education debate. Since I'm on my second-year English Lit. course ('O' level) I'd thought I'd better tell you about my Mode Three...

It's not a Parisian Fashion, simply a snazzy title for a new, more flexible type of 'O' Level, one that's designed to let us poor sods taking the exam have some choice over the books we study (Paper 1 on a Shakespeare play is still compulsory), The basic idea is that our course teacher lets us choose a certain literary category - SF, War, Horror, etc. - from which he appoints a book to act as the course basis; and at the end of the year he sets and marks an exam, although to complicate things more, there probably won't even be a conventional Paper 2 exam - our marks may simply be determined on our year's study. To add security, an 'O' Level examiner will of course come down to the school to check some random exam papers.

It's a very great improvement. If you happen to think - as most of my form does - that Thomas Hardy should have been castrated at birth, and Jane Austen exported, you can spend your time enjoyably studying SF. I've heard - and read - in the Matrix cols. all arguments about how kids should be made to read the classics. Not only are people who say that wrong, but also those who advocate complete freedom of choice. I believe in the compromise decision taken by my teacher. We are given 10 books to read over the school year, all widely recognised modern classics. (SF is represented by THE SILVER LOCUSTS and perhaps LORD OF THE FLIES.) This way we find the category we enjoy most and do an 'O' Level in it. Sounds simple! But it isn't...

However the compromise system our master is using is, I think, the right one:

- 1) It allows teenagers to find out what books they can enjoy. I know most of my classmates prefer staring at the breasts on Charlies Angels to reading, but I've seen some come back after reading Solzhenitsyn's ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVITCH and similar books asking for more. Surely it's better to get a reaction like this, than to bore everyone stiff with 'Kim'.
- 2) It allows teaching flexibility. Our teacher can - and has - devote an odd lesson to SF and give the same service to other types of literature.
- 3) And who's to say these more modern books are in any way inferior to established books.

((This sounds interesting. I've heard a lot about Mode 3 and it seems you can get to some good books on this course. In my own conventional 'O' Level course, about 10 years ago, so things will no doubt have changed, we had only the briefest, if any look at genres and modern literature. I read a lot of stuff I'm grateful for having read, but I'm sure I'd have got just as much if not more out of it if we'd had a wider view. I think people at school can well have a wider range of reading interests than they're often given credit for, and while I think a knowledge of the 'Classics' is rewarding, very few people are really going to get anything out of cramming as much as possible of the history of English Literature. I'm only just getting round to reading Jane Austen, who I quite enjoy now but who I never wanted to read at all when I was doing 'O' Level. Far better to read something you're really going to get something out of, I think.))

I don't know how any BSFA member could praise TVSF. It is diabolical.

The American imports are sheer money-spinners and it normally shows - yes, even STAR TREK is feeble. Producers just haven't woken up to the fact that the public doesn't want monster-filled Space Opera.

We have a similar predicament here in Britain. After a promising start, SURVIVORS deteriorated into CROSSROADS while 1990 made its' mundane intentions clear from the start. What a waste of time! What a comparison to ALT? ERNATIVE 3! Admittedly not pure SF, but a stepping stone.. surely there must be something the BSFA can do? ((Well Dave Cobbedick has a scheme in mind...check out his letter later on.))

Finally, whatever happened to 2001, that superb movie? I can't recall it ever being shown at any local cinema for at least 3 years, and I've heard that it's been shown twice on American TV. Surely this classic can't be rotting in some library? ((I suspect it's on the launching-pad together with a lot of other classic SF movies to see if the reception of STAR WARS warrants re-release.))

PHIL ROSENBLUM, Burton Bank, Wills Grove, Mill Hill, London NW7

There is a smack of religious idiosyncrasy in D.H. Wilson's opinion/letter. Science Fiction is not a formalised institution rigidly following the dogma laid down by the founding fathers. What puts guts into SF is its' gregarious inclination to express all aspects of man and his universe in whatever manner it chooses.

The day when somebody defines SF in terms of content or technique is the day SF ceases to exist.

I do not find fuck, cunt, shit etc. 'daring'. They are an integral part of everyday life. I prefer SF to be about Real people, not Victorian Icons.

As to Mr. Wilson's accusation that they do not belong in SF as they can be found elsewhere, can I infer that the words ROCKET, PLANET, SUN, SPACES, TIME, etc. should be removed from mainstream fiction?

Every SF author thinks he is writing the best kind of SF, otherwise he'd be writing something else. It is only understandable that J.G. Ballard dislikes Buck Rogers. However, Mr. Wilson seems to have fallen into the trap of disliking all 'New Wave' SF from just such personal taste. Personal taste is not going to convince me 'New Wave' SF isn't SF, and that we should read nothing but Buck Rogers.

Let's not imprison SF in a cage of definitions. Let's have freedom, development and fun.

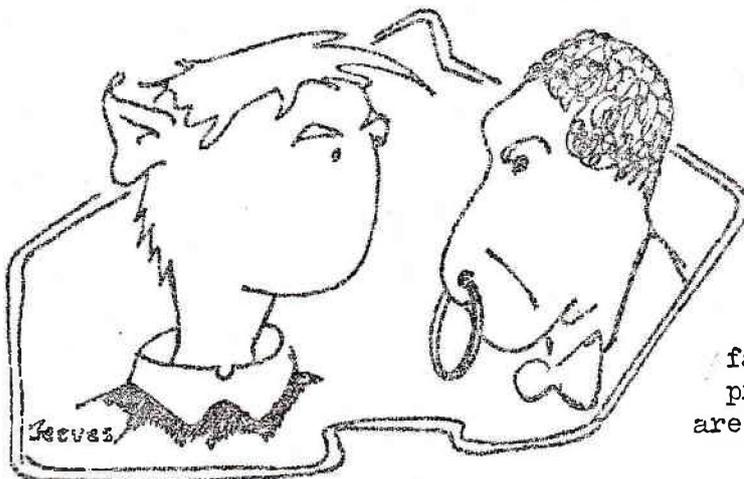
DAVE COBBLEDICK, 245, Rosalind St. Ashington, Northumberland NE63 9AZ

My, my, I do let myself in for some stick by prostrating myself and my views in this letter column, but I stick by my guns once I start, and here cometh my replies ('ere, don't switch off or turn the page....'ere, come back...)

TVSF: Now that I've made all my speeches on this subject (excepting one or ten comments for later), I'd like to ask for volunteers. I need people to help me with the dissemination of the census that I proposed last issue. ((Asking people what they disliked or liked about TVSF and what they would like to see.)) If you are interested in trying to better TVSF then I'd like to hear from you. Now for those comments: I don't want to inflict pressure upon anyone, Andy. All I want is for the collected thoughts of a couple of thousand SF'ers be placed where

they may do some good for TVSF. Advice from those who know the ropes to those who have the power and money to make it all happen on our TV screens. If they take no notice, then we put the pressure on; send a couple of heavies round to split on their works, etc. etc. Special thanks to Roy Jackson: I hope that my opening paragraph (last letter) didn't crap on your opinions, which I fully support. (I'm one of those STUPID adults who watch 1999.....'n I like it. Richard Bancroft, my thanks to you for thinking of me frothing at the mouth as I indulged in a savage and barbaric attack on my typer whilst thinking of those who were to read my mis-ive.

H.G. Wells: Oh Andy, you missed my point. There was Peter Ellis, sprouting off at the mouth at Wells' incompatibility. It's like I said, "Books (fictional books) are there to entertain". I agree with you that some authors try to prophesy the future and some have succeeded, but to say that because an author happens to guess at what will happen, or be invented, at some future date is a prophecy come true is just ridiculous. Will the jump drive created by Haldeman in THE FOREVER WAR be declared a prophetic happening if it's invented in a few years time? Of course not. Did Verne sit down and postulate on atomic power when he wrote 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA? Naw, he thought up something which was highly unusual and unavailable at the time of his writing. If it happens in a fictional novel then it is pure coincidence or is theorising on what is already around you. ((Dave, I think we are talking at cross-purposes here... I agree that no writer sets out to be 'The man who prophesied TV' or whatever; the gadgetry in Wells' stories is to a very large extent unimportant, but in some of his books (eg MEN LIKE GODS: THE SLEEPER WAKES) he was trying to comment on his present society (and the way he thought it might develop) by 'inventing' a future society. You said books are meant to entertain. True. But Orwell, etc. wanted to warn people of possible future developments and decided he would reach more people by using fiction. Obviously you reach and hopefully influence people if you entertain them. That was really my point and I agree with you that SF is not a literature in which the success of a writer can be judged by how many future inventions or developments he scores.))



OK, so you're gaffiating from fanac to start a prozine..now what are you talking about ?

Politics: tum-tee-tum, what a tiresome subject, but; we are a democratic country who do everything by majority vote. UNTRUE. We are a divided nation. We have unionists, communists, anarchists, fascists, democrats, Scottish and Welsh Nationalists and our own individual selves. We vote a government into power by casting votes and it can consist of many of the above-mentioned but, it is we who put them there and it is they who dictate policy to us. They determine our standard of living, they determine laws which, if put to democratic vote, would be torn down by majority vote. Politics is not how we live, Andy, but is how we are dictated. My main point, however, was to ve it out of Matrix. (The whole subject of what people THOUGHT Heinlein to be, anarchist/facist, was what prompted me to step in and try to point out that he is A BLOODY GOOD AUTHOR to me and to others who enjoy his work). Thou shalt not hear another word from me about politics UNLESS this defamation of author's characters is brought up again...even for those whom I dislike. Nuff said. (( Hmm...could write pages and pages on these comments but basically you are quite right in suggesting that Matrix is devoted to SF rather than politics. I respond strongly to social attitudes expressed in books, if this is political, I plead guilty. But I don't let this blind me to other qualities. ))

Matrix: two pages have just dropped off the back; is that electric stapler what it should be? Nice job Andy, I really liked this issue, but for one thing; what's happened to all the letters? Is there a shortage of people, sitting out there with nothing to do when they could be writing to M (sounds like the guy out of James Bond?) It's nice to see that there is more poetry/rhyme coming into Matrix. I think that it is one of the best ways of expressing oneself, as it requires some deep and heart-searching thinking. I think I'll get the quill out and try my hand once more at this almost forgotten art.

Peter Nicholls: I loved the interview and found that it brought about some interesting facts about the SFF, Peter, and the BSFA. The SFF is a marvelous organization and I've a lot to thank them for (especially Colin Lester who used to work for them) as it was from there that I got to know about the BSFA. Peter, I'm sure that although you've had no verbal thanks from anyone for what you have done for us, we all appreciate it very much and if it's not too late I'd like to say THANKS. However, I disagree with you about 'reading SF becomes depressing when one reads it all the time'. From a personal viewpoint (and that's all there is) I love it; I eat it read it, drink it ((REMIND ME NEVER TO LEND YOU ANY OF MY BOOKS!)) dream it, but I never spew it up...great stuff it is.

KEITH FREEMAN: 269 Wykeham Rd, Reading RG6 1PL

Cover - very good: think it's a bit naughty for

the new editor to allow such cracks to be made at the expense of the 'old' editor...and Tom swore black and blue his ears didn't stick out like that (but I'm sure Dave Lewis can operate on him during Novacon!)

Editorial title - a literary reference no doubt... but I won't hazard a guess at book title or author - I'm sure to be wrong and reveal my ignorance! (I suppose I already have come to think of it!)

Would suggest another competition - the winner being the person who guesses nearest to how much Tom Jones bribed you to continue making Matrix the fanzine where typos outnumber non-typed words! ((No cimmint, er, commug, oh forget it!))

Len Varter's foreword. Very funny - only hope you don't get sued by someone...between his writing C\*N\*N stories etc!

Peter Nicholls (now resigned from Foundation, I believe) is contentious in places but I'll leave it to others to take issue with him. When he says the BSFA 'gave' its library to the Foundation he does not mean, of course, 'transferred ownership' but 'delivered'.

This Matrix, obviously, is a 'transition' edition - that is although you've edited it (and typed it, etc.) it's from material mostly gathered by Tom Jones - and the letters, obviously, refer to previous issues. I'm sure you'll make changes - equally sure you'll make as good a job as Tom has in the past! Good luck!!

PAUL FRASER: 51 Ivanhoe Rd, Aberdeen AB1 7HA

1) What's the point of printing new members in Matrix when you also hand out a membership amendment sheet? ((call it some sort of administrative cockup, I think.))

2) Poetry: why is this not in Tangent where it belongs? I'd rather have another decent article, of which in Matrix there is a noticeable lack.

3) Enjoyed the interview. He seems to be getting a bit pissed off at the BSFA.

4) The comic review: you spend one and a half pages on a comic review. Fair enough, but don't you think that the prozines are more of a priority?

5) Round the Clubs: Think this should be a bit shorter as a page and a half is too much.

((I've already answered some of these points in a personal letter but: Poetry 'belongs' in Matrix just as much as in Tangent. If you don't like it, then say so, but there's no reason, I think, not to publish poetry as a policy decision. If I think something is worth printing then I'll print it. I think the 2000AD review was important as this comic will serve to introduce SF to many thousands of potential readers.))

6) The meat of this letter: the so-called prozine reviews. I'd like to know who Mr Strahan is. I would like to know which type of SF he prefers, which his favourite magazine is, in short, what his critical judgement is based upon.

You see, when I received the F&SF in question I quite liked it. Before I go on, I'd like to say that I've been reading a lot of mag SF recently and can really become pissed off and jaded at the poor quality of it. So, therefore, when I say I quite liked it, in my opinion it was \*SOMETHING ELSE\*

Robert Thurston's 'The Mars Ship': he said it was pointless - most fiction is. "Virtually all description" - no, not quite. The majority of the writing was characterization. I'll admit it was what some people would call a 'plotless verbosity' and normally I can't stand that type. This was an exception though. Thurston made it all come alive and for a while I was there. Just because a story doesn't have a plot it doesn't have to be bad. And to crown it all, he didn't even read it all! How anybody can not finish reading something but attempt to review it is utterly ludicrous.

He also slags the cover as 'a slur on SF': what does he mean by that? The cover was a painting of an organic/metallic spaceship by Steinbach. What's that in Strahan's book? Heresy? Maybe he would have preferred a painting of yet another phallic spaceship or maybe a BEEM? Perhaps a Robot?

After this comes another review by Dan Farr. Yet another piece of shit. "Cosmos is a good magazine" I do wish he'd stop making these unsupported statements. All he did in this so-called review was list four short stories and the other material while omitting the novella and two other stories,

His review of 'Unearth' is far more interesting. By this, I mean it is easier to rip his ideas to shreds. He cites Del Rey as delivering an "uncalled for negative review" of 'Unearth' "simply by missing the magazine's point of existence". He goes on to cite this purpose as "giving would-be writers a chance to be published." Would-be writers can get published in any SF mag, or anthology.

Magazines, in principle, are published to make a profit. Magazines are bought by people because they like reading, they escape into the fantasy worlds created by authors for various reasons. They do not buy magazines to give half-brained amateurs a chance to publish their crummy stories that have probably been bounced by 'Analog', 'Amazing', 'Cosmos' etc. beforehand. They do not wish to buy 18,000 words of fiction for \$1 when other magazines offer 50 - 60,000 words for the same price.

Next comes "The Newshounds of the BSFA" which even had it been on time sounds like it would have been fucking useless. The "Foundation" series on Radio 4 I would have liked to hear but it was finished by the time I got this. I've heard (or seen) the book news before. "The Bionic Dog" - who wants to know about shit like this? 1990 was finished before this arrived carrying news of the series' existence. Drive! The majority of this was just drive! ((The time lapse between typing out the 'Newshounds' pages and the mailing was something over which I had no control. I regret this and will do my best to include topical items, although there will inevitably be a delay during which some items may lose their topicality. The 'Bionic Dog' was a typical example of the producers of a TV show scraping the barrel to extract the last dregs of mileage (mixed metaphor there!) from an idea which was never particularly original in the first place. The news item was presented as such because I thought such operations interesting and indicative of the way the mass market works. Are we to ignore this? ))

Then "Opinion" by D. Wilson. Jesus Christ, whatever next? I must say that I had great fun filling in the blank spaces. There are places for these 'daring' (not lifelike, like people talk) words. We mustn't have them in SF. No 'mainstream' elements either. (Would someone mind explaining what the hell a 'mainstream element' is?) ((I wish someone would myself!)) No mysteries or detective stories. Just good old-fashioned thud and blunder or space opera, where hero saves heroine from BEEM and they walk off into the third sunset (pink to blue-green) on Vega 9.

The only thing to be missing was a whine or two about S\*E\*X. This letter reminds me of when Ben Bova first stated editing 'Analog' and everybody complained about a drawing Kelly Freas had done with a protagonist extending his middle finger at the female in an upward direction. They all started whining, (well, about 5% of the reader) about this and after a few months Ben Bova revealed that Campbell had bought it and not him.

And now, onward, onto the subject of 'Vortex'. When are you bunch of cocksuckers (not you, Andy, most of the reviewers) going to get off criticising 'Vortex'? Keith Seddon told me in a letter that he was fairly new to SF when he started editing the mag, but he damned well must have worked hard at it as the staff consisted of him only. He also got treated like shit by one of the managing directors but in a couple of fanzines he shall hopefully make clear why 'Vortex' folded and whose fault it was.

So, isn't it nice that self-appointed experts like K.M. Warwick can tell us why 'Vortex' folded. Let's consider his letter.

1) He says that the editor printed 'boorish', 'unsuited', 'totally irrelevant' literature. 'Boorish'? How did he get that idea? 'Unsuited'? To what and to whom? 'Irrelevant'? I'd say that 90% of all SF is irrelevant but that doesn't stop me enjoying it if it's good.

2) He didn't like the 'expensive glossy paper'. Why, oh

why do people always think that SF mags should be printed on pulp paper? He said of the magazine generally 'to expect the public to pay the earth.' It only cost 45p, for Christ's sake. SF Monthly and SF Digest before it cost 50p and the American mags cost 65. to 90p at that time, so it wasn't expensive at all.

3) He said it 'steered clear from hardcore SF and concentrated on speculative fiction.' So did New Worlds and look at the acclaim it drew, but what he says isn't even true. There was one piece of spec in each issue but I half enjoyed the Christchild Trilogy so it didn't bother me. Hardcore SF was catered for. Colin Kapp had an entertaining new serial 'The Chaos Weapon' start in no. 5. Rob Holdstock, Terry Greenhough and Dave Penny had stories that were SF, not hard-core, but hard enough for me. The Moorsock serial was very enjoyable.

So, after all, it seems that faults of the magazine were worst in the earlier issues and that the editor did change to a certain extent later on. In fact, issue 5 was the most promising apart from the Mark Ambient piece and incidentally he is not, repeat not Ravan Christchild.

So, in future, unless somebody's got something worth listening to, stop picking on VORTEX and indirectly at Keith. The magazine's folded and that proves that things weren't all to the good. Nobody needs people rubbing salt into wounds ad infinitum.

((A stimulating letter, Paul. Your criticisms are biting, but I accept them, with reservations in areas where I might disagree as an attempt to kick up standards. I must admit to feeling sadder about the demise of VORTEX than I did over that of SF Monthly - my opinion, for what it's worth, appeared in a letter in an earlier Matrix (no. 12, I think) and was along the lines of 'VORTEX is lacking in identity, but has the potential to get one.' Keith Seddon, from rumours of rumours that I have heard, seems to have been grossly maligned by a lot of people and his efforts to keep VORTEX going deserved a lot of applause which he has not really had. His mag was never bad and could have been great. It's a shame the UK can't support an SF mag.))  
DAVID WATKINS: 'Gaycroft', Laleston, Bridgend, Glamorgan CF32 0LD.

Peter Nicholls' latest attempt, in his interview with Trevor Briggs, to justify his efforts to promote the teaching of SF in schools leaves me, at least as suspicious and hostile as ever. He accuses his critics of arguing by implication that the schools should only teach boring subjects. Well of course! If there is no-

thing difficult and boring about a subject, there is no useful job for a teacher to do. A decent teacher will hope eventually to persuade at least some of his pupils that even Chaucer or French or Accountancy can be interesting. But anyone who isn't spontaneously and effortlessly interested in SF is just not ready for it.

To be trite, self-education is the best kind. The teacher-pupil relationship is at best a necessary evil, always potentially dangerous and unhealthy - probably never more so than when its' basically authoritarian nature is masked by a pretence of friendly collaborative equality. (Have you read THE PRIME OF MISS JEAN BRODIE? Or looked at all those pathetic wrecks who studied under F.R. Leavis in the thirties and are still earnestly striving to deserve his approval, like good little sixty-year old teacher's pets?) If a child can learn something on his/her own (and it must be possible to learn about SF that way, since you and I and Peter Nicholls all did), he/she will learn it better, and more important still will acquire a lot of self-confidence and independence.

The trouble with most teachers is that basically they're bureaucrats. As we all know, bureaucrats hate to accept that we can ever do without them - still more that we can sometimes do better without them than with them. Look at the teachers who wrote to Peter Nicholls asking "where to find more stories about robots"! It obviously didn't occur to any of them that some of their pupils could probably teach them about SF. It didn't occur to Peter Nicholls either.

((I agree with you up to a point, but that point is far behind many of your statements. Yes, learning about something through your own efforts is far more satisfying than being 'taught', but your argument that 'anyone who isn't spontaneously interested in SF is just not ready for it' can be used for all subjects. OK, so you and I and Peter Nicholls discovered SF outside of school, and very possibly it was because it was out of school that we stuck to it (this can be said of many other activities e.g. comics, skateboarding) - but what about the people who haven't discovered it, or who have made up their minds on the evidence of one or two inferior books or TV programmes? Learning things through your own efforts is all very well, but the most accessible form of information is still the book. What about kids who find reading difficult? How do you interest them? Many teachers have found that SF is ideal for this - look back at my editorial - and it is unreal to expect kids who have scarcely read a book in their lives to be experts on SF, however much they may take to it in the end.))

MARK ADLARD: 12 The Green, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool.

of MATRIX 14 that you had a feature called "SF PLANS FOR TEESSIDE" from Rob Carter. When I turned to the article I discovered, of course, that it was headed (correctly) "SF PLANS FOR TYNESIDE."

We have all learned to forgive Londoners their ignorance of geography, but I had hoped for something better from an editor who lives at Birkenhead on Deeside.

((Should I admit it and bring even further disgrace upon myself...? All right, I will - Rob Carter has himself chastised me for this error and points out that, in any case, I spelt "TEESSIDE" incorrectly! I shall never dare venture east of the Pennines again....!))

JAMES CORLEY: 30 Empress Ave. Manor Park, London E12

The BSFA Award - personally I read more hardbacks than paperbacks, but why not an award for both? It needn't be more expensive if the trophy's dirt cheap - like one of those cardboard pyramids that keep your pencils sharp - just what a successful SF author really needs. My votes going to Len Carter anyway.

Intro Pack: a bit expensive isn't it for an introductory offer? 50p. max. I'd say.

The first issue: like the man who fell off the top of the skyscraper said as he plummeted past the first floor window, "No problems so far."

((Thanks, James, that's really encouraging... I think?))

STEEV HIGGINS: 18, St. Austell Ave., Tyldesley, Manchester, M29 7FY

My first impressions of MATRIX are what you'd probably call favourable. I produce, edit, etc. a small fanzine (12 to 15 copies) for a sort of SF circle at school. Anyway, I appreciate some of the problems of editing. One criticism I have is that I don't like the corner stapling. Whether anything can be done though.... The interview was interesting, but I thought there might for some people have been too much personal stuff and new about the Foundation and the plans of the Foundation might be more interesting. I myself, however didn't find that. The 'Gongo of Ganymede' piece I found slightly childish at times. I enjoyed most of the poetry, especially the Andy Darlington one.

Reading the 'Newshounds' I was overcome by a sense of deja vu. My own fanzine is usually about 2 - 4 months late and full of stale bits and pieces. But even though the mailing was very late, there were

still items that I found interesting.

Anyway these were the impressions of a first time reader and new member.

In answer to Dave Cobbledick's question "where are the people who enjoy listening to SF wordings" in rock music, I'm one. However, I think SF is part of contemporary culture (for want of a better term) and has many elements paralleled in musical form in rock. Take examples such as Pink Floyd's 'Interstellar Overdrive' or Camel's 'Lunar Sea', both instrumentals which without their titles would be 'ordinary' rock. Jim Tiptree makes the point in 'Mother in the Sky with Diamonds' that rock, like SF, is an emanation of our society, and the most non-SF rock cannot get away from the nature of the 20th century, which is a technological era.

THE VITREOUS EDIFICE.....Steev Higgins

Glass tower in a crystal castle  
Shard-like turret glinting in the sun  
Jutting angles tipped with bright white fire  
Deep, dead silence, eerie noiselessness.

But the translucent citadel will commune  
With any traveller with the ears.  
Listen and you will hear, if you have soul,  
The tinkling song of ringing surfaces  
of glass, and the high-pitched note that resonates  
within.

Crash! like that of a mirror,  
Crystal spears spray out like stinging rain.

.....AND WE BID YOU GOODNIGHT.

((That's all. I've tried to put something of interest to everyone in this Christmas issue of MATRIX. I hope I've succeeded.

MATRIX 16 could not have been produced without inspiration from Paul Kanter & Grace Slick, Bob Dylan, Black Sabbath Van Morrison and especially Roy Harper. Gratefully thanks to John Peel whose music programme coincides with my regular MATRIX typing stints.

Thanks go to the Newshounds for this issue: Tom Jones, Cyril Sims, Trevor Briggs, Mary Long, The Media, Richard Bancroft, Arts Alive Maerseyside, Dave Cobbledick, KARASS, Keith Freeman, and many more...

Charles Fort once had one line too few on a page of one of his books. When this was pointed out, he immediately wrote the following sentence - "One measures a circle, beginning anywhere.

Likewise myself. A very happy Winter Solstice to everyone!))