

MATRIX

102

The Newsletter of the British Science Fiction Association

£1.25



OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1992

INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

BSFA MEMBERSHIP

Now costs £15 (EC). Please enquire for overseas rates.

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MATRIX

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This issue's artwork

The Front Cover is by Irene Salzmann and the interior illustrations are by Shep.

British Science Fiction Association Ltd.
Company No. 921500.

Registered Address: 60 Bournemouth Rd, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5AZ.
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Printed by: PDC Copyright, 11 Jeffries Passage, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4AP.

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ISSN: 0307 3335

DETERMINANTS

To walk home alone at night with the mist clinging to your hair means balancing the faint possibility of attack against the probability of getting wet. The air is clammy, with that dank autumnal smell from rotting leaves, there's a faint pad of footsteps ten paces behind. A shape looms from the shadows. It may pass. It may come closer. You are conscious of wearing a tightish (skirt, highish) heels, smallish (sh) handbag. Your mind is flooded with regrets about choosing to instead of those self defence classes, your mouth goes dry as your body strives to present an assertive 'don't meddle with me, Mister' position ... it's that frisson of fear and excitement that makes reading horror fiction so attractive. You are invited to enter the shadow world of suffering short-lived characters knowing that you can stop any time, honest — if you really want to.

I moved to a Leeds still shell-shocked by the Ripper attacks where a recently remote female was escorted home from church by burly young Christians and women only buses had a high political profile. But gradually, the restraints have slackened as each woman assesses her priorities and balances the risks. It's helped, perhaps, by realising that rape tends to be spontaneous and opportunistic, an attempt to bolster a flagging self-confidence by selecting a weaker person at random.

Rape, to a woman, is an unwarranted intrusion — for though there is a rather sick school of thought which suggests that anything female walking alone at any time in any place is 'asking for it', most women would vehemently deny it. Besides damaging her body and clothes, the attacker demolishes her self-confidence and probably her future sexual enjoyment.

I'm not sure what the man would gain from rape. He may feel forced into committing secondary crimes — traumatising the other party into silence, even murder — and the outcome, for his self-confidence, is as trivial as crushing a snail or dropping a thousand ants. He might, though, get the guilty enjoyment of getting away with it, a feeling he could perhaps have got for free by reading a horror fantasy.

Horror, then, acts as an extreme form of escapism with the reader firmly in control. The reader can vicariously explore witchcraft or demonology, torture (any variation of), dark shadows (physical or mental), child and geriatric abuse, whatever turns them on before emerging, closing the book with a decisive slam, back to the stifling ordinary nothingness of their more normal life.

Still, the consensus of members appears to be that horror and dark fantasy news should be included in *Matrix's* remit, so that was designed to be the dominant theme of this issue. But for those readers uncertain about reading horror, who prefer the honest savagery of Guy Fawkes' night, there's a couple of historical articles, one on the genesis of the BSFA, one on the awards. Although the awards will not be presented until Easter, it's time to think seriously about the ballots, as Kev McVeigh exhorts in his *Empire Dreams* piece.

Besides voting for the awards, one way in which you can all help is by reading newspapers and magazines, then sending me any SF-related clippings. As far as I can make out, there is a very encouraging trend towards media taking SF moderately seriously with *The Independent* and *Le Soir* in the forefront. However, SF news this time comes from such diverse sources as the *Cambridge Evening News*, *Bella* and the *Hull Daily Mail*. So if you see a clipping of a SF event, signing, local SF author, obituary, interview, tv/radio programme or SF column, please pass it on.

IN AND OUT

New & Rejoined Members

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Departed Members

Aikman, Sandy; Arbon, Heather M; Aston University F&SF Society; Calder, Richard E; Edwards, Kenneth C; England-Koch, Graham; Frost, Peter V; Greener, Mark J; Holtham, Tony; Holzmann, Prof. Christian; Ivasenko, Eddie; Jones, Gwyneth A; Kimber, Ian; Lewis, Andy; McKay, Paul I; O'Dell, James A; Quinn, Tony; Raber, Tom; Saunders, Clifford; Siggins, Mike; Soames, Adrian T; Sorensen, Ian; Stewart, Alex; Stewart, David; Stuart, Alasdair; SA; Trace SF Club; Trant, Nick; Wake, Stephen M; Wheeler-Ried, Alistair

DEADLINE
15 NOVEMBER

NEWS

From: Bill Higgins, Stuart Falconer, Laurie Mann, Doug Fratz, Eva Hauser, Pam Wells, Peter Tennant, Ken Lake, Bernie Peek, "Jim Trash", Dani Zweig, Robert Horvitz, Terry Pratchett, Diane Duane, Arthur C. Adams, Geoff Knob, Joel Fink, Dan Danehy-Oakes, Charles Stross, Chuq von Rosbach, Tom Shippey and your editors.

HUGO AWARDS

The Hugos are awarded at every World Science Fiction Convention. Properly called the "Science Fiction Achievement Awards", they were nicknamed "Hugos" after Hugo Gernsback. Each convention traditionally creates a backdrop or base to accompany the 50's style rocketship and Magician chose to commemorate the 50th Worldcon with the theme "Where the Magic of Imagination Meets the Technology of Science". Phil Tonicini designed this backdrop of infinite space and colourful nebulae, resting on top of a small piece of metal grid taken from the gantry of Launch Complex 26 at Cape Canaveral, Florida and British engineer Peter Weston produced gold-plated rocketships. And if you can't visualise them from that, try Diane Duane's description: "They look like a simple silver rocketship of the 50's vintage — long body, short fins". The complete Hugo statistics are available, but I qualified at typing them in. If you're interested in seeing the precise details, please send a stamped addressed envelope to the editorial address, and I'll forward on the figures, courtesy of Laurie Mann.

The 1992 winners were:

- Best Novel:** *Barraby*: Lois McMaster Bujold (Analog July-October 1991, Baen)
- Best Novella:** "Beggars in Spain" Nancy Kress (Axlotl Press, Analog April 1991)
- Best Novlette:** "Gold" Isaac Asimov (Analog September 1991)
- Best Short Story:** "A Walk in the Sun" Geoffrey A. Landis (Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine October 1991)
- Best Non Fiction Book:** *The World of Charles Addams* Charles Addams (Knopf)
- Best Original Artwork:** cover of *The Summer Queen* by Michael Whelan (Warner Questar)
- Best Dramatic Presentation:** *Terminator 2* (Carolco)
- Best Professional Editor:** Gardner Dozois
- Best Professional Artist:** Michael Whelan
- Best Semiprozine:** *Locus* Charles N Brown (PO Box 13305, Oakland, CA 94661, USA)
- Best Fanzine:** *Mimosa* Dick and Nicki Lynch (PO Box 1350, Germantown, MD 20875, USA)
- Best Fan Writer:** Dave Langford
- Best Fan Artist:** Brad W Foster
- John W Campbell Award:** Ted Chiang

OTHER AWARDS

The 1991 Chesley Award Winners, which are presented by the Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists at each Worldcon were:

- Best Cover Illustration: Hardcover Book:** Michael Whelan for *The Summer Queen* (Joan D Virge)
- Best Cover Illustration: Paperback Book:** David Cherry for *Sword and Sorceress VIII* (edited by Andre Norton)
- Best Cover Illustration: Magazine:** David Mattingly for *Amazing* (September 1991)
- Best Colour Work/Unpublished:** David Cherry for *Filia Mea*
- Best Monochrome/Unpublished:** Michael Whelan for *Study for 'All the Ways of Pern'*
- Best Three Dimensional Art:** Clayburn Moore for *Celestial Jade*
- Award for Contribution to the American SF Association:**

Tie between Jan Sherrell Gephardt for her service to ASFA and Richard Kelly for financial assistance

Best Art Director:

Betsy Wollheim and Sheila Gilbert — DAW Books

The **Golden Duck Awards** are presented annually to the author of the best children's SF book and to the illustrator of the best children's SF picture book. These awards were started in 1992 by an Illinois SF convention, Duckcon, to promote excellence in children's SF and the winners will receive cash awards. The intention is to serve as an incentive to encourage quality SF for children. The winners were:

Best Children's SF Book: *My Teacher Glows in the Dark* Bruce Coville (Pocket 1991). This is the third in his "My Teacher" series and uses the theme Robert A Heinlein explored in *Have Space Suit - Will Travel*. Aliens are deciding if Earthlings are too warlike to be allowed to live in their galaxy.

Best Children's SF Picture Book: *Time Train* illustrated by Claire Ewart, written by Paul Fleischman (HarcourtCollins 1991). A class takes a trip to the Rocky Mountains Unlimited "Time Travel" Express to visit dinosaurs while they lived. The picture of the children trying a dinosaur egg is precious.

Honorable Mention: *Invitation to the Game* Monica Hughes (Simon & Schuster 1991). High school graduates have the choice of living on welfare or becoming unknowing colonists, based on their score in a computer-induced reality game. "Good enough for many adults to enjoy, but probably will be found only in children's libraries".

1993 Nominations: The committee is actively seeking nominations of quality SF for children. Please send nominations to: Duckcon, PO Box 4843, Wheaton, IL 60189, USA by April 30, 1993, to enable all members of the committee to get a copy. The 1993 qualifiers so far are:

Best Children's SF: *My Teacher Flunked in the Dark* Bruce Coville (Pocket 1992)

Best Children's SF Picture Book: *It Came from Outer Space* illustrated by Carol Wright and written by Tony Bradman (Dial 1992) and *The Magic Rocket* Will Hillenbrand (Holiday House 1992).

The **Hugo and Blackhole Awards** showed a considerable political and in-joke bias, however the most interesting were:

The Deroach Award for putridity in everyday life: Woody Allen

Best Traumatic Presentation: Woody Allen in "Honey, I knocked up the kid"

Best Dead Writer: William Shatner

Cuisinart Award for worst editing: *Highlander II*

Most Bizarre Hal Costume (Real or Imagined): Clarence Thomas as a judge.

The **Prometheus Awards** were presented at MagCon by Brad Unaweaver of the Futurist Libertarian Society. The Best Libertarian SF novel of 1991 was judged to be *Fallen Angels* by Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle and M Flynn and the Hall of Fame award went to Ira Levin (in absentia) for *This Perfect Day*.

SF SCENE

Charles Addams worked in the layout department of McFadden crime, mystery and horror publications when young, touching up photographs of bodies to make them look less gory (he thought this was totally unnecessary). "Addams speaks squarely to the inhuman condition, the Caliban or goat beneath the skin of all of God's children" wrote Wilfred Steel in the introduction to *The World of Charles Addams* just published (though, of course, a reprint) with 300 of his best cartoons and 24 of the *New Yorker* cover paintings. "He doesn't speak, he haunts" added Wilfred Steel. Favourite cartoons: the Addams family giving carol singers a warm

welcome with boiling oil and the skier whose tracks go each side of a tree.

Brian Aldiss, described coyly as a "Science Fictionist", is the editor of 58 leading works arguing for the continuation of the Net Book Agreement, by which the publishers dictate the retail book price for a specified period after publication, in a new leaflet called *What Price Reading?* The main arguments concern sympathy for young writers and small booksellers. If the Net Book Agreement were abandoned, then Nina Bawden suggests that the future would hold "more cut-price sales for bestselling novels and higher prices and fewer sales for others".

David Brin has said that he will do his books in threes: a serious book, like *Earth*, a lighter book, and an Uplift book. His last book was serious, he's working on a light book, and an Uplift book is supposed to follow. The next book is supposed to be something about a world where most of the people are identical clones of their parents, and the story concerns the few exceptions. Then the next Uplift book concerns colonists who start staking claims on a planet before the official land grab begins. The title *Sooners* is supposed to reflect similar situations in the Oklahoma homesteaders.

Lois McMaster Bujold's next, "Vorkisgan" book will follow *Mark and Miles'* further adventures. Mark is going to take on the gene baddies and he and Miles will stumble into each other.

Pat Cadigan, who is to be Guest of Honour at Mexican in Scarborough next May, has a new book forthcoming from Bantam-Spectra, *Fools*. She studied creative writing at the University of Kansas with writer and SF historian James Gunn and has been a professional freelance writer since 1980, besides having acted as a consulting futurist to several organisations. One of several female SF writers interviewed for an article on "Reinventing the Future" in a recent issue of *Elle*, she said "I've always been dissatisfied with traditional Science Fiction. It was a literature that captured my imagination, but it was also about white guys in space. I grew up in a household that was feminist before there even was such a word — there were no men in our house, my mother worked, and I was a latchkey kid — and as a result I had a very different idea of what I wanted my particular future to look like".

Pat Murphy is also quoted as saying that "one thing female writers have brought to Science Fiction is a focus on people attempting to live normal lives in whatever world they find themselves rather than viewing things from the perspective of the grand, galactic government. I'm much more interested in power relationships among ordinary people than I am in the brave space captain going out to do battle with the aliens". **Shariann Lewis**, however, says that all her female characters "are feminist in the best sense of the word. They often do occupy positions of power and make decisions based on their own goals, some of which are misguided. I think it would be a huge disservice to women to say 'You can't make mistakes'. Freedom means having the option to choose the wrong thing!" This is echoed by **Misha** who argues that "those who aren't allowed to make major decisions — women and other minorities — have the advantage of a critical perspective. It comes from being involved in the high-tech age without really being part of it." **Final words** from **Pat Cadigan**: "The world that I insist on living in is a world in which the word 'feminist' is as quaint as the word 'suffragette'".

Suzy McKee Charnas commented on being considered a horror writer: "I don't think (that I am). If you define horror as the monstrousness in people and in culture, then yeah, *Vampire Tapestry* is definitely about that. Joanna Russ said it was definitely Science Fiction because it was logical. It was about being a predator, not a

monster. There's a difference between a tiger and a Jeffrey Dahmer. The tiger just wants his dinner. Dahmer wants his dinner, but he also wants the soul of the person that he's killed. But then a lot of books about modern culture, mainstream books just about what goes on in people's families, are horror novels."

Arthur C Clarke has teamed up with Captain Carl Fismar, president of the Spanish Main Treasure Company, to retrieve the only known sunken treasure from the original Taj Mahal family and release the actual coins to the public. It is a hoard of silver rupees, dating from 1702, which were minted in the reign of Aurangzeb, son of Shah Jahan, builder of the Taj Mahal. This money was intended to purchase rich Oriental goods for the Taj Mahal itself, but the ship carrying it was caught in a typhoon and driven across a massive coral reef. Arthur C Clarke has been intermittently exploring the Great Basses Reef off Sri Lanka with his associates since 1961.

Contagion: Glasgow City Councillor, Iain Thomas, is searching for an address other than an intended PO box to contact this *Star Trek* con which apparently alleges that after they refused to let him attend the convention he proposed that their host hotel might have trouble renewing its licence. When asked, the manager at the hotel said that he was unaware of any such incident occurring. Councillor Bill Aitken, leader of the Conservative group in Glasgow, reported that "[Councillor Thomas's] version of events is backed up by a third party." We have just heard, however, that the *Contagion* response to a request for an apology and withdrawal of the accusation was to pass their version of the story to a Glasgow free-sheet with an approximate circulation of 500,000.

Storm Constantine, who is Guest of Honour at Novacon in Birmingham in November, has hardened her attitude towards publishing and says "The creative people in publishing these days have lost all their power. The people under the show don't really care what goes into a book. They want to let you take the risk, but where's the risk? If you sell, they're scored, if you don't sell, well, it's all absorbed as a tax-loss against those who do sell. What they want is *promoting* you. As an industry, the writers struggling at the bottom are just the ples, the old-fashioned piece-workers."

Vincent Di Fate, award winning SF artist and Guest of Honour at the Orlando World SF Convention, quoted surrealists like Salvador Dali and magazines, however, says he was also influenced by early SF artists like Stanley Meltzoff, Robert Schulz, Chesley Bonestell and Robert R Foster and has always admired Frank Kelly Freas. He does not restrain his work purely to book covers and magazines, however, and has done work for aerospace companies, defence-oriented organisations, toy companies and also pre-production design for Hollywood movies.

Diane Duane, who is working on a fourth *Wizardry* book, tentatively titled *Wizards Abroad* gave her views on religion recently: "The rampant influence of Lewis [on my writing] is probably very visible; also of a Catholic upbringing which I abruptly rejected (at around age 10), on being told by the nuns that my 'true friends' prayers didn't get to God: I was wrong." There followed a study, a "comparative religion" period in college where I read everything I could get my hands on, in an attempt to sort things out — with special attention to Judaism; then Lewis jumped me from behind, and I got my Christianity back. It's an odd brand, and people who have read the *Door* books, with their extremely post-Graves version of the Goddess, sometimes get confused about how I can, as it were, profess the one and support the other. I shrug. Other universes have different rules. Heck, this one seems to have a lot of different ones. I have room to let them be the way they are."

Russell Hoban, who collaborated in the making of the earnest of the current prize-winning British film animation shorts, *Daisy*, is talking at the Lancaster Literary Festival (Music Room, 1st Floor, Storey Institute, 8pm, £4 admission) on Wednesday 28 October.

Fred Hoyle's statue was erected in the grounds of the Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge, on July 18, as reported in the last issue. His association with the Institute goes back 25 years when he obtained funds to enable the Institute (then the Institute of Theoretical Astronomy) to be built and to become a centre of excellence for British astronomy. He went as far as ensuring that it would be carpeted, arguing from his knowledge of acoustic physics that the carpeting would be an essential sound-absorbent. Looking at the Churchillian pose of the statue, it is easy to see that he was not a person who could be easily browbeaten in an argument. Nevertheless, he left the Institute in 1972. The unveiling ceremony was attended by the great and the good of British astronomy, and the major names involved in developing the steady-state theory of cosmology. The assembled throng included the sculptor, Sheila Solomon, who had produced the clay original in 1982 in her Long Island studio. Missing was Chandrasekhar, who, with Hoyle, had been cold-shouldered by some astronomers for their recent theory of bugs from space. He could, however, have been missing for some other reason.

P D James's latest book *The Children of Men* is based in a near future England where fertility is absolute zero. In 2021, the panicking population is held by a dictatorship and only a small group, the Five Fishes, challenge this. But "I suppose it is a moral fable; I don't like to describe it as Science Fiction" says Baroness James of Holland Park in *The Independent* interview. Despite two of the fishes being practising Christians, she declines to take the easy way out: "I wouldn't be satisfied to think of it as a purely Christian novel, though", in fact, the most positive description she can give is that it seeks "clearly about the truth of the human condition". Which is perhaps as good a description of SF as any.

Katherine Kurtz said in a recent interview that after she finished *Javan's War* and *The Adept Book 2*, she is going to put everything else on hold and start work on *The Quest for Saint Camber Book 4*. The whole reason behind the book: to get Kelson married. *The Adept Book 3* is already in publishing production (say, Spring 1993). If she is going back to Kelson, it may be, in part, because Book 3 of the *Heirs of Camber* series is another one in which everyone dies and she hasn't as yet been heard to say why (she may not have figured it out yet).

Richard Laymon found his experience of attempting to teach English to misgranted hoodlums in a Catholic girls' school (his words) invaluable as a foundation for becoming a horror writer. Although he still works weekends, this is his writing schedule: "Monday through Friday I usually work on my novels for about five hours a day in the mornings and afternoons, taking breaks every couple of hours just to keep myself fresh". He begins each session by reading the previous day's work and making revisions, then writes new material, aiming for between five and seven manuscript pages per day.

Gentry Lee became a novelist after a long career in spacecraft engineering and was deeply involved in the Viking and Galileo projects at JPL, then worked on the TV series *Sagan* with Carl Sagan. Or whatever. When he gave a lecture at a local college quite recently, he talked, ostensibly, about the solar system, but used that as a hook on which to hang anecdotes about his travels, his family and a lot of human foibles, including his own. And he was a wonderful storyteller. He's good at getting across the human side of science and

technology — and he really rammed home that old saw: wonder.

Sharryn McCrumb, who satirised SF conventions in *Bimbos of the Death Sun* and *Zombies of the Gene Pool* claims not to wish to continue the series though, says the source cynically, "money may change anything".

Patricia McKillop is "inkering" with another SF novel. Basically it's about a museum curator who wants to take a travelling exhibit of interplanetary alien art to various planets in the system — and winds up in terrible hot water doing just that simple thing. This is kind of a loose trading system, and they run into aliens who are interested in ancient civilisations with their own art. These are collected in one huge museum, and he's taking some of it out to put on a tour.

Judith Merril was honoured at a special literary event on October 15 as part of Toronto's International Festival of Authors. Authors scheduled to be on hand to pay tribute to her were Michael Moorcock, Frederik Pohl, Samuel Delany, Spider Robinson, Elizabeth Vonarburg, John Robert Colombo, Katherine MacLean and Pierre Berton. Apart from being one of Canada's finest SF authors, Moorcock, Pohl, and Robinson, and pioneering feminist issues in SF, Judith Merril donated an enormous collection of books and magazines to the Toronto Public Library, where it forms part of the world's largest publicly accessible SF libraries. (Personally, I wouldn't have put John Robert Colombo in the same class as Samuel Delany or Michael Moorcock, and Pierre Berton is a well known Canadian historian who has kept his SF connections very quiet, if they exist at all — but it's still a great idea and a worthy tribute — ed.)

Marvin Minsky has made two unpublished chapters intended for the book *The Turing Option* written with Harry Harrison (Warner, August 1992) available for a wide audience. He comments "These chapters have a lot of far-out ideas, some how to build a human-like machine. Harry Harrison said, 'I have been long-time friends. One day, he said that he liked my book *The Society of Mind* and suggested that the ideas could reach a larger audience if I wrote a version in the form of a novel. When I said I didn't have the talent for that, he offered to collaborate. I decided that the central character, Brian, would be a mathematical super-hacker of the future who would build the first AI with a human-like mind. Harry drafted the action plot, and I supplied the technical stuff. While our hero is building his robot (in the year 2023) he is shot in the head by mysterious criminals who steal the prototype. This lets us explain computational aspects of the theory in the context of repairing Brian's brain, while also explaining psychological aspects in the context of reconstructing his childhood memories."

A co-author does not have complete control (see Terry Pratchett's piece in this section for a contrasting view on co-authoring — ed.). These FTP chapters are part of the text I wrote which did not make it into the published book. Both Harry and the editor at Warner thought they would slow down the story too much. At the time I disagreed, but now I think they were right.

Jonathan Porritt wrote an interesting mixture of fact and criticism for *The Daily Telegraph*, suggesting what life for a child born this year might be like at the age of 21. Maurice, this particular child, even reads *The Daily Telegraph* which is predicting that the Greens will win the next election, though he personally believes that people just couldn't vote for "a bunch of sanctimonious tree-huggers" even if the Tories were deeply unpopular after 34 years in office. His local train service had not been "Bransoniised", so he has plenty of time to stare out of the windows at the landscape blighted by the dust storms over what had once been Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. His stroll down Cromer promenade is interrupted by continual

requests to see his ID (part of a mass crackdown in illegal immigrants and glimpses of the massive vid screens flashing the maximum permitted exposure (burn time) and the ultraviolet readings).

Terry Pratchett has sent the ms of *Johnny and the Dead* to his editor and *Lords and Ladies* will be out in November to give the latest on Magrat and the Fool. When asked about the collaboration of *Good Omens* with Neil Gaiman he replied "I did most of the physical writing because:

- 1) I had to. Neil had to keep *Sandman* going — I could take time off from the DW
- 2) One person had to be overall editor, and do all the stitching and filing and slicing and, as I've said before, it was me by agreement — if it had been a graphic novel, it would have been Neil taking for chair for exactly the same reasons it was me for a novel
- 3) I'm a selfish bastard and tried to write ahead to get to the good bits before Neil.

Initially, I did most of Adam and the Them and Neil did most of the Four Horsemen, and everything else kind of done by whoever — by the end, large sections were being done by a composite creature called Terryandneil, whoever was actually hitting the keys. By agreement, I am allowed to say that Agnes Nutter, her life and death, was completely and utterly mine. And Neil proudly claims responsibility for the maggots. Neil had a major influence on the opening scenes, me on the ending. In the end, it was this book done by two guys, who shared the money equally and did it for fun and wouldn't do it again for a big clock."

Spider Robinson, who says the greatest influences on his writing were Robert A Heinlein, Theodore Sturgeon and Ben Bova — "Robert taught me how to think, Ted taught me how to feel and Ben taught me how to survive as a writer" — has a new novel, *Lady Slings the Booze*, being published shortly.

Kim Stanley Robinson considered utopian issues almost automatically in his new Martian series, although his most utopian novel to date has been *Pacific Edge*. After recommending Thomas Moore's *Utopia*, H G Wells' *A Modern Utopia*, William Morris' *News from Nowhere* and especially Ursula K LeGuin's *The Dispossessed*, he said that Science Fiction "is really misperceived by the end of the environmentalist movement. They think of Star Wars and the whole technological, spaceship, other planets side of Science Fiction. I'm trying to widen their awareness of Science Fiction as an environmentalist literature... The political side of your writing is effective in exact proportion to how good the story is as art." And he uses Joanna Russ' *The Female Man* as an example of this.

Charles Stross is the new chairing of the writing group Milford, with Chris Amies as secretary. The event was a success: nobody was murdered, nobody committed suicide reports Charles cheerfully.

Jack Vance has just completed another series: *Cadwall Chronicles*. *Arminia Station* and *Ecce and Old Earth* have already been published. *Throy* will follow shortly.

Vernor Vinge gave a talk on the background to his book *A Fire Upon the Deep* which explained that the notion of the Singularity was central to his books. He believes that the exponential advance of technology will continue in the future, until the point at which superhuman intelligence (AI or computer-enhanced human) can be realised. At this point, which shouldn't be that far in our future, human society becomes as impossible for us to understand as our society is for a goldfish to understand. Therefore he believes that Science Fiction which ignores the potential of such a Singularity is dishonest. The problem is that accepting it severely limits the

potential for writing Science Fiction. So he has deliberately set out to create a milieu in which interesting stories, such as *A Fire Upon the Deep*, could be placed.

Gene Wolfe claims that there may or may not be a third book in his *Soldier* series, that he just plans to write them whenever he feels the interest. They're going to be a kind of walking tour of Ancient Greece. Of the disguised names, Hill is Thebes, Sestos is Sestos(!), Bearland is Arcadia, the Hot Gates are Thermopylae, Red Island is the Peloponnese, Riverland is Egypt.

Walter Jon Williams explained the reasoning behind the aliens in *Angel Station* in a recent interview: "I was trying very hard to take a new culture... I think living in a place like New Mexico helps. I am surrounded by alien cultures. I wrote a story called 'Surfacing'. Part of it had to do with communicating with cetaceans and I realised I was able to apply to it what I knew about Navajo speech — because in Navajo speech you don't have a distinction between subject and object, it seemed to me that that element of Navajo speech would apply very well to cetaceans, where the liquid three dimensional environment makes it difficult for them to distinguish between themselves and something else, and that incorporates into the world-view as well."

Obituary: Fritz Leiber

Tom Shippey

Fritz Reuter Leiber (1910-92) is one of the small but inspiring group of Science Fiction and Fantasy writers who have managed not only to be there at the birth of their modern genres, and to have shaped those genres' development by their own work, but to have kept writing with undiminished excitement and increasing skill right up to the end of their long lives. English *herv* *sem eldis* says the Old Norse proverb: "Every man loses heart as he grows old." It was not true of Leiber, whose spirit remained heroic until his death.

Leiber was not one of the teenage prodigies of fantasy, enjoying a relatively staid education at the University of Chicago, and then at theological seminary. His first story "Two Sought Adventure" came out in the August 1939 issue of *Unknown* and launched on the world the characters of Falhrd the giant barbarian (said to be modelled physically on Leiber himself) and Gray Mouser (said to be modelled on his friend Harry Fischer). The pair have since adventured on through six volumes of short stories and a novel, the last volume in the series, *The Knight and the Slave* of Swords, appearing as late as 1988. In the fifty year career, fal-lal in quality and indeed a steady deepening of characterisation and near-symbolic quality (as in the story of Falhrd's flight from the Cold Wastes "The Snow Women" of 1970, surely one of the great fantasy novelettes).

Leiber, however, produced much other distinguished work both in Science Fiction and Fantasy. In the latter genre, all readers would pick out *Conjure Wife*, an *Unknown* serial from 1943, a classic "extrapolation" of the accusation reported in the *Malleus Maleficarum*, that all women are really witches, but crossed unforgettably with campus politics; for if all women are witches and you forbid your wife from witching defensively, the most amiable of professors must come to grief. *Gather Darkness* was another classic from the same year. But what is surprising (especially in the modern world of trilogy upon repetitive trilogy) is that in spite of this string of successes in the fantasy genre, Leiber in the next decade turned away from an established mode and produced a string of Science Fiction classics as well. He may be most often remembered for his "Change War" series of the time-travel war between the Snakes and the Spiders, which began simultaneously with a short story in *Asounding* and a serial (*The Big Time*) in *Galaxy*, both in

or from March 1958. The series allowed Leiber to use his notable command of history in setting up oppositions of cultural style, but also to extend the argument carried on by de Camp and others about whether changing history could ever be possible: in essence, an argument about the ways things are, not about how they might be. The same decade brought *The Silver Eggheads*, a riotously funny novel which should have introduced the useful term "wordwooze" to the English language. In 1965, Leiber won the Hugo novel award with *The Wanderer*, a novel of unusually advanced and ambitious technique. The seventies had Leiber returning to write his best Larikar stories, as mentioned above, as well as the modern Gothic *Our Lady of Darkness* (1977), and a string of award-winning short stories all the way up to 1988.

Leiber won six Hugos, three Nebulas, the Lovecraft, Derleth, Gandall and Lovecraft Life Achievement awards. He was one of the best, and one of the most influential writers of fantasy fiction this century. His work showed an inimitable combination of wit, invention and irony (the last not least about his own genre)...

Forthcoming

Darklands 2 is an anthology of horror fiction coming from the Egerton Press in early October, edited by Nicholas Royle. The contributors are Garry Kilworth, John Burke, Graham Joyce, D F Lewis, Peter Crowther, Chris Barnham, Judy Hines, Kevin Mullins, Simon Clark, Jean-Daniel Bregue, Roger Stone, Conrad Williams, Julie Akhurst, Joel Lane, Mark Morris, Ian Cunningham, Michael Marshall Smith, Derek Marlowe, Steven Rayner, Mike O'Driscoll, Brian Howell and Kim Newman. Among the glowing press accolades was one from *Vector* which said simply "There isn't a weak 'n' here".

Dracula is the taste of the month. Francis Ford Coppola presented clips from *Bram Stoker's Dracula* with Gary Oldman as Dracula and Anthony Hopkins as Van Helsing with Wyona Ryder as Mina Harker at the Orlando Worldcon (to be released in January 1993) and Pan are publishing *Dracula: The Novelisation* in December with a fiction/film tie in of the original by Bram Stoker. *Dracula: The Novelisation* by Fred Saberhagen and James V Hart is a powerful and somewhat erotic re-telling of the legend and includes 8 pages of colour stills from the film. Two hundred films have been made of *Dracula* so far, but the book is still worth reading. Part of it is set in Whitby, where there is a *Dracula* museum. *The Making of Bram Stoker's Dracula* by Francis Ford Coppola and James V Hart comes in December as well - it's a large format paperback, with nearly 200 pages, 100 coloured illustrations and 60 blackwhite — featuring pieces on the stars and every aspect of the film's production from costumes, sets, special effects to the complete screenplay. There's also an introduction by Francis Ford Coppola.

Headline's latest books echo the horror/dark fantasy threat of this issue. Ian Maitland's *Cathedral* (September £15.99) is a first novel relating the distorted memories of a young adolescent who can only take refuge in the Cathedral from the demons from the past which haunt him. But the Cathedral becomes an obsession in itself and so he finds himself plunged into a maze of nightmare experiences. As a contrast, Richard Laymon's *Midnight's Lair* (September £15.99) is set on an underground lake where tourists can marvel at Nature's handiwork. When a sudden power failure traps a group of tourists, they uncover a nest of horrors that have lain hidden for generations. And if you like that, try Richard Laymon's *Blood Games* (September £4.99) which is simply described as a "blood curdling extravaganza of horror".

Grafton have a couple of forthcoming horror books — Walter Jon Williams' *Facets* (October £4.99), Brian Lumley's *Spawn of the Winds*

(November £3.99) — but concentrate more on Science Fiction with Philip K Dick's *Ubik* (£3.99) and *Valeis* (£4.99) in October, with *The Penultimate Truth* (£3.99) in November and Kim Stanley Robinson's *Down and Out in the year 2000* (£5.99) completing the November publishing schedule with Ray Bradbury's *Machineries of Joy and October Country* (£4.99) either. They are strong on fantasy too: Mike Jeffries' *Shadows in the Water* (£4.99) is coming in October with a trade paperback of *Hidden Echoes*, with two trade paperbacks, *Face of the Waters* by Robert Silverberg and Raymond Fiest and Janny Wurts' *Mistress of the Empire* in November, together with Patricia Kennealy's *Hawk's Grey Feather* (£4.50). December's SF is mixed, or indistinguishable, with Persi Anthony's *Mer-Cycle* (£4.99), Raymond E Feist's *Magician* (trade paperback), and Gordon R Dickson's *Dragon Knight* (£4.99).

Pan are publishing *Achilles' Choice* by Larry Niven and Steve Barnes in January, a brilliant award winner the chance to compete in the 11th Olympiad, which tests the mind as well as the body and gold medalists can become one of earth's ruling elite, but only if they elect to "boost". Losing boosters, however, die. *Dream Park The Voodoo Game* is also coming in January by the same authors — the ghostly shell of the Beehive is due for renovation, but been the spatially moving the owners of the fabulous Dream Park unveil their plans for one last fantastic game — Voodoo. Yet another vampire novel, *Suckers* by Anne Bilson comes out in January also — you just can't keep a good vampire down, especially when they wear pinstripes and pearls. There are killings to be made, and we're not talking fiction....

Just in case anyone has forgotten that 1992 is the 100th anniversary of Tolkien's birth (incidentally, in South Africa), there is another Tolkien tribute, this time after *The King*, stories in honour of J R R Tolkien, edited by Martin J Greenberg, with contributions by J R R Tolkien, Patricia McKillop, Craig Shaw Gardner, Piers Anthony and others including a 'beautiful' Stephen Donaldson novella. Even the Royal Mail is getting in on the act with a special prestige Stamp Book, to be published October 27, with an inscription in Tolkien's own Elvish script on the cover. The text appears to have been exhaustively vetted by several Tolkien students, giving the *Tolkien Centenary Poster Portfolio* by Alan Lee (£12.99 incl VAT) coming in November with Tom Shippey's *The Road to Middle Earth* (£12.99) in addition to *The Illustrated Hobbit* which came in October at £12.99.

If you missed David Wingrove's *The White Mountain*, published by New English Library in September as a paperback, then there is another to come: *The Stone Within* coming in hardback on December 3. As volume 4 in a series of at least 10 books (I think) that the series will now run to 9 thick volumes), it may not be the most suitable Christmas present available for an elderly relative.

Hodder & Stoughton have rejacketed a selection of John Saul backlist titles to be reissued in December: *When the Wind Blows*, *Cry for the Strangers*, *Come the Blind Fury*, *Punish the Sinners* and *Suffer the children* (all £4.99). The other December offering is Robert E Vardeman and Geo W Proctor's *Swords of Raemlyn 2* (large format £7.99). Ben Bova's *Mars* (£5.99) is coming in January 1993, together with Stephen Gallagher's *Followers* (£4.99). *Mars* will be backed by a powerful advertising campaign, with posters and advertisements on the London Underground and in the national press and specialist magazines. Arthur C Clarke described it as "a splendid book.... of my many books, *Mars* must be the most important". However, when considering the actual logistics of the journey, Hugh Aldersey-Williams' *Interdependent* that "Manned space flight to Mars will make a day in a traffic jam on the M25 seem

really interesting". To emphasise that he is not a perverted traffic jam freak, he continues "the reality of the planned journey to Mars, about 200 days' flying time away, will be utter boredom". Professor Albert Harrison, a NASA consultant and professor of psychology at the University of California, wrote on this in the *Journal of the British Interplanetary Society* with Yvonne Clearwater of NASA Ames, and suggests that reality of the journey, the space itself, "flood" provide a sense of up and down, important for orientation in weightless conditions. Pictures on the "walls" are beneficial. Recreation is important, not only to maintain muscles that tend to deteriorate under weightlessness, but also to combat tedium. Conventional diversions will not be enough during the long months, however escapism will be vital". But Professor Harrison rules out the use of drugs and alcohol: it is considered that the US taxpayer would not condone them.

Millennium started publishing officially on September 17, with Vernor Vinge's *A Fire upon the Deep*, Kristine Kathryn Rusch's *The White Mists of Power* and Molly Cochran and Warren Murphy's *The Forever King* and the launch has continued with a uniform edition of Michael Moorcock works. Publications will be simultaneous hardback and trade paperback. Look out for cross-track advertising on the London Underground and in-store promotions.

Magazines

Derek B Stewart has just launched a magazine called *Phantasy Province* which will concentrate on Fantasy, Horror, Supernatural and Science Fiction themes. Issue 2, which should have about 80 pages, is due about towards the end of October though the subject to availability — BSFA members who subscribe will get issue 1 free with issue 2. Derek is particularly interested in quality fiction, which will be exclusively illustrated by dark fantasy artist Kerry Earl (who screen prints the most amazing t-shirts, but that's not quite relevant). Details from his at Misty Publishing, PO Box 6, Fraserburgh, AB43 5SX.

Dirk Strasser and Stephen Higgins, of the Australian magazine *Aurealis* are looking for quality fiction (1500-6000 words). Although stories do not have to be explicitly Australian, since the magazine is grant aided by the Victoria Ministry of Arts, they would prefer an authentic flavour. Details from Chimera Publications, PO Box 538, Mount Waverley, Victoria 3149, Australia.

Doug Fratz's magazine *QUANTUM-Science Fiction and Fantasy Review* will cease publication as from the Winter 1993 issue and will merge with Steve Brown's *Science Fiction Eye*, for which Fratz will become associate editor. When asked why he had decided to stop publishing, Fratz replied "I've been publishing this magazine for twenty years now, and I'm tired. I've been publishing the magazine for exactly half of my life, and I've paid my dues, working 80-100 hours a week, between the magazine and my real career as a scientist. I want to support SF Eye too; I really admire what Steve is doing with the magazine. I want to have time to read more SF. I want to write more SF criticism. I want to spend more time with my wife and kids. I want to have a life". The Fall 1992 issue of *Quantum* has columns by Michael Bishop on James Tiptree, Jr, David Langford and Darrell Schweitzer with articles by Jessica Amanda Salmonson, David Alexander Smith, Arthur Rapt on Alfred Bester, Anthony Trull on William S. Barington, Rand and Nancy Kress and Kathy Lindskoog on the Lewis hoax with an interview with Lawrence Watt-Evans. Copies of all issues are available at \$3 each (\$3.50 foreign) or 6 for \$12 (\$18 foreign) from Thrust Publications, 8217 Langport Terrace, Gaitersburg, MD 20877, USA. *Science Fiction Eye* 10 is also currently available and includes columns by Bruce Sterling, Richard Kadrey and

Paul DiFilippo, plus articles by Terry Bisson, Ernest Hogan, Dennis Kaelley, Charles Platt and John Shirley, together with an interview with David Wingrove. Subscriptions are three issues for £12 (\$20 overseas) from Science Fiction Eye, PO Box 18539, Asheville, NC 28814, USA.

Pulphouse has just closed submissions until September 1993 because their inventory is bulging. All submissions will get returned for a year or so, because they have 18 months' of inventory hanging. The good side of this is that when they re-open submissions, they'll be paying on contract instead of on delivery of galley. This doesn't affect their other magazines: *Report*, *Tomorrow SF* (an Analogue type magazine) and *Mystery Street* (which is about to be announced, but doesn't officially exist yet) are all reading.

Vokno is a Czech magazine, of which the 160 page current issue contains an interview with J G Ballard. The current editor, S M Blumfeld, has sent out a general request. They have no hard currency, but are hungry to know what exciting things are being published elsewhere, in and out of SF. He would like people to send him copies of innovative non-mainstream periodicals. Please write to Vokno, Bolzanova 7, 110 00 Praha 1, Czechoslovakia (tel: 42 2 22-47-53).

Science Fiction Age has now been published, though Scott Edelman incautiously advertised a Harlan Ellison piece on *Dangerous Visions* together with a list of the fifty most powerful people in SF, neither of which materialised in the magazine. Harlan's been ill and has also had trouble writing (those two probably are connected). The other piece will probably appear after several re-writes. Apparently 23,000 paid subscriptions were received prior to printing.

The Dargon Project is an electronic magazine printing stories written for a shared world anthology similar to (and inspired by) Robert Asprin's *Thieves' World* anthologies. It centres round a medieval-style duchy called Dargon in the far reaches of the Kingdom of Baranur on the world named Maklor, and as such contains stories with a fantasy fiction/sword and sorcery flavour. Simply because it is a shared world anthology, it requires a great deal of commitment from its writers and interested writers should first contact the editor for detailed instructions and current plotlines. It goes without saying that all new authors should have read absolutely everything relevant before joining the project. Details from: WHITE@DUVUM.BITNET (sorry, no postal address provided).

Spirits of Another Sort has four humorous ghost stories in the current issue, in the setting of Tompion College, written by Alan Lear. (A5, 40pp, £2.50 from Rosemary Pardoe, Flat 1 36 Hamilton Street, Hooles, Chester CH2 3HQ).

Grue Magazine 14 features "tales from the raw edge of horror" with fiction by Melanie Joy, Peter W Hill, D R McBride, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, H Andrew Lynch, David Starkey, W H Pugmire, G L Payne, Thomas Wilcox, Terrence White, John MacLay, Randy Chandler and T Winter Damon with twelve poems and copious illustrations by, among others, David Conover, Harry O Morris and Jeffrey Osier. (A5, 100pp, £2.75 or £10 for 4 issue sub, edited by Peggy Nadravac but available from the NSFA, c/o Chris Reed, PO Box 625, Sheffield S1 3GY).

Vollmond 3 has stories by D F Lewis, Brian Lumley, Robert M Price, Steve Snedey, Steve Tanner and Andy Dodd with magazine reviews, articles on Machan and overcast and a RPG scenario. The contents are mainly weird fiction, macabre and horror with illustrations from Russel Morgan, Dallas C Goffin, Alan Hunter and Jeffrey Salmon among others. (A5, 72pp, £1.85 or £7 for 4 issues from Andre Paine, 12 Woodcrest Road, Purley, Surrey CR8 4JB).

Peeping Tom 7, publishes horror, dark fantasy and SF with a horror slant and the current issue has stories by Stephen Gallagher, G F O'Sullivan, Elena Cherry, Conrad Williams, Lindsay Quicke, Tracy Fletcher & Tina Hughes, Sean Friend (who drew the cover illustration for *Matrix 101*), Dallas Goffin, Derek Fox, J M Summers and Richard Coady, with artwork by Philip Rowlands, Dallas Goffin, Alfred Klosterman and Claire Herschell. (A5, 48p, £1.80 or £6.75 for 4 issues from David Bell, Yew Tree House, 15 Nottingham Road, Ashby de la Zouche, Leics. LE65 1DJ).

Exuberance 5, has artwork from Russell Morgan, Jason Hurst, Roger Morgan, Dreyfus and Philip Rowlands, with an interview with Grant Morrison, an article on Japanese comics and stories by A J Cox, Peter Reveley, Graham Andrews, P J L Hinder, Steve Savile, David Hopkins and John Duffield. (A4, 72pp, £1.95 or £7 with 4 issues from Jason Smith, 34 Croft Close, Chipperfield, Herts WD4 9PA).

Sound covers poetry and short stories with a focus on music and is interested in contributions on all of these plus artwork. Details from Sound, PO Box 31104, Omaha, NE 68132, USA.

The Cleveland Review is not exclusively SF, it does concentrate rather on poetry, but editor Luigi-Bob Drake is keen to be in contact with potential contributors. Details and back copies available from Burning Press, PO Box 585, Lakewood, OH 44107, USA. Typical reviews from it include:

Central Park (Box 1446, New York, NY 10023, USA; 344 pp \$9). Their 10th anniversary issue, this deserves to be spread out on your coffee table if you have one. Book sized, perfect bound, dense with material that deserves that kind of permanence. The poetry mostly L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E influenced (or post-modern), that means anything. Essays on Chris Columbus and genocide, "disappeared" persons in Chile, Salmon Rushdie, several pieces on the Gulf War including one by Noam Chomsky. Serious people taking their work seriously, and working to knowledge it.

Generic Culture prints materials about popular culture, conspiracies and more. The next issue is being prepared right now (a circulation of 450 copies) so please send articles to Generic Culture at ASUC Store Box #228, Bancroft and Telegraph, Berkeley, CA 94720-1111, USA.

Robot Olympics

The Second International Robot Games were held from September 24-25 in Glasgow, organised by The Turing Institute. The events were scheduled to include, but were not restricted to: micro-mouse, robot (robot ping-pong), microhiker (a microbot hill climber), robot-sumo, solarbot (a dragster race), two legged race, pole balancing, javelin, swimming, wall climbing, obstacle avoidance and vocal communication, more than two legged race, room cleaning, rope climbing (self starting), hurdles, high jump, nannouse, aerial robots (flying machines that pick and carry loads), innovation machines, robotart (aesthetics that move), synchronised dancing (robots that move in synchro and aesthetically).

Competitions

Traditional SF story, not longer than 4000 words to be sent, with entry form, to Oxford University Press. Dept: Aliens, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, USA. The judge will be Arthur C Clarke and first prize is publication in *Asimov's*. Only one entry per person.

Open Poetry: poems should be unpublished, in English, typed and not longer than 40 lines. Entry fee £2 per person: first prize £300. Entries to: Clive Eastwood, 8 Edward Street,

Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 0HP.

Writers of the Future: This regular competition, together with a parallel one for artists, is sponsored by the Scientology group. While perhaps contestants might like to be aware of the overall philosophy of the organisation, Dan Danehy-Oakes questions the blind mentality that avoids anything connected with Scientology as the ultimate evil. He writes:

"Is there any particular reason for avoiding them, other than Ooh, they took money from Scientology, they must be in Scientology's pocket? Give me a fucking break. Look at the list of judges for any given competition. Are you really convinced that, for example, Frederik Pohl, Gene Wolfe, Anne McCaffrey, Ramsey Campbell, Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle, Andre Norton *et al* are all Scientology dupes?"

"Or is it just the young innocent people who enter the contest that are dupes? Or perhaps entering the contest means you're a talentless dupe?"

"I can understand prejudice against Scientologists. (I think Scientology is the world's biggest con of shit, myself, though I've had no complaint against the people who follow it). They gave my co-author and myself more money for a short story than a lot of people get for their first novel."

"But I submit that if you're going to spread the brush that tars Scientologists wide enough to make this pre-judgement against those who win (or enter?) the contest, then in all fairness and consistency, you'll have to admit it's spread wide enough to require the same pre-judgement against those who administer and judge it — which is a major hunk of the talent of SF today."

"Go ahead. Tell me you don't read Gene Wolfe or Frederik Pohl."

Stamps

"Mission to Planet Earth" is the title of a major international effort tying the United Nations to other agencies to use space technology to improve our understanding of the global environment, to study Earth as a planet, as a complex, integrated, ecological system of dynamic balances. As part of this, three separate issues of stamps have been printed in the US, Switzerland and Austria with designs by Attila Heja incorporating satellites, planets, oceans, deserts and even a mouth talking to an ear across the design. Details from Postal Administration, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland (tel: 22-731-02-11 ext. 3811).

Television

There are two new SF tv series: *Space Vets* is for children, amusing animated fun with the occasional subliminal moral tone and a second series of *Science Fiction*, the Yorkshire TV series which takes a fictional form ("the story") and applies it to a factual area ("science"), with introductions from suitably qualified actors — Tom Baker, for example, the former *Dr Who*. The programmes aim to show how people perceive science and the stories have been chosen to "show the connections between science and the outside world — religion, politics and literature". Sadly and all too obviously, they have not been written by anyone who has the slightest idea of the philosophy of science. It's probable that the series will improve, because, frankly, it is difficult to see how it can't.

Tyne Tees Television is always pleased to receive the work of new writers and playwrights for appraisal. Send them to Tyne Tees Television, City Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 2AL and help increase the proportion of SF on tv.

Fan Funds

The TAFF nominations closed on October 1 and the runners are Birmingham based Tony Barry, Leeds based Michael Ashley, gamer and artist Ashley Watkins, and fanzine editor Abigail Frost. The winner will represent British and European fans and SF readers at the 1993 Worldcon in San Francisco. The GUFF fund will bring a deserving Australian to the 1993 Worldcon, the British National Easterncon and Eurocon in Jersey next Easter and nominations should be received by November 30, 1992. The European administrator is Eva Hauser, Na Cihadle 55, 160 00 Praha 6, Czechoslovakia and the Australian administrator is Roman Orszanski, PO Box 131, Marden, SA 5070, Australia.

Water as a Teaching Aid

Anglia Water has re-created the *Enterprise* spaceship in a simulated journey through the waste water treatment process. Passengers are "minisub" before being hurled up inside a bathroom cabinet. They are then taken on a flight round the bathroom before being flushed down a toilet. The spaceship then goes with warp speed through the main sewerage system and as the journey continues, the two pilots give an explanation of each stage. A close encounter with the treatment works' large rotating aerator blades is followed by a minor scrape with a concrete wall before the craft speeds safely to the final destination near a river outlet. Mike Turner, the public relations manager at Anglia Water said "It has been an incredible success. It gives a nice educational slant and that's what it's for". The *Enterprise* is now on tour, initially to Milton Keynes, then will return in 1993 for the region's major shows.

EMPIRE DREAMS

Kev McVeigh

It has been a tricky summer for the BSFA. Various staff changes have held up projects for a while, one quite serious. Fortunately, almost all of these have been resolved now. All that remains is to see how the revised mailings work in practice. I'm afraid this means that the mailing you are now reading is approximately two weeks late, and subsequent mailings will continue to be one or two weeks later than before. This phase shift enables us to ease several logistical problems whilst not actually missing a scheduled mailing. Thank you for your patience.

Some good news: firstly, Elizabeth Billinger is now fully in charge of the BSFA finances and is busy writing cheques. If we owed you money, you should soon be paid.

On the Council front, I have asked Iain M Banks to join the Council and he has agreed. His appointment will be ratified at the next AGM. Iain has been a member of the BSFA for several years, and is a popular figure at conventions as well as an acclaimed author of SF and mainstream literature. I am still hoping to attract other names to the Council and welcome any comments.

I am also pleased that the BSFA London meeting was a success this month. For those of you who missed it, Kim Stanley Robinson gave a fascinating talk of "SF and Post Modernism" before a long question session, and then signed books and chatted for the rest of the evening. Amongst those attending were John Clute, Paul Kinnard and many BSFA contributors in a crowd of about 30 people. October sees Sue Thomas as our guest, and hopefully a popular choice again in November. There will be no December meeting, but we are aiming for something special in January or February.

Finally, it's still not too late to tell Nicholas Mahoney about books you've enjoyed this year.

The BSFA award is important, please join in. For my part, to my earlier list I'd added: *Lost Futures* (Lisa Tuttle), *Course of the Heart* (John Harrison), *The Good Fairies of New York* (Martin Miller) and *Dhalgren* (Samuel Delany -- This last is remarkably a UK 1st edition after 17 years!) and four stories from *In Dreams: Goodgrass* by Ian R MacLeod; "Fat Tuesday" by Ian McDonald; "Honey I'm Home" by Lisa Tuttle and "Digital to Analogue" by Alastair Reynolds. Now it's your turn. See you all next time.

INFORMATION SERVICE:

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Phil Nichols

Science fiction as a genre or literary category may reach back to 1818 and Mary Shelley's creation of *Frankenstein*, but the label "science fiction" took another half-century or so to appear. Attempting to define SF can be fun if you're on your own -- or infuriating if you're in the company of someone else, as they're bound to have different ideas. Your definition of the genre probably says as much about you and your tastes as it does about the genre itself. The funny thing is that while we all have different ideas of what any definition should include or exclude, we all have some degree of affinity for the term "science fiction," or at least its commonest abbreviation: SF.

The first "SF" was "scientific fiction," the term used by Hugo Gernsback for the occasional story he would publish in his various magazines including *Science and Invention*. The August 1923 issue contained nothing but "scientific fiction". In a moment of genius, Gernsback later contracted these words down to the unpronounceable "scientifiction", a word which lasted through to his pioneering *Amazing Stories*.

The less cumbersome "science fiction" arose in the 1930s, and was picked up by John W Campbell Jr in *Amazing Stories*. Where it came from, I'm not absolutely sure, but it caught on and has remained with us to the present.

"Sci-fi" attributed to Forrest J Ackerman, and presumably derived by analogy with "hi-fi" was apparently intended as a serious replacement for "science fiction", but somewhere along the way its use diverged so that within the SF field it became derogatory, a way of putting down that book (or, more usually, film) you despise. Out in the big wide world, though, it became, from the 1960s onwards, the term used by journalists and broadcasters to identify our cherished genre. You could even tell who read SF and who didn't: those who didn't, but who nevertheless wanted to sound knowledgeable, called it sci-fi. Finally, to make the true fan's position absolutely clear, "sci-fi" took on the phonetic pronunciation "skiffy", a term of particular, contemptuous use when discussing the latest pitiful Hollywood "space adventure".

It was in the 1960s, too, that the words "science fiction" became embarrassing for some, and too restrictive for others. The most popular alternative, particularly among writers who had emerged from the SF field but didn't want to be constrained by it, became the virtually tautological "speculative fiction", coined by (I think) Robert A Heinlein.

The sixties and seventies also brought the field under academic scrutiny. One scrutineer was Robert Scholes, who -- presumably unhappy with its own phraseology -- gave SF a new name, but thoughtfully sought to preserve those cherished initial letters. He called it "structural fabulation".

I've stopped calling what I read "science fiction", because what I read doesn't conform to what most people understand by the term. I don't

know what I should call it, but I'm happy with just those two letters: SF.

For those who don't know yet, and for new readers, the Information Service exists to answer questions on anything relating to SF. The service is free to BSFA members: all we ask is that you provide a stamped addressed envelope for a personal reply. Most questions can be answered (eventually) and all letters are usually acknowledged within 14 days. Please send your letters to: Phil Nichols, 57 Grange Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands B70 8PB.

If there is any aspect of SF you feel knowledgeable about, please make it known! Your Info Officer doesn't know everything himself, and he needs people to turn to when asked about obscure authors, etc. If you can help, please write to the above address, and I'll put your details on file.

THE MEDIA FILE

Mann and Machine is a new tv series State side set in the near future, when police duty is being augmented by robot patrolmen, though they aren't very sophisticated. Along comes Eve (original choice of name -- see also below for another Eve), the prototype for a new AI robot, and she's being field-tested as the partner for Detective Bobby Mann, who dislikes robots, but comes to like Eve. Captain Claghorn is Bobby and Eve's boss. In a typical episode ("Truth or Consequences") Eve learns a bit about the human condition while guarding a young girl and her mother, who's decided to testify against her accountant husband's mobster employers.

SKYWATCHING

Mark Ogier

It amazes me that in the minds of today's Hollywood producers, SF tends to mean one thing: violence. Name any popular SF movie in the last ten years, and I'll bet it will contain at least one incident where a person is either shot at, blown up, beaten up, or gobbled up. Of course, if there was a SF movie made without any such incidents, relying upon bloodless dramatic conflict, the chances are it wouldn't make any money.

However, violence alone does not a good film make, and Sky Movies and the Movie Channel have shown a few films in the last couple of months that illustrate just how true this is.

Take *The Salute of the Jugger*. This 1990 movie starring Rutger Hauer (Mr Guinness ad), and Joan Chen (Josie in *Twin Peaks*) has to be the biggest pile of "8" that it has been my unfortunate lot to suffer through since I started watching movies on satellite.

Set in a post-apocalyptic world (my, how original!) the film tells the story of a band of juggers. No, not some futuristic folk group, but a motley collection of vagrants who wander from village to village challenging teams in each to play *The Game*. This involves two teams trying to place a dog skull on a stick in the opposing team's home area. Doing this involves much wielding of heavy cudgels and chains, and usually the death (or at least severe maiming) of several players.

Joan Chen joins the Juggers when they pass through her village, and they set out on a quest to become eligible to play in *The League*, which is the ultimate aim of all who play *The Game*.

And that's about it, really. In between bouts of the bloody and pointless game, there are only one or two attempts at characterisation, but on the whole these are perfunctory and simply get in the way of the fighting. For those who like their violence unconstrained by such things as

plot, this is ideal fare. Anyone who believes that there is any future in SF cinema is advised to steer well clear.

A violent game is also the central theme of another Sky Movies offering, *Arena*. Produced by cheap'n'cheerful Empire pictures under Charles Band (he of *Trancers* fame) this movie is best described as *Rocky* meets *Star Wars*. A cast of unknowns is headed by Paul Satterfield as a human who wants to become the first humanoid in fifty years to earn the title of *Arena Champion*. The *Arena* is basically a giant boxing ring on a space station, where all manner of aliens slug it out for the honour of being hailed *Champ*.

This gives the make-up and special effects guys an excuse to come up with some truly bizarre creations that would not have looked out of place in a *Star Wars* cantina. Of course, some are better designed for fighting than others, and so a computerised handicap is imposed upon them. But even so, until our hero steps into the ring, humans have not been well represented for decades.

The sub-plot involves an evil alien who fixes all fights so that his 'mar' is the Champion, and of course he decides to fix our hero too.

It's all very pat and derivative, but I found it peculiarly enjoyable -- if only to see what weird creature the FX men were going to come up with next. Speaking of derivative, I suspect the producers of *Eve of Destruction* were fans of *The Terminator* who decided that it was time a woman had a go at being a rampaging humanoid robot.

The Eve of the title is Eve VIII, a battle robot built in the likeness of its creator (called Eve -- wow!), who is played by Dutch actress Renee Soutendijk in her big screen debut. Eve VIII is out on test when she falls foul of a bank robber with a shotgun (who soon realises the error of his ways) and promptly goes AWOL.

Her creator -- whose experience and memories have been programmed into the robot -- is called in to help Gregory Hines neutralise Eve before she blows up. You see, just to make sure she could not fall into enemy hands, she is fitted with a nuclear bomb device that could take out a large chunk of a city if it explodes.

Before the duo close in on their prey, Eve VIII has the chance to strike several violent blows for women. If you thought *Thelma and Louise* were anti-men, they were charmers compared to Eve VIII. Mind, it has to be said that the men in *Eve of Destruction* -- with the exception of the hero, of course -- are portrayed as misogynists of the highest calibre, and receive short shrift from the writers. There's one particularly nasty incident in the back room of a bar that made my eyes water.

In the end, our heroine scientist realises that her creation is doing things that the original Eve had once thought about or dreamed of, but would never have done because of her upbringing and because most of these are illegal. One of the less hidden of the scientist's thoughts was her hatred of having to give up her son every weekend to enable him to see his father. Eve VIII decides to collect the boy early, and the film becomes a fairly exciting chase to disable the robot before it self-destructs taking the boy and everyone else with it.

The ending is corny in the extreme right down to the clock counting down the seconds and the 'surprise' resurrection of a supposedly disabled robot -- but as a female response to the macho man image perpetuated by Arnie Schwarzenegger et al, I suppose it has a point.

UNIVERSAL SOLDIER I

(US-German, 1992, Roland Emmerich)
Ian Mundell

No-one films the Vietnamese war without some sort of political agenda. There have been revisionist and apologist films, films that see Nam as a sickening and vile land, and films that see it as the source of all American sicknesses ever since. *Universal Soldier* starts in 1969, with Private Luc Devereux (Jean-Claude Van Damme) confronting his psychotic Sergeant in the ruins of a Vietnamese village. Sarge (Dolph Lundgren) has slaughtered the rest of the platoon and is busy making a necklace out of selected GI ears.

They kill each other. Flash forward to 1994 — Luc and Sarge are lining up among the universal soldiers, a crack military force made up of reanimated units' from the past. Impassive, impervious to most kinds of damage, superhuman ... the whole thing works through a cocktail of drugs that speeds up their metabolism and keeps them amenable to commands. However, a situation in one of their missions triggers off the old memories and the two cut loose. Luc, who was close to the end of his tour of duty, wants only to go home, while Sarge takes up the good fight. The chase is on.

It is certainly possible to make a case for *Universal Soldier* being up front and honest about the war, that it is saying no matter how long ago it all happened there is no way to escape the horrors — they will come back, one way or another. The people in the armed forces now are the same who created that whole situation. This reading casts the two universal soldiers as victims, Luc yearning to return to his parents' Louisiana home, Sarge standing dazed in a supermarket, lecturing the locals on fifth columnism.

The Vietnam preamble dictates all this thinking, but try to ignore it for a while. Look at it this way. There is nothing strange about the impassivity of the universal soldiers — you can see the same look on the faces of the soldiers who mount a 24-hour guard over the tomb of the unknowns at Washington DC's Arlington cemetery, you'll get the same lack of response from any of the armed forces in public situations. But scratch a grunt and what do you find under that surface? The US media has been much vexed by that question in the light of reports that came back from female military personnel who had been in the Gulf war, and again during the Tailhook scandal (apparently female naval personnel were indecently assaulted by male ratings in a convention hotel, while senior officers failed to intervene). Look at it this way and *Universal Soldier* is blatantly apologist for the military culture. Scratch a grunt and what do you get? Psychotic Sarge and home-loving Luc. Who wins ...? You guessed, Luc.

This is all very well, but arguably the plot in this sort of film is primarily there to provide reasons for the two principals to beat hell out of each other — which is where *Universal Soldier* starts to rise above the 'straight to video' fare it might easily have been. In the same way that there is someone out of shot choreographing all the combat, the memory event that triggers off Luc and Sarge beautifully choreographs the whole film. The last external trauma before their deaths — a boy and girl Vietnamese kneeling in terror before them — it emerges out of the contemporary landscape driving them this way and that until the last confrontation. Similarly, the device behind the idea of the universal soldiers holds together, for instance with the raised metabolism comes the risk of over-heating, and Luc repeatedly has to seek out ice to cool down. Apart from a slight slip with instantaneous steroids (Effective immediately! Impress your friends! Breaks the ice at parties!) the whole thing seems to make sense and, by way of its terrific pace, is strangely engaging.

And although you don't have to buy the subtext, I'll leave you with this thought:

'Old sarge smiles ... "What the bloody fucking hell are civilians for anyway ..." — William S Burroughs.

UNIVERSAL SOLDIER II

Joseph Nicholas

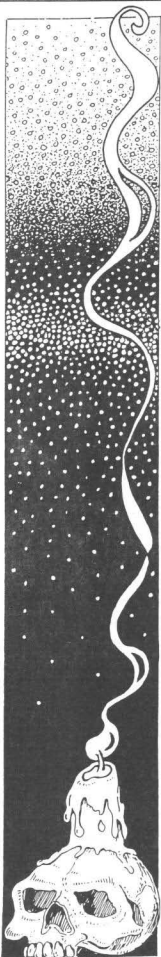
Ask someone to name a famous Belgian, and they'll probably get no further than Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot. But there are others (real rather than fictitious): Adolphe Sax, inventor of the saxophone, painter Rene Magritte; and, going completely downmarket, bodybuilder-cum-actor Jean-Claude van Damme.

Van Damme is a sort of sub-Schwarzenegger figure, but without the will and intelligence; and *Universal Soldier* is the sort of sub-Schwarzenegger film you have when the genuine article is absent from the summer release schedules. As though to make up for this, *Universal Soldier* also stars that other sub-Schwarzenegger figure, Norwegian bodybuilder-cum-actor Dolph Lundgren. But the two are no substitute for the genuine article; although the film is moderately engaging, the blunt fact is that with more thought — and more effort expended on the script — it could have been a lot better.

In fact (unless I blinked), there's no scriptwriter credit at all, and the possibility that it was the product of diverse hands may be responsible for the inconsistencies with which the plot abounds. The 'UniSols' are first encountered resolving a hostage crisis at the Hoover Dam, in full view of TV news cameras; and their colonel informs the reporters that this is their third successful action. Later, when things start going wrong and their chief scientist argues that murder of innocent bystanders should not be covered up, the colonel informs him that the UniSol project is secret even from the Pentagon. Are we supposed to believe that the Pentagon never watches TV? Later, following the destruction of a motel by automatic weapons fire and the blowing up of a service station, the TV news circulates a story attributing these and the associated killings to a female reporter who's on the run with Van Damme — which suggests a cover-up initiated at a much higher level than the UniSol colonel in his cryogenic truck. But then you recall that the director of this bif-bang-pow extravaganza is the same Roland Emmerich who was previously responsible for the equally inconsistent *Moon 44*...

These inconsistencies are doubly disappointing because of the film's intriguing premise: that soldiers who are killed in action can be frozen, experimented on, and brought back to life to serve as indestructible go-anywhere, do-anything killing machines. One might expect that this would entail lots of cyborging and scientific doubletalk; but the cyborging consists of a wrist monitor and a detachable headset, and we get exactly two lines of doubletalk — "He's overloading on muscle enhancers" and "We discovered that by hyperaccelerating the bodies we could restore them to life". And of course the plot is obvious: that, *Robocop*-like, the dead soldiers will start to rediscover who they are, and escape from their control. To the film's credit, it gets this bit over with early, so that the audience needn't spend time watching the characters rediscover what it already knows; but the debit side is that the rest of the film is little more than an extended chase sequence.

The film culminates in a showdown between Lundgren and van Damme, with much flexing of muscles and flying through the air to deliver karate kicks to the chin — which is, of course, exactly what they were hired for. Given that neither of them can act worth a damn and has about as much emotional range as a soggy paper bag, it's difficult to see what else they could do, never mind what they can do next. Do these people really have fans?



©Shep

THERE'S TROUBLE AT T'MILL: A REVIEW OF ALIEN³ (1992, David Fincher) Ian Mundell

There's a terrible moment in the middle of *Alien³*, a moment when the ground falls away from beneath your feet, when a wave of foreboding and vertigo sweeps all before it. We are on a desolate planet, in a prison that is half monastery, half industrial lead works, with the certain knowledge that somewhere in the labyrinthine passages lurks an Alien. In the space of ninety seconds, it has despatched the two most developed characters in the film — one of the inmates of the prison turns to Ripley and says: "... but how are we going to kill it?"

Noooooooo! Hide and seek! Stalk and slash! Dungeons and Dragons! The moment is truly awful ... from what was shaping up to be a respectable SF yarn, we are plunged into the 'Ripley and the slowly disposables' scenario that was the line of least resistance narrowly avoided by *Alien* (1979, Ridley Scott) and *Aliens* (1986, James Cameron). This is just the biggest of the holes that *Alien³* inherits from a particularly tortured production history. Eight screen writers were involved, starting in 1989 with William Gibson, and three directors, although everything on the screen is apparently down to Fincher, either off his own back or at the insistence of the studio. Anyway, it goes like this.

Florina (Fury) 161 was an industrial prison planet, until the powers that be decided to close it. Twenty-five of the inmates, all hard cases who had "found God at the end of the Universe", petitioned to stay, and were left with two 'keepers' (Brian Glover is the gaoler) and a medic. A sort of zen bleakness reigns until an evacuation pod from the ship that was carrying Ripley *et al* away from the last lot of carnage splashes down. Ripley, the only survivor, is taken to the prison, while the Alien hitches a ride in a passing dog. Xenobiology follows its course, and the beastie that emerges is a strange canine version of the Alien we know and love. Indeed, the posters were taking the piss when they said "the bitch is back".

The prison inmates, many apparently with roots in the North of England, begin to disappear. The gloom closes in and the film starts to look like a remake of *The Name of the Rose*, all ugly monks and mysterious death. Then comes the vertiginous hole, and things change direction. Without wanting to give the game away (well, someone out there may not guess ahead of time), it is fair to say that the twist will send all those feminist-Freudian academics who had constructed theories about *Alien* and *Aliens* running for their typewriters ... or straight into psychoanalysis.

Fincher has taken a lot of flack for the way he handled the film, a certain amount of it no doubt down to jealousies over his roots (his most notable previous works are some videos for Madonna) and the \$50 million he was able to spend on this, his first feature. He has his faults, most irritatingly an inability to get out of close-ups, and the film does not have the visual logic of the Hollywood SF movie. Yet he creates the right feeling of claustrophobia, leaning on the setting as much as the alien, and there is no betrayal in the ending.

For all *Alien³*'s faults, there is something irresistible about a remote planet peopled by psychotic millenarian Yorkshiresmen ("There's a very good chance that this sinful bastard is lying", intones Glover) pitting their wits against an alien super-whippet. Criticised by some as looking like an RSC production that time forgot, it is better to savour *Alien³*, marvel at how ever got made in the first place, and know that we shall never see its like again.



@Shep.

ANIME Geoff Cowie

August release: *Project A-Ko* (Katsushito Nishijiru, Island World Communications Manga Video MANV 1002 86 mins, PALM, cert 15 English dialogue £12.99)

I previewed this Japanese animated film in the last issue. The movie is presented in the original widescreen format (with black bands at the top and bottom of the TV picture) and the video quality is good. The songs, as in the Japanese version, are in English. This was a Japanese film about Japanese schoolgirls, and the dialogue, though competently dubbed, robs the movie of much of its intimately Japanese character. American voices don't sound right.

The translation used is necessarily equivalent rather than exact: in Japanese, names are given a suffix denoting the status and relationship of the speakers, so that when C-ko addresses A-ko as A-ko-chan, we know that they are close friends from kindergarten. Likewise, Miss Ayumi is really Ayumi-Sensei or 'honoured teacher, Ayumi'. The booze that the space-captain drinks is, of course, sake. And so on. Of course, you won't have seen the original and you may wonder why I quibble. A recommended buy in any version.

September release: *Dominion Part 2 (Acts III and IV)* (Masamune Shirow, Island World Communications Manga Video MANV 1004, 67 mins, PALM, cert 15, English dialogue £12.99)

This is the conclusion to Part I which was reviewed in *Matrix 101*. In the concluding episodes of this Japanese animated video series the ecological background continues. In Act III, Buaku steals an overpriced painting of himself with the assistance of the sexy Puma Twins. Meanwhile at Tank Police headquarters 'Showtime' girl recruit Leona, in bunny costume, helps live knives at a drug dealer strapped to a spinning board with a live hand grenade in his mouth. The audience places bets on how many seconds it will take him to spit out the grenade. The Tank Police attend the burglary, but Leona is captured by Buaku. In the final episode, the 'green' theme recurs and we find (as is typical of Anime) that some of the bad guys were less bad than we thought. Not quite politically correct, but great fun. The artwork in *Dominion* is a treat, especially the title sequences, and the use of dubbing is quite acceptable this time. Recommended.

October releases (Oct 5): Should be in shops by the time you read this. *Odin* (Island World Communications Manga Video, MANV 1005, 93 mins, PALM, English dialogue, £12.99)

In this Japanese animated film, a newly commissioned spaceship sets out on its first mission and hears a SOS message from the spaceship Jupiter.

Venus Wars (Island World Communications Manga Video, MANV 1006, 104 mins, PALM, English dialogue, £12.99)

This is set on a future terraformed Venus and follows the adventures of an investigative female reporter and a young soldier. There are battle scenes and chase scenes but the highlight of the movie is a race between two armed military motorised bicycles down a ravine. This isn't a particularly well-known Anime film but I saw it some months ago and found it very watchable. In style the animation is quite similar to live-action. Worth buying.

Certification of these two movies was unconfirmed at the time of going to press, but will probably be '15'.

Island World have made it clear that they don't think that subtitled releases are economically viable for them, and consequently all their UK

releases will be dubbed. Their marketing seems to be aimed at the youth market. Dubbed versions specially made for Island World Manga Video will be released in the USA by American distributors. What effect this will have on the pricing and availability of US subtitled anime remains to be seen.

Island World are reportedly negotiating for the rights to *Crying Freeman*, *Midnight Eye Gogo*, *Doomed Megapolis*, *Laputa*, *Nausicaa* (2 hour version), *My Neighbour Totoro*, *Kiki's Delivery Service*, *3x3 Eyes*, *Area 88*, *Lum-Beautiful Dreamer*, *Tomestone for Fireflies*, *Vampire Hunter D*, *Nadia* (movie), *Anime*, *Dirty Pair*, *Gundam* and *City Hunter*. This list is by no means anime classics and several other excellent movies, but is only a minute fraction of the Anime potentially available.

A lot more Anime has been given licensed release in the USA recently, so if you have some disposable income, you can rent or buy a PALMNTSC dual standard VCR, order the tapes from the USA or a few specialist UK outlets and watch them now. *Dominion Acts I-IV*, *Bubblegum Crisis I-VIII*, *Bubblegum Crash II*, *Project A-Ko I*, *Madox-01*, *Riding Bear*, *Gunbuster*, *Dango*, *Applesseed*, *Black Magic M-66*, *Robot Carnival*, *Urusei Yatsura* and other titles are all available for about 35 dollars. Most are subtitled rather than dubbed. If you want to watch subtitled versions you might be wise to buy now while they are still available and the dollar is weak. Laser discs are promised soon. In Japan, much recent Anime is available on laser disk (*rasa-disku*). A suitable player costs £499.

Contact addresses for anime enthusiasts:

Anime UK newsletter -- Helen McCarthy, 147 Francis Road, London E10 6NT

Anime Kyo UK (club): c/o Carlo Bernhardt, 4 St Peter's Street, Syston LE7 8HJ, Leicestershire.

FIRE AND HEMLOCK COSTS OF FANZINES

With a fanzine of a reasonable size, it becomes cumbersome to sneak round to the works photocopy and often far too noticeable. The best way of spreading costs might simply be to bite the bullet and go for a large print run. Seth I Robson represents one end of the spectrum, writing:

"In general, breaking up one's production into smaller jobs is less economical, whether you use offset printing or photocopying. And if you're going to do a large run (1000+ issues), you actually will save money by going to offset. Yes, it's a lot more complicated when you get to that stage (you really have to start worrying about things like halftone screens and so forth), but you can really get good results if you make sure things are right.

"The first two issues of my zine were straight out of the copier, and we lost a little money. Both were runs of 500 each, and we got rid of all of them. Our third issue, which should be ready in a couple of months, will be offset, 80+ pages, probably one colour inside pages and a two colour cover".

The other extreme is covered by Scott H Redd who publishes a fanzine with his friend. He writes:

"*Ten Fingers* is composed and 'mass' produced completely on a Xerox machine. I will occasionally 'scan' some of the paste-up sheets and clip art on the machine where I work, but when it comes time to copy off our run, we head to Winkos, where we must pay about one dollar a copy.

"*Ten Fingers* is very new, so initially we made only 100 copies. Any time we need more, we run down and run them off. Since our run is so low, it's not that much of a setback to run a few more off here and there.

"When it comes to the zine, our main concern is to have fun, enjoy the contacts that I make from trading zines, letters, info, and assorted stuff. It seems to me that making money is the last thing that anyone considering running a zine should think about."

(*Ten Fingers* is available from PO Box 18462, Huntsville, AL 35803/8462, USA).

FANZINES FLOATING ON AN EDITORIAL DESK

Black Hole #1 (c/o Leeds University Union, PO Box 157, Leeds). Some confusion about editors here, the official one is Adrian Rankin, credited on the back cover for "help and advice", while the actual editorial is done by ex-student ex-NSSF secretary, Andrew A. Adams. The confusion continues inside with *Insider*, an eight page pullout of mostly half-understood fannish in-jokes and invented gossip, though the guide to surviving costs on a low budget is pretty good and the tips for doing your own fanzine are excellent, if somewhat sercon-bused.

Lagoon 3-D (Simon Unsworth, 28 Beckwith Crescent, Harrogate HG2 0BQ). It's on M.E. and spiritual healing and is absolutely fantastic. Subject to availability, it is also available for a letter of comment, fanzine in trade, the severed head of Cecil Parkinson, bottles of "Elarnol Marine" and, of course, Bendix Bittermints (which are extremely expensive).

Thingumbob #6 (Chuck Connors, Silidan House, Chesham Road, Wissett, Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0NF - Trade/Usual) There are elements of comics - a major ongoing serial, a 'comicle' and a skit - there's talk about TAFF, talk about fanzines in general, some definitely worrying information about bank accounts, talk about car theft, and that's before you get to the letters. Fun in many places, but you have to be quick to get most of the jokes. 50pp and an extra large staple.

Gross Encounters (Alan Dorey, 9 Haywards Farm Close, Verwood, Dorset BH31 6XW) Late again, thus demonstrating one disadvantage of working to a "official" timetable (so much easier to just publish when the urge strikes you), therefore most of the letters need explanatory afterwards. But up to date-ish with blank verse to celebrate the merger of *Vector* and *Paperback Interns* which, judging from the metaphors does not strike Alan as a Good idea, this opinion reinforced by a blistering, if slightly misguided, attack on *Vector*.

Radio Free Thulacandra (Marty Helgeson, 11 Lawrence Avenue, Malverne, NY 11565-1408, USA Internet: mnhoc@curmyn.cuny.edu; Bnet: mnhoc@curmynv). The only reason this one's not late is because of a nifty bit of rescheduling: and it's packed with comments and discussion on Christian SF (try Jamethon Black as an evangelical SF hero) and the weakness of horror fiction (basically that neither author nor reader have any belief in the rituals needed to defeat the evil or their underpinnings, and anyway, the monster has to be kept alive for the sequel).



CREAM OF BRAIN SOUP Chuck Connors

"The living dead insist it's the latest twist" and well they may do, but despite all the declarations that the fanzine is dead, your humble editor has tasked me to dispute such claims. I should point out that SF fanzines are not my prime stamping ground but she who must be obeyed felt that an outside view could well be enough to get some of you into participating. The availability of these mags are marked as Trade/Usual where no price is given. This means you write and ask for an initial copy (slip some stamps in to help cover postage if you feel ill), or you trade with your own mag. After the initial contact has been made, then it is up to you to reply with a letter of comment saying what you thought of the mag's contents, any comments/arguments you want to get involved with, or tell the publishers to remove you from their mailing list -- these mags are distributed for free just so long as you remain active. Must be the only mag market where the readership really does have control of the product! So, in no particular order:

Sercon Popcult Litcrit Fanmag #1 (Garth Spencer, PO Box 15335, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6B 5B1 -- Trade/Usual) Nice little A-sized zine, well written, well edited, seems interested and knowledgeable over Canadian SF fandom's history. He also talks about moving to Vancouver, troubles with conventions, and his plans for the future. Nice writing style, but the artwork is awful. Thankfully there isn't too much of it. This reminds me a lot of a couple of pen-friend mags around at the moment, though it is really Garth getting back into regular fanmag publishing again.

Werewolf #4 - Spring 1992 (Wolf Head Press, PO Box 77, Sunderland, UK) T and Wear -- 50p in stamps or a couple of US\$. Ever wondered what happens to all the silly bits of news and off-centre stuff that the BBC can't make any misery of and that Nerds At Ten close their act with? Well, Bayan Howl gets the clippings, and melds them into something that is informative and curious. The man gets around, including Roman Re-enactments where they sacrifice fish to the god Neptune. There's also information on biscuits that come in the shape of one of the hillside chalk carvings. Is nothing sacred? Fun and colourful.

Stun Gunn #15 (Ian Gunn, PO Box 567, Blackburn 3130, Victoria, Australia Trade/Usual) I think this is more a humour mag (anyone remember *Inside Joke* from New York?), this issue dealing with films both real and spoof (and a wicked send-up of *Art House* movies at their worst *My Father: Portrait Of A Fascist Bastard*). Ian also points out that the number '23' seems to be controlling peoples' lives. This has a lot of life and excitement in it and hopefully it was as fun to put together as it was to read -- and you don't need a cash course in obscurities to get the jokes in this.

The Reluctant Famulus #22 (Tom Sadler, 422 West Maple Avenue, Adrian, Michigan 49221, USA -- Trade/Usual) Smart layout, coloured semi-card covers and good printing. I get the impression that this has been through some changes of late, but there seems to be an slant towards the historical or nostalgia side of SF fandom. Tom also talks about seeing a "spirit of Fandom" which makes me think Tom should lay off whatever brand of mushrooms he's trying for breakfast. It has survived 3 years and seems to have developed its own niche and readership. Sedate and nostalgic.

Flickers 'n' Frames #16 (John Peters, 299 Southway Drive, Southway, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 8GN -- £1.50 single issue £5.50 4-issue sub) Ah, more like it, familiar-ish ground. John's productions have been gaining in quality and page count (hence the price) and apart from a rare flaky photo reduction of a video or film

advert he has the quality side down pat. Very diverse news and reviews mag, with a possible bias towards Horror as opposed to SF. Now has an American contact and it may be that John will have to increase his publication schedule in order to keep the stuff hot and in date. Nice mag, excellent casual style of writing.

The Light Shot #4 (Rhodi James, 25 Wycliffe Road, Cambridge, CB1 3JD - Trade/Usual) My first impression of this was that it was produced as a sort of school newspaper - seems full of dodgy poetry and people with names like Zander Nyrood - but there are some sensible reviews, some comments on Fourplay by a 'Martin GK' (apparently this was a singing convention as opposed to a mis-spelt form of bedroom fun), a piece on scene styling in SF novels, and a large collection of letters which helped sort a few things out in my mind. Informative, more of the fun, but perhaps a little pedestrian in presentation.

Nightfall #4 (Nightfall Press, 18 Landsdowne Road, Crews, CW1 1JY, Cheshire - £1.75 each, £5.00 for 3-issue sub includes free copy of the one-shot, SHADOWPLAY - monies payable to Noel K. Hannan) AGAIN, more familiar ground, the 'InnanNighTfAlL' explosion comes on expanding, and going by the quality, quite rightly too! Graphics & Graphix abound, albeit more on the macabre-SF side than the usual BEM invasion. Excellent material from Kevin Cullen, the portfolio from Tom Simonon, and even Noel himself puts in a little bit of scripting in the form of *Sirius*. Paper quality good, printing excellent, art quality good as well. Not some Marvel or DC sub-standard clone. Well worth getting if you enjoy some of the newer styles and ideas in comics these days.

Stet #5 (Leah Zeldes Smith, 17 Kerry Lane, Wheeling, IL 60090, USA - Trade/Usual) Massive mag which has been duplicated in no less than four different coloured inks, making the layouts and covers attractive. 96+pp and a lot of activity in the letters section (almost 50% of the mag itself) which, if you were starting up your own mag, looks like an ideal place to mine for your initial mailing list. There's pieces on comics fandom as well as the state of fanzine fandom in the USA. Nice, cosmopolitan feel to it, but it can be prone to taking itself a little too seriously some of the time.

The Olaf Alternative #1 (Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 1LA - Trade/Usual or some unused stamps) Hand coloured covers? There's an awful lot of what I'd call 'sketch art' in this (as opposed to completely finished pieces) and the typefaces tend to jump about a bit, but there seems to be a chatty, informal (almost family-like) quality to the whole production. There are articles on *Hamington* Hall, some fiction, short mag reviews (capsule stuff), and a letters section that seems to talk about everything except SF - more interested in communication and conversation as opposed to critical.

Sailoromania #7 (Michael Ashley, 9 Blakeley House, Kilmore Grove, Woodside, Bradford, BD6 2RF - Trade/Usual) Most of this seems to be taken up with a convention report on Novacon 21, done in a rather over-the-top angst and nihilism style that I haven't seen since Julie Burchall met Jean Rook. Some of it strikes chords, true, but I can't help feeling that Mr. Ashley is playing with self pity rather than sorting himself out. Lot of talk in the letters section about a review of *The Enchanted Condition* (sounding like I've not read it but am curious as to why it should generate so much controversy) and someone called Nigel Richardson seems to write a lot about why he thinks fandom isn't worth writing about. Takes all sorts I suppose?

Bob7 #3 (Ian Sorenson, 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton, ML3 7HY, Scotland - Trade/Usual) One of the most funniest mags I've read for some time. Odd how we (as an audience) take

delight in the pain and discomfort of others, isn't it? Ian's writing style is wonderfully suited to dramatising medical matters, and I'll not spoil it for you by explaining further. Nice style, and a context-orientated letters section. Well worth getting.

Spent Brass #11 & 12 (Andy Hooper & Carrie Root, 4228 Francis Avenue N #103, Seattle, WA98103, USA - Trade/Usual) Very slimmed (2 sheets of paper each) and supposedly on a rapid deadline (though the last one I have is apparently dated 25th May) there are some interesting little pieces in the form of a convention report (Norwescon 14) - apparently the convention committee ignored one of the invited guests - and Carrie talking about a party given in honour of a grandchild (not her own) named Amber Peyote Hackney. As Carrie says "that's no worse than many names we foisted on kids in the 70's, and it sounds better than 'Moon Unit' or 'Sunshine.'" More a personal mag than anything else, with a nice relaxed feel to it.

So there you have it. Hopefully they are of a varied enough nature to appeal to some of your interests, mainly as they range from the Media side (pickers 'n' frames) though the fanfannish (*Bob7*, *Sailoromania*) out to the graphics side of things (*Nightfall*, *Shadowplay*).

Personally I have enjoyed them all for their various aspects, but what does surprise me a lot is the lack of much home-grown productions. Maybe I was sent a bunch at a slump in the market? It really is easy to publish your own fanzine, especially in these days of the photocopier, and I'm surprised that a lot more of the membership aren't putting out their own mags so as to give themselves a much wider forum for their views than *Mutrix* could ever give them. The least you can do is support these people, either by subscription or by letter writing, if only to see what it is you are missing.

THE US FANZINE SCENE

Alexander R Slate

Hello again from the colonies. Last time, I mentioned Leah Zeldes Smith in relation to her comic book fanzine, *Stet*. Well, Leah, and her husband Dick Smith (Leah edits, Dick publishes), have their own fanzine, *Stet*. *Stet* is a fanfannish fanzine. That means there's nothing about SF in it. Instead, it is about fandom, the people, the conventions, the fanzines, and anything about the private life of fans. For instance, the first couple of issues dealt with the troubles of Leah and Dick with a house they recently bought.

So, what makes this a fun fanzine to read? The people involved. Fandom is, in many respects, an extended family. Oh, sure, we squabble, but so do families. But what was nice was that a couple of months ago, I was able to call Dick and Leah up with a question, this after having met them only once in person (at Chiccon in 1991).

The latest issue, #5, was a good one. The editorial 'No Promises' talks about fanzine production. *Stet* is a mimeographed zine, but Leah is not a mimeo or ditto snob that insists that a fanzine has to be produced this way to be fanfannish. 'No Promises' also talks about the impact of technology and invention on our everyday lives.

Other articles deal with the fandom of old, and comic fandom (and its parallels - or lack thereof - to SF fandom). There is also a burgeoning letter column.

As previously mentioned, this issue is mimeographed with various coloured ink (black primarily, other colours such as red, blue and gold are used for artistic effect) on light blue paper. Because of the mimeo, the type isn't as crisp and clear as it might be, but it is very readable. Interspersed

nicely with some very good art. There might be a few changes I would make to this zine, but certainly not many, and nothing very major.

Stet (edited by Leah Zeldes Smith, 17 Kerry Lane, Wheeling, IL 60090-6415, USA, Tel: (708) 537-1306. Internet: leah@smith.chi.il.us. Available by editorial whim (aided by the usual), also all-for-all trade. One time sample \$2).

I read *File 770*, for a totally different reason. I'm not as connected to the net of fandom as I'd like to be, and my personal life sometimes isolates me from what's going on. *File 770* (now on issue 93) is the source for news in the SF and fanfannish world. It's not always just news, sometimes there are also convention reviews. It's well written so it's interesting, but it's not a wide ranging fanzine. It sticks to its purpose well.

File 770 (edited by Mike Glyer, 5828 Woodman Ave #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401, USA. Available for news item submission, art, arranged trade, or \$8 for 5 issues (surface mail overseas). Add \$2.50 per issue for air mail).

Here's something else that's quite a bit different. Don-o-saur is a fanzine that's no longer available. It was the perzine of Don Thompson, a long time and well respected fan in Denver. Each issue was a single topic issue. Mostly philosophical in nature (though not wholly), it covered a wide range of topics, an example being the nature of fear and horror, and how different media of today and the past handled them. There were inputs from a variety of different people. It was an excellent zine, cut short by Don's death of cancer shortly after the *Workdon* at the Hague in 1990.

Now for our second lesson in fan zine terminology. Fandom and fanzines are full of acronyms. These can be confusing even to someone who's been in the scene for a while. Our first offering this time round is 'WAW'. This stands for 'We also heard from'; it's the clue term for folks who have sent in letters and articles not reprinted in the issue at hand.

The next two terms are complementary, 'FIJAGH' and 'FIWAWL'. These stand for 'Fandom is just a goddam hobby' and 'Fandom is a way of life'. These two are different ways of approaching fandom, and the two are fairly straightforward from their expansions. Of course, these are only the extreme ways to deal with fandom - take sort of a middle course myself. Until next time...

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION AWARDS

Nicholas Mahoney

It all started in the year I was born, so I don't know much about the early times other than what is set out below. According to my source of information, during the first incarnation of the award, it was actually called the British Fantasy Award and given initially to a writer rather than a book.

1966 John Brunner

1967 *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* Philip K Dick

* Special Award to Michael Moorcock

No awards were given for either 1968 or 1969. In addition to this, Michael Moorcock never got his original trophy back after the then award administrator took it away for engraving. A new trophy was awarded at the launch of the new *New Worlds*.

The second incarnation of the award proved more durable. Sketchy reports suggest that eligibility rules were not wholly consistent, but

British authorship and British publication were a common factor.

1970 *Stand on Zanzibar* John Brunner

1971 *The Jagged Orbit* John Brunner

1972 *The Moment of Eclipse* Brian Aldiss
(Unlike the others, this is a collection of stories, not a novel.)

1973 *Rendezvous with Rama* Arthur C Clarke
* *Billion Year Spree* Brian Aldiss (special award)

1975 *Inverted World* Christopher Priest

1976 *Orbitsville* Bob Shaw

1977 *Brontomek!* Michael Coney
* *Pictorial History of SF* David Kyle (special award)

1978 *The Jonah Kit* Ian Watson

1979 No Award

There was obviously some sort of interregnum at this point, probably something to do with the palace revolution if my chronology doesn't desert me — this is way before my time. Certainly, from 1980 onwards, there was a complete restructuring of the awards. So says my source of information and I've no reason to doubt it, since it is even more before my time.

There was, at this point, a growth in the number of awards given. In addition to the existing novel award, they were for short fiction, media presentation and Artist. Also the requirement of British authorship was dropped.

1980 Novel *The Unlimited Dream* Company J G Ballard. Short Fiction "Palely Loitering" Christopher Priest. Media *The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (record). Artist Jim Burns

1981 Novel *Timespace* Greg Benford. Short Fiction "The Brave Little Toaster" Thomas M Disch. Media *The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (2nd radio season). Artist Peter Jones.

1982 Novel *The Shadow of the Torturer* Gene Wolfe. Short Fiction "Mythago Wood" Robert Holdstock. Media *Time Bandits* (film). Artist Bruce Pennington.

1983 Novel *Helliconia Spring* Brian Aldiss. Short Fiction "Kitemaster" Keith Roberts. Media *Bladerunner* (film). Artist Tim White.

1984 Novel *Tik-Tok John Sladek*. Short Fiction "After Images" Malcolm Edwards. Media *Android*. Artist Bruce Pennington.

1985 Novel *Mythago Wood* R Holdstock. Short Fiction "The Undiscovered Country" Geoff Ryman. Media *Company of Wolves*. Artist Jim Burns.

1986 Novel *Helliconia Winter* Brian Aldiss. Short Fiction "Cube Root" D Langford. Media *Brazil*. Artist Jim Burns.

From 1987 onwards, there was a slight change in the artwork category in that a specific piece of artwork was voted for rather than the artist himself.

1987 Novel *The Ragged Astronauts* Bob Shaw. Short Fiction "Kaeti and the Hangman" Keith Roberts. Media *Aliens*. Artwork "The Clockwork Girl" Keith Roberts.

1988 Novel *Grainger* Keith Roberts. Short Fiction "Love Sickness" Geoff Ryman. Media *Star Cops*. Artwork Cover, Worldcon Programme Book Jim Burns.

1989 Novel *Lavandys* Robert Holdstock. Short Fiction "Dark Night in Toyland" Bob Shaw. Media *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* Artwork Cover, *Lavandys* Alan Lee.

1990 Novel *Pyramids* T Pratchett. Short Fiction "In Translation" Lisa Tuttle. Media *Red Dwarf III*

(3rd tv series). Artwork Cover, *Other Edens III* Jim Burns.

1991 Novel *Take Back Plenty* Colin Greenland. Short Fiction "The Original Dr Shade" Kim Newman. Media *Twin Peaks*. Artwork Cover, *The Difference Engine* Ian Miller.

1992 Novel *The Fall of Hyperion* Dan Simmons. Short Fiction "Bad Timing" Molly Brown. Media *Terminator II: Judgement Day*. Artwork Cover, *Interzone* 48 Mark Harrison.

That makes a grand total of 65 awards. I would not be in the last surprised to hear about some others I never heard about, but David Garnett who compiled most of this list is pretty sure it is accurate.

Currently, I only get about one letter every three months concerning the award. With the inception of a suggestion stage in the award I'm hoping this will improve. In addition, you do get the odd phone call, the last of these was from some poor demented soul who thought the BSFA award was some kind of grant and wanted an application form.

DELIBERATIONS OF THE JURY

The informal jury is in operation. There are twelve members so far, but I'm looking to swell the numbers to around the 15-20 mark. The first newsletter has gone out with the first suggestions. We'll also be debating certain aspects of the award (should we have a name for the award, new categories special awards, etc.). Anyone who would like to take part, just drop me a line, even if you don't want to be a permanent member of the jury I can still include your views in the newsletter. The suggestions to date are as follows:

Novel: *Quarantine* Greg Egan. Short Fiction: "The Company of Storms" Kathie Koja (F&SF 6-92); "Dust" Greg Egan (F&SF 7-92); "Grownups" Ian R Macleod (Asim 6-92); "The Coming of Vertumnus" Ian Watson (Interzone 56); [Stephen Payne] Red Head Simon Ings; Red Mars Kim Stanley Robinson; *Burying the Shadow* Storm Constantine. [KV Bailey] *Chimeras* Christopher Evans; *Lost Futures* Lisa Tuttle; Was ... Geoff Ryman; *Hearts, Hands and Voices* Ian McDonald; [Graham Andrews] *Small Gods* Terry Pratchett; *Voyage to the Red Planet* Terry Bisson; *King of Morning*, *Queen of Day* Ian McDonald; [John D Owen] *Meridian Days* Eric Brown. [Jenny Glover] *Red Head Simon Ings*; Was ... Geoff Ryman; *Correspondence* Sue Thomas; *Lies and Flames* Jenny Jones; *Voyage to the Red Planet* Terry Bisson; *King of Morning*, *Queen of Day* Ian McDonald; *Red Mars* Kim Stanley Robinson. [Kevin McVeigh]

Short Fiction: "The Coming of Vertumnus" Ian Watson (Interzone 56); "Priest of Hands" Storm Constantine (Interzone 58); "Softly — As in an Evening Sunrise" (Interzone 62); [KV Bailey] "Next" Terry Bisson (F&SF 5-92); "Miss Ain't Behavin'" Jack Wainer (Far Point 4); "True Faves" Pat Cadigan (F&SF 4-92). [Kevin McVeigh]

Artwork: Interior Illustrations to "Blue Wolf" Deirdre Coughlin (Scheherazade 4); "The Red Marguerite" Brian Combe (Scheherazade 5); "The Sword of Mannwy" Paul Vernon (Scheherazade 5); "The Future of Science Fiction" Jim Porter (Nexus 2); "Nesting" Freddie Baer (Interzone 59); "She Devil" Freddie Baer (Interzone 63); "Priest of Hands" SMS (Interzone 58); "The Queen of the Burn Plain" Kevin Cullen (Interzone 55); *Works 7* Kevin Cullen. [KV Bailey]

What now?

Apart from the obvious i.e. try and lay your hands on any of this stuff you haven't seen,

there is the question of timing. The next *Matrix* will have a deadline such that it'll need your suggestions by about the beginning of November if they are going to be seen by the majority of the membership. The list of suggestions will make up the back of the award form which I'll have to do at about that time.

How do I get hold of this stuff?

This will mostly be obvious stuff, but we've got to face facts. This is the main problem for most of us.

1. If you can afford it, you can buy it. Most of us can't afford it, but some of the books listed will be affordable, like *Red Head* by Simon Ings which is available in B format at £4.99.
2. Borrow it from someone who can afford it.
3. Order it from the library.

NB This is my tried and trusted method. It works if your library is up to it, but they vary as you go around the country. My local library has introduced charges for this sort of thing, but it is still a lot cheaper than buying backlogs.

Write to me, Nicholas Mahoney, at 275 Lonsdale Avenue, Intake, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN2 6HJ.

WRITEBACK

The letters positively flooded in, to our delight, after last issue and so the letter column has been arranged by subject to keep the conversation going. Addresses at the end. If you've got anything to say — on SF or anything else, or if anything in this issue has caught your attention — please write to Jenny and Steve Glover 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP by the deadline:

NOVEMBER 15, 1992

BRITS IN SPACE

In *Matrix 101*, Julian Flood considered the useful side effects of a space programme and concluded "What use is a space programme? It's a diagnostic tool, it tells you if your society can hack it". Ken Lake responded with congratulations for this "impassioned outburst" but pointed out that Julian "overlooks the fact that both the old Soviet Union and the USA entered it solely for fear of the other". So what will happen with lack of competition? Which is a subject discussed by Joseph Nicholas below. Ken Lake further suggested a "paper" by Duncan Lunan and Gordon Dick for further reading. It's *Flight in non-Terrestrial Atmospheres*, or, The Hang-Glider's Guide to the Galaxy and is due to appear in *Analog* shortly.

Adrian Soames

While tending to agree with the underlying theme of Julian Flood's letter in the last issue, I think he's got his historical perspective a little distorted, particularly on Britain's booster programme. It is a matter of historical detail that it was Ted Heath, not Harold Wilson, who cancelled Black Arrow, although it was the Wilson administration that had committed British rocket development to ELOD, rather than maintaining a national programme. So much for "The White Heat of Technology".

The truth, elusive though it may be, is that British research into big rockets died over ten years earlier. Black Arrow was the grand-child of Blue Streak, and although that venerable projectile ended its days as a first-stage booster in French Guiana, propelling dual Franco-German orbiters, it began life as a weapon.

Blue Streak had been Britain's ICBM, intended to carry a H bomb 6400 kilometres, the ultimate article of Duncan Sandys's faith in robot missiles. When the military rationale for Blue Streak was removed, with defence cuts and the decision for Skylab and Polaris, the big rocket was dead in Britain, kept going only by the intravenous drip of civil science funding.

This is the difference between Britain and the erstwhile Superpowers. For all the pretence, neither Russia nor the USA ever drew a real distinction between a civil and a military space programme. The boosters which launched Vostok and Mercury, Soyuz and Gemini, began their careers as ICBMs. The Agena may have originated as a practice vehicle for the Apollo programme, but it's still in production as a chassis for spy satellites.

To convince a government, or a group of governments, to invest in a high-tech project, you have to ram home its strategic significance. Even if not blatantly military, they have to perceive a security aspect, be it military or commercial, or just to maintain an illusion of sovereign independence.

The best way to get the US back to the Moon, with Europe along for the ride, is not to offer them the carrot of co-operation, but the stick of competition. If they think the Chinese or Japanese will be there ahead of them, with unpleasant consequences for their future they'll get off the launch pad. Just tell the White House that a Mitsubishi mass-accelerator on Nearside is the 21st century's answer to the Berlin-Baghdad railway.

This sounds cynical and hawkish, but the reality is that people don't run unless they're in a race. So where would this leave Britain? Well, we have a precedent. When Wurttemberg looked set to be absorbed without trace into Bismarck's unified Germany, one Schwabian soldier came up with an idea to buy his homeland's independence.

His name was Zepplin, and he believed that if he gave the new Empire command of the sky, then the Schwabians would be accorded their proper status in Germany. After much hardship and expenditure, and many failures, he succeeded.

Britain could do the same, with the technological lead of Hotol and Satan. History has proven that the Germans and the Americans are not the technological giants of modern industrial myth. We still have the entry fee, but we have to put our money where our mouth is.

Unpalatable though it may be, the only message a British government would understand is one that contains a strong element of the truth. A mid-21st century nation without an autonomous, if not totally independent, space-lifting capability, will be a sovereign state in name only, regardless of where its parliament sits.

A space programme is not a diagnostic tool, as Julian Flood says, but a weapon. A non-lethal one, hopefully, but still an instrument of power. Someone must decide whether a future Britain is to wield any of that power, or do we let the entire Earth become one giant Grenada.

Joseph Nicholas

One thing which has struck me about the resurgent debate in *Matrix* around the issues of spaceflight and space exploitation is the prevalence of arguments which appeal to the emotion rather than to the intellect; arguments about the nobility of the human species, the historic thrust of its civilising endeavour, the imaginative investment in the laboratory power of contemporary technology, and so forth. To a certain extent, these arguments have a crude philosophical base: whether the human species should venture into space because doing so would increase our understanding of ourselves

and our world. Viewed in those terms, the issue is not one that can ever be resolved, since to take one step would only generate pressure to take the next, and the next, to see what new depths of understanding we might achieve; and the argument over whether we should take the first step is one that can (and, on this latest showing, does) rage on forever.

But these arguments avoid the political and economic questions which, more than any philosophical considerations, will actually determine whether the human species does embark upon the large-scale (or even small-scale) "colonisation" of space. After all, the fact that something can be done does not mean that it automatically will be done; it will always be a matter of allocating scarce resources between competing priorities, and at this nexus questions of technological feasibility are generally relegated in favour of hard-nosed monetary concerns. At lower levels of expenditure, one can do all kinds of cost-benefit analyses to show the spending (say) £5 billion on a weather satellite would be more productive than spending the same amount on improved coastal defences, because the weather satellite would permit the monitoring of storm tracks and so minimise economic damage because the emergency services would be better prepared to cope with potential floods, whereas improved coastal defences are entirely passive and flooding measures and can't respond to unpredictable changes in storm patterns; but at the moment of decision it will be a question of whether the construction lobby is stronger than the space lobby, or vice versa, as to which of them gets the £5 billion. But when you jack the level of money involved up to £50 billion, or £500 billion, or more, the space lobby is likely to lose out completely.

The blunt truth which space lobbyists have to face — and in this group I include those BSFA members who are enthusiasts about spaceflight and space exploration — is that the space age is over because it costs too much. Weather satellites are one thing; but space habitats, moon stations, factories in orbit, missions to Mars, expeditions to mine the asteroids, and all the other activities traditionally associated with the "science fiction dream" of the conquest of space — now are they to be paid for? Where is the money to come from? Who is to make such investments? And so on. In my experience, space enthusiasts faced with such questions tend to fall back on a number of propositions. The existing NASA budget, as a proportion of US GDP, is small, and could be greatly increased; space projects should be internationalised, and their cost thus spread more widely; larger investments will be forthcoming in the future when sufficient returns have been realised on the existing ones. None of these propositions sustain closer scrutiny.

Firstly, any substantial increase in the existing NASA budget (ie an increase that would enable NASA to actually do something rather than keep current projects ticking over) would require massive reductions in the funding allocated to other US programmes, which is self-evidently beyond the bounds of political possibility. (Anyone seriously proposing that social security, medical care, or housing be eliminated to pay for a space station is probably already lost to sanity). Nor could such an increase be met via annual economic growth, since such growth would need to be in the region of 10, 15 or even 20% rates which (some of) the advanced industrial economies have not achieved since the immediate post-WWII period.

Secondly, international co-operation might have been feasible at a time when the international economy was still experiencing the long post-WWII boom that characterised economic activity in the fifties and sixties; but talk of it in the here and now ignores the very different conditions of the eighties and nineties. (Any argument that the eighties saw a similar boom would ignore the

fact that it was based on arbitrage, currency dealing and service industries, and created no real national wealth). One superpower has ceased to exist, another is struggling with the huge deficits left by Reaganite military profligacy and the S&L scandals, Europe is increasingly preoccupied with the costs and consequences of reunification, Japan is more interested in securing its Pacific hegemony against the "tiger" states of South East Asia, the suggestion that these nations might collaborate on a hugely expensive manned mission to Mars (when some of them are experiencing negative economic growth rates to boot!) is simply bonkers. Nor is the current recession a short-term interlude on an ever-upward path to greater prosperity; the likely failure of the GATT negotiations means that we stand on the brink of a full-scale trade war, NAFTA vs EEA vs ASEAN, which will drive the global economy from recession into depression and render recovery to anything like the boom years of the fifties and sixties impossible — and no recovery means no spaceflight.

That leaves private corporations to step in where governments can't, which seems to me to be the implication behind the claim that larger investments will be forthcoming in the future when sufficient returns have been realised on the existing ones. But this suggests, weirdly, that TNCs (the only private corporations which could afford such outlays) will be prepared to hand out money for the next twenty, thirty or forty years in the hope that something would eventually turn up to retroactively justify the investment. Yet no one — and certainly not TNCs concerned about the bottom line — makes investment decisions on any such basis; they want a guaranteed return in no more than ten and preferably no more than five years, or the investment is not made at all.

End of the "science fiction dream" in other words. But if space enthusiasts are serious about realising their dreams, then they have no option but to face these questions head on; and to explain clearly and precisely where and how the funding is to be generated, when, from whom — and why the rest of us should go along with their schemes. And that means something more coherent, and less romantic than the absurd proposal advanced by one space enthusiast, when confronted with these questions, that a single wealthy individual such as the Queen could "buy" a fleet of space shuttles and "donate" them to the human species!

Philip Muldowney

The idea of a space programme as some sort of national virility symbol, I find delightfully dotty. The phallic symbol of the spaceship takes on a new meaning. While Julian Flood's letter makes impassioned reading, it is perhaps slightly wide of the mark. The whole space programme has basically been an extension of the American industrial civil war of the post war era. Would the Americans have landed on the moon in 1969 if the Russians had not launched spunkin in 1957? The moon landing was a unique and great achievement, but it had more to do with an expression of the American empire at the height of its economic and military power, than with true space exploration. The moon landing was a generation ago, yet it proved a cul-de-sac. Most of the serious money has gone on the military aspects of space, with the scientific ones being largely PR ops. Basically it all comes down to money, and the exploration of space is hugely expensive. Hence it is only the defence budget that has been able to afford it. If only the billions wasted on star wars of the eighties could have gone into real exploration. The end of the cold war, and the direct threat of the USSR in space, has removed a lot of the *raison d'être* behind the space race, and NASA is finding it increasingly difficult to find money.

As for the argument over notional prowess and space achievement. The most economically successful countries of the post war era Japan, Germany, the Asian tigers, have had no rocketry of space plans until recently. The former parts of the USSR are economic basket cases, due significantly to their vast spending on the military. What price the moon if you cannot service the tractor to harvest your grain? The reasons for Britain's decline over the past century are many, but is the failure to have a big rocket one of them?

HOLES IN THE NET

The "Net" represents casual quick communication internationally (one of our more valuable piles of print-out is the almost minute by minute log of the "August coup", when people like Vadim Antonov kept communications lines open within the Soviet Union and with the outside world). Less Eerie-shattering, that was the way we heard about the victory of the Glasgow bid, the Hugos, the Prometheus awards and the Auroras (listed in Matrix 101). But there are several problems: like the intermittent nature of the service...

Dave Bell

To be honest, while there is something to be said for using the Net as a source for news, it just doesn't seem to be important in the UK, compared to the US or, apparently, France. I have heard some dramatic claims made for the use of the French Minitel system. According to reports, the French telephone system is replacing paper directories with dumb terminals. The end result is that everyone with a telephone will have a standard system, which they will have to know how to use. That is the key factor in creating the Net.

So, if Net-related material is being reported, rather than simple use of the Net as a communication medium, could we perhaps have a little more hard data about where to hook into the net time you log on. But these factors also make it wholly unsuited for a NetNews column, or even for the odd quote, really, since without immediacy, you are often left with very half-baked ideas that are a month or more out of date and without interactivity, you have no way to get back at people or ideas that hack you off.

Matthew Freestone

I think the attraction of the Net is its immediacy — reading it, you really are looking at thoughts poured straight from the head into the terminal, and its interactive nature — you submit an idea and it can be ripped apart fifty different ways by the next time you log on. But these factors also make it wholly unsuited for a NetNews column, or even for the odd quote, really, since without immediacy, you are often left with very half-baked ideas that are a month or more out of date and without interactivity, you have no way to get back at people or ideas that hack you off. I suppose I could summarise that by saying that Matrix doesn't come out fast enough to comment sensibly on the Net — though the Net could comment on Matrix, if there were enough BSFAns with Net access.

Yes, a large amount of net-traffic is pretty ephemeral, but there is gold in the dross. The problem lies in winnowing the information from the opinion. Paradoxically the local bulletin boards present more of a problem here: perhaps the analogy with "free sheets" is a valid one? In terms of accessibility, when most BSFA members have a phone, 60% (according to the 1990 Survey) have a computer and a modern costs about the same as a pair of hardbacks, the Net is definitely *there*. Towns as small as Fokestone support an SF-oriented bulletin board, though admittedly access to the commercial net is not yet available nationwide at local call (ca 80p/hour) rates. A future Matrix will have a longer article on getting onto the various

areas of the net, covering both hardware aspects and what the various services have to offer the SF fan. Just before leaving the subject for now, we'd be interested to hear from any BSFA members with net access about their experiences.

THE DARK FANTASTIC

[in a Halloween mood, here are some recommendations for Horror and Dark Fantasy. Chilly reading ...]

Matthew Freestone

I suppose the book that has left the biggest mark on me is Bradbury's *The Halloween Tree* since my dad read it to me when I was still quite a small child, and I think it probably provoked me to read more, and hence another SF fan was made. I haven't read the book for quite a long time now, so I don't know what I'd make of it now, though I still admire Bradbury's style enormously.

As for what the BSFA's attitude to the genre should be, I would treat supernatural horror as a branch of fantasy in the broad sense and as such I think it should get some attention, since it is a part of the broad spectrum of "fantastic" literature.

Pam Baddeley

Ramsey Campbell's *Incarinate* is one story I would put at the top of my list for its sheer brooding atmosphere which creeps up on the reader. It also, without being of the blood and guts school, contains one of the most chilling and truly horrific scenes when the little girl is swallowed up by the dark, partly because of her total isolation before this, due to her mother's inability to comprehend what is happening. There are also some very effective Campbell short stories, such as the story of the schoolgirl who uses black magic against a hated teacher and imbues life into paintings by other children which seal the teacher or the bathhouse dog which forces its way into a man's house and drives him to distraction until he kills it, then returns to haunt him.

Another memorable story is Stephen King's *Pet Sematary*, chiefly because it is such a downbeat, harrowing book with a particularly dark and depressing conclusion.

I'm not sure if the genre "fits in" with the BSFA remit, but it would be artificial to exclude it: apart from anything else, a lot of Horror/Dark Fantasy books draw on scientific advances as the trigger for horrifying events or else use alien invasion as a cause so it might be difficult to pigeonhole some books as one or the other. I'd prefer some coverage by the BSFA, even if it's relatively minor.

Peter Tennant

You ask if Horror and Dark Fantasy come within the BSFA's remit. For me, at least, the answer has to be a resounding "Yes". This is a matter of self-interest as, like many other members I suspect, I enjoy reading both, but I believe a strong case can be put forward to support this viewpoint.

Genre boundaries have always seemed highly arbitrary to me. Whether a book is classified as Science Fiction or Horror can depend on such diverse factors as editorial whim, marketing strategy, a writer's previous track record or even something as basic as the level of gore involved. It seems to me that the two genres have and always will be related, with the exchange of ideas and themes enriching both. *Frankenstein*, regarded as many as the first Science Fiction novel, but also a horror story, at least in Hollywood's version of events. Some people have made a strong case for Stephen King as a Science Fiction writer, given that

several of his books use genre themes (paranormal abilities in *The Dead Zone*, *Carrie* and *Firestarter*, aliens in *It* and *The Tommyknockers*, biological warfare in *The Stand*). Some modern writers, such as Dan Simmons or S. P. Somtow, have a high profile in both genres and there are few Science Fiction writers who haven't dropped a toe into the horror pool at some time and found its waters to their liking. Bradbury wrote *Dark Carnival*, George R. R. Martin penned *Fevre Dream*. And so on. The conjunctions and interactions between the two genres are endless.

What Science Fiction and Horror share is the sense of wonder, the fascination implied in the words "What if?" Sense of wonder in the bright light of day emerges as Science Fiction, but seen after dark it takes the form of Horror. We should keep ourselves receptive to both types of experience. As Thomas Disch says at the close of *Camp Concentration*: "Much that is terrible we do not know. Much that is beautiful we shall discover. Let's sail till we come to the edge".

Choosing a favourite horror story: that's a hard one. Clive Barker's early work springs to mind, written before he started to produce the doorstops for which he's now known. Tales like "Rawhead Rex" had a breath-taking narrative drive and ferocity; Stephen King's best short stories, collected in *Night Shift*, are remarkably appealing and far more subtle than this bestselling author is given credit for. Then there's Robert Aickman, whose chilling, surreal tales should be read by everyone interested in Dark Fantasy. I think, though, my favourite must be Joe R. Lansdale's powerful "Night They Missed The Horror Show", more shocking for its blatantly redneck attitudes than any violence involved, and at the other extreme "Drink to Me Only with Labyrinthine Eyes" by Thomas Ligotti, a beautifully written and disturbing work of the macabre. Both are highly recommended.

MARCH OF THE ENTS?

Recent issues have discussed the role of the BSFA and both what the members should expect of it and what can be expected of them. This continues vigorously.

"Dead Wood"

I am one of the 999 "silent mass" talked about in recent issues of *Matrix*.

I don't contribute because I wouldn't dare. I have no SF credentials apart from a shortage of living space taken up by books, and the level of erudition among the fans is much too high for me.

I used to be a fan, of course, but that was back in the Stone Age when my old Mum found my secret hoard of *Astounding* etc. and decided I must be the Antichrist. If you don't think I suffered for the cause, well, you don't know what things were like in 1952. And you certainly didn't know my old Mum.

I only joined the BSFA fairly recently, out of a 40 year love of the genre, and because I thought it could use all the help (financial at least) it could get.

Now I am discovering to my sorrow that what I seem to be is that lowest of all lifeforms, a non-fan or Reader, who is not fit to lick the boots of the Great in Fandom and who may not even be worthy to write the cheque for my next sub.

Even those souls who are quite kind to people like me and protest that they themselves are not Fans, are only interested in the literature, have no truck with Fandom, etc., all seem to be so maddly active in other areas of SF that I have trouble telling the two groups apart.

Even those who say reassuringly that it is Quite All Right not to contribute, and that they themselves don't (Ha!) all seem to have

credentials as long as your arm. They are all budding authors at the very least.

Different blends you might say, but all of the same denomination.

So am I the only non-activist slop to sometimes get the feeling I have strayed into Advance Theology by mistake when I should have been looking for the BSFA Sunday School?

Or are the other 999-odd faithful all drawing their skirts aside in superior distaste right now?

P.S. I tell you one thing, though. The Fans of 1992, bless them, are no more able to laugh at themselves than the Fans of 1952.

Ouch! That this letter had to be written shows the extent to which we've allowed elitism and pseudo-intellectualism to take over the BSFA and goes some way to explain the haemorrhage of members and lack of new members joining.

Perhaps it's time for a new Revolution? Come along to the BSFA at Novaco's (Saturday 7th November, Royal Angus Hotel, St Chad's Queensway, Birmingham at 2.30pm) and tell us what we should be doing. After all, you are all shareholders as well as members and we (yes, even unto the coordinator himself) are ultimately responsible for our stewardship.

Leigh Barlow

In the last couple of *Matrices*, there seem to have been a lot of people talking about a disinterested membership. All this talk certainly made me wonder why I had not contributed to the BSFA previously, and so to put my mind at rest, I went through all my reasons. They are as follows: I have a full time job which keeps me busy from about 7.30am to 7.00pm Monday to Friday. Along with this, I enjoy role-playing for a couple of nights a week. I also have a computer which I either mess around on trying to program or play strategy games with. That covers three weekday nights. Add to this the fact that I like to go out with my friends a couple of nights at the weekend and so therefore get up late the next morning. Saturdays are usually taken up by going into the city I live near to and looking for books and computer games I want. By my reckoning that leaves Thursday night and Sunday, and I nearly managed to forget that I also have a relationship with someone who forces me to see them now and then, along with the fact that I go swimming sometime on a Sunday. Now I only have one afternoon free, but still I've missed out the fact that I'm in an Orbiter workshop and do some play by mail as well. Having said all that, I would still like to help out the BSFA and go to cons and such like.

A bit of self-indulgence there, but what if most of the other members you never hear from are like me and just haven't found the time to do anything, yet? Can you really pick fault with them? At least they tend to be members for free (though probably not on time) and read the magazines. Maybe they could all send in a simply yes or no letter to say whether they, like myself, are hard pressed to find the time needed to lend a hand.

David R Smith

As for the discussions about whether or not the BSFA should go all out to grow, with some folk taking of 10,000 members, I find it hard to believe that there are that many folk out there who actually want to read about written SF; certainly I think the BSFA would have to change its character a great deal to draw in that number of folk, and would those who are already members want to remain with the new organisation? It is easy to forget that the BSFA has changed over the years (like the printing quality of the magazines: time was when *Matrix* was printed in the Harvey's garden shed, or something similar).

I have been amused at some of the comments regarding the BSFA annual awards. I confess that I haven't voted for years (if I ever did: the old memory is not what it once was): in the last year I don't think I have read any SF published for the first time last year. What I did read was fairly old (like a couple of volumes of P K Dick's short stories, and the book I am about to start reading is C L Cherry's *Rimrunners*... real up-to-the-minute stuff eh?). As for short fiction in magazines, I gave up on *Interzone*, *Asimov's* and *Analog* a number of years ago, as it was rare to find there to be any stories in them I actually liked. I was a little sad stopping my *Interzone* sub, but I have to say I don't miss it now — I prefer to use my limited reading time with some care, not just read whatever drops through the letter box this month. Anyway, that all means I can't really nominate or vote (okay, you could argue that once the short list appears, I could track down the items on it and read 'em all, and then be in a position to vote, but I just don't feel up to it). Finally, I suggest we rename the awards the "Shelleys", or better still, go the whole way and call them the "Frankensteins"... the first ever awards guaranteed to rise up one dark and awful night and take the recipients to an early grave!

Stuart Falconer

I always thought it was part of the brief of the BSFA to encourage emerging writers, within its general aim of promoting Science Fiction. Writers need not leap into the world fully armed, ready to turn out masterpieces whose reviews are sufficient to keep them in hot dinners indefinitely. For many of us, writing can be a long, lonely struggle in a world which is either indifferent or hostile. There are various ways to solve this problem. The method I have used, and which I recommend, is the workshop process.

The immediate effect of joining a workshop is to reassure the writer that they are not alone. There are others who are travelling the same road, or who have been there already and know the route. This in itself is helpful.

The next result is that the members all give their different views on the work under discussion. This is immensely useful, in that feedback reveals points the author will have missed while writing; the author is often too close to the work to be able to make a dispassionate judgement.

The third result, and perhaps the most useful one in the long term, is that the process teaches you how to criticise your own work. This is achieved in two ways. Firstly, learning how to respond to criticism teaches you to see how others perceive your work. Secondly, since it is necessary to participate fully, analysing and criticising the work of others, you are able to learn and practice criticism, and later apply this skill to your own work.

There are various ways of organising a workshop. Perhaps the simplest method is to circulate the typscripts by post. This is the approach used by the well-established "Orbiter" groups, which are run as part of the BSFA. Cassandra operates something similar, which we call "Mercury". An alternative to this is the workshop meeting, where work is circulated in advance and members meet to discuss their evaluations. Though this is the more effective method, since it encourages debate, and occasionally original brainstorming, such meetings can take a lot of organising, particularly if the participants are widely separated geographically.

Focus, the BSFA's magazine for writers, filled another void in the writer's world, providing market information and articles of interest specifically to writers such as contracts, rights, how to submit work, etc. It is sorely missed. The newsletter which I edit for Cassandra attempts in its humble way, to provide news which might be of interest to members, including new or hard

to find magazines and one-off anthologies. I might add that if anyone is about to launch a new magazine, sending me a copy of the contributors' guidelines will put them in touch with more than three dozen writers, all eager to discover new markets. (70 Wavay Way, Portland, Northumberland NE20 9RG).

If the BSFA is to continue to encourage writers, means will have to be found to revive *Focus*, either as a magazine in its own right or as a section of the newly enlarged *Vector*. No doubt, there will be voices raised saying that *Focus* represents a minority interest and therefore should not be a burden on the organisation as a whole. Over the years I have seen letters dismissing more or less every part of the BSFA's publishing output. I believe it would be a mistake to be forever contracting our activities simply in order to please one vocal minority or another. For example, I myself would not lose any sleep if the film reviews were discontinued, since I rarely visit the cinema. However, it would be arrogant of me to suggest that film reviews were unnecessary and must be dropped forthwith.

I would be happy to see closer collaboration between the BSFA and writers' groups such as Cassandra. There may be snippets of market information and other news which turn up from obscure sources and are worth sharing. Several members of Cassandra are already members of the BSFA. Might it not be possible for the BSFA to recognise our efforts and take out a token single membership of Cassandra?

Ditching Focus was perhaps the worst single mistake the BSFA has made since Maureen Speller resigned the coordinatorship. The "temporary suspension" was rushed through the AGM, at least in part because there was no new editor or potential editor on the horizon. Of course, this might have been because the job of Focus editor was never advertised.

Jean Sheward

The problem of when to review new books is a long running one and spills over into the question of awards and how to allocate them. Like most London-based fans, I buy paperback on import. So I'll have read a few novels anything up to five years before they get released (if at all) in this country. *Paperback Inferno* underlined the sort of problems this brings by reviewing three of Freda Warrington's books in the same issue, despite the fact that the "Blackbird" stories have been knocking around (reimandered in trade PB format, forsooth) for years, while I've not seen *Darker than the Storm* at all. Perhaps instead of British publication dates, you should give the original copyright date, which would enable readers to put the book into its correct place in the author's oeuvre.

Another facet of the publishing date problem means that I'm never sure which titles qualify for any given award. The Hugos apply to US hardcover publication dates — one reason why we Europeans don't have much input into the Hugos even when there's a European Worldcon, we simply haven't had time to read the nominees. The BSFA awards relate to British release dates, by which time I've forgotten all about the book, unless it's something really outstanding. It would help if someone (and the BSFA is ideally placed for the task) could simply list all the SF novels, in release date order, at the end of the year, or as a supplement to *Matrix* on a quarterly basis, with the dates of the relevant BSFA review (on similar lines to *Amateur Photographer's* camera guides).

Stephen Baynes

On the merging of *Vector* and *Paperback Inferno*, anything that gets all the reviews in one place is a good idea. If it makes administrative sense for this place to be *Vector*, then so be it.

On to the role of the BSFA. I see three distinctive ones, though many activities come under more than one role.

The first and most important is facilitator/communicator, ie making sure that information gets to the right people so things can happen. This is handled well by the news in *Matrix* and the various reviews.

The next is education, in the most gentle and least authoritarian of ways. *Vector* does not too badly at this, but could widen the scope of the subject matter.

The last and most controversial is promotion, ie actions that increase the amount of SF (or SF related) material in existence. The BSFA already does a bit with things such as Orbiters and awards. The problem with promotion is that it costs money, if you do it out of the subscription, it must either be small scale or have enough popular support that you can raise the fee. Bigger things can be self-financing, but if you want to subsidise them, you have to get the money from somewhere. That means fund raising; which, whether by jumble sale or industrial sponsorship, requires lots of work. Volunteers please stand forward.

Note that I do not regard provision of entertainment as a role of the BSFA. It's all to the good if the BSFA's works provide entertainment, but not necessary. Entertainment is, however, a role of SF.

Matthew Freestone

I think Maureen's comments on the general lack of activity from most of the BSFA's membership were understandable, but I also think they were unfair, and potentially damaging. Unfair because, as David Smith points out, the apparent deal on joining the BSFA is "you give us £15 and we send you the magazines for a year". If a certain amount of activity is expected, you might at least mention it in the adverts, you place. The comments were damaging because they may well cause inactive members to pack up and go, not so much out of shame as Syd Foster suggests (*Matrix* 101 again), but out of a feeling of indignation: "I've paid my money and I don't have to take that sort of comment" type of thing. Certainly, I almost left it and it was only Carol Ann Green's piece on Orbiter which coincided with my newish interest in writing, that made me decide I would renew my sub.

I think that will have to do, I am, after all, one of the inactive members of the BSFA, and I don't want to prejudice my status.

Peter Tennant

Nobody joining the BSFA is told that they must be prepared to write articles, letters, do reviews, attend meetings, etc. People do so because they want to and presumably find such activities rewarding in some way. It's not on for the activists to lay a heavy guilt trip on members who are happy simply to pay their dues and play the role of passive consumer.

Yet I appreciate Maureen's comments (in *Matrix* 100) also. The activists are the ones who make the BSFA work for all of us and without them the organisation wouldn't exist. If you give up your spare time for the BSFA, it must be willing to receive faint praise when things go right and a ton of criticism when they go wrong. We should all perhaps be a bit more voluble in expressing our thanks, less strident in our criticism. What would be bad is if criticism were stifled altogether. I don't think that's likely though. You only need look at the letters to see what an argumentative lot we are.

I'd like to see a BSFA Annual or Yearbook, featuring the reviewer's choices that currently appear in the February/March issue of *Vector* plus fiction. There are various possibilities for acquiring the fiction. The Orbiters are one, if

members are willing to submit work (with or without criticism). Another possibility, and one that I prefer, is for the BSFA to sponsor a short story competition and publish the winners. By charging an entry fee, the project might be made self-funding and it would publicise the BSFA in wider circles while at the same time doing something positive to encourage writers. Does anyone else think this is a good idea? More important, is anyone willing to take it on?

POLITICALLY CORRECT, CULTURALLY NAIVE

Before the discussion continues on sex proper, a digression on the sexual characterisations of words

M Cowen

I find the current politically correct debate depressing enough as it is. It has already resulted in the Chairman of our school's Parent's Society being called sexist for refusing to refer to herself as a "Chair" (her answer was that she knew what sex she was, and didn't consider that Chairman implied anything one way or the other). Now it rears its irrelevant head in F&SF circles with the debate on "hir" and other non-sexist options.

It's not just that it's so utterly irrelevant to any real issues, like women being stereotyped into kitchens, or men into macho tough guy roles. What really annoys me is that the very people who usually care so much about other cultures and languages should be so anglocentric when debating really important issues.

I spend a fair amount of my time using Welsh and German, other members of my family and friends cover languages ranging from Polish, Russian, French and Italian to Urdu and Sindhi. In almost all the other languages I have met, any attempt to even describe non-sexist language would be almost impossible, or self-evidently silly.

In Welsh and French, every word is either masculine or feminine, "Chair" is feminine, for example. Neuter words do not exist. You can, if you wish, omit a feminine ending, but that will merely leave you with a masculine word. In German, there is a neuter, it implies not indeterminate sex, but immaturity. If the word existed, a German "Chairling" would be a person chairing a meeting who has not yet reached puberty.

I'm not saying I think such endings are a good thing or a bad. When you're learning a language they are certainly a pain in the neck (assuming you can remember whether "neck" is masculine or feminine). The important thing is that they are there.

If the concept of "non-sexist language" has any validity, then it is a universal one, or at the very least a common one to the Euro-American culture in which we live. If it cannot be applied to most of the major and minor languages of Europe, how can it be such a great panacea to the English. How can it cure real problems of sexism in Manchester, if it is irrelevant in Mannheim or Machynlleth.

If you think I am wrong, then answer this challenge. If the use of gender endings in language is unacceptable, then how can you avoid the position that the use of French, Russian, Welsh and so on is unacceptably sexist?

Or, to put the issue more simply, tell me the non-sexist German for "Chairman".

Steve Palmer

Further to Mike White and Julian Flood both having difficulty with gender and the 'h' words in *Matrix* 101: why can't they use 'their', which is

perfectly acceptable for general use, and even literary use — as far back as 1759, one Lord Chesterfield noted that if someone was born of a gloomy temper "they cannot help it". Literary luminaries such as Doris Lessing have been using 'they' and 'their' for ages. Not only does it avoid using silly new words such as *ter*, *tem*, *ve*, *E*, *jhe*, etc. (that last one is not a new word), it represents women and men equally, it's certainly feasible to avoid 'he' entirely, and well worth the little small amount of effort.

Ken Lake

Should I be surprised that Mike White is so ignorant he thinks I *invented* "hir"? It has been in use for the best part of a decade in many publications: surely I have the right to expect SF fans and readers to be on the leading edge of language as of science?

Harry Cameron Andruschak

Here in the USA many of us are trying a different usage, namely to use the third person plural for the third person singular. It may seem a bit odd at first, but it really is no different from the usage of the second person plural for the second person singular. I do it, you (singular) do it, and both of you do it. (Unless you are a member of the Society of Friends or one of those fake "Early English" types). So just expand this usage to the situation of third person singular when you are not sure of the gender.

John Madracki

I note from the first column on page 2 of *Matrix* that a number of key posts in the BSFA are held by women, and one presumes that this is a result of the positions being given to those who were most qualified to hold them. Unfortunately, within the pages of the magazine proper, this worthy egalitarianism did tend to falter on occasion...

Both Orbiter and Cassandra boast a "woman only" group, but there was nary a mention of a similar service being offered to the excluded males.

There were also frequent applications of the pretentious "Ms" when naming certain women. This dated affection should have been made redundant years ago. If someone chooses to introduce herself with a term that makes her sound like a neutered bee, then that is her affair, but do we have to pander to such an inane conceit? Indeed, are titles really necessary in the first place? I don't recall seeing any of the men being prefixed by "Mr.". Surely the name itself is sufficient.

And there were several instances of the word "humankind" being used. How condescending can you get? The more familiar "mankind" means exactly the same, and there can't be that many dimwits around who actually think that it refers only to the male of the species.

Now I'm not suggesting there is a feminist conspiracy abroad within the ranks of the BSFA — but then again, why not? Paranoia seems to be one of the few things to have achieved genuine parity.

SEX AND THE BSFA MEMBER

What the married couple might have been up to in space had Hurricane Andrew not intervened can't even be conjectured, since, according to Frank Nye "the prudies at NASA have put them on opposite shifts. This, I think, is in retaliation for them having gotten hitched after the crew announcement had been made". He continues:

*"Zero gravity's awkward for lovers
Especially pushers and shovers
The problems of docking
And then interlocking
Are greatly increased when one hovers".*

Which is one way of continuing the discussion of sex in SF.

Ken Lake

Sex you got back in the late '40s from a paperback (I think it was by Astron Del Marita) which featured casual forced sex, and multiple births (like 1,000 at a time, if memory serves me right, and a bookshop owner in Christmas Eve, Bristol, who occasionally had SF happened to read this particular book and called me aside to say how GREAT it was and how he understood now why I read SF and he was getting in a lot more ... and stuff like that. I never went back.

And today we have Piers Anthony's grotesquely overpriced B-format *Pornucopia* (£9.99 import) and a while back, Spider Robinson's superb *Stardance* (written jointly with his wife) and a whole slew of books by female US writers who concentrate (heaven knows why) on male homosexuality. Joe Haldeman's amazing *The Forever War* had some penetrating (sorry) things to say about sex in war, there's a lot of it about and so long as it's integral to the plot, I see nothing wrong with it. The fact that there used to be much less is because in those days (see the Heinlein *Grumbles from the Grave*), censorship (*sic*) was fierce as well as illogical, but then again Heinlein got carried away when he found he was finally allowed to describe it right out there in words, and turned into the archetypal Dirty Old Man of SF, pity about that.

AIDS? Ah, there, there's a problem it's called PC or Political Correctness, and SF people seem to have fallen for that as disastrously as poor old Campbell fell for the Dean Drive and Dianetics. It goes like this: in the good old days we would have had villages sealing themselves off, killing wanderers, branding people with a scarlet 'A' on the forehead, society collapsing, all kinds of good clean survivalist fun. Nowadays you aren't allowed to criticise, threaten or even openly identify any minority group, especially one so tied up with homosexuality as AIDS, so there's a big Thou Shalt Not over AIDS plots which is as pernicious, and probably a damn sight more dangerous, than the old one-plot-on-the-ground Hays Code.

Philip Muldowney

I suppose in the end, the question is: do you expect a cure for AIDS in the near future? Because if you do, then a lot of the SF speculation side of it is in danger of being outdated very quickly. Given the very large amounts of money getting thrown into AIDS research, there is that possibility. On the other hand, after many years, we still have not found a cure for cancer, is AIDS incurable in the foreseeable future — say one or two generations? That gives an entirely different scenario. Are we facing the 21st century equivalent of the Black Death? Yet one can hardly accuse SF authors alone in being negligent in their future thoughts on AIDS since the medical establishment still has not worked out a code for its members and AIDS... Will we eventually return to the puritanical society where sex is frowned on except for procreation with medical testing beforehand? The celibate society. The future possibilities are many. Perhaps it is because they are frightening that we have only approached it from the horror end of the genre. Because that may be what we face: horror.

Dave Bell

I am not sure that Kev McVeigh is being quite fair to pick on SF for its attitude to sex, post AIDS. Perhaps I have not read as much relevant fiction as he has, but I don't recall many examples of explicit safe sex in any fiction. What examples I do recall seem to be in the form of embarrassed, slightly smutty, humour At least SF doesn't seem to go in for the

conventionally promiscuous male. Could I suggest, as an addition to his list of AIDS-influenced work, Mary Gentile's *The Architecture of Desire*?

NAVEL GAZING

Philip Muldowney

Little seems to have been mentioned (in the debate over the BSFA and its future) over the quality of the officials of the organisation. The hard work, talent, dedication, and bloody-mindedness of the various officials really makes or breaks the BSFA. As Cecil Nurse illustrates, if only one official misfunctions, then the whole of the BSFA can be very badly affected. So perhaps a word of thanks is due to the officials, in particular I think that some sort of recognition of Keith Freeman's hard work must be due, as is obvious from the ground swell for this from various letters.

Dave Bell

Cecil Nurse raises an interesting point about the current organisation. He suggests that the system, apparently focused on a "Co-ordinator" tends to stifle attempts to think about change. I am afraid, after seeing Kev McVeigh's performance at the Annual General Meeting, that I can see how such an opinion might develop. The title of "Co-ordinator" also sends a chill down my spine. I used to be a member of a society which had a rather vague organisation headed by one of those. It was a lot bigger than the BSFA, and it was suddenly discovered that the society should have been registered for VAT for the previous three or four years. But the BSFA is a limited company, and has to produce accounts, and shouldn't fall into that trap.

Perhaps, before anyone gets too argumentative about Cecil's suggestions, somebody should check on what the BSFA's articles of association, and general company law in the UK, have to say about what should be done, and what may be done. I have a feeling that the main difficulty behind any perceived lack of accountability is poor communication. Do members really appreciate the importance of the AGM, and what can be done to make a proxy vote more than the political blank cheque it appeared to be this year?

FLAME ON

The latest shots in the debate on media and the intellectual depth of SF films came from Chris Baker, Susan Booth and Jean Sheward. However, their letters have been held over for this issue, so that their ideas can be discussed and, hopefully, acted on. In the meantime, here is a modest proposal.

Sam Keogh

As professionals from the world of TV making, we are exasperated by the lack of good quality Science Fiction on tv, and for that matter, on film. The reasons are fairly clear. It's expensive to make, and not as popular as *Conan of the Sword*. The lowest common denominator gets the investment.

Much of the expense is due to costume, make up, set design and special effects work, as well as the usual costs involved with artists and rights.

We propose to make Science Fiction for consumption on video only, using two ideas to reduce costs to a minimum.

The first is to assemble a team of enthusiasts much as you would a rock band. So we hope to find: background artists, performers, music makers, designers, etc. who are willing to work speculatively against a profit share if the project

succeeds, as we, director, video editor and producer are.

The second is to limit ourselves to a range of production techniques which are easy, cheap and effective, and make a virtue of them.

Our dream is to make a sell through video which looks like a collision between a Graphic Novel, a Rock Video, *Hill Street Blues* and *Blade Runner*.

We need a good, intelligence SF story that has not yet been published, and invite prospective writers to send us a one page synopsis and a short sample of script, say two sides of A4.

So, any writers out there want to join our band?

We'd also like to hear from folk who'd be interested in becoming involved in other roles.

Write to Sam Keogh, New Flame Productions, Suite 401, 302 Regent Street, London W1R 5AL.

PARTICLES

Gillian J K Rooke

A bit of a quiz: match the words with the definitions and improve your SF vocabulary.

Words:

Quark Opaque Event Horizon Gluon Hadron
Superconductor SAD Flatline Entropy
Superstring

Definitions:

- Your guess is as good as mine
- A sticky particle
- A bit of a particle that is never sure whether it exists or not or both (and sometimes thinks it's a cat)
- Count down on Auto-Destruct
- Sod All Daylight
- Means cannot be seen through, except in SF or in the Lingerie trade
- The exact point (very difficult to detect with SF fans) at which brain-death occurs
- A pushy particle
- Imaginary boundary beyond which nothing happens, with astounding frequency
- Person taking fares on Superlight Spaceship.

David R Smith

If I were to be sent back in time, I am sure that, given my personality, I would be unable to influence society or technology in any useful way, so I would take with me in my (admittedly large) pockets my two volumes of *Vintage* Thurber, James Thurber being my favourite humourist. I may as well be happy for what, with my luck, would be a short life in the past. Send me back to Shakespeare's time and I bet we would have fewer plays from old Bill, as he would be too busy savouring the work of a real master (whether or not you think fewer Shakespeare plays is good or bad is up to you).

John Gribbin

Everybody and his dog seems to be fascinated by time travel these days. As a kind of footnote to the piece in *Matrix* 101, anyone intrigued by David Deutsch's TV programme will find all this, and more, explained (with due reference to SF) in my book *In Search of the Edge of Time* (Bantam). Unlike the esteemed Dr Deutsch, I know how the "granny paradox" related to Heinlein et al.

ADDRESSES

Adrian Soames: The Croft, Cheneys La, Forncett St Mary, Norwich, Norfolk NR16 1JT
Joseph Nicholas: 54 Frinton Rd, Stamford Hill, London N15 6NH

Ken Lake: (now travelling, but mail may be sent to John Bull Stamps Ltd, PO Box 10,009, GPO, Hong Kong)
Philip Muldowney: Golden Harvest, Tamerton Foliot Rd, Looseligh Cross, Plymouth PL6 5ES
Dave Bell: Church Farm, North Kelsey, Lincoln LN7 6EQ

Matthew Freestone Grosvenor Lodge, Sotham LA, Sudbrooke, Lincoln LN2 2QJ
Peter Tennant: 9 Henry Cross Ct, Shipdham, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 7LQ

David R R Smith: 42 Macfarlane Pl, Uphall, Broxburn, West Lothian G52 5PS

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John Gribbin: Rose Cottage, Piddington, East Sussex BN8 8AT

M Cowen: 23 Bristol Ave, Levenshulme, Manchester M19 3NU

Steve Palmer: 31 Edward St, Luton, Beds. LU2 0NF

Sam Keogh: New Flame Productions, Suite 401, 302 Regent Street, London W1R 5AL

Stuart Falconer: 70 Willow Way, Ponteland, Northumberland NE20 9RG

John Madrack: 17 Goldrill Ave, Bolton BL2 5NJ

Apology to Joseph Nicholas

The last issue of *Matrix* referred to a certain "Jo" Nicholas — of course, it should have referred to Joseph Nicholas. The typist went for consistency rather than accuracy, after initially losing four letters. We would like to apologise for any upset this might have caused.

GENESIS OF THE BSFA

A cursory analysis of the BSFA membership list shows that there are not too many founder members — and, since the latter column has been dominated recently with suggestions for the society's future, it is perhaps appropriate to give some idea of how it all started.

Vine Clarke sketches in the background:

Fandom started from the desire of SF readers to communicate with each other. They got in touch because SF magazines used to print the names and addresses of readers who wrote to them. Around about 1930, Ray Palmer (who later edited *Amazing Stories*) started a fanzine, *The Comet*, and other fanzines from other people followed.

At first they were plain fanzines, just as film buffs or racing car aficionados might have eulogised their own hobby ... interviews with authors, punts for magazines, etc. But by about the end of the thirties, there were some very individual zines appearing which, like today's zines, sometimes hardly mentioned SF, tho' the assumption was there that all the readers would know what you were talking about if you mentioned FTL spaceships, for example. Arthur C Clarke was assistant editor (ie duplicator handle turner) of one zine, and Sam Youd (aka John Christopher, of *The Tripods*) ran zines which were full of assorted folk spiritedly arguing with each other. An Association was started, based on an American model, and flourished briefly. Annual Conventions were held.

Then came the War, and blighted everything. For one thing, the magazines which were allowed — British Reprint Editions, or BREs — had no space for reader's letters, so recruiting to fandom was either through people picking up pre-war magazines and miraculously being able to get into touch with other fans through old addresses, or through sheer luck. The Science Fiction Association, which had about 200 members, stopped in its tracks.

Mike Rosenblum of Leeds kept fandom alive during the War; he was a conscientious objector (and very genuine, as he was Jewish), and managed to put out not only a news magazine, *Futuran War Digest*, but included other people's

zines in with it ... stapled in, as sometimes they were only one or two sheets. One of the people who had a zine included was Harry Turner, who is still around today. Another wartime fan, who issued his own zine, was Ken Bulmer.

After the War there was a sort of exhausted pause, and it was Ken Slater, then in the Army, who decided that another Society was required. This was where yours truly came in. I'd been in touch — but not exactly of fandom because I was too damned shy and ignorant — since before the War, but I volunteered to help the Science Fiction Society, as Ken called it, in the post of editor of the official organ. Around about the same time, I started to share a flat with Ken Bulmer.

Over in Ireland, Wall Willis and wife Madeleine became active in Belfast. The intelligence, dedication and sheer ~~fannishness~~ of the man soon made him well known on both sides of the Atlantic. He and James White put out a hand-printed fanzine (one page set up per night) called *Siant*, and were later joined by Bob Shaw. If anyone 'set up' fandom as we know it', it was Walter.

In Georgia, USA, there was a young girl called Lee Hoffman who started a fanzine, *Quandry* (sic — she mispelt it and asked Walter to write for her. The combination was a terrific success). *Q* was a fanzine about fans, not about SF and there were sufficient fans about for it to publish 30 issues — and actually have a fan-history enthusiast re-print it in the '80s. American fans thought so highly of Walter's writing that they organised a fund to bring him over to a World Con in '52, which foreshadowed TAF.

Meanwhile, the SFS had been faltering, partly due to the fact that Ken and I found it difficult to cope — we were almost the only publishing fans in the London area, most of the others being content to meet weekly — and we eventually threw in the towel. We saw how much fun Walter and Lee and Bob Shaw and the others were having non-officially, as it were, and we wanted some of the action without lies and rules. We continued the official organ as a private news-zine ... mostly my own, as Ken was turning pro.

So during the '50s most of British fandom was happily anarchic and there were some memorable conventions. Ken and I started OMPA, the first British APA, in '54, and various people like Ron Bennett, Ken Cheslin, Arthur Thomson and others came into fandom and made it a joyous and friendly place to be.

But it was also growing smaller. Partly this may have been due to the fact that a trans-Atlantic fan mythology had grown up, with hundreds of cross-references, its own slang, abbreviations, etc., so it was hard for a newcomer to get into this new zine. It was invariably the case in the second issue from leading fans of the day praising the contents of the first issue!), and partly because SF magazines were in decline and not printing reader's letters with their addresses.

So I put out an OMPazine saying we had to do something and advocating a sort of loose organisation. This was enthusiastically taken up, and at the next Convention the BSFA was formed.

Ted Tubb continues:

At that time [the late '50s], fans and fanzines were becoming thin on the ground and attendances at conventions were shrinking each year. Programmes had been abandoned and the point had been reached when conventions had become no more than an informal gathering of friends. Enjoyable for those involved, but as the numbers grew less each year, it was obvious that, unless fandom grew in numbers, there was a danger it would dissipate or simply disappear. New, active blood was needed and in order to

attract it, steps had to be taken. If they were to be saved, fandom and conventions needed to take drastic action.

I wasn't the only one who recognised the necessity for this, and it seemed as if, somehow, there was a consensus of opinion and a readiness to do something to reverse the trend. Together we worked out what should be done. To more fans the concept of 'organisation' is anathema, but it was obvious we could do little without it. Obvious too that certain basic essentials had to be recognised and accepted. We needed a name, an 'image' and a purpose. We settled on them all.

The name chosen, after argument, was The British Science Fiction Association. With it we needed a 'war-chest' and I proposed a £1 a head contribution — not a small sum in those days. Enough was raised to make an operating fund. The basic purpose of the BSFA was to be a 'front'. Hotels were understandably reluctant to trust their premises to other than 'respectable' clients and were wary when dealing with enthusiasts, but unknown individuals or odd groups of vague stability. Publishers the same. We needed an organisation which could negotiate convention space and rates in hotels, back any financial deal made, handle things like insurance, the press, etc., and be able to approach publishers and other similar groups for backing, publicity, advertisement and support.

It sounds ambitious and for us at that time it was, but the entire objective of the organisation was simply to stimulate the increase of active fandom and ensure the enhancement and continuation of conventions.

Fans were to be attracted by advertising placed in the professional magazines and books. Conventions were to be initially subsidised and their continuation ensured by making it a condition that, any group running a con with the financial backing of the BSFA, would pass over any profits made to the following group so as to help 'launch' them with their own effort. Other fanzine and relevant news would be circulated via the journal. That was the original, basic aim of the new organisation and once the system had got going the BSFA would, in a sense, become redundant.

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Terry Jeeves takes over here:

Ted Tubb rammed through a basic club and committee members were elected. Dave Newman was Chairman, Eric Bentcliffe and I were joint secretaries, Archie Mercer was Treasurer. Ted was to edit the official magazine (at that time it had no name) and I would duplicate it. At a later meeting, I suggested *Vector* and had it accepted. Within a month, Dave Newman galloped and Ted resigned as editor. I took over the editing, finished off *Vector* 1, and then carried on with 2, 3 and 4. Eric took on all the secretarial functions and arranged for the first BSFA publication, a New Year's checklist. I organised one on *Galaxy*, compiled by member Karl Dollner and typed by Keith Freeman. I got an introduction by Gould and handed the whole lot, on stencil, to my successor (Bobbie Gray, I think) — whereupon it vanished for ages and appears years later, sans the Gould letter and without credits to Dollner or Freeman. I later became Vice-Chairman, then Chairman.

Ken Bulmer charts the BSFA's progress:

At Cyticon IV, the convention in Easter 1958 at the George Hotel, Kettering, Ted Tubb spoke on the subject of forming a new society and such was his blazing enthusiasm to bring in new fans that the BSFA was formed on the spot. Vinc Clarke and I had reservations about possible problems, but thankfully, we were proved wrong, or about 90% wrong. The BSFA has had ups and downs in its chequered history. Ken Slater had to step in to salvage the bits on one occasion and the fan who held British Fandom

together in the war — J Michael Rosenblum — also did a very great deal. A lot of good people got the BSFA going. You may recall a poster-sized magazine put out by NEL called *Science Fiction Monthly* which was mostly pictures. The BSFA ran an advert just like the ones people keep on calling for in *Matrix* and so many people wrote in with their postal orders the organisation of the BSFA collapsed. It was saved, of course, but it was a dreadful warning. Most of the new ideas for the BSFA in *Matrix* have been aired many times in the past. I will say that over the past few years, the zines and the presentation have been just about as good as they've ever been and I always curse when the BSFA bundle comes in, for that means no work that day and probably the next, although I love it all.

Vinc Clarke rounds it all off:

Subsequently, I fainted (forced away from it all) in 1960 with an 18 month old child to bring up single-handed, but apparently the BSFA, which was initially intended to draw fans into the anarchic fandom of the '50s, fell into the hands of sercon people such as Rog Peyton, and became an end unto itself.

When I came back in '81, fandom had expanded due to media stuff such as *Dr Who* and *Star Wars* — far beyond what we thought was possible in the '50s, and although I was able to bring back old friends dating from that era (Chuch Harris, Arthur Thomson etc.) who had more or less given up on British fandom, times had changed.

There is still some of the old *Quandry* tradition in the States, and the forthcoming hardcover publication of Warner's *A Wealth of Fable*, about world-wide '50s fandom, has drawn lots of interest, but fandom's moved on in most places and, to an old time lost some of the magic.

I had a pretty good and an active time in the '50s in fandom, and formed the opinion that it was far better to be friendly with people than to regard fandom as an arena where your ego was rampant. I found (then) a small, close-knit society where it was possible, by putting in effort, to extract a modest pleasure. If that is making Fandom Is A Way Of Life, then so be it. Personally, I think it's a goddamned hobby — with the sticking powers of a super adhesive. But as for 'setting it up'? Oh no, I just happened to be around when a lot of friends had the same ideas.

THE PERIODIC TABLE GLASGOW WINS!

Glasgow won the bid to host the 1995 Worldcon by the narrow margin of 150 votes. The con will be *Intersection* with Samuel R Delany and Gerry Anderson as Guests and it will be held at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre and the adjacent Moat House International Hotel, over the weekend of 24-28 August 1995.

1993 Worldcon will be in San Francisco, then Winnipeg for '94.

The Worldcon at Orlando was described as being hot and hectic with 20 programme streams and films in addition. Francis Ford Coppola was promoting his *Dracula* film and there were also the new *Saturn* cartoons. The Art Show was overwhelming — it took two hot tired British feet two hours to wander round.

OTHER CON NEWS

On a sourer note, *Sou'Wester*, the 1994 Eastercon, has just announced plans to move from its Bristol base to the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool. This is disappointing on two counts: first because once again an Eastercon has been voted on misleading premises (people voted for a Bristol hotel and get landed with one in Liverpool) and because although the Adelphi Hotel was the successful venue for *Follycon* in '88, Eastcon in '90 found that the prostitutes were a nuisance in the lower bar, there were multiple thefts and the hotel staff were, at best, unreliable. Fortunately for people in the South West, there are the annual Plymouth Armadacons in November and the Exeter Microcons in March.

Constantinople the 1994 Australian National SF con and 12th Australasian SF media con has William Gibson as Guest along with Bruce Gillespie, Narelle Harris and probably one more guest. Their three programme streams will include 'isms on alternate reality, cyberspace and virtual reality, which is logical, given William Gibson's presence and there will be films and videos also.

Millenium is still eight years away, so there's no hotel arranged, nor Guests, but the con will definitely concentrate on the SF of the 20th century. The attending membership price structure is suitably complicated, but if you want to celebrate both the end of the century (pedants apart) and the millennium (ditto), write to Malcolm Reid at Flat 2/R, 9 Airline Street, Hyndland, Glasgow G12 9RL.

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Peter Schaap (Dutch author of *Ondeeds de Loutere* and *De Wolven*)
Tad Williams (author of *Tailchaser's Song* and *The Dragonbone Chair*)

Fan Guests of Honour:

Johan Flaton & Jo Thomas (editors of the *Jo-Jo Intersection*)

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The current attending membership for people who neither voted nor presupposed nor befriended is £40 — details from Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 4SH or Theresa Renner, Box 15430, Washington, DC 20003, USA.

For US congoers, there are proposals to have a TransAtlanticCon immediately prior to *Intersection*, in fact, on the boat over and Geoff Crookes from North Carolina is considering the options. Still, there's three years to go — the

CONVENTION OF IDEAS CAME TO HASTINGS Steve Sneyd

Hasticon, the SF convention in Hastings July 25-6, was conceived as a convention where ideas took priority by organiser, veteran writer, anthropologist and futures researcher, George Hay.

Events during the two day con, whose slogan was *The Future Strikes Back!* bore out this intention during the discussions that took place in Hastings' main Brassey Institute Library, prefaced by a personal message to the con by Arthur C Clarke, no less.

The many "futuristic" topics discussed included new thinking in Chaos Theory, magnetic transportation, computerised networking and publishing, and a variety of other ways in which change has made sure we all live in a "science fiction world", one which, as the participants proved, Science Fiction is uniquely equipped to analyse and explain.

Charles Stross, with fellow professional writer Kim Newman, joined Guest of Honour David Gemmell to discuss the future of the SF genre with fantasy and horror, in the context of changes in communication techniques, the trend to post-literacy and the implosion of current publishing structures. Though the tone mixed gloom and hope, David Gemmell reinforced guarded optimism in his advice to writers on "how to get out of the slushpile and onto the editor's desk" later in the con.

The art competition was won by Fred Orchard, who was awarded the £50 prize by Paul Brazier, who will also publish the drawing of a spaceship hovering over the town's unique net-drying shops, in his Brighton-based magazine, *SF Nexus*. Other local input came from Gerry Carter, with a vivid audiovisual presentation on the fractals and "strange attractors" of Chaos Theory, and Maurice Lester, with a paper on the prospects for magnetic-powered international transport.

Poetry itself, in line with George Hay's statement that "technology gives us answers — but what we need now is questions which poetry provides" was presented in two sessions. I gave a brief history of the development of SF poetry, then K V Bailey later gave an excellent reading with Peter Garratt and myself.

Each day's session ended with a lively discussion with the audience, Saturday's being on "Serious Futures — the Politics of SF" which included Charles Stross' suggestion that government might come to be carried out by interacting computer-linked individuals rather than formal structures. Finally the Adamantine Press announced its intention to commence its series of educational books for the 21st century by making H G Wells' *World Brain* available to the general public once more. The con ended with a vote of thanks to all concerned, it was the con that lived up to its promise of being "an ideas event".

CONTOUR MAPPING

ConCert III: October 30-November 1, King's Manor Hotel, Edinburgh. Special Guests Peter Monwood and Diane Duane. Details from Jette Goldie, 97 Harrison Road, Edinburgh EH11 1LT (tel 031 337 2052). Ghostly goings-on, with Alien encounters guaranteed in a programme of SFF/Horror and full programme of films and anime.

Who's 7: Dr Who/Blake's 7 convention October 30-November 1, Moat House Hotel, Telford, Shropshire. Confirmed Guests (subject, as ever, to work commitments) Colin Barker, Gareth Thomas, Jacqueline Pearce, Shoshannah Wells, Peter Tuddenham. In aid of the Citizen's Advice Bureaux and the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals.

Novacon 22: November 6-8, Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham, attending membership £25. Guest of Honour Storm Constantine. The first Novacon was held in 1971 and there has been one every November since. It is organised by members of the Brum Group. Details from Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, B66 4HS.

Armadacon IV: November 7-8, Astor Hotel, Plymouth. Guests (subject to work commitments) John Carrigan, the *Star Trek* stuntman, Jacqueline Pearce, Adrian Cole, Roger and Linda Garland, Jon Pertwee and Mark Levill, the theatre director. Details from Marion Pritchard, 4 Gleneagle Avenue, Mannamade, Plymouth PL3 5HL.

Hillcon III: November 27-9, Atlanta Hotel, Rotterdam, 52.5 guilders attending membership. Guests of Honour Tanih Lee, Terry Pratchett, Tad Williams, Peter Schapp. Details from Kottor 5, 1186 WH Amstelveen, Netherlands.

1993

Helicon: April 8-12, Hotel de France, Jersey, £25 attending membership. Guests of Honour John Brunner and George R R Martin, Fan Guest of Honour Larry van der Putte. The programme themes are Borders and Barriers and Recreation in the Future. Details from 63 Drake Road, Chessington KT9 1LQ.

Mexicon V: May 28-31 Hotel St Nicholas, Scarborough, £18 attending membership. Guests of Honour Pat Cadigan and Norman Spinrad. Details from Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 4HS.

AROUND THE CLUBS

Just as, inevitably, in spring far more people think of love than strictly necessary so nearly every club tends to have occasional yearnings for its very own magazine. The initial enthusiasm, though, is roughly buffeted by the twin realisations that most members want only to give moral support (the less the better) and that of the rest the higher the desire to contribute, the lower the literary merits of the donated articles.

The editors have two possible solutions to save the as yet unpublished magazine. They can call in outside help and use this to justify rejecting someone's precious article or they can (and do) write the whole thing themselves. It's a series of pseudonyms with decreasing credibility, for the hardest part about producing a magazine is not getting the articles, but inspiring the right person to want to produce them (and then to do so).

A fairly typical clubs magazine is produced by the Brum Group. It's a monthly leaflet, the cover describing the speaker of the month with a few trivial, but important, details about venue, price and Brum group committee. Inside, there's normally a news column from Martin Tudor culled from the columns of *Critical Wave*, the news magazine he edits with Steve Green (in fact, Brum group membership is a better deal than a CW sub if all you want is news). Sometimes there's a competition, occasionally con reports, always reviews by members. Therefore members can simultaneously be aware of new books as well as using their knowledge of the reviewers concerned to assess what the books are really like. Vernon Brown, who has set the GCSE SF quiz at Novacon, for example, has a bias towards "hard" SF and would not relish reviewing a soft fantasy of dragons and maidens in distress.

The Brum Group leaflet functions, therefore, almost entirely as an information source, unlike *Cyberbase*, which is published by the South Hants Group. This one's fun. It does have the essential information — venue, times, dates of D&D campaigns, when the mah-jongg league competes, but the rest consists of social articles on topics like the history of the club, every character mentioned (and they were characters) like bristling an anatomical instrument when confronted by a pass and snarling "Listen, buster, I've castrated more rats than you've had hot dinners" or why the group has moved from various pubs (was it being too realistic while

doing charades to the extent that one's trousers split or was it the landlady turning a corner unexpectedly to see a customer on a table and screaming something like "Get down, you bugger from outer space" (this has been slightly paraphrased ...). There's articles on real ale (a subject almost as close to the group's collective heart as SF), comics and gossip. The SF articles seem to spin off from group activities: there's a priceless and informative article by John Richards drawing comparisons between *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Tootsie* and a later one on agemism in SF, which was definitely inspired by seeing *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*.

Cyberbase is sparking with personality. The group members know each other well and can slag each other off without causing interminable strife.

Ethel the Aardvark is a hybrid. The Melbourne group is particularly active in a sporting outdoor way — fetes, cardboard horse races, fundraisers, cake sales — but contributor Ian Gunn is now tired of being a willing equine, working without thanks or appreciation from the members. "I'd estimate that there's only roughly fifteen people ... who actually get off their bums and pitch in. That's about 10% of the membership. The other 90% seem quite content to sit back and just be passengers" he writes. But the members do appreciate his writing and his cartoons; it's just that they have lives away from *Ethel* and other interests, other priorities (this begins to sound uncomfortably familiar).

Ian's priorities are shifting now that he and wife Karen Pender-Gunn are standing for FFANZ, the Australia-New Zealand fan fund. *Ethels* due for a shake-up, but hopefully it won't lose the comfortable patchwork flavour of articles in uncomfortable juxtapositions. For *Cyberbase* and the Brum group newsletter: more of the same, please! They've slotted themselves ideally into their respective club ecological niches and though evolutionary change will occur when the club changes, with any luck this won't be for some time. Like never?

The Brum Group Newsletter: write to Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 4HS.

Cyberbase: details from Keith Coslett, 12 Crosby Close, Ensworth, Hants PO10 7TS.

Ethel the Aardvark: contact Alan Stewart, PO Box 212, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia.

CLUBS LISTING

Drake Science Fiction and Fantasy Association: This club caters for SFF in the South West (and Plymouth) with regular items like quizzes and debates, plus a quarterly magazine. Details from the Secretary c/o 22 Arkwright Gardens, Kings Tamerton, Plymouth PL5 2BJ (tel 0752 369962 or 0752 267873).

South Hants: This group meets at the lounge of the Electric Arms, Fratton Road, Portsmouth on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday monthly. The next meetings are October 27 and November 10.



NOTICEBOARD

Reivers' Warband: Battles and living history, warfare, crafts and research of Celtic heritage, 5th century onwards. Details from Sarah Mawson, 85 Healey Road, Ossett WF5 8LT.

Clubs pairing: Many Romanian clubs are interested in having regular contacts with British clubs — just for contact, for swapping books, fanzines, letters. Most Romanians speak and write good English and most of the rest speak and write French. Other foreign clubs in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Ukraine, for example, are also interested in contact. Details from Bridget Wilkison, 17 Mimosa, 29 Avenue Road, London N1 5JF.

Solo Wargames Association: Details from Ken Gordon, 209 Rivermill, Harlow, Essex CM20 1BP.

Fast Lizard Graphics are a small team of men and women working in and around the small press, including artists, designers, writers and publishers, who offer a full service from pure graphic work right through to magazine design. We offer all our services at a very low rate and every project undertaken is wide open to negotiation. Write to: Rob Kirbyson, 6 Grange House, 248 Leymouth Road, Golcar, Huddersfield HD7 4QL.

Gallipoli music: I'm trying to obtain the classical music that was featured through the 1981 Mel Gibson film *Gallipoli* and which has haunted me since I watched it several days ago. From what I can gather from the end-of-film credits the piece I'm after is known as *Adagio in G minor* (for strings and orchestra) by Tomaso Albinoni performed by Jean Francois Patillat, Chamber Orchestra, RCA Records. Contact Chris C Bailey, 52 Druids Walk, Great Western Estate, Didcot, Oxon OX11 7PF.

The Lands of Elvira: Play by mail game of 1 to 5 stout hearted adventures. You, too, can be an accused Anti-Paladin, a dashing hero, a sneaky cut throat or an environmentally conscious Dragonman. Details from Mark Pinder, 139 Nelson Way, Lacey Acres, Glimps DN34 5UJ (tel: 0472 77027).

Edgar Rice Burroughs: Does anyone have any Edgar Rice Burroughs books they wish to sell or swap. If so, please contact: Craig Herbertson, 13 Rushworth Court, 273 Wellington Road, Stockport SK4 5BP.

Futurist Magazine: published by World Future Society. Does anyone have copies of this magazine for sale or loan? If so, please contact Jim England, Roselea, The Compas, Kinvor, West Midlands DY7 6HT.

Rossendale Valley Bindery provides a comprehensive service to private collectors, dealers, libraries and public institutions. All aspects of cloth and leather rebinding and repairs are undertaken, in period to the original book. Phone, write or call (customers welcome to call at the bindery which is next door to Haskingsden Public Library, but phone first) to: E Fielding, Rossendale Valley Bindery, Suite 1, 22A Deardengate, Haskingsden, Rossendale BB4 5QJ (tel 0706 226093).

"Mary Jane" shoes: I'm looking for a pair of "Mary Jane" shoes (patent leather evening shoes with silver buckles) to complete Full Highland evening dress. Anyone know where I could order them from please? — Harry Cameron Andruschak, PO Box 5309, Torrance, California 90510-5309, USA.

The Gern Growers: I am looking for a copy of this story by Robert Potter, published in 1892. It is an account of an alien plot set in Australia, and I require it as research for a proposed history of 100 years of alien invasions in SF. —

Adrian Soames, The Croft, Cheneys Lane, Forncett St Mary, Norwich, NR16 1JT.

List of Magazines: I compile a list of UK literary magazines. It's 'Lights List of Literary Magazines' for readers and writers: names and addresses of over 200 UK small press magazines of prose, poetry and art. 50p + A5 s.a.e. from: John Light, The Light House, 29 Longfield Road, Tring, Herts., HP23 4DG.

Norwegian SF Society: Is there a SF association in Norway? Evig eiss kun tapet! — Fred Endre Larsen, School of Medicine, University of Tromsø, MH Breivika, 9019 Tromsø, Norway.

Belgian SF Fans? If you know of SF clubs or associations in Belgium, please could you drop a line to the editorial address?

PKD Research: I am a post-graduate student at University College, London, and I am currently writing a thesis on Philip K Dick and William Gibson. I'm especially interested in the way that readers of SF interpret the work of these authors, as I get fed up with 'experts' in English Literature and Cultural Studies departments telling us what a novel is *really* about without ever asking the people that read them what they think. As a result, I'm interviewing two sets of readers, one in London and one in Los Angeles. I'm due to start working with the British group this autumn, and I've recently been casting about for ways to contact fans of Dick and/or Gibson.

I would like to contact readers of Philip K Dick and/or William Gibson in order to form several discussion groups; readers must live in the Greater London area, as the discussions will be held in central London. The group work will be conducted from September (at the earliest) through to December, but I don't think that any one interviewee will do more than three or four sessions, spread over several weeks. Each session will last for about one and a half hours. The group discussions will be as informal as possible, with all the material being strictly confidential, and I hope to be able to set a venue for them in the near future.

I would be grateful if anyone interested could contact me, James Kneale, at the University of Geography, University College, London, 26 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AP.

Fanzine exchange: Gary Pattillo is interested in receiving fanzines for his zine exchange network. Send them to him at 5920 Victor Street, Dallas, Texas 75214, USA.

ELECTRIC ORACLE?

Snippets & Examples from the Net

A typical appeal to the "collected wisdom" of the net's Mike Mehl:

"I know about Lucas Garner and Gil the Arm but what about other detectives in SF/F?"

A starting point could well be Gary Louis's Science Fiction Detective Tales: A Brief Overview of Futuristic Detective Fiction in Paperback (Gryphon Press, Brooklyn 1986) which lists about 100. Easily accessible ones are Jack Chalker's Spade and Marlow or Dean Koontz's Jessie Blake and Baker St Cyr. Roger MacBride Allen's recent *The Modular Man* centres round a murder trial and patent attorney Charles Harkness uses his legal experience in several of his books, like *The Venetian Court*. Look out for Alfred Bester's *The Demolished Man* or the two Lloyd Biggles novels about Jan Darzek. *Gladiator-at-Law* by Frederik Pohl and C M Kornbluth is more about lawyers than detectives (often a fine distinction) and there is a Paul Anderson murder mystery, rather amusing, in which the murder victim was the planet Earth. But what was its title?

Thanks to James Davis Nicoll, David Goldfarb, Frank Lyall and Terry Dawson for their help above.

Charles Stross and Kiran Wagle started off the next question by tossing "push button" titles around. Brad Templeton then elaborated it to:

What would you on the book covers of books you didn't want to read?

Example 1:

Princess Th'rk'zn'l Gets Her Kit Off (Again)

"... features loads of women with no vowels in their names being rogered by barbarians"

"Has an epic grandeur (and some really ace sex scenes)"

"My magic sword is bigger than yours!"

With maps and glossary.

Well, having disposed of fantasy, how about SF?

HackerTech Volume 19: War of the Cyberpunks

"On a desolate future earth only the technically competent can survive"

by Gilliam Wilson

"In the grand tradition of Gibson, Sterling and several other computer-illiterates"

— A Well Known Cyberpunk Author

And finally one which defies description:

On A Planet Where Women Were Toys And Men Wore Strange Leather Underpants:

Slaveworld Of Kbnrxyzthim

In the Grand (and Sexist) Tradition of Jane Gaskell and John Norman

by A Word Processor With Some Good Search And Replace Routines

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Thanks to Brad Templeton and Peter Fenelon for these imaginative suggestions — unless you can do better ...

Final query (for now) from Michael Rogers Brown who's got a more general query:

I am trying to put together a list of fictitious planets for use as names for some Sparcstations. Our current set are named for the planets of the Solar System, but I thought it would be neat to have the rest named after other planets. Can anyone help?

Yes. It seemed to be difficult at first, as many planets are named after places on Earth, which rather defeats the object, but when in doubt, open a Douglas Adams at random (this leads to names like Magrathea, Etrion-6 or even Vogosphere). Less flippantly, there are Yuggoth (Lovecraft's Pluto), Nemesis (the 10th planet), Tanith (Pournelle's CoDominium prison planet) or Timothy Zahn's Esquiline. Matthias Ulrichs in Karlsruhe is making up a comprehensive list which, I suspect, will be very long. Thanks to Matthias, Mark Sachs and Jeff Cooper for the above suggestions.



SF IN CYBERIA

"Cyberia" is a name coined by American SF fan, flicker and all-round Net person Steve Savitsky to refer to the electronic world, with all its own customs and traditions. This first appearance of the column simply lists the bulletin boards we know of that carry the FidoNet SF&F "echo":

Phantom BBS, Aberdeen, Ian Sherri, 0224-709833
Andromeda, Abergavenny, Andrew Wilson, 0873-858921
King of the Castle, Ashford, Chris King, 0233-620228
Random Access, Barnoldswick, Keith Whiteley, 0282-850011
Alba Maximus, Barrehead, Donald Whannel, 041-880-7845
Alba Maximus, Barrehead, Donald Whannel, 041-880-7863
The Bath TUB BBS, Bath, Paul Williams, 0225-480103
Clapham Junction, Bedford, Mark Lewis, 0234-213510
Barney's Rubble, Birmingham, Jon Morby, 021-709-0296
The Magic Castle, Birmingham, Mick Coleman, 021-430-3761
Time Tunnel, Bolton, Dave Roorcroft, 0204-596245
TGM, Bradford, Paul Simmonds, 0274-606670
The Power Pack, Bradford, Rik Lister, 0274-488967
Six & Five, Bristol, Ralph Davey, 0273-688888
Nova, Bristol, Tony Jones, 0272-635610
Moon Moth, Bromley, Bill Welch, 081-777-9730
Public House BBS, Cardiff, Stephen Ogbourne, 0222-451362
The Dream Machine, Cardiff, David Thomas, 0222-341713
Surrey TVEE BBS, Chertsey, Colin Masters, 0932-568435
The Power House [2], Chester, Edward Hobson, 0692-782667
Roofops, Chichester, Nicholas Williams, 0243-530230
Chem-Cali, Dartford, Steve Gooding, 0322-278652
Central Net, Droitwich, Pete Franchi, 0905-775191
Midlands HUB, Droitwich, Pete Franchi, 0905-775191
TUG It, Droitwich, Pete Franchi, 0905-775191
Kestrel Ridge, Dublin, Diane Duane, 010353-402-35308
TOPPSI, Dublin, David Doyle, 010353-1711047
Excelsior BBS, Eastbourne, Paul Whitaker, 0323-643165
RIDJEX THOME Mail Centre, Emsworth, Brian Timmins, 0243-370249
The Crystal Tower, Enfield, Chris Gower, 081-447-8244
P C Forum Line 2, Erith, Keith Wassell, 0322-350372
SouthWest & CI Net, Exeter, John Burden, 0392-495699
Microforce Multiline, Faversham, Denis Bennett, 0795-530961
The Voice BBS, Folkestone, Dave Spinks, 0303-246144
More Summer Wine V23-V32, Gomersal, Nigel Beaumont, 0274-851027
GABBS, Gosport, Stephen Cole, 0705-511590
Almac BBS, Grangemouth, Mark Anderson, 0324-665-371
Needful Things, Gwent, Andrew Pick, 0495-245151
Excalibur's Edge, Halisham, Mike Atkinson, 0323-848888
Poppers, Hastings, Peter Burnett, 0424-853361
Tara Recovery, Hemel Hempstead, Dwight Alwine, 0442-231693
Integrated Circuit, Herts, Nick Parker, 0707-270230
Polaco BBS, Hoshorn, Tim Wallis, 0403-272531
Last of the Summer Wine, Huddersfield, Chris Townsend, 0484-653234
MetNet Triangle, Hull, Jon Witty, 0482-473671
Wall Street BBS, Hull, Kay Bailie, 0482-589796
Centronics BBS, Ipswich, Jon Greaves, 0473-273246
The End Zone, Lancaster, Adam Purnell, 0524-752245
ChatterBox, Larkfield, Kent, Mick Spice, 0732-870941
Chaos!, Leeds, Jim Mowatt, 0532-529675
The Owl Service, Leeds, Malcolm Arnold, 0532-606876
Burning Chrome, Liphock, Simon Gardner, 0428-727060
Breakthrough BBS, Liverpool, Jim Hamilton, 051-734-5817
The Wine Rack, Liversedge, Ron Brookes, 0924-411109
01 For Amiga, London, Tony Miller, 071-247-9240
02 For Amiga, London, Sue Miller, 071-377-1358
Amiga Hub, London, Tony Miller, 071-247-9240
Arcade Bbs, London, Dave Coleman, 081-655-4412
Anchors, London, Nigel Hardy, 071-730-6596
Citizens Band BBS, London, Tony Vilimek, 071-284-3436
Jolly Roger BBS [2], London, Roger Seaward, 081-995-5829
Pyrotechnix BBS, London, Malcolm Rowe, 081-390-4701

SELA, London, Marc Anderson, 081-311-9244
Starbase One (UK), London, Nick Stevens, 071-738-7225
The Rock of Gibraltar, London, Paul Bonifacio, 081-678-6087
Amiga Junction 9, London/Surrey, Stephen Anderson, 0372-278000
Aspects, Manchester, Dave Gorski, 061-792-0260
D.I.E., Manchester, St Thornton, 061-434 9907
The Sphinx, Manchester, Lorna Price, 061-748-3855
Greedy Goblin, Marham, David Ekins, 0760-337981
Aureal, Market Harborough, Eddy Ralphson, 0858-466594
"Track 83" Atari ST, Norwich, James Partner, 0953-851351
Karnak Northampton, Steve Brecknock, 0604 705669
INDEX III, Nottingham, Simon Gedhill, 0522-707359
Midlands HUB, Nottingham, Paul Dingley, 0602-640488
Rivendell, Nottingham, Paul Dingley, 0602-640488
SAMSoft, Oldham, Simon Molloy, 061-624-5585
Black Cat BBS, Penarth, Mark Butler, 0222-707359
The Castle Eden BBS, Peterlee, Andrew Lackenby, 091-518-1058
PONTY BBS, Pontypridd, Chris Andrews, 0443-409882
SET UAFALTERNATE 1, Portsmouth, Denis McMahon, 0705-698221
S/e/r/v/a/ [UKRAS], Postling, James Barry, 0303-862415
Red Rose BBS, Preston, Tony Walker, 0772-652212
Computer Knowledge 1, Princes Risborough, Andrew Eaves, 0296-668148
The Pig Pen, Ramsbottom, Oliver Clarke, 0706-821837
Icithus TBBS, Reading, David Rance, 0734-461466
MIDNIGHT MAIL, Reading, David Rance, 0734-461466
The Purple Tentacle, Reading, Mike Jagdis, 0734-509090
Universal BBS, Reading, Richard Sillito, 0734-461286
The Gas Lamp, Rochdale, Ian Strachan, 0706-358331
Tequila Sunrise, Rochester, Paul Boakes, 0634-663696
Academics, Solihull, John Kelly, 021-705-2906
Apriot Technical Support, Solihull, John Kzesinski, 021-717-0455
The Demo Factory, Southborough, Ian Mugridge, 0892-516304
Virtual Reality, St Ives Ringwood, Terence Milbourn, 0425-478436
STUN NeST Central, Stockport, Daron Brewood, 061-429-8603
Mininet-3 BB, Stockton-on-Tees, Mini Mansell, 0642-672813
Missing Link Node1, Surrey, Andrew Hopkins, 081-330-6066
(-: Golly! :-), Tynford, Terry Robertson, 0734-320812
Log on In Tynedale, Tynedale, John Rawson, 0434-606639
Brit Net North, Tyneside, John Rawson, 0434-60-6639
Wild Imaginings, Tyneside, Martin Nichol, 091-263-4303
The Music Studio UK, Warwick, Paul Urmoston, 0928-403904
Chiba City, Whitburn, Dave McIntosh, 0501-44262
Gaia, Whitley Bay, Mark Barry, 091-252-6572
Spook BBS, Wickford, Brian Crudgington, 0268-767365

STOP PRESS

The British Fantasy Awards were announced on October 4 at Fantasycon XVII. They were:

Committee Award: Andrew Porter, editor of *Science Fiction Chronicle*
Icarus Award for Best Newcomer: Melanie Tem
Best Small Press Publication: *Peeping Tom*
Best Short Fiction: Michael Marshall Smith's "The Dark Lane"
Best Novel: *Outside the Dog Museum* by Jonathan Carroll
Best Artist: Jim Pitts
Best Collection: *Darklands* edited by Nic Royle.

Horror Poetry: Try Steve Sneyd's *The Thirteenth* house published by Night Vision, Rea Young, Rt 2 Box 357, Troy, NC 27371, USA.

Stephen King's haunting new novel *Dolores Claiborne* was released as a Christmas Gift Edition from Hammonds in October (trade hardcover edition not available until February). Expensive at £29.95 but embossed with deluxe binding and author's facsimile signature!



COMPETITION CORNER

RESULTS OF MATRIX IQI COMPETITION

Another bumper postbag (35), this time with almost all the entries including an attempt at the "Number Plates" competition (27), but less for the crossword (16). This may be because I didn't make it clear whether there was a prize for it or not. As there was a goodly number of entries, there will be a special (£5 token) donated by BECCON Publications (i.e. me — as publisher of *filk-books* and *Drables*) for the crossword as well as the usual BSFA £5 token for the Number Plates. The number of entries was very satisfying as the format of the competition was thought up at about five minutes in a mad panic when I realised that I was **very** late in sending this column to your esteemed editors.

Sample Answers — "Number Plates"

ABCD Freda Warrington A Blackbird in Amber; EFGH James Blish Cities in Flight; KLMN Jack Vance The Killing Machine; RSTU Bob Shaw The Ragged Astronauts; AZED Edgar Rice Burroughs Tarzan the Untamed; AAAA Brian Aldiss The Malacia Tapestry; IIII Philip K Dick Divine Invasion; RRRR Arthur C Clarke Reach for Tomorrow; EESS Poul Anderson Trader to the Stars; CRAP Theodore Sturgeon The Cosmic Rape; FABO Philip Jose Farmer The Fabulous Riverboat; ASDP Philip K Dick Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?; EEEE Samuel K Delany The Einstein Intersection; HHHH Douglas Adams The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy; DUNG Algis Budrys Blood and Burning; WIZZ L Frank Baum The Wizard of Oz; TRIX Bruce Sterling Schismatrix; POIU Philip E High The Prodigal Sun; YTRE Ray Bradbury The Day It Rained Forever.

Obviously there were **many** titles that can fit the letter combinations given, although POIU and more surprisingly ABCD were the ones giving most difficulty — but only 5 of the 27 entrants failed to find all 24 "number plates".

In the future, I must be more exact in my phrasing of the rules, as one British fan, now resident in France, sent in a mixed French/English entry — for example, for IIII he offered "il est difficile d'être un dieu" by the Strugatski Brothers. Thanks, Mike Wgley, for not being TOO extreme in your choices so that I had at least a fair chance of marking your entry. If all the foreign entries had used the same play, I would have been searching for Finnish, Czech and German reference books! Incidentally, all four foreign entries were "all-correct".

Another loophole in the rules was that I didn't say I wanted a different title for each of the 24, so the alternate title for *Chronocules* by D G Compton would have done for about half the titles. As some charade players will know, the title is "Wireless Sets, Aspirin Tablets, the Sandpaper Sides of Used Matchboxes, and Something that Might Have Been Castor Oil".

After all this, the winner, out of the hat, of the £5 book token is John Ollis of Luton — with thanks and congratulations to all the other entrants.

Answers — Crossword

Across: 5 Deimos, 6 Normal, 9 Famous, 10 Ideology, 11 Nova, 12 Prediction, 13 Crystal Ball, 18 Telepathic, 21 Norn, 22 Skeleton, 23 Subway, 24 Nugget, 25 Wizard.

Down: 1 Dinosaur, 2 Toss Up, 3 Forelimb, 4 Amulet, 5 Dragon, 7 Legion, 8 Time Machine, 14 Star Trek, 15 Longboat, 16 Weaken, 17 Errand, 19 Eulogy, 20 Cosmic.

First all-correct entry out of the hat was from Chris Nash from Taunton. Thanks to all entrants who sent in either completed grids and/or comments about the standard and correctness of the clueing. I'll let John have your comments.

Glasgow in '95 Competition

Nobody guessed/suggested *Intersection* as the name for the Glasgow in '95 Worldcon, so no free attending membership will be awarded. However, two people agreed with the committee's second choice. The committee will be contacting you in due course to award you consolation prizes of supporting memberships.

COMPETITION IQ2 — "DINO-SOARING"

Colin Greenland has recently had a book published by Savoy Press entitled *Michael Moorcock: Death is No Obstacle* in which he presents, as Angela Carter says in her introduction "Interviews with the master storyteller of our time". Colin has persuaded Savoy to let him have two copies of the book as prizes for this month's competitions — one for the quiz and one for the crossword.

The eight questions below are four each from Colin and myself (can you guess which?) — so your thanks and/or curses should be transmitted to us both via the usual address

1. What is Mike Moorcock's date of birth (day, month, year).
2. Mike Moorcock's first ever story in *New Worlds* was a collaboration with another writer. Name the story, the other author and the pseudonym they used.
3. Mike Moorcock often revised, and retitled, his novels. What were the original titles of *The Chinese Agent* and *The Russian Intelligence*?
4. Which band, associated with Mike Moorcock, recorded *The New Worlds Fair*, released in 1975 by United Artists.
5. Mike Moorcock based two of his books on rather unlikely novels by other authors — *The Ice Schooner on the Rescue* and *The Winds of Limbo on Coningsby*. Who wrote these inspirational books?
6. Moorcock took the name for one of his most successful novels from an unfinished poem. His novel was subtitled "The Unfulfilled Queen" — name the novel, the poem and the poet.
7. Who wrote the Jerry Cornelius story "The Last Hurrah of the Golden Horde" and where was it first published?
8. Whose obituary appeared in *New Worlds* 197, and what was the connection with Mike Moorcock?

EVERYMAN CROSSWORD 3

Across:

1. Rune cast about tale of wonder or cyberpunk fable (11)
9. See the good doctor when I'm over disappearance of queen (6)
10. Antelope hung back, losing last of breath (3)
11. Writer creates hydroxyl radical in plural (4)
12. Make heavenly body disappear using energy for a special mixture (7)
14. Knownot to stuff into west, perhaps (7)
16. Discovered a tree on 9's terminus (10)
18. King or King, by Davidson (4)
19. Viral infection created by Wintermute perhaps — disseminated sclerosis? (4)
21. Assume right-on solid state device for 9's brains (10)
23. Watchers see no king in no clothes! (7)
24. The first bone, a French or Roman magistrate (7)
27. Earth's creator seems right inside a waste receptacle (4)
28. It's security systems for diamonds (3)
29. Salesman wearing brown is an old bore (6)
31. "Dune" sank the mixture produced by 9 (3,5,3)

Down:

2. Fifty, inside measurement for tree? (3)
3. Talks wildly — see this as severe when confused (5)
4. Wizard locates silver held by me (4)
5. Electronic brain can learn turn approximately (6,3)
6. Salesman in capital brought back to galactic ruler in 16 (7)
7. 9's forward planning technique involves madman studying the past (13)
8. 9's yarn, make up yarn with a mate (3,7,3)
13. 10 nil at first due to charge bearer (3)
15. Wash life when Pole is inside (5)
17. When human holding one can be cast, perhaps? (9)
20. Crush noisily in disc — run checks (7)
22. Sphere offers rare books initially (3)
25. Esteemed Slippery Jim meets journalist (5)
26. Turntable which produces 1's consensual hallucination (4)
30. Bird has egg at first, with Greek character below (3)

