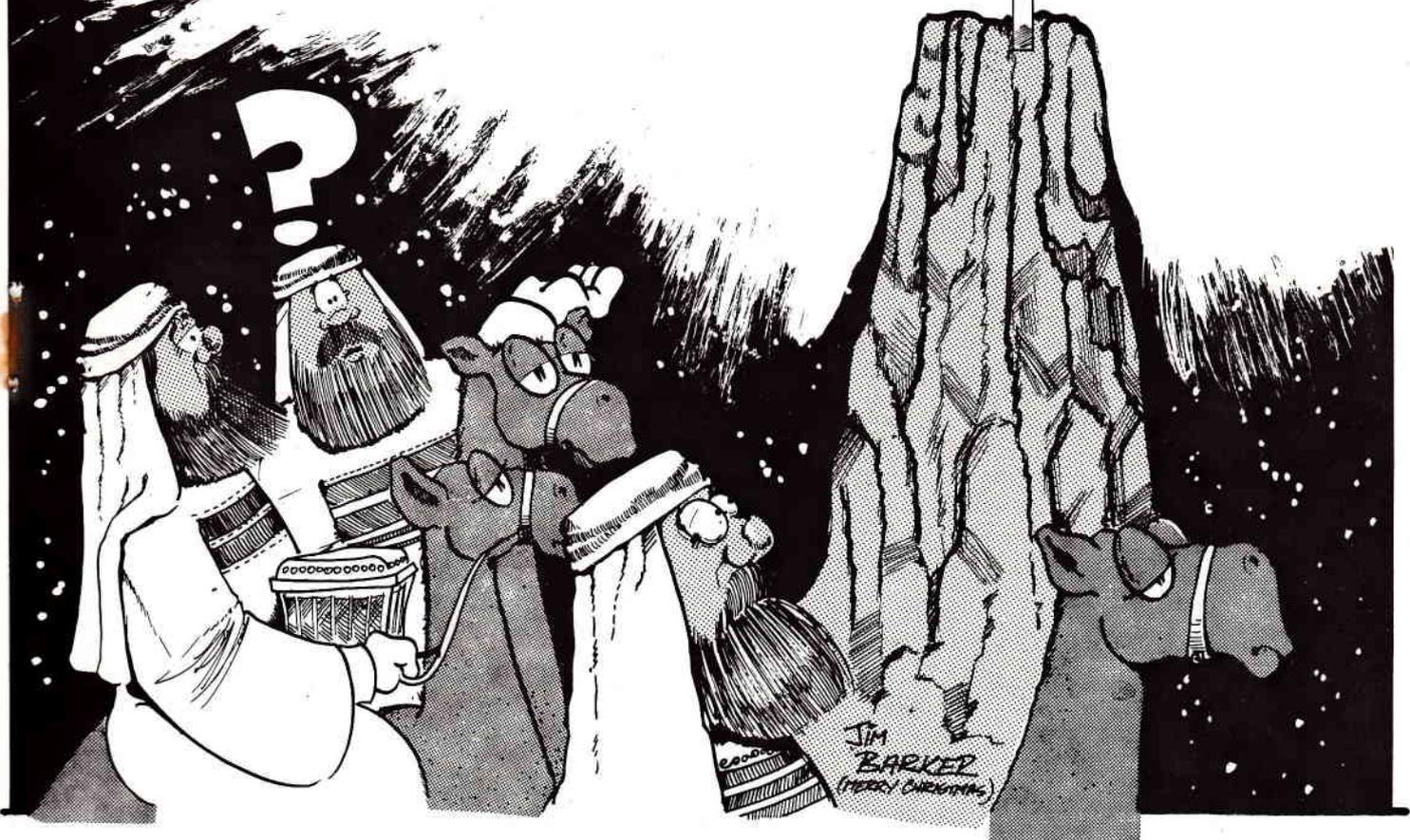
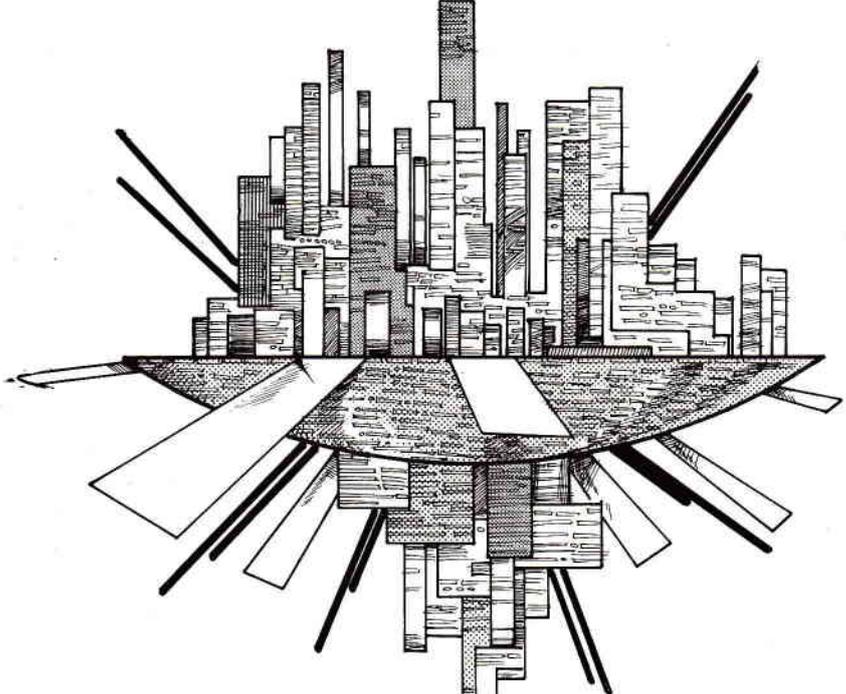


matrix



JIM
BARKER
(MERRY CHRISTMAS)



MATRIX 21

December 1978

ISSN 0307 3335

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, INTRODUCING.....

It all started back in August at Silicon when I opened my mouth and slurred "I'd like to edit Matrix". Trust big-ears Wingrove to be listening - next thing I knew Tom Jones was interrogating me, then passing the job onto me and a parcel of material and stencils from Andy Sawyer came through the post. So it was that the burden of Matrix fell on my shoulders (and Eve's of course). So who are the new editors? If those who already know the story would kindly go to the next item, I'll explain to the others where we came from (no - not the mulberry bush!).

Back in the mid-sixties I was an SF reader, aware of fan activities, Eastercons, Worldcons and the BSFA but too apathetic and young to do much about it. Thus I missed out on the 1965 Worldcon in London and never bothered to join the BSFA or collect fanzines. When I went to Newcastle University I fully expected to find an SF group/club. The distinct lack of one finished any chance of finding my way into fandom at that stage. So I drifted away from SF and stopped reading it for 3 years. It wasn't until I returned to University in 1972 that I returned to SF. There appeared a notice in the Students' Union - "SF Society inaugural meeting". Needless to say I couldn't resist attending that.

Thus it was that I got to know Eve who was one of the founders of the SF Society and later became Secretary. She had been a very passive reading fan up till then. She takes great delight in telling all and sundry that her mother (who is German) learnt English by reading SF. She had no idea that fandom itself existed, had never heard of a convention, fanzine, BSFA - nothing. So how the hell did she become one of the founders of Leeds SF group you ask? Because she's never learnt to say no. It was sheer luck that at Leeds there happened to be some old friends of her's from Brighton - one of whom was a certain Dave Pringle who now resides at the SF Foundation. One day Dave said "how about starting up an SF group at the University Eve?". As usual, she said yes and Dave never gave her a chance to quietly forget about it.

Together Eve and I ran the SF Soc at Leeds for 2 years and stumbled along into the great world of fandom i.e. we went to our first convention - Tynecon. It was a downhill slide from then and before long we'd launched into the fanzine world with Leeds University SF Soc's Black Hole - some first effort! Things didn't improve with our departure from Leeds and along with the confirmed convention addiction came our own fanzine - GHAS now metamorphosed into Wallbanger. Convention interests led to an abortive Eastercon bid and Eve's involvement with Seacon '79 first as secretary and now as organiser of the fanroom. Then I opened my big mouth.....

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

As you should have already noticed, Matrix looks slightly different now. Not too different to make it unrecognizable we hope, but we felt that on taking up the editorship one of the most important things to be done was to improve its visual impact. So banished to the outer darkness is the micro-elite typewriter - we hope this new typeface makes Matrix more readable, but the problem with that is once you make it easier to read the

words, you make it easier to notice how good or bad those words are. Therefore we are also intending to maintain a high standard of content so that although the larger typeface means a smaller wordcount, the reduction in quantity will be offset by the improved quality. After all, the readers are paying for Matrix and therefore they deserve to be given good value for money.

We have several ideas on what we would like to put into Matrix in future issues but most important of all is that it contains what the readers want. Therefore we would appreciate any ideas, suggestions etc both on what is in this issue and what you would like to see in the future. Also any articles, news, information on groups and clubs and artwork would be gratefully accepted. Talking of artwork, we hope to make it more relevant to the subject matter instead of having so many fillos. We therefore intend writing to all those people who have shown willingness to help us out giving a summary of the major articles going into the next issue. Hopefully one or two of these subjects would inspire some small illo from some of them to give us a mix of work in different styles but relevant to the content of the zine.

We don't want to bore you with the same detailed analysis of what we intend doing that we gave the Council, hopefully you will devine this from Matrix itself. Finally, a note about the division of labour between Eve and I in the editorship. As befits an ex-secretary and economist, Eve decided there ought to be some specialisation between us, so all the editorial words in Matrix are mine, the typing's hers. I think she won on that deal somehow!

When Simone Walsh heard that we were taking over as editors, she said, "Well, you'd better scintillate". It's 8.05 now so I'll repent and get on with my work! (Now read that again, s-l-o-w-l-y.)

And on that exceedingly silly note, we'll pass on to the next item on the agenda.

JOHN HARVEY

BSFA SF POLL

In M20, Andy Sawyer printed a resume of the results of this poll carried out by Richard Smith. Due to space restrictions, we do not intend printing the full listing here, but copies are available for anyone who would like one. To give you some idea of the broad span of the poll, we have listed below the major subject headings. Just send us a large, stamped addressed envelope and we'll send you a copy.

Best SF Books, SF Writers, SF Short Stories, SF Short Story Writers, Most Controversial Novel/Anthology etc, Most Controversial Writer, New Writer, SF Humourist, SF Theme, Factual Book on SF, SF Magazine - Of All Time, Today, Best SF Magazine Editor - Of All Time & Today, Fanzine - Of All Time & Today, Fanzine Editor - Of All Time & Today, Fan Writer, Best Novel etc and Writer From: 30's, 40's, 50's, 60's, 70's, Best SF Personality, Worst SF Writer, Best S F Illustrator, SF Film, SF TV Series, SF Comic Strip, SF/Fantasy Comic Book, SF Music, SF Singer/Band/Musician etc, Best SF Award.

If you don't want to receive the whole thing, just let us know which sections interest you and we'll extract just the relevant pages.

We feel a lead article is important to Matrix and so, using the opportunity Novacon afforded, we leapt in on ~~some friends~~ and gave them the task of justifying their answers to:

WHY I'M A FAN ?

In this issue we're printing Paul Kincaid's answer. Paul is an aspiring writer who works for an advertising agency in Manchester. He has sold one short story to New Writings in SF which is due to appear in number 31, so watch out for him. He is a 70's fan who has recently started his own fanzine in conjunction with Mike Scantlebury entitled Tripe Pickers Journal

To be honest I'd never thought about it before, not until Eve Harvey handed me this school essay title and commanded 500 words. It may be a cliché, but fandom really has become such a normal part of my life that I've never questioned my involvement.

I came to sf late, and embraced it with the particular fervour of a convert. I bought books by the shelf-full, and actually managed to read most of them. Worse still, I wrote the stuff - reams of it, all bad. I'd already garnered quite a handful of rejections from NEW WORLDS when I first encountered this thing called fandom.

I'd heard vaguely of it before, in fact I'd sent off a cheque to the BSFA that was never cashed. But this was the first contact: Seacon 75. I went... Why? Because I enjoyed sf, because I thought meeting authors would be an impressive thing to do, because I thought I might find some new books, because I dreamed of impressing hordes of publishers and editors with my charm and genius and have them falling all over each other to say "We were wrong, and here's my cheque for £1,000,000 for your new short story". In other words, probably the same reasons why 90% of people enter fandom. The social side of it didn't enter my mind for a moment and it's perhaps just as well, considering how Seacon turned out. I enjoyed Seacon, even if it didn't bring fame and fortune, but not for the social life - I spoke to only 3 people, and spent most of the con alone.

But I was coming to the end of my university career; leaving the hectic social milieu to return to a hometown where I no longer knew anybody. Like everyone I'm a creature of contradictions, a gregarious loner. While still not being a part of the social side of fandom, nor even, particularly, wanting to be; the twice monthly meetings of the Manchester group did offset the depression of days spent alone at home.

For perhaps a year and a half I remained very much a science fiction fan. In other words my prime, almost my sole reason for maintaining my contacts with fandom were to hear about new books and to talk about them. After all, other people who shared this obscure and peculiar interest were still a novelty. I also spent some time writing about sf. Occasionally one or other of the few fanzines I received at that time had the great bad taste to publish some of these things. Without in any way intending it, things spiraled. More fanzines started to turn up. As much as anybody I like to

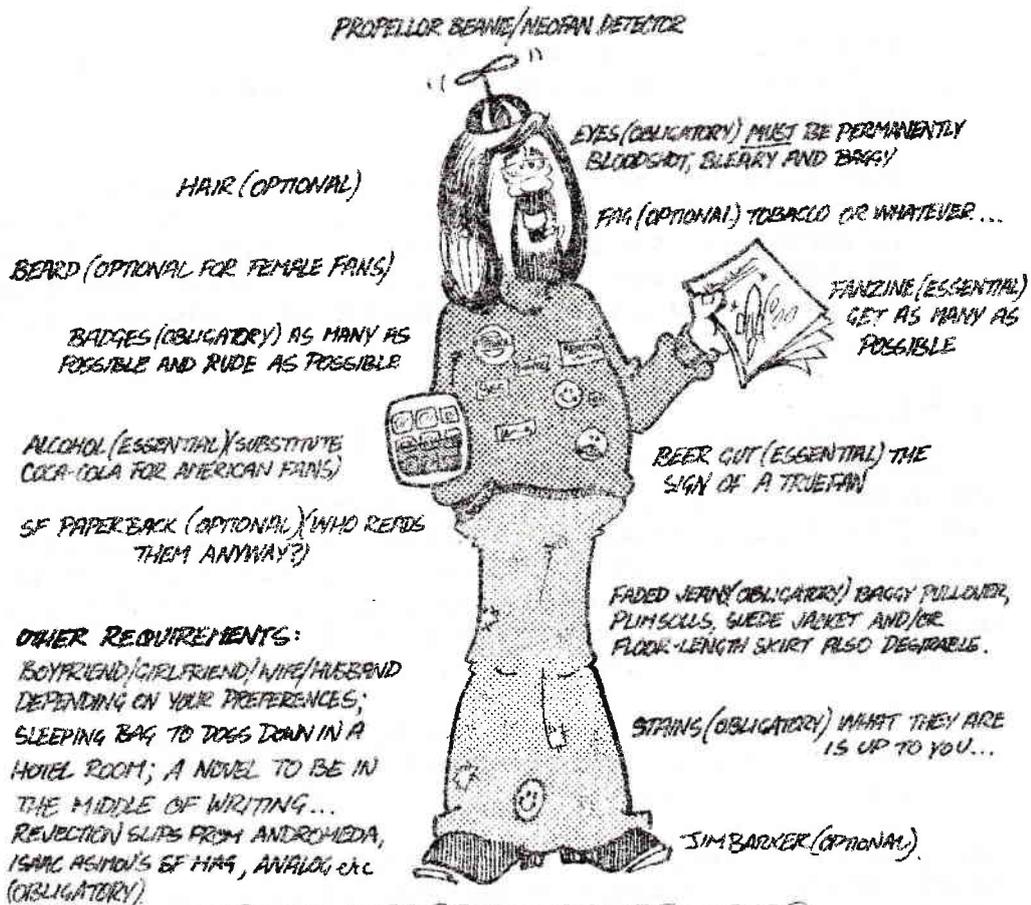
be part of the crowd, so I wrote LoCs to keep getting them. People got to know my name, as con succeeded con I got to meet some of these people. And I found I liked them.

Since those early days things have changed a lot. My interest in sf has waned, or rather my interest in other forms of literature has increased. My writing has had its little successes, but unrelated to fandom. And recently my writing ambitions have been re-directed somewhat; and people keep interrupting anyway to ask for articles.

Nothing remains of the reasons why I first entered fandom. Though I'm still a fairly avid book collector. I remain a fan for one reason only, though on analysis it is probably the most important reason; I am a fan because that is where my friends are. And a more varied bunch I couldn't ask for, tied together by only one thing in common - an interest, at some time or other, in some part or other of the wide spectrum of sf.

I've seen some people try to argue that being a fan is some sort of sign of a social failure, with limited social horizons, someone who cannot function in the big bad real world. Is that true? Is it hell. Practically everybody channels their interest and energy in one particular direction - into work, perhaps, or birdwatching or football or stamp-collecting. For me the channel is fandom, and I don't consider that it requires any social pleading. My interests outside sf are many and varied, and some are as intense as my interest in sf. But, not unnaturally, I enjoy being with my friends; and the vast majority of them are fans. So I am a fan.

PAUL KINCAID



THE COMPLETE SF FAN

NEWS

THE BSFA FILE

1. Thanks

This is the first issue of Matrix under the editorship of John & Eve Harvey so this is an appropriate spot to thank the retiring editor, Andy Sawyer, and wish him well in his new job.

2. Council Meeting

There was a Council Meeting at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Birmingham during the evening of Friday, 4 November (Novacon). Several decisions were taken which it's worth noting.

2.1 Tangent

The editor, Ian Garbutt, was very keen that the magazine should go to litho and was willing to fund this himself. After much discussion we agreed to this with the BSFA contributing £15 to the cost of an issue (the approximate amount which would have been spent duplicating the issue). The committee also agreed to keep this arrangement under review.

2.2 Vector

It was agreed that the financial situation was such that Vector could return to litho production with the first issue in 1979. It will be possible to allocate some £200 per issue (the present duplicate version costs about £50) and the number of pages will be governed by this sum.

It was also agreed that a special Worldcon issue, probably larger than a normal issue, will be produced for the Worldcon in September.

Dave Wingrove announced that he would be giving up the Vector editorship after the September 1979 issue for personal reasons, in particular the fact that he is giving up his job as a banker to become a mature student of English Literature at university. The search for a new Vector editor will thus have to start in the New Year.

3. BSFA Award

The Award for Best Paperback of 1977 ("The Jonah Kit") was presented to Ian Watson at the Novacon Banquet by toastmaster Bob Shaw. A special illuminated tapestry (an unusual artform) based around a theme from "The Jonah Kit" was commissioned from Miss Gerry Wilmer, one of the Arts Council of Great Britain sponsored artists, resident at South Hill Park Arts Centre in Bracknell. Everyone agreed this was both an unusual and excellent piece of art and Ian Watson asked that his thanks be expressed to all BSFA members.

It'll soon be time to vote for the 1978 Award, please make the effort to do so as the Award only has real significance if a large number of people participate in the voting.

Also, if you think you're a good enough artist to produce the 1978 Award and have some ideas on the subject please write to Tom A Jones. (By the way we'd been thinking of a price tag of around £50.)

4. Putting The Record Straight

The BSFA (in particular the committee) have come in for a lot of criticism lately in some fanzines, most of it negative and some of it hysterical. As such the criticism is of little use to us except as an indication that even our detractors are forced to take note of us. But within the membership we have certain members whose criticism is always welcome even when particularly damning as it is written in a constructive manner without malice, and Sandy Brown is amongst the best of those. So it was to be expected that Sandy was the first to enquire about a report in Gross Encounters 4 which seemed to indicate the BSFA had offered the Matrix editorship to first Alan Dorey and then Joseph Nicholas.

The report doesn't lie but doesn't tell all the truth so I'd better set the record straight. Alan Dorey had kindly been assisting at a BSFA mailing and during the chat had mentioned what a good job he'd done as editor of the Leeds University fanzine, Black Hole so Keith Freeman suggested he apply for the Matrix editor's job - he declined. To suggest that Keith offered him the job is ridiculous, Keith is not a committee member and in any case no committee member was empowered to offer the job to anyone.

But Joe Nicholas did apply and following his application I wrote to him with the standard set of questions which I sent to all applicants. The replies to these questions were used to help decide who would get the job.

Sorry to dwell on this but it's this kind of misreporting that can bring an Association into disrepute and perhaps we've allowed such misreporting to occur without correction too frequently in the past.

5. 1979 Mailings

We are aiming for the 1979 mailings to be collated at the following times:-

2nd week in February			
1st " "	April		
2nd " "	June		
1st " "	August		
3rd " "	October		
2nd " "	December	Best	Tom A Jones

BSFA SERVICES

The Library Kept at the Science Fiction Foundation. For subscription details, contact the Administrator, Malcolm Edwards, Science Fiction Foundation, North East London Polytechnic, Longbridge Road, Dagenham, Essex RM8 2AS.

Information Service For that fact you've forgotten; if you want to remember it again, contact Dr Roger Gilbert, Dept of Genetics, University of Swansea, Singleton Park, Swansea, Glamorgan.

Magazine Chain Subscribe to one or all of the current US magazines, paying a small subscription fee and the outward postage to the next person on the list. Contact Keith Freeman, 269 Wykeham Rd, Reading, Berks RG6 1Pl.

Duplication Service Magazines will be duplicated and materials supplied at reasonable prices (due to bulk buying). If you're thinking of producing a fanzine, contact Keith Freeman (address above). It is also possible for fanzines and advertising matter to be distributed to BSFA members at a charge to be worked out with the Treasurer.



NEWSHOUNDS

Plenty of news this issue which we hope you'll find interesting and informative. We'd like to thank the following for supplying the material:

Mary Long, Keith Freeman, Joseph Nicholas (with a little help from his friends Terry Hughes and Ian Maule), Richard Bancroft and a special thanks to Dave Pringle of the Science Fiction Foundation, who supplied a great deal of information at very short notice.

Media News

It looks like the eternal commercial ramifications following a cinema box-office success has started over Star Wars (if you hadn't already noticed!) Mary Long sent us information of a special Thanksgiving holiday special show on US TV "Star Wars Holiday Special" - a variety show would you believe. Mary says it wasn't too bad, but only one or two sequences made it worthwhile. What'll they do next?

Another major commercial extravaganza is on its way from Warner Brothers. Superman has returned from his summer hols with a big bang. There's something for everyone - if you don't want to see the 8 Superman paperbacks, the Superman comics that are going to be re-issued, the mock phone booths (the kind that protects Superman's modesty when he changes which will be placed in stores throughout the world) or the double LP record set of the filmtrack, how about Superman Underoos. Yep, for the person who's got everything, how about Superman pants and vests! As if that isn't enough they're re-issuing the original 1939 film, producing a 90-minute television special on the making of a new Superman film to be released in the States this month. Warner Bros are apparently spending £20m on the whole thing so I don't think we need say watch out for it, it looks as if they intend to make sure no-one can miss it!

Hugo Gernsback is not dead! He's alive and living in the Mermaid Theatre's Molecule Club. Well, not quite, but the Club is following in his steps in attempts to bring science education to the masses. Instead of using science fiction stories, they are using the theatre. They produce plays on subjects like light or sound or electricity and apparently are very successful at it. The performances are mainly aimed at school-children but they sound very interesting. From 16-19 January they will be appearing at the Greenwood Theatre in London daily, Tuesdays to Fridays with performances at 10.30 a.m. and 2 p.m. After that they are going on tour round the country including such places as Canterbury, Isle of Wight, Reading and Northampton. If you're interested Lesley Broderick is most helpful. Her address is Mermaid Theatre, Puddle Dock, London EC4.

20th Century Fox have filed suit against MCA/Universal whose Battlestar: Galactica they claim, rips-off ideas from their own Star Wars. MCA/Universal have filed countersuit against Fox, claiming that Star Wars rips-off ideas from their own properties Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers. As Joe Nicholas says, all it seems to take now is an SF writer with guts

(Harlan Ellison?) to file suit against Fox and MCA/Universal for pillaging uncredited ideas from SF in general, and the movie industry will get the kick up the backside that it's long needed!

Rumour from Dave Cockfield - apparently Lorne Green, one of the stars of Battlestar: Galactica walked into an SF bookshop and asked for the top ten SF bestsellers in order to get some idea of what SF was about. Result: he got lots of Heinlein and Asimov and Clarke... that's what SF's about? Now if he'd asked for the top ten best (and never mind the sellers)...

Magazine News

The new editor of Analog is Stanley Schmidt, who took over from Ben Bova in September (Bova, of course, is now the fiction editor of Omni, the new Penthouse-organization magazine). Schmidt had a new novel, Lifeboat Earth, out from Berkley Books in November.

The new editor of Galaxy is G Harry ("Hank") Stine, author of the highly-regarded pornographic SF novel, Season of the Witch (1968). He replaces John J Pierce, who resigned some months ago, after just one year as Galaxy's editor.

For all you budding writers, Galaxy wordrates will drop to 1 cent per word, paid on acceptance (for a change), until they clear up the outstanding debts to writers of \$15,000.

Amazing and Fantastic have changed publishers - Sol Cohen has sold out to Arthur Bernhard. The editor of the two magazines, Ted White, is apparently planning to leave after the transition period. He has been editor for exactly ten years.

Award News

The 1978 Hugo Awards were announced, as some of you will already know, on 3rd September at Iguanacon, Phoenix. In case you haven't yet heard, they were: best novel - Gateway by Frederik Pohl; best novella - "Stardance" by Spider and Jeanne Robinson; best novelette - "Eyes of Amber" by Joan D Vinge; best short story - "Jeffy is Five" by Harlan Ellison; best dramatic presentation - Star Wars; best professional artist - Rick Sternbach; best professional editor - George Scithers; John W Campbell Award for Best New Writer - Orson Scott Card.

As you may have noticed, most of the winners are American. This is the case every year. With Worldcon in Britain next year, this is the chance for British Fans to have a larger say. We are therefore intending to run a series of articles on the Hugo Awards and suggestions for possible nominations etc. We will be starting the ball rolling in the next issue with some suggestions from Dave Pringle. Remember, this may be the last chance we have for a long time - so don't waste it!

The 1978 World Fantasy Awards were announced on 15th October at the World Fantasy Convention, Fort Worth: Best Novel - Our Lady of Darkness by Fritz Leiber; Best Short Fiction - "The Chimney" by Ramsey Campbell; Life Achievement Award - Frank Belknap Long.

Lord Foul's Bane, the first volume of Stephen R Donaldson's fantasy trilogy The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever made it as far as fourth on several US bestseller polls.

Forthcoming Events

Science Fiction - an 18-week evening class beginning on Tuesday 16th January 1979, to be held at North East London Polytechnic, Barking

Precinct. This course, which will concentrate on textual study of SF classics, will be taught by Malcolm Edwards and David Pringle of the SF Foundation. Further details are available from Olive Swaby, SEH Short Courses, NE London Polytechnic, Longbridge Road, Dagenham RM8 2AS.

Science Fiction Theatre of Liverpool presents The Warp: An Epic of Ten Plays Relating to the Alternative, written by Neil Oram in collaboration with Ken Campbell. To be held at the ICA, 12 Carlton House, London SW1 from 2 - 21 January 1979. Bookings and enquiries phone 01-930 0318.

Science Fiction Films - a one-day survey of robots in the movies, entitled "War with the Robots". Presented by Philip Strick, with guest speaker Harry Harrison. To be held on Saturday 17 February at North East London Polytechnic, Barking Precinct. The programme will include lectures and discussions plus three full-length films. The fee is £4.50 (which includes lunch). Further details from Olive Swaby, at the above address.

YORCON, the 30th British Easter SF Convention is to be held in Leeds, April 13-16 (Easter weekend). The Guest of Honour is Richard Cowper, noted author of Clone, Twilight of Briareus, The Custodians, The Road to Corlay and many other books. Registration fee is £2.50 (supporting membership) and £5 (full attendance). For further details please write to Alan Dorey, c/o 20 Hermitage Woods Crescent, St Johns, Woking, Surrey GU21 1UE.

Science Fiction Writers' Workshop to be held on July 5-9 at a site in central London to be arranged by North East London Polytechnic. Course tutor will be Richard Cowper, with assistance from Malcolm Edwards of the SF Foundation. Attendance will be very limited. If interested, please contact Malcolm Edwards as soon as possible, c/o the SF Foundation, North East London Polytechnic, Longbridge Road, Dagenham RM8 2AS.

Seacon '79, 37th World Science Fiction Convention in Brighton 23-27 August 1979. British Guest of Honour - Brian Aldiss, American Guest of Honour - Fritz Leiber. Membership rates after Jan 1st 1979 £5.50 supporting, £11 full attending. For further details write to Seacon '79, 14 Henrietta St, London WC2E 8QJ. Please note that this is just a mailing address, no personal enquiries or telephone enquiries can be handled at this address. Eve wants to put a plea in here for the Fan Room. She is in charge of the room itself, not the Fan Programme, and wants to make it an enjoyable place to be in even if there is no programme item scheduled. Have you any ideas of posters etc you would like to see there? Any photographs of old conventions, both British and foreign? Any willing hands to help in the setting up and manning of the room? Is there anybody there? Contact Eve Harvey at the Matrix editorial address with any comments, suggestions, offers of help.

In Memoriam

Dennis Dobson, well-known publisher of SF, died on his way home from the Frankfurt Book Fair in October. He had been publishing SF for some twenty years and had built up a hardcover list which included the works of such writers as Eric Frank Russell, Robert Heinlein, Richard Cowper, Keith Laumer and Jack Vance.

Robert Bruce Montgomery, better known as "Edmund Crispin" died recently, aged 57. He had a big reputation as a detective novelist, and was author of The Moving Toyshop (1946) and Glimpses of the Moon (1977) among many others. He also wrote incidental music for many British films, especially in the 1950s. In the field of SF he was best known as an anthologist. Indeed, he was one of the first and most influential of British anthologists, beginning with Best SF (Faber, 1955) - which was followed by five

subsequent volumes. He also edited two volumes of Best Tales of Terror, and a couple of juvenile SF anthologies.

Brian Lewis, well-known SF artist, died suddenly on Monday, 4th December. Brian's activities were far too many to list here, but they range from covers for New Worlds and Science Fantasy in the sixties, through helping with the animation for the Beatles' Yellow Submarine to Vector covers over recent years. Recently you may have seen him on TV in the "Quick on the Draw" programmes. He will definitely be missed at conventions.

General News

Peter Hammerton is quite well-known in SF circles for his shop, The Space Centre, in Sheffield. But not many people know he was a bank manager. I wonder if this is the new underground revolution - subverting the pillars of the banking world into the science fiction world. First Peter, then Dave Wingrove, where will it all end? Seriously though, Peter is doing an excellent trade in Sheffield - his shop doesn't just sell books, but everything and anything connected with space. Well worth a visit if you're in that area.

Science fiction is even permeating into Russia these days. Apparently Russia is protesting over 'discrimination' which it says has prevented its writers from taking part in the fourth European congress of science fiction writers in Belgium earlier this year. I didn't know they had any other than the Strugatsky brothers. Still it makes a change for the Russians to be complaining that their writers couldn't go to a non-communist state instead of trying to prevent them.

Computers galore - throw away that old phrase book, Lexicon have produced a pocket computer that can do the translations for you, giving the correct phrases in the required language on a visual display. It's only available in America at the moment, but no doubt it will make its way across the Atlantic in due course. Trouble is, how do you understand the native's reply?

Have you got any old comics mum is about to give to the jumble sale? Stop her this instant. In a comics convention in New York recently, \$500 was paid for a single mint-condition Superman comic. You could also buy your own Spock ears for \$10. Some people have more money than sense!

Did you know that the aliens are now interested in Kuwait. It seems that an oilfield 90 miles from the capital has had its first UFO visitor who stayed precisely 7 minutes - they obviously don't like the Arabs' oil prices either!

Forthcoming Books

Ronald Holmes has compiled and edited an anthology entitled Macabre Military Stories which was due out at the end of November. It is published by Lee Cooper Ltd and includes stories from Robert Bloch and Robert Sheckley.

The History of the Science Fiction Magazine, Volume 5, by Mike Ashley will be published in March 1979 by NEL.

Universe 9, edited by Terry Carr will be published in May 1979 by Doubleday. The lead story is by Bob Shaw.

On Wings of Song, a new novel by Thomas M Disch, is to be published by Gollancz in January. It will also be serialized in The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, beginning in the February issue. F & SF

are billing it as the longest and possibly the best novel they have ever serialised. Bantam Books are also planning to release a Best of Thomas M Disch in 1979, with an introduction by Samuel R Delany.

The Unlimited Dream Company, a new long novel by J G Ballard, should appear in mid-1979. Ballard has also written a novella, Hello America, which will be published in an illustrated edition by Pierrot Books in about two years' time. The delay is to give Jim Burns plenty of time to come up with appropriate illustrations.

Jem: the Making of a Utopia, a long novel by Frederik Pohl, is to be serialized in Galaxy imminently. It will probably be published in Britain by Gollancz in 1979.

Titan, John Varley's second novel, will be serialized in Analog early in the New Year. It is perhaps the most eagerly-awaited second novel in recent SF history.

The Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction, edited by Peter Nicholls with the assistance of John Clute, will be published by Doubleday in mid-1979, and will subsequently appear in Britain from Granada. This aims to be the first real SF encyclopaedia, a massive A-Z volume, giving full information on authors, films, magazines, editors and SF themes.

The Walking Shadow, a major new novel by Brian Stableford, will be published by Fontana in September 1979. Stableford has said that he does not intend to write any more "serious" books, and from now on will be concentrating on serious novels and non-fiction works.

The Dark Design, Philip Jose Farmer's third Riverworld novel, which was published in America in 1977, will be out at last in Britain from Panther Books in April 1979. The Magic Labyrinth, the fourth and final Riverworld novel, may be out in America before the end of 1979.

M John Harrison is apparently finishing a sequel to The Pastel City. It promises to be the ultimate sword-and-sorcery novel.

Michael Moorcock is working on a vast novel tentatively called Mrs Cornelius Between the Wars. He has also written a novella entitled Elric at the End of Time, to be published by Pierrot.

The Fountains of Paradise by Arthur C Clarke, which he claims will be his final novel, should be out from Gollancz very early in 1979. It will also be serialized in Playboy.



WHAT ARE THEY DOING NOW?

RICHARD COWPER has sold a short story to F & SF - Out There Where The Big Ships Go. His novel Clone is due from Pan early next year along with his most recent novel, The Road to Corlay in February. The latter has also sold to the USA and Germany. His new novel Profundis is due out from Gollancz early next year. As for his earlier books, The Twilight of Briareus and Kuldesak have sold in Italy and France, Clone in Japan and The Custodians in France.

CHRISTOPHER PRIEST has completed a long novella called The Miraculous Cairn which Ramsey Campbell will be publishing next year in a new Pan anthology called New Terrors. He has also written a play based on one of his short stories although he can't give me any idea what might happen to that as he doesn't know himself. Something else he can't tell me about is a Secret Project he is working on with Rob Holdstock. BBC Radio 4 will be reading The Space Machine as a serial (10 part) either at the end of this year or the beginning of next. The novel will also be published in the USSR next year. Work in progress: another short story, followed by a new novel.

ANDREW STEPHENSON has sold his first novel Nightwatch to Dell Books (USA) for an undisclosed sum.

IAN WATSON is/has just completing/completed his newest novel God's World. He was awarded a Literature Bursary (1,250) by the Southern Arts Association to subsidise the writing of it. He has sold a story to Lee Hardings new anthology The Rooms of Paradise, published in Australia this October (copies in the UK before Christmas) by Quartet Books. His story title and the anthology title are the same. The antho has an introduction by Zelazny and stories by Aldiss, Wolfe, Lafferty, Bishop, Komatsu, Wilder, Broderick, Turner, Lake, Madern and McKay. Mr Watson's first short story collection, The Very Slow Time Machine contains thirteen stories and is due from Gollancz in the early part of '79. All five of his novels have been bought by the Japanese. Panther Books are doing Alien Embassy and then Miracle Visitors. He has also sold Nightmares to the magazine F & SF.

BRIAN STABLEFORD has completed the book he took over from James Blish. It has been delivered to Doubleday and is called, The Stigmata of Evil: A History of Witchcraft. The Walking Shadow, the novel he is doing for Fontana should have met the Sept 30th deadline. An expansion of his Foundation piece on James Blish is to be published as a monograph by Bergo Press.

BRIAN ALDISS' year as Chairman of the Society of Authors terminated in October and he shall shortly be feasting over the paragraphs of his next novel.

Finally, ROBERT A HEINLEIN has recovered from his recent brain operation and is intending to come over to Seacon with his wife.

PAUL FRASER



FAN WORLD

Most people know Dave Langford through his personal zine Twll Ddu. He is instantly recognizable in any crowd as the tall one who wanders around cupping his ear at people and saying "Pardon?" (He is a trifle deaf except when someone is buying drinks or being indiscreet.) Dave's fannish activities are too numerous to mention but at the moment they include being British Administrator for GUFF and Hugo Administrator for the 1979 World-con. He has published several short stories in Andromeda and New Writings.

Once again Novacon gave us an opportunity of acquiring material for Matrix and so we pounced on Dave and demanded a convention report. Here is Novacon through Langford eyes.

DECADENCE IN BIRMINGHAM

Novacon 8, 3-5 November 1978 at The Holiday Inn, Birmingham.
Dave Langford reports:

"Bullies kicked sand in my face, until I went to Novacon 8: now I have thirteen Hugo awards!" (This is true.) (Unfortunately I'll have to pass them on to less worthy persons at Seacon next year: meanwhile, leave me alone with my glory.)

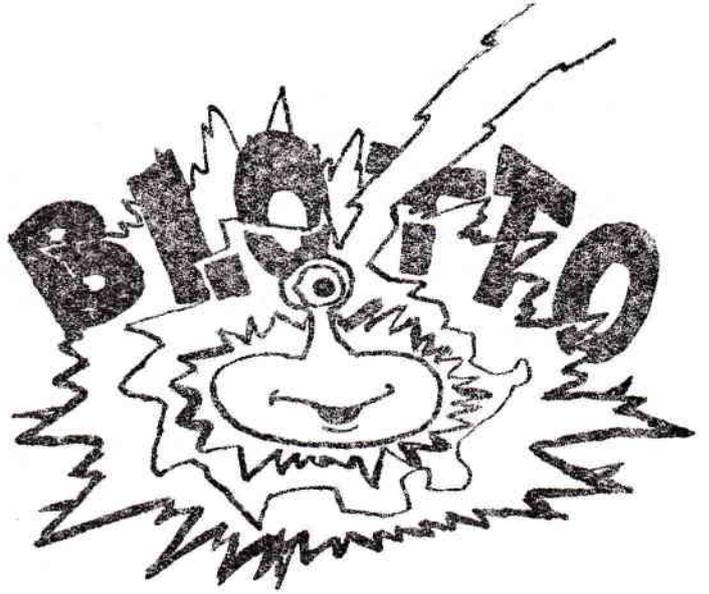
This year, I cleverly missed the Guest of Honour speech (by Anne McCaffrey), the banquet with its BSFA Award presentation (to Ian Watson) and a wide variety of other items. Learning of this ignorance, your editors realised I was the man to Tell All... creative genius, they said, must not be shackled by humdrum facts...

The Holiday Inn was definitely decadent: swimming-pool in the bar, bed-space sufficient for a respectable orgy in every room, and on all sides a fetichistic motif of ropes, cords, exotic knots a-dangle - a vista of bondage in the guise of nautical decoration. Even the Fan Room (which was in an obscure and unlikely position) was called "The Back Splice" (doubtless an obscure and unlikely position). Stunned on arrival by all this, I tottered to the bar amid 140-decibel shouts: "Hi there Langford, you deaf cretin," and suchlike fannish endearments. This bar was crowded, everyone having been driven from the con hall by the Official Opening & Introduction of Celebrities - save for Rob Holdstock, who awaited his accolade only to discover that the celebrity-introducer did not know him. Meanwhile Greg Pickersgill told me, "This is Ian Garbutt," and thrust a bottle of whisky into my hands by way of palliative. "You owe me a drink," said the secret master of Tangent, ingratiatingly; with a false smile I backed out of his presence and was overcome with amnesia at 44p a pint.

Most of the "organised" events I remember were in the Fan Room. The free party, with Joe Nicholas limp-wristedly dispensing 5cc helpings of a nameless potion; the fanzine reviewers' panel, with D West tearing up a carefully stolen copy of Maya before going to sleep; an auction, including computer-written H P Lovecraft and soft-porn stories featuring noted fans, who were quick to buy up the evidence; and mumblings on the Meaning of Fandom, which were merrily stagnating when one Alun Harries shouted that this was all nonsense.

"How can I get into all this?" he cried disconsolately. "You fans are such an in-group". "Have you tried asking?" said Greg Pickersgill after much head scratching. "I'm too shy and nervous to ask," he bellowed. "You should be asking me to join you instead of sitting here talking rubbish."

Alun kept very close to the door, even when informed that fans were as morbidly introvert and neurotic as he could possibly be. The sequel was almost too ghastly to relate. Suffice it to say that however strong your prejudices, incautious questions in the Fan Room can lead in mere hours to a hideous aftermath of chatting and drinking amid the vile elitists. Take heed.

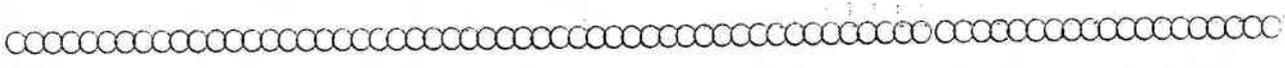


Saturday night was clogged with events, crowding together like the cliches in Star Wars. The Nova (Fanzine) Award Committee convened by the swimming pool to disallow ballots bearing Hugo Gernsback's name in D West's handwriting, and after several recounts was reluctantly forced to admit that through some quirk of statistics the award would have to go to Alan (Gross Encounters) Dorey. The pool edge later became a dance-floor; either everyone danced very carefully or the management successfully smuggled out the sodden corpses in laundry-bags. In the Fan Room, the Astral League (sic) initiation was under way, a secret ritual requiring great agility and a long stick not unlike a steel shower-curtain rail. It was here that famed artist Jim Barker - inspired by evil Graham Charnock - lovingly created the cardboard Peter Weston Moustache. Soon this Führer-like symbol was affixed with Blu-Tak to scores of upper lips, and scores of clenched-fist salutes were given - to the dismay of Chairman Peter. (Some loyal Westonites found it difficult to adopt the new insignia: Kev Smith, for example, discovered that he already had a moustache with which Blu-Tak could become irretrievably intermingled. In a burst of lateral thought, he compromised by wearing his Peter Weston Moustache on the end of his nose. (Who said the sense of wonder was dead?))

Further upstairs, Cathy Ball and Andrew Stephenson hosted a party which lasted until nearly breakfast-time - it may have continued longer, but I left early. Here Peter Roberts said dreadful things which I'm not allowed to reveal; nor may I tell the dreadful thing that nearly happened to Peter Weston. Exhibitionistic girls wandered round, secure in a belief that stripping to their underwear had converted them to sex goddesses or Star Trek characters. D West, mysteriously supine, attempted to fondle one such saucy and manifestly available lady, who screamed until her husband reached her. Even I, a happily married man, must confess that I was not alone on the chair which collapsed beneath me.

But what of science fiction? It was mentioned. "I say, Peter, how about *hic* filling the next Andromeda with stories by me under ten pseudonyms?" "No." An sf quiz on the works of Anne McCaffrey foundered since only one person knew enough about her work to qualify. (Rumour has it that this paragon was Anne herself.) And what could be more cosmically significant than the Fan Room decorations?

Incriminating photographs of more fans (the caption to a photo of Rob Jackson began 'Millions of underprivileged people suffer from this condition...'); and the amazing rejection slips from Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine, which must be seen to be disbelieved. But for me the finest moment - besides raising money for GUFF, which John and Eve will mention elsewhere in this issue - was my supreme science-fictional sense-of-wonder encounter with legendary Ian Garbutt. Next time I must buy him that drink.



ROUND THE CLUBS

Before I get to the featured group in this issue, I thought you might like to know about an inter-club quiz which took place on 15 November in Matlock in Derbyshire.

The evening was organised by Joy Hibbert, of the Matlock SF Club, and was a resounding success. Five groups were scheduled to take part but Nottingham University group were unable to make it. Those who did make it were the Matlock SF Club (represented by Mandy Dakin, Mike Meara, Terry Greenhough and Rob Day), the Nottingham SF Group (represented by Alan Robson, Andy Hazlehurst, Jackie Thornton and Geoff, whose surname I forgot to ask), the Sheffield Group (represented by Terry Jeeves, Trev Walton, Clive Jennings and Susan Batts) and, last but not least, the Stoke on Trent SF Society, (represented by me, Dave Rowley, Keith Burgess and Brian Dale).

The venue was the Crabtree public house, a delightful little place with the worst beer in the world (home-brewed apparently)! Still, the contestants did not let such a minor item deter them. The questions were asked by Peter Hammerton of the Sheffield Space Centre and if the whole event proved anything it was that no-one likes to lose, and that there is always more than one correct answer to any given sf question!

Seriously, though, the whole evening was a resounding success (emphasis on the word resounding!) and was finally won by the Nottingham group with 51 points. Matlock were second with 43, Sheffield third with 39, and (blush) Stoke brought up the rear with 25 points. (In fairness, our questions were harder)! Nottingham took the prize of uncountable bottles of wine and promptly disappeared, obviously anxious not to share the winnings. Everyone else retired to the bar for a noisy and lengthy jawing session, and the evening wound up about 11.00 pm.

Joy Hibbert, so I believe, is intending to make the whole thing an annual event. All I can say is roll on next year and Revenge!

*

The featured group this time are Friends of Kilgore Trout, otherwise known as FOKT. I'm told you have to be very careful about how you pronounce that lest one gives offence to the masses. Bob Shaw (the other one) informs me that any resemblance to a well-known four letter word oft used in the lettercol of Matrix is purely intentional.

Bob Shaw (the other one) has not restricted his comments in his letter to me purely to FOKT, and has ranged across the broad spectrum of sf/fandom/space. I'm no sf-chauvinist so I'm going to let his words stand unadulterated.

FOKT meets every Thursday in the lounge bar of Wintersgill's pub, on the Great Western Road in Kelvinbridge and can count on a regular attending membership of about thirty. Meetings are quite informal and start about 8.30. By closing time, the meeting is even more informal. The group produces a zine, imaginatively named FOKT, of which I believe, three issues have thus far appeared. A copy of the magazine can be obtained from the editor, Sandy Brown at 11 Gordon Terrace, Blantyre, Glasgow.

As most people will know, members of FOKT organised Scotland's first sf convention, FAIRCON, which was held in July of this year. Bob tells me that it was a great success with about 350 folks attending. Guest of Honour was James White.

Associated with FOKT is the comics group, sometimes known as FOCK (that's Friends of Clark Kent to the uninitiated). They meet at the same venue but on a different evening (Wednesday).

Linked with FOKT, but based in Edinburgh, is the Edinburgh Friends of Fandom Group, sometimes known as (believe it or not) EFoff! The group is smaller but meets regularly in Jim's Inn, off Cockburn Street every Tuesday from 8.30 onwards.

A joint sf/spaceflight format is presented by the University of Strathclyde Space and SF Society, or S4. Bob tells me that S4 meets more-or-less on alternate Tuesdays in the Students Union, where it has hosted talks, films and slideshows. Examples: a sf-writers workshop; Dr Strangelove, and a lecture on Regression hypnosis. Membership of S4 stands at about 70 people.

On the purely space side, the Scottish Space Society is a new group offering participation in various activities on the space front. The society was only formed in late July but is planning a major recruitment and publicity drive in October to coincide with the 21st anniversary of Sputnik.

Longest established group of any sort in the Glasgow region is the Glasgow Astronomical Society, which has a membership of about one hundred. It hosts meetings with major personalities in the astronomy world, holds film and slide shows. The GAS meets regularly throughout the winter on Thursday evenings at the University of Strathclyde, though the society is not a student body.

My thanks go to Bob Shaw (the other one) for all the details he has provided me with. It seems to me that if you're interested in space/sf/astronomy, then Scotland is the place to be. Just before I close let me just append a list of contact addresses that Bob has given me, for anyone who might be interested...

FOKT: Bob Shaw, 3/L 11 Barrington Drive, Kelvinbridge, Glasgow G4
 S4: c/o GCCS, Students Union, 90 John Street, Glasgow
 SSS: Bruce Saville, 9 Regent Street, Greenock
 FOCK: Chas Falconer, 34 Manse Brae, Glasgow G44 5UG
 GAS: Mrs M Morris, c/o Univ Observatory, Acre Rd, Maryhill, Glasgow
 EFoff: Phil Dawson, 17 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh EH5

Next time around we'll be looking at the Cidereal SF Society. See you then.

BILL LITTLE

The first time I met Steev was at his first convention, Silicon this year - what an introduction for him! As you can tell from his article, he is still at school in Manchester. Somewhat in contrast to Bill Little's piece, Steev gives all of us a salutary warning about the pitfalls of forming a society. The path to a successful group is not necessarily smooth, but well worth it.

MASOCHIST'S WALTZ

Steev Higgins

Being a true and complete account of... well, nearly...

The genesis of the DLSSFG* (phew!) was in a scrappy little piece of paper more reminiscent of a teacher's blackboard rag absconding from its intended position in life than a bright, attractive poster designed to fire the imaginations of what I believed would be hordes of potential members. There were a few pencil scrawls intended to resemble graphic decoration (pictures to the uninitiated) but they merely added to the worn-out, creased and shabby effect. It was greeted with great hilarity when I put it up but colleagues were kind enough to share the joke; I had spelt science wrong. (Damn, there I go again.) Luckily this particular item vanished into oblivion.

At the time I was a librarian in the Junior Library of the college, which was now I had access to the noticeboard. A few months later, being a youth of uncommon dullwittedness at that time, I prevailed upon a friend of mine with an artistic bent (a pity too, he was a nice lad) to conspire with me in the production of a NEW, IMPROVED VERSION, BIGGER AND BETTER THAN IT WAS BEFORE. I also conceived of the master-stroke of putting it on the wall. Why I've no idea.

True to form nothing happened.

Much later, the tattered remnants were still there but about to give up the hopeless task of gracing the blistered grey wall. The black-visored astronaut could still be discerned pointing a somewhat deformed finger at the suitably quailing viewer and announcing that 'The SF Circle needs you!' One day I was minding my own business when a snotty little second-year weed crawled up and, in the respectful tones due to one a whole year his senior, began to enquire about the SF Circle.

"Eh? What?" I demanded, mystified. Then a nervous twitch of his eyes towards the poster sent my gaze to rest on it. Ancient, dust-laden memories began to emerge.

"Aha!" I thought. With those few of my firends foolish enough to agree to participate, this fly I had ensnared in my well-woven net, and some hapless member of staff I would con into becoming our patron, there would be sufficient to begin a society. I commenced to lay my fiendish plans...

With permission of the chief librarian, the teacher who supervised us (what the whips and chains were for I never did find out; one whiff of his ghastly cigarette smoke was enough to quell the most obnoxious high

* For the past five years I have attended an asylum known to its inmates as 'De La Salle College, Salford', sometimes referred to in polite circles by an acronym of DLS

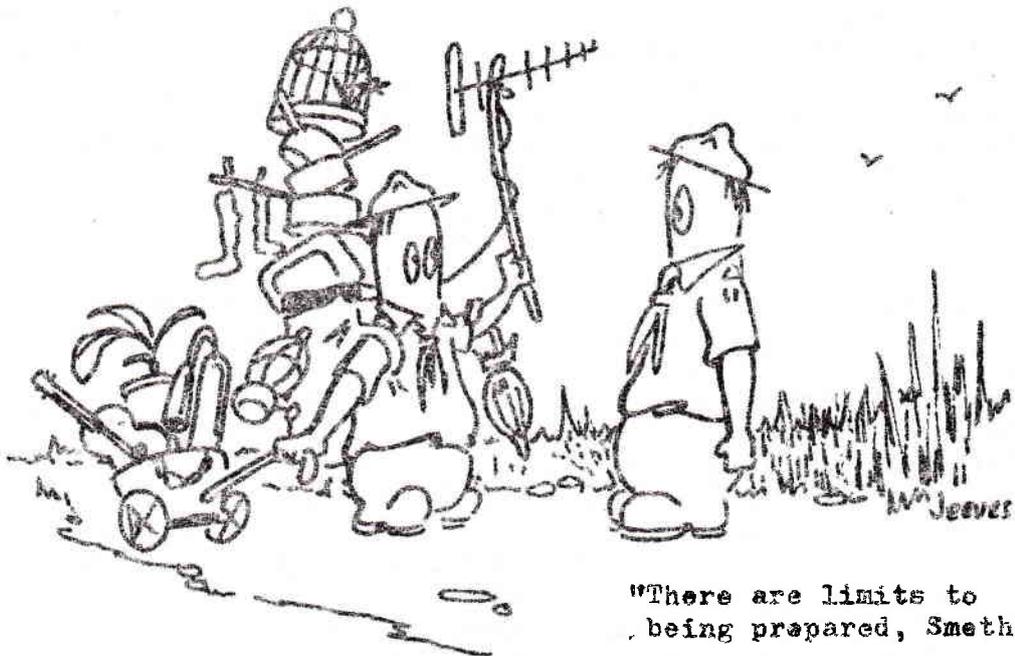
spirits) we held the meeting in the library. This enabled us to close early and partake of the librarian's favourite sport, taunting the frustrated borrowers milling desperately outside trying to return their books. (Served them right for leaving it until the last day.) Mr Lawless, the feckless sub-human, had brought along an equally disgusting friend, who later confessed to not only having read one Arthur Clarke story (the squeamish should go no further) but to have read all of them, and to have ENJOYED THEM!!!!

I sat them all down and began to address them in my suavest, coolest and most casual manner. The two worms sat at the front and giggled hysterically. I persevered and made an even bigger ass of myself as I pretended to be just as reluctant as them to write, not to read more than one book a month, and passed around my magazine collection (I'd taken a risk and brought them both in) with a hesitant and hopeful grin. They all instantly found the dirty story and embarrassed me further.

Since then the group has been in decline.

I had hopes of an eventual fruition at the beginning of this year, with a whole new intake to recruit from. The publicity campaign has so far produced nil response. Even worse, all the old members seem to have assumed that the whole thing has died a death over the summer. So much for that, it'll take a major renaissance to get back to the zero we were.

But, unsuspecting, my future victims wander even now through the hallowed corridors of this seat of learning. Let them beware...



"There are limits to
being prepared, Smethers"

FOCUS ON FANZINES

We have a fairly heavy fanzine review section this issue with three guest reviewers. I personally feel that the fanzine review section of Matrix is important to members as this can quite often be the only way for them to get to know new titles and sources of fanzines. To this end we have included with our in-depth reviews a listing of current fanzines and their availability. Although this list is by no means comprehensive, we hope to include as many zines in each issue as we have information on.

NEW WORLDS, OLD WORLDS

Alan Dorey

By including a fanzine in this column I am not advocating that one ought to rush off and grab a copy without further thought. The fanzines reviewed are those that display either the best or worst of each particular category of 'zine, with a few bland efforts thrown in for the benefit of placating the older fen amongst us. These fanzines have all been received since the end of October, and I'd be the first to admit that apart from the odd bright gem shining away with all the intensity of a Dorman-Smith traffic-lamp on a foggy night, the rest are pretty ordinary. Indeed, if not for being limited for space, the tone of much of this column would be such that I'm sure the attempted suicide rate would temporarily increase. If in doubt about the weight of that statement, I'd better point out that I've left out more fanzines than I've included, and that they range from poor to mediocre. Anyway, to be optimistic for a while, let's take a look at the newer fanzine faces:

Paul Kincaid has long had the reputation amongst fannish circles of being somewhat of an introspective person given over to serious articles and long thoughtful letters. His first attempt at a fanzine, TRIPE PICKERS' JOURNAL (co-edited with one Mike Scantlebury) certainly isn't intended to dispel that thought, and yet somehow there just seems to be a fannish writer trying to break out of the restricting body like some literary Hulk. Production on TPJ could certainly have been far more controlled, and perhaps next time the cover will be trimmed. Kincaid comes through as the more readable of the two editors; Scantlebury tries too hard to write in an interesting fashion about nothing in particular (his failed sex-life) and would probably go down well in the coffee-table column of some small-time provincial weekly newspaper, whereas Mr P at least has a subject matter in mind and handles his choice of words in... well, a thoughtful fashion. And that's where it rests; there's nothing stunning about the zine, but it does have an unrealised potential in its favour.

Mike Dickinson, at one time responsible for BAR TREK, described by Roy Kettle in a more sober moment as a "fanzine for people whose brains have

turned to alcoholic mush", has finally got around to doing his new personal zine ADSUM after many a month of speculation. Basically it's a jolly romp through his own style of humour, which at times can be original, but for the most part is too restrained - almost as if he's afraid to fully exploit a winning idea. The issue contains a welcome convention report from John Collick, full of youthful energy if not originality; a piece by Dickinson on the music he knows, and with a Thompson-esque title such as Sinking in the Seventies, it's off to a good start. Production is rushed, and some of the humour doesn't translate, but on the whole it's a pleasant fanzine that will obviously develop provided he can summon up the energy to produce the next issue before another year goes by.

Also new is Steev Higgins' PERIHELION 2, a fanzine from a fan at the younger end of the age-scale from Mike Dickinson. It's a strange effort simply because it contains such a mixture of faded writers and fresh hopefuls, that there seems to be a little lack of direction. Higgins appears to be too easily influenced by too many people, which does tend on occasions to stifle his own promising writing. His convention report is a case in hand, borrowing much that has gone before and eschewing the pleasing development of his own work that is obvious when compared with issue 1. If he could concentrate on his own very real abilities and stop relying on unproven outsiders, this will become a fanzine to watch.

Before passing from the New to the established, I must make mention of SIRIUS 1, produced by Mike Dickinson and myself. The fanzine is an attempt to produce a sercon magazine with a definite policy with regard to content and direction. The first issue is very much a last minute conglomeration, not enhanced by poor reproduction, but contains work by Dave Pringle, Brian Stableford, Cherry Wilder, the editors and an interview with John Sladek and is (even if I say so myself) a refreshing attempt at plugging a gap in the fanzine 'market'.

Much has been written about the talents of Dave Langford and his remarkable TWILL DDU, but number 14 maintains the usual high standard of imaginative writing. A convention report that would be totally original in concept but for him having given similar treatment to another piece of writing in an earlier issue, leads off, and again, the letters column shows how the quality of a fanzine forces the readers to respond in a wittier and far more imaginative fashion than usual. Indeed quality is what Simone Walsh has managed to engender in the second issue of SEAMONSTERS, which far from being just a continuation of STOP BREAKING DOWN is developing into something a good deal more varied. Critics have said that Simone's writing is too mellow or 'fair enough if you know the way she talks' (implying that those who have never met the lass will not enjoy it), but the point to make is that a style has developed and it is interesting enough in its own right **to be labelled quality writing. It doesn't appear forced, just pleasingly natural** and thus rarely seems to wander off into nebulous trivialities. Greg Pickersgill contributes a provocative piece of writing which surely proves that those who are willing to speak their minds instead of pussy-footing around on the borders of mediocrity, will be the writers to watch. But for me, the piece that I was most surprised about was Chris Atkinson's convention report. One could use hopelessly sychophantic words such as fine, excellent and all the rest of it; what I like about it was the tone of the piece, the way it came over and most of all, the balance. Simone's got herself a fine fanzine here.

Mike and Pat Meara are responsible for KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE 6, the first issue for quite a while. I can't honestly say that I've missed it because there's so little personality to it, the over-dependance on including dreary LoCs does nothing to enhance the lacklustre production. Such a

problem has often reared its head as far as Ian Maule and NABU are concerned; the words 'wishy-washy' instantly spring to mind, but really, a joke's a joke and if NABU 6 hadn't been a distinct improvement on previous issues, I for one would be more than a little critical. Maule believes in his formula, which in itself is competent, but not progressive... "relentlessly marking time" to quote a phrase I once used in another context. However, Joe Nicholas has come up once more with some superior fanzine reviews, and John Brosnan (remember him?) provides one of the best 'convention' reports I've read this year. His phrasing is high perfect and his description builds up the whole scene in a most workmanlike manner. It's unfortunate that Maule's selection of letters aren't as interesting as they could be, although he has made the best of them in the unusual layout that makes them look like some transcript of a fannish discussion.

A fanzine I acquired at NOVACON was FUSION 1, which to be honest, could have been printed on scented perforated Andrex for all the style it possessed. The layout is pedestrian and uninspiring, and the contributions display a remarkable lack of rewriting and tend to be either too short or too bitty. The fiction is dire, and the book reviews tell you about as much of the book as driving a car does about sex. Really it is the contents of a fanzine like FUSION that lift the Maules of this world into the Superleague.

Paul Ryan is a character who hasn't been around for some while, and his fanzine, ORYAN has just re-appeared in a very limited print-run for its fifth issue. Ryan was always more concerned with the artistic values in a fanzine, and his writing whilst being on the right lines is nothing to shout from the roof-tops about. ORYAN 5 contains so little of the man, that a valued judgement is difficult, but there is a nice comic strip by one Paddy Lee. One hopes that Ryan having emerged from his shell will continue to push out his fanzines because there is something there of worth, but time is needed before this quiescent quality emerges.

Well, there we have it, not a remarkable selection, but this is only symptomatic of the general lack of talent available. I would however, like to mention a few fanzines that would have improved my outlook on life if I hadn't already reviewed them elsewhere. These include Kev Smith's DOT, Rob Hansen's EPSILON, Dave Bridges' ONE OFF and GONAD THE BARBARIAN, produced by a number of people who should know better. (For details of GONAD see fanzine listing at the end of the review section.)

Most of the addresses for the fanzines Alan has reviewed are in the listing at the end of the in-depth reviews, but two not included there are listed below:

FUSION 1

John Cowie, UWSF&FS, Arts Federation Pigeon Holes, Union Building, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL

ORYAN 5

Paul Ryan, Flat G, 10 Springwood Road, Oakwood, Leeds LS8 2QA

ROGER WADDINGTON

It's perhaps remarkable that for all its short history science fiction should have gathered round itself, like clouds of glory, such a collection of historical relics and keepsakes (books, prozines, fanzines and films) that any researcher in the field might consider his reputation made and his career assured. And for this maybe happy, otherwise debatable state of affairs, we can only congratulate or blame our own efforts; in that we hang onto all we read as if it were Holy Writ. We parade them lovingly on our shelves or store them carefully away in plastic bags; not only from our own time but those that have gathered the dust of years, from far outside our own experience, that we might acquire a sense of what it was like to read sf in that first and brightest dawn. We may collect by default because we can't bear to throw anything away (and, if we do, we can always be sure that it'll be half the price again when the time comes to mourn its loss!), because we have fond memories or because we collect for the sake of collecting. There may yet be something even more psychological in it, that Frederic Wertham has yet to investigate!

Nevertheless we collect and to collect we need sources, we need to find other people who have the same material and want to sell. Ordinarily we frequent the dealers, such as Fantasy Medway, Fantasy Centre, Andromeda and all the other hundred people and places that have sprung up to meet the ever-increasing demand. There is, however, a limit to what they can stock and even what they're offered and so we cast around to see what other people have within our reach, what they've managed to buy and collect. There are one or two canny people in the field who have noticed this trend and have come out with their own zines to introduce collectors to sources, sellers to buyers and maybe even make a slight profit in the process, though this latter doesn't seem very often. Such zines have had a long reign in the comics field, where dealers are almost as thick upon the ground as fans and have often been accused of adding to the field's rapid inflation by publicising the prices. That something similar could happen here has already been a matter of debate.

Thus we get Xenophile, the oldest and most respected of these zines (with apologies to Ron Bennett and his Skyrack Trader, but I can't help but think of him as one of the filthy pros, as far as dealing goes!) It's published by Nils Hardin, whose especial love is the age of the Pulps, those great ragged-edge inventories of stories and serials from the Twenties through to the Forties, often memoried and increasingly reprinted. So it's maybe little wonder to see page after page filled with sales of wants for these magazines, and articles plus checklists which bring some of the magic of that era here to us, who have never known anything more than this present grey and rather limited area of publishing. His editorial presence and that of his contributors is obviously one that can only come from a deep knowledge and love of this particular branch of our publishing history. It has an enthusiasm that demands to be shared. Which doesn't mean that this is exclusively concentrated on the Pulps; there's as much else besides from the digests of the Fifties and Sixties to the very latest small press books and limited luxury editions. Certainly you'd be well advised to find a bottomless wallet! The one drawback is that unless you pay airmail rates (which I wouldn't recommend except to the most dedicated of dealers) the most tempting items, the biggest bargains are most likely to have been snapped up. But each issue does provide a marvellous address book for sources, for people that might have exactly what you're looking for, the exact issue that he might be willing to sell even if it isn't in his advert and maybe even that fanzine address you're trying to track down! Special issues abound - a Ray Bradbury issue, one on the hard-

boiled detectives, on Max Brand, on the Shadow; this present 120-page issue features the letters and personality of Virginia Combs, the still-remembered femmefan who impressed a whole fannish generation.

The SCIENCE FICTION & GENERAL ADVERTISER on the other hand, is very much more commercial and more limited in scope; though considering the wealth of material available to American collectors, and the very limited amount that finds its way over here - the days of machinery ballast are long gone! - it's maybe not too surprising. Even though its pages may be limited, the numerous Panther editions, of Doc Smith, A E Van Vogt, the copies (fair) of New Worlds, Authentic (and beware the British editions which suffer from splitting spines and once secondhand can only be admired from the safety of a snelf!) they do fill a gap. Each issue is well laid out with categories clearly displayed be it American paperbacks or British magazines. The one trump card it holds over such foreign competitors as Zenophile is that you're more likely to be able to buy what you're looking for; that is, if you can find it there! Though on the present evidence there's nothing to show that collecting is anything more than making a fast buck, no articles exploring, enthusing, illuminating; we maybe get the fanzines we deserve, a tenet of life that's amply illustrated elsewhere; but that doesn't mean they should give up all effort, no matter how easily it seems to run itself!

On the third hand, there is one magazine that brings it all together and that's the SCIENCE FICTION COLLECTOR. Here are checklists designed for the budding collector who doesn't know where to start and for the almost-complete collector who wants to find out the gaps in his collection and whether in fact they really are missing, or just a publisher's oversight. This present issue has the bulk of its pages devoted to an index of Ballantine Books from 1953 to 1976, with one page of what antiquaries would call Notes & Queries. Promised for future issues are bibliographies of E C Tubb, Avram Davidson and John Wyndham, with indices of Digit paperbacks, Uncanny Tales and the Avon Fantasy Readers, with Curtis Books bringing up the rear; which would seem a catholic selection for any fan! It's published infrequently by J Grant Thiessen, who has an excuse in that he has a bookstore to run as well - though it's to his credit that he doesn't push its wares in his fanzines. But whenever it does come through the letterbox, you always have the feeling that it's been well worth waiting for!

REALITY PLUS

One of the more rewarding consequences of running a column such as Reality Plus is the resultant chance to watch a fanzine's slow metamorphosis from crud to worthwhile literature; a few escape oblivion that way, some are worthwhile to begin with, a great many fail to make either alternative. One fanzine that has improved steadily over the last nine months or so is Skywood, Donald Barr's irregular stripzine. Issue 4, just out from Donald is a notable advance on previous issues - with the possible exception of his still frequently tedious poetry. Mark McKenzie's artwork is much in evidence, suffering a lot less by the godawful xeroxing than in earlier Skywoods. The success of Donald's work still depends very much on personal tastes, and his heavy emphasis on pseudo-sociopolitical commentary will not be to everybody's, but in overview this is certainly the most enjoyable issue so far - and, ironically, the last at least for some time to come. The format isn't quite worked out yet, but it did show a spark of promise and it's a pity that Donald's decided to cancel just as the zine has begun to show signs of improvement.

The second Magus is now out, available from Phil Greenaway. It's A5 litho, with a fair piece of cover art by a curiously un-named artist. Phil's layouts are a little jerky on occasion, and he does tend to insert the less accomplished artwork in prominent positions, but overall it's a reasonable improvement on his first issue and deserves reader interest - highlight this time is an interview with huckster Mike Conroy by Richard Burton, editor of Comic Media News International.

Speaking of which, CMNI 37 is now out, and ish 38 should be on sale by the time this column reaches print. CMNI's content includes lengthy coverage of events in sf and fantasy as well as comics, and publishes a monthly update newsheet to keep readers informed of the latest developments. It's a dependable, pro-format fanzine guaranteed to contain at least one article of interest in every issue - probably the UK's top newszine.

The third issue of Jan Van Genechten's zine Fandom's Film Gallery should be out by the time you read this. FFG's format is simple: devote an entire fanzine to one particular movie, with articles on script, director cast etc; the film on this occasion is Hammer's classic CURSE OF THE WERE-WOLF, starring Oliver Reed. Jan's last issue (Romero's NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD) was a very classy publication indeed, and his content list for FFG 3 sounds similarly good.

Despite my comments on his Winding Numbers last issue, Randy Reichardt has surprised fandom once again - by publishing WN 6 (also known as ONEpub 17). It's more of a personalzine than previous issues, and at six pages considerably thinner, but a shrunken WN is better than no WN at all, the future of WN is - once again - highly uncertain, though enquiries may spur him on to further glory. The sub-title's "I've Got a Toothbrush From Lethbridge" for those collectors of fan trivia who care to know...

Terry Jeeves has sent along his latest Erg (thanx Terry), which reaches its twenty-first year of publication next April. Anyway, Erg 64 is another highly worthwhile issue, with articles by Mike Ashley and Michael Banks - but the most intriguing piece included is without a doubt Terry's own "ergitorial" on future sources of energy (or to be more accurate: our lack of sources...). Watch out for the special twentieth anniversary issue Terry's planning for Erg 66.

STEVEN J GREEN

RECENT FANZINES

In addition to in-depth reviews, we felt that members might appreciate a listing of some of the fanzines currently available. We do not propose this as a comprehensive listing, nor are we particularly recommending them, they are for information. All fanzines are available for return postage, trade or letter of comment, but where there is a price as well, we have included the amount. We would like to thank those people who supplied the information, and make a plea that if you have any fanzines you think others might find interesting, please let us know - title, address, availability and brief resume of contents.

SKYWOOD

Donald Barr, 47 Seedfield Croft, Cheylesmore, Coventry CV3 5HU

MAGUS

Phil Greenaway, 38 9th Avenue, Galon Uchaf, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan, S Wales. 25p

COMIC MEDIA NEWS INTERNATIONAL

Richard Burton, 22 Woodhaw, Egham, Surrey. 45p.

NEWSHEET (monthly update of CMNI's)

Colin Campbell, "Biytoo", Plains Road, Great Totham, Maldon, Essex

FANDOM'S FILM GALLERY

Jan Van Genechten Lintsesteenweg 95, 2540 Hove, Belgium. £2.50.

WINDING NUMBERS

Randy Reichardt, 58 Penrose Place, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

ERG

Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Road, Sheffield. Subscription rates for 1 year (4 issues) are £1 (US \$2).

COSMIC THEMES

A J Callow, 53 Rose Avenue, Worcester. 25p plus postage.

Issue 16 has a reasonably interesting collection of book reviews and fiction.

ARENA SF

Geoff Rippington, 15 Queens Ave, Canterbury, Kent.

Issue 7 contains Kurt Vonnegut's views on Kilgore Trout and Brian Stableford's views on Vonnegut

THE FRIENDS OF KILGORE TROUT MAGAZINE

Sandy Brown, 18 Gordon Terrace, Blantyre, Scotland. 30p

Litho zine. Issue 3 sports an excellent Kevin Clark cover, plus James White's recent Faircon GOH speech, in-humour by Don Malcolm and John Welsh on Heinlein. Only let-down this ish is a rather pointless fanzine review column by Jimmy Robertson.

ASTRON

Steven Green, "Ad Astra", 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, West Midlands. 20p plus postage (UK 10p; foreign send IRC for details)

Issue 3 is out now featuring articles by Bob Shaw and John Brunner, interviews with Judy-Lynn Del Rey and Joe Haldeman. Astron is a large format stencil-litho fanzine.

CLOSER TO THE EDGE

Steven Green - see Astron.

A new A4 stencil reviewzine, published bimonthly and including a hybrid of Steve's Reality Plus column, with broad emphasis on sf and comics.

GROK

Science Fiction Society, Students Union, UMIST, PO Box 88, Sackville St, Manchester M60 1QD. Has a cover price of 2p due to university subsidy. but there are problems in selling copies to non-members of the Students Union. Copies are available to outsiders for trade or LoC, however. Grok contains fiction as well as articles.

XENOPHILE

Nils Hardin, PO Box 9660 (Kirkwood Branch), St Louis, Missouri 63122, USA. (English agent, Phantasmagoria Books, 8 Colwell Rd, East Dulwich, London SE22.) Overseas rates for 1 year \$25.00 (Airmail), \$12.00 (Surface)

THE SCIENCE FICTION COLLECTOR

J Grant Thiessen, Pandora's Books Ltd, 1440 52nd St NE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2A 4T8. £1 per issue; £5 for six. (English agent, Fantasy Centre,

43 Station Road, Harlesden, London NW10 4UP.)

SCIENCE FICTION AND GENERAL ADVERTISER

28a Beechwood Avenue, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Hants. Available for a large SAE.

THRU BLACK HOLES

Michael Roden, 982 White Oak Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45245, USA. (British agent, Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Road, Sheffield, S11 9FE). \$1 an issue Issue 3 contains Aliens of Known Space (the Larry Niven variety); When is a Robot not a Robot by Terry Jeeves; Hardware Restart (reviews of events within the Space Programme) by Dave Griffiths.

THE MENTOR

Ron L Clarke, 6 Bellevue Road, Faulconbridge, New South Wales, Australia. \$1.50 (Australian) for two issues.

Issue 24 contains Grimes-San and the Naked Lady by A Bertram Chandler; Elegy in a City Backyard by Jack Wodhams; The Role of Men in Science Fiction by John J Alderson; reviews of Shipwreck and Catchworld by Diane Southgate.

NIEKAS

Sherwood Frazier, 351 Elm Street, Lakeport, New Hampshire 03246, USA. \$1.25. Issue 21 contains an interview with Carol Kendall (The Gammage Cup, The Whisper of Glooken); an Index of SF Available from Recordings for the Blind, by John Boardman; Thoughts on Lord of Light by Roger Zelazny; letters on Niekas 20 (eight years ago - that's what I call 'out real soon now').

AMRA

George Sciethers, Box 8243, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101, USA. \$1 per issue, \$8 for ten issues; British orders at current rates of exchange to Archie Mercer, Lyonesse, Post Office Lane, Mount Hawke, Truro, Cornwall, TR4 8DW.

Issue 68 contains the History of Conan (in limerick form!) by L Sprague de Camp; Bearslayer by Dainis Bisenieks (Latvian sword & sorcery); the Swordsmen of Frederick Faust (Max Brand) by Fred Blosser; reviews by L Sprague de Camp.

MAYBE

Irvin Koch, 1870 Dresden Drive NE, B9, Atlanta, Georgia 30319, USA. Maybe is very much a personalzine and issue 51 contains Veni, Vidi, Vici by Alan Luck (a neo's first encounters with fandom); Boosting N3F by Irvin Koch; Hitler Could've Taken Lessons (ditto) (politicking that makes the BSFA look like kindergarten).

GONAD THE BARBARIAN PART 1

Alan Dorey, 20 Hermitage Woods Crescent, St Johns, Woking, Surrey.

GONAD THE BARBARIAN PART 2

Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave, Reading, Berks.

Two volumes of epic fantasy (!) available for a trivial 50p each. These one-shot zines were written by assorted fans in various stages of inebriation at a "writers' course" in Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire and at Silicon 3. Their one saving grace is that the 50p goes to the GUFF fund (see Miscellany Corner).

KIPPLE 2

David Wingrove, 4 Holmside Court, Nightingale Lane, Balham, London SW12. Available for the usual reasons I assume as there is no indication of price

etc. This is Dave's own fanzine - a combination of articles, reviews and fiction.

KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE

Mike & Pat Meara, 61 Borrowash Rd, Spondon, Derby.

Contains a massive fanzine listing (but no addresses I'm afraid) plus a book listing, letters and other miscellaneous items.

NABU

Ian Maule, 18 Hillside, 163 Carshalton Rd, Sutton, Surrey.

Issue 6 contains fanzine reviews from Joe Nicholas, a convention trip report by John Brosnan, Ian's own editorial ramblings and letters.

WALLBANGER

(Or Whatever Happened to GHAS 5?)

John & Eve Harvey, Matrix Editorial address.

Well, what can I say about this epic of the fandom world! No seriously, issue 1 contains a transcript of Leroy Kettle's Fan Guest of Honour speech from Skycon, a con rep from that auspicious occasion by Paul Kincaid plus the usual fanzine reviews and letters. All this can be yours for the usual, 25p or, if you're so moved, £1 for five issues.

PERIHELION

Steev Higgins, 18 St Austell Ave, Tyldesley, Greater Manchester.

A genzine containing in issue 2 a report on Westercon 31 by Cyril Simsa, fanzine comments (not really reviews) by Steev plus poems and letters.

SEAMONSTERS

Simone Walsh, 7A Lawrence Rd, Ealing, London W5.

A genzine full of comment and entertainment. Well worth reading.

SIRIUS

Mike Dickinson and Alan Dorey, Flat 7, 301 Chapeltown Rd, Leeds 7.

This is the first issue of a long-promised SF hardcore fanzine from two "fannish" fans. Interview with John Sladek, book reviews and articles.

ADSUM

Mike Dickinson, address as for Sirius.

The first issue of a personal zine from Mike in complete contrast to Sirius.

TRIPLE PICKERS JOURNAL

Paul Kincaid & Mike Scantlebury, 20 Sherbourne Rd, Middleton, Manchester. Yet another first issue, written totally by the editors - it's more of a genzine than you'd expect.

TWLL-DDU 14

Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave, Reading, Berks. Usual terms or 25p for GUFF.



Despite the Nova award results, this is still the top personalzine in Britain today.

WAIF 2

Tom Jones, 30 Ripplesmere, Bracknell, Berks.
Your BSFA leader and ex-Matrix editor's own publication.

THE WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG 1

Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Rd Apt 207, Detroit, Mi 48219, USA.
A zine of fanzine reviews which is useful as it covers many foreign publications.

MAILBAG

In the past, Matrix has received a certain amount of criticism over the length of the letters. To a large extent I must agree with this and therefore in assembling the letters column I have tried to be quite ruthless. So if you want your letter included it needs to say something interesting and to say it well. That is not to say we will not include criticism. We realise it is virtually impossible to please all the people all the time and therefore are quite happy to receive constructive criticism that might help us achieve this aim. We were most surprised with the letters we received on M20. Looking at these it would appear that Andy Sawyer had managed this impossible task. It is far more interesting for us to receive a letter of criticism than one of blind praise.

Having said we have been ruthless and no letters will be printed in their entirety, we now disprove that and print Sandy Brown's letter in full since all the points raised are important. The letter was in fact addressed to Tom Jones since it was an official letter. Tom passed it on to us as he felt it should be given publication and Matrix is the medium in which to do it.

SANDY BROWN

18 Gordon Terrace, Blantyre, Scotland G72 9NA.

I feel I must pursue the Ian Garbutt situation. I am appalled at Tangent 5.

1. Page 34 stated that the next issue will be "all-litho". If this is solely funded by the BSFA, I must protest at the frittering-away of BSFA funds. All agree that Vector should return to litho - presumably over 800 copies, and anyway, our official organ; Matrix - probably 600 copies - presumably our most popular (with the members) publication; Tangent - 250 copies?? Solely on this basis (leaving aside the question of a 2-month cycle as against a 4-month) there is more point in making Matrix litho rather than Tangent. Indeed, the additional money would be better spent on buying a new typewriter for Matrix, which would make it easier to read, and, as a byblow, reduce the number of words in total, which might force more editing of letters, which a certain amount of letter-writers seem to refer to a lot in Matrix - come to think of it, there does seem to be a lot of repetition, but then, it's up to the editor.

2. Tangent 5 is even more of an ego-trip than previous - full of self-congratulatory, fatuous, patronising, tasteless remarks. May I draw your attention to Page 3, in which Roger Waddington gently hints that there is perhaps too much of the "Ghostland Stories" - Garbutt slaps him down, and sets himself up as an arbiter of taste, and assumes that his taste is an absolute.

3. I cannot believe that all the fiction received by Garbutt is of the same type - that is, by adherents to the idea that style is all, thus excusing the need for it to be entertaining, plotted and well-written. But this is all it contains, apart from a very few isolated examples in earlier issues. Garbutt seems to be saying - "The members be damned; I'm editing it, so I'll put in fiction of my taste", which is all right for a personalzine, but hardly fit for an organization where the members pay for this cavalier treatment.

4. I find it grossly offensive that Garbutt should take advantage of his editorship to make rude remarks about other BSFA workers in "his" zine (Page 5). Surely, as with Dave Wingrove's recent slanging match in Vector, this type of thing is to be entirely confined to the pages of Matrix.

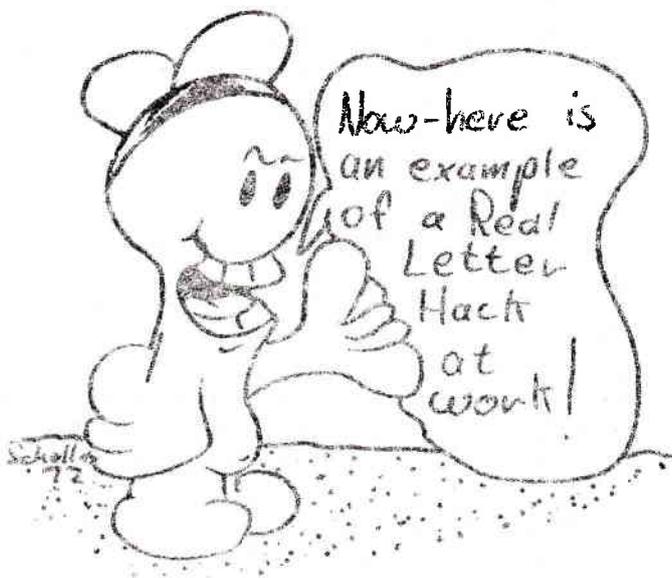
5. And as for this silly, schoolboyish "Telsa" fixation - is it, or is it not a fiction magazine? Perhaps it is intended to give the magazine a "personal touch", or to make it more informal, but I, for one, think that it is simply a piece of whimsy with which he has been carried away.

6. The overall impression is that it is self-congratulatory (e.g. see Garbutt's own editorial words, and those he has chosen to reproduce from respondents' letters), and I can only foresee it getting more extreme.

7. I write this letter to you, for the attention of the Council, as there would seem to be little, or no point in writing it to him, as it would only be ridiculed, or, even more likely, misquoted (which he has done with another's letters in the past).

***** Firstly, as you will have read in the Vice Chairman's report, your worries about the funding of Tangent are unnecessary. Ian is funding the extra printing costs out of his own pocket. So that rather knocks out your suggestions for better uses of the money, as much as I personally like them.

As to the specific points you raise about Tangent 5, I'm afraid I cannot comment since I have only seen it a couple of times, the last time being when Ian recently tried to trade it for Wallbanger. Even those that I have received I have never read since fictionzines don't do much for me. However, there are those who do want it so who are we to deny the members their desires. This aspect of fanac reminds me of D & D



fans; I've no objection to them so long as they go off and do it quietly in a corner (consenting adults and all that!). Just count me out.

The editors of these magazines should still have the same responsibilities as those of other fanzines, though, and I was worried by your comments on Ian's editorial attitudes. The editor of any BSFA publication has an even harder job than anyone else because he has a responsibility not only to reflect his own personal feelings, but those of his readership as well. This latter is the most important part and with such a large readership (the largest in British fandom) and such a wide mix of interests this is very difficult indeed. But that shouldn't stop you trying. When Eve and I took on this job, we didn't view it as a successor to our own fanzine, Wallbanger; we expected them to be completely different with their own identities, Wallbanger being more personal than Matrix. That isn't to say Matrix shouldn't have a personality that is peculiar to us, it should have an editorial presence, but the content should be that which pleases the readership the most.

Just to be fair, I sent a copy of your letter to Ian Garbutt to give him the chance to reply. Here is his response, completely unedited....

It is not normally my policy to reply to letters such as this for the simple reason that the BSFA is full of people who seem to take great delight in telling the publications editors how to do their job. Also, any comments on my part would imply that I take Sandy's letter seriously, which I certainly do not; however, as his complaint is an official one, it would appear that I am obliged to provide a response of some kind or other.

Taking your letter on the whole Sandy, it would seem that you have either not read Tangent 5 properly or not paid attention to certain comments printed therein; comments that are directly relevant to the points you have raised. For the benefit of those people who do not receive Tangent I shall deal with these points one by one, reiterating as I go along statements made in the magazine itself.

1. The answer to your first point has already been provided both by Tom Jones and John Harvey so all I will say is that Tangent has a maximum print run of 300 (not 250) which in all probability will not rise irrespective of reader demand, unless it becomes a subscription based publication.
2. I find it very difficult to believe that any fictionzine can be an ego-trip, especially since this particular type of periodical attracts more abuse from fandom than anything else. Indeed, I would say that a ficzine editor has to be rather thick-skinned to survive and is more liable to have his ego deflated instead of inflated. My comment to Roger Waddington in People and Places referred to any series which may appear in the magazine, not specifically Ghostland. I am sorry that I offended your delicate sensibilities with my "self-congratulatory, fatuous, patronizing, tasteless remarks" but then that's your own fault for taking too seriously comments that are only intended as jokes. As for being "an arbiter of taste" I use reader response in the planning of Tangent issues and this can be extremely difficult given the large differences of opinion that exist

within the readership. A single story can prompt both wild enthusiasm and downright loathing from different people and I have to try and cater for all tastes. On more than one occasion I have featured material which I, personally, disliked but which drew a favourable response.

3. You are quite right Sandy; the fiction received by me is not all of the same type, unfortunately it's not all of the same quality either. I do not accept a story for publication because it is of a particular style, I choose it because it is the best available, and by best I mean provocative, moving, memorable and intelligent. If you prefer stories of the E E Doc Smith or Perry Rhodan type, i.e. all action and no thought, then I cannot and will not accommodate you. Tangent is a service and the project was set up to cater for the creative aspirations of the BSFA membership and entertainment is not its only function.

4. "I find it grossly offensive that Garbutt should take advantage of his editorship to make rude remarks about other BSFA workers..." Once again (my first name is Ian, by the way) you have taken my comments far too seriously. You should see some of the comments these "other workers" make about me! (Outwith the pages of Matrix). But who wants to start a fight about it? I must confess to being previously angered by such comments but now I take them in my stride as I'm sure do the people I mention. We on the Committee are our own harshest critics.

5. Tesla: If you had read, or at least read properly, TESLA: THE EXPERIMENT CONTINUES then you would not have raised this point, simply because the whole thinking behind the idea is revealed there together with an outline of my intentions. Tesla is not my fixation, it's the fixation of the Tangent readership. All comments received on the idea were printed in the T5 lettercolumn and if you look you'll see that not one person is against the experiment; indeed, most people are very enthusiastic. With a response such as this I would be a fool not to exploit the idea. Tangent is not published for fiction alone (though this is and always will be its primary function), it is a creative magazine encouraging artistic response in the form of short-stories, artwork, poetry, etc. and variety of content will be one of my principal aims as editor. Tesla is an editorial mascot created as an artistic experiment and in an attempt to add colour and life to the pages of the magazine.

6. Here you repeat yourself about the periodical being self-congratulatory so I won't make any comments on that.

7. Here you make a very serious allegation indeed. I have never consciously misquoted anyone who has written to the magazine and if I have done so accidentally then I would be grateful if you would point out the mistakes to me so I can immediately rectify the situation. If you have any complaints about Tangent then you must write to me personally; writing to the Vice-Chairman is rather foolish (apart from being a backstab) as your letter would reach me anyway. Your comments would certainly not be ridiculed, even if they deserved to be, however you did not even attempt to contact me concerning your worries and as such I was in no position to deal with them.

To summarise, let me say that I am not editing Tangent for your

benefit alone, and if you don't like what I publish or the way it's published then that's too bad. It is quite impossible (and I'm sure I speak for all the BSFA editors when I say this) to please everyone, and I'm sure that if I did edit the magazine to please you personally, other people would be "appalled" by it and write diatribes to the Vice-Chairman. A magazine editor can never win, no matter how hard he tries. Which is all I have to say on the matter now or in the future.

Ian Garbutt

***** Enough said on that point for now so onto the other letters. Generally M20 seemed to produce a very favourable response, many of you were of the opinion that it was Andy's best issue. It's pleasing to see him go out on a high note and I hope we can come in on the same level. One thing that did get a paning was the cover. This letter sums up the general feeling.

WILLIAM BAINS.

Corpus Christi College, Oxford, OX1 4JF

Hope M20's cover was an editorial off day: it was junk. I look at it now with the staple side down and think it is much improved. What the hell is it meant to be? Anthing?

Ah, Mick Johnson is off on the definitions game. Note that it is a game, akin in intellectual satisfaction to snakes and ladders as SF is now so diverse and so rambling a field that to attempt to define it is ludicrous. Firm note: description is not definition, especially when as here it is not a correct description. But... he throws a six... my favourite is 'SF is the literature of the Big If'. Explanation: any work of fiction assumes a world which does not actually exist. 'Mainstream' happily puts little deviations in the normal world and explores them, creating the odd person here, the very odd one there and so on. SF (including fantasy, or vice versa for BFS) puts in a war there, a falling comet there just for starters, and can abolish the universe entirely to replace it with its own simplified or distorted versions. This need not be a conscious process by which an author says 'Hmmm, what would happen if the Earth were square' or what have you, and indeed probably is usually entirely unconscious as the author searches for a stage on which to put what he has to say (if anything) or just a scene which amuses him/her. SF is distinguished from mainstream, therefore, by a greater range of imaginative variation of the world in which it is set. Thus the BIG, as opposed to little, IF.

But James Parker has summed up for me... SF... "is, increasingly, the final potent form that most other literary and dramatic traditions are flowing into". In an increasingly imaginative world where people are challenged by the future and the alien today and not just when it comes the IF in all literature is bound to broaden until SF is no longer a minority sub-group of fiction, but is fiction period. And we of fandom will be normal. Won't that be sad?

***** Yes, I must agree with your points on the definitions game. It is a little futile - but most of us find it fun at one time or another. 'And we of fandom will be normal' never! but that all depends on how you define fandom - woops more definitions. It would be sad though. Libraries seem to have no trouble with defining what SF is, however, they just look at the spine and believe the publisher!

GREG HILLS

c/o 22a Polson Street, Wanganui, New Zealand.

In NZ there are, in the Public Libraries, two grades of fiction; 'free' and 'rental'. I have never been able to figure out where the division is, since most fantasy is rental but LotR is free. But I have noticed in my library-going, that rental fiction is chosen far less than is free fiction. Obviously, if sf wants to become really popular, fast, it should declare itself free. If bookshops followed this trend, then I misdoubt that very shortly sf would be undergoing a boom unlike any other ever seen. Of course, there are a few minor snags - distribution, losses in the mail, the drek that would also be going at a record rate; but I am sure all these can be worked around...

That bit of drivel inspired by, but having nothing to do with, either pro or con, Anna Prince's letter. Fact is I found it an extremely interesting letter. It points up one thing: 'mainstream' has often been called 'an artificial construct' of sf readers. But actually, the term applies to a particular type of book. It may not always have been so - but it is now, because enough people believe it to MAKE it so. There are some things not alterable by majority decision; but literature is not one of them. And this raises a further matter: the current boom of the 'sci-fi' addicts into the sf domain. If enough of them come in, sf will be 'sci-fi', and what is currently called sf will be the fringe. And it'll be no use our screaming 'it ain't so', cos it will be so. And moreover, there is no way of avoiding this. If it goes on, we'll just have to resign ourselves to being a small, tight-knit splinter group... again. That, or let things collapse around our ears so that what is left is no longer really sf.

***** Another letter which generated quite a large response, was Steev Higgins'.

DAVE COBBLEDICK

245 Rosalind Street, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9AZ

Steev, if a writer is so concerned about a particular point and has the ability to put it down onto paper convincingly in a truthful and valid, factual, manner.... what the hell are they doing writing FICTION. FICTION is a lie which purports to be true therefore any statement a writer makes (which isn't already an accepted fact) will be put down as an untruth! Is that any way for a writer to make a valid point? Naturally you have attitudes within the context of a story... that is what makes it convincingly true AND a unique form of escapism. I don't "Rant and rave" about entertainment... I merely express that this is what I look for in SF. It's others who "Rant and rave" telling me that there is more to it than that; and, this is what gets my back up! I shall be conducting a survey fairly soon with SF authors (the results of which I'll gladly hand over to the Matrix editors hands for publication) asking WHY they write SF stories. I think you'd be surprised by the answers!

Right, James Parker! I stand by my initial opinion whereby I stated that I care not for any political, ethical, scientific or technological theories that an author cares to throw into his/her story. However, you have picked my statement up in reverse; I'd be a fool to say that (above) in the sense that you thought I meant. That is, that I didn't care whether there were any of the latter mentioned evident in a story. What I did intend by that statement, was that the author could throw in what he/she likes just so long as it all fitted together in an entertaining story. I absolve myself of all biases when reading SF... I don't care what extremist or pacifistic views are expressed; what smart gadgets are dreamed up; what ethics

are involved, etc, etc... all I want is to be entertained. So, take another look at that statement and see where you've erred. By the way, I do watch Wrestling and enjoy it tremendously - as do thousands of other grapple fans.

PHILIP MULDOWNNEY

28 Moorland View, Derriford, Plymouth

Steev Higgins in his letter mentioned something about Matrix being a fanzine. Well, yes, but then so is Vector or SFR or god knows how many personal zines around. There are as many views of what fanzines are, as there are fanzines. Indeed is that part of the raison d'etre of publishing a fanzine. It is your creation, to do with as you will; to make as personal or impersonal as one sees fit. The point I was trying to make somewhere here was about the letter column in Matrix. To retain interest and communicate, a letter has to be well written. If it is not, then people will skip it. Similarly with a letter column. It has to have a minimum level of competence. Of people saying interesting things as well. If not, why bother. Matrix is not a personalzine, where every ody knows everybody else, and knows the hidden meanings and idiosyncracies. I agree, it is nice to have it relaxed and chatty, but too often relaxed chattiness can become boring self indulgence. Anyway, given the massive lobotomising that a Matrix editor must do to most Matrix letters, the letter column is very much his creation. For instance, one opinion or five on a subject, is interesting. Thirty or more is boring.

Three cheers for the suggestion that Matrix letters actually get down to talking about some sf. After reading three issues of Matrix, I can hardly remember anybody actually talking about written sf - apart from the Dick-good Norman-ugh type of generality. With the world con taking place in Britain next year, then presumably a lot more of us will be joining the worldcon and voting on the Hugoes. So what awards for fiction in 1978. My first thought is John Varley's THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION for novelette. This appeared in F&SF early in the year, and nothing has rivalled it in my mind. What about contenders for any other awards? Cannot say that anything really brilliant has struck me in the short fiction. Or maybe I have been reading all the wrong places. Have any Hugo nominees been appearing in Tangent.

Any opinions on the new OMNI. A typical Penthouse product, in fact on first glance, how very much it is like a men's magazine, without the nudes. This is the brainchild apparently of Bob Guccione Jnr, who as a twenty-five year-old whizz kid, reckons that OMNI is going to be the biggest magazine around. Superbly printed, with all those juicy adverts that Ben Bova claims in his SFR interview, would not come in an sf magazine. The science articles were interesting, but collected as a whole, gave the impression of someone was all too clearly writing down at you. But very carefully and cleverly aimed for all that. The fiction though... a Sturgeon out of water that stinks, a none too good Asimov weakling, and a non-existent piece by James Hall, and a slight bit by Goulart. Now if they are shelling out all that money in extraordinarily high fiction rates, swiped Ben Bova for fiction editor, is this the best that the sf field has to offer fictionwise. If so, God help it. Or is it just that they went for big names, and came a cropper. Because I thought that the fiction content was very poor. Which was a pity, for such a gorgeously designed and produced magazine. In appearance it looks like the magazine that all editor's of sf have dreamed of. Until you question the nonentity cover. It will be fascinating to see how it goes. Even more interesting to see how many will follow it. Because you can bet your depreciating dollar, that if it is a success, then others will follow it.

***** Some good points there, in particular Matrix and the letter column.

I'm in complete agreement with Philip on the editing of letters as I hope this local shows. I've tried to limit the number of comments on a particular topic thus trying to eliminate reading the same thing time and time again. Matrix letters about SF? Well, sure I'll include this if the points are well argued and interesting but I doubt if you'll ever find a letter details the merits of Niven etc. Some things have to be left for Vector! Hugo's - good point; we really must get a few in Britain (permanently) perhaps some of you would like to campaign for your choice in these pages.

OMNI - I didn't get to see No 1 but when thumbing through No 2 I was fully expecting the nudes when I turned the next page. Not a magazine I will rush out and buy every month I'm afraid. The taking down Philip mentions was only too clear in the second issue. Anybody want to review no. 3?

Last issue you will remember included the results of the poll and in it Mike Moorcock was pronounced worst author. I was rather surprised not to have been inundated with angry letters. Still someone did.

PHIL ROSENBLUM

92 Loudoun Road, St Johns Wood, London NW8 0ND

What better way to start a letter than with outrage: "Michael Moorcock worst SF writer"?? Can it be?? The man who just won the Guardian Award for Fiction with his CONDITION OF MUZAK??

All right, a lot of his work pre-73 was a bit hastily written and it sure wasn't hard SF, BUT it was damn good. His ability to conjure up vast, opulent universes of mystical beings, gods and all manner of exotica, combined with the ability to visualise them and put them across to the reader are virtually unparalleled. He captures the essence of science fiction: the sense of wonder.

And that's just the beginning: many overlook his use of allegory and symbolism, his touching characters, his ability to evoke atmosphere. But what critics overlook most of all is that he is a gifted writer: GLORIANA and the afore-mentioned CONDITION OF MUZAK are both great pieces of writing.

I suspect that those people who did Moorcock the disservice of voting him worst SF writer were motivated by spite towards the fantasy genre or, as I sincerely hope, truly misguided. Moorcock had nothing to do with the writing of TIME OF THE HAWKLORDS (which is a truly atrocious book). The honour of authorship is the sole right of Mr Michael Butterworth. This careless error by the publishers (which must have earned them quite a few bucks) has subsequently been corrected in QUEENS OF DELIRIA (the sequel to HAWKLORDS).

I suspect the labelling of HAWKLORDS as a Moorcock piece has done considerable damage to his reputation, and that is what I hope to rectify here. All the disappointed by HAWKLORDS, can I ask you to try GLORIANA, CONDITION OF MUZAK, his nebula-winner BEHOLD THE MAN, THE SHORES OF DEATH, THE ICE-SCHOONER or THE WAR-LORD OF THE AIR. You will be pleasantly surprised.

ALEX S PILLAI

32 Mingle Lane, Stapleford, Cambs CB2 5BG

Allan Lloyd says he finds something lacking in TV or film SF treatments. That's hardly surprising, for the visual medium can never ever be translated into

the written one. Since all visual pictures have to be much simpler than written ones, not as much detail or atmosphere can be put over. That is, why, I think, virtually all TV programmes (fictional ones) would appear dull on paper. Of course a hell of a lot of TV programmes are duller than they need be for no apparent reason; space what-ever-it-is is a good example.

***** What a peculiar argument. Surely the old "one picture is worth a thousand words" still is true therefore moving pictures must be worth even more. How many words can an author spend describing a scene? Not that I think and TV SF has ever been a patch on a good novel or short story - it's just that there's more potential (look what Star Wars did with a half page of plot line!).

JONATHAN COLLECLOUGH

'The Cottage', High Street, Ellington, Cambs PE18 0AB.

What I'd like to see is a bit more humour spread throughout Matrix because I feel this gives a sort of cohesion to the whole zine, which is, without it, just a collection of articles, reviews, letters and generally miscellaneous bits and pieces. I'd hate to see this variety disappear but try to keep it all together with editorial humour.

***** Well, we'll try, but humour is not necessarily an easy thing. I suppose we could go all out to tell jokes & poke fun, but I know many people wouldn't like that. To get the right balance is the sign of a true artist - if there's any of you out there, we'll welcome you with open arms.

TERRY JEEVES

230 Bannerdale Rd, Sheffield S11 9FE.

Well, for openers, I'd like to say right off that I have very little sympathy with those critics who sit on the outside and tell everyone what is wrong with the BSFA... and don't do anything to help put right their alleged grievances. It is too easy to carp... far harder to buckle down and help. Having done my stints with the BSFA in the past, I know only too well that helpers are few and far between... the moaners, like the poor are always with us.

So to the mailing. Well first... and this will seem a bit contrary in view of what is to come... I am one of those who think the BSFA mailings give value for money... I enjoy 'em and even though much isn't suited to my palate, I know full well it suits many others. Specifically, I'm heartily in favour of the BSFA helping with duplicating facilities... assuming of course the funds are not used to subsidise such aid. As for PAPERBACK PARLOUR... this is one of the best items in the mailing, and even though I get my own slew of review material coming in for ERG, I always enjoy comparing my tastes with those expressed by Phil Stephensen Payne... so please don't listen to twits complaining about it. Heresy coming up... I find Vector predictable and boring. I know in advance it will be full of a tedious interview and several pretentious book reviews. I like to know what a book's about... then I'll decide to buy it on that... NOT on some character's meanderings as he drags in literary influences from all over the garden.

***** That sums up one of the reasons Eve and I wished to take over Matrix. I think this idea of change from within is permeating fandom, though, and hopefully many more people will try this method.

Ben Burr succeeded in stirring it up a bit on the topic of escapism and Gwynfor Jones' reaction was typical of most replies.

GWYNFOR JONES

34 Bryn Gwynt, Amlwch Port, Anglesey, Gwynedd, North Wales

I have always thought the usage of the term escapism as very ambiguous and especially so when not aimed at any specific branch of creative literature. I therefore found Ben Burr's vague reference to escapism in issue 20 of Matrix letter col and his Mary Whitehouseish preoccupation with its evils on the susceptible mind as rather perplexing.

It's my belief that all literature is escapism whether it be labelled for the convenience of the masses or not. When a book is written about a fictional person in a fictional situation then surely the person reading that work is escaping, hence all novels are escapist and the taste of most readers is escapist - is that not so?

What Ben did not explore or make clear in his letter was the type of escapism he was indirectly referring to or the degree of escapism. What he is saying I suppose is that it's perfectly acceptable to escape from reality into a constructed reality as long as that reality reflects the reader's reality. In other words some plots are fabricated to diverge to such an extreme from the reader's acceptance of a 'norm' reality and as such are irrelevant and therefore morally and ethically degenerate?

Ben has arrived at the ultimate solution to intellectual, moral and ethical stagnation - escapism in literature. And yet he doesn't specify one title as an example he just uses the all-embracing category escapism. Perhaps he would care to expand his letter into an article in a future issue and give a list of offending authors and books to avoid? Be more specific Ben. Or are you frightened of biting off more than you can chew when the authors and their readers start biting back!

STEEV HIGGINS

18 St Austell Avenue, Tyldesley, Greater Manchester M29 7FY

It was interesting to note Terry Jeeves describing how the BSFA was formed to attract new fans whilst Andy Sawyer defends the right of the membership to sit back and simply use the 'zines as sources of news and interest. It seems very difficult to find out quite what the present administration want the Association to do, when its adverts and its VC claim it is to provide some service to SF, and yet in practice it simply produces a handful of average and/or esoteric fanzines. I don't object to a part of a 500-600 strong membership being inactive, but when 90% have little to differentiate them from readers. I begin to wonder whether it might be a dead horse we're flogging.

Everyone suffers from the apathy and inactivity rife at the moment in the BSFA, because unless a fair proportion actually write material and submit it the editors won't even have the chance to exercise any discretion, and will be reduced to mere compilers. What price then those who join simply for the 'zines when those have nothing to offer. I don't think it's unfair to expect that if people want good material from an amateur magazine which is a communal property they should put something in.

Uugh! Not another SF rock piece. What is it about SF fans that they are possessed by what Aldiss called 'colonial ambitions' and have to claim all possible fringe territory for themselves, as if the mountains of drek we're lumbered with wasn't enough?

***** I wholeheartedly agree with Steev - you only get out of any activity what you put into it. If too many of the membership are apathetic, they'll get the Council and magazines they deserve. Onto SF rock reviews. I doubt if any lengthy, in-depth rock articles will be featured in future issues of Matrix (of course, this depends on the quality of any article). We will be featuring short, informative items, however and we welcome any items from the readers.

WAHF

Ian Waugh, Wiktor Bukato, Rob Freath, Dave Symes, Steve B Ince, Alison Hutton

MISCELLANY CORNER

Jonathan Coleclough, 'The Cottage' High Street, Ellington, Cambs would like to hear from anyone who has copies of either, or both, the 'Glastonbury Fayre' and 'Greasy Truckers' live albums which he can borrow or buy.

Have you any artwork, articles etc that you think might be suitable for Bill Little's new zine IMAGES. If so he'd be grateful and can be contacted at 183 John St, Biddulph, Stoke on Trent ST8 6HP.

Is there anyone in the Newcastle-upon-Tyne area who would like to know about the University SF Society? If so, and you don't need to be a member of the university, write to Steve B Ince at either, 5 Otterburn Street, Hessle Road, Hull HU3 5HE; or 6B Krkley Close, Gosforth, Newcastle NE3 2LJ (university address). Steve is also interested in starting a local society in the Hull area. Anyone interested?

Hey, Londoners, Robert The wants to know of any local groups in the London area. How about dropping him a line at 22 Tees Ave, Perivale, Greenford, Middlesex.

CAN YOU HELP THE BSFA?

We would like to publicise the BSFA, with posters in libraries, colleges, schools and recreation centres etc.

If you could place a few of these small posters in your area or town, please contact me by postcard, giving your name and address, with how many posters you can realistically use. We would be most grateful for your assistance.

Dave Symes, 3 Hannington Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 6JT.

GUFF - the Get Up & over Fan Fund, aims to collect money to transport some strange Australian fan as if by magic into our midst for Seacon. The candidates are John Alderson, John Foyster and Eric Lindsay. As mentioned earlier, that intrepid deaf giant Dave Langford is English Administrator for this and is spending much time in fund-raising activities. For more information on the platforms of the candidates and the various ways in which Dave has deviously designed to make you part with your money, contact:

Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks RG2 7PW

TAFF - the Transatlantic Fan Fund. This was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds (they're all after our money!) to bring well-known and popular fans across from the States. By the time this reaches you the nominations will have been closed, but watch out in all fannish places (sounds rude!) for details of the candidates and the methods of voting. This will, of course, be to bring an American fan over to Seacon, it was Pete Roberts' time last year and he went over to Suncon in Miami Beach.

COMPETITION

Unfortunately we had no entries for the last competition so we've made it nice and easy this time (in other words, we're not clever enough to think up a difficult one - anyone got any ideas?). Below are two anagrams of title and author of two books, see if you can guess what they are (bet it takes you less time than it took us to work them out!) and a couple of paperbacks will wing their way to you.

IF THE BAD TERRA DEMON SHELLLED ME

FLEE DEATHRAY-G. POW!

(Note: the punctuation in the anagram is not necessarily that of the original title.)

Well, that's it for our first issue. It overran slightly but we should be able to control ourselves more in future. We hope you enjoyed our attempt. If you're going to risk another one, then you can look forward in future issues to yet more convention reports (a Polish one too, how's that?), details of foreign fanzines, people etc in preparation for the Worldcon, discussion on possible Hugo nominations and whatever else you send us, so please do.

A new venture will be a strip cartoon from Jim Barker which, if he is provided with sufficient story-lines, we hope will become a regular feature.

ARTWORK CREDITS

We'd like to thank the following artists for providing us with the illos:

Front cover: Jim Barker

Interior: Jim Barker, Terry Jeeves, Jeff Schalles and Paul Thompson