

MATRIX

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Newsletter of the British Science Fiction Association



December 1993 – January 1994

Data File

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Determinants

Poor Patrick Stewart! Just when he'd hoped to be able to consider returning (a richer and wiser man) to the Shakespearian stage, along comes *another* interviewer fixated on identifying actors with their principal TV roles. However, he did mention that in his opinion, half of the attraction of "Star Trek" and, by extrapolation, Science Fiction, was the knowledge that some variation of humankind would survive. It may be a post-apocalyptic world and ninety-nine per cent of the human race may have been poisoned, starved or otherwise eliminated yet, like myxomatosis, somehow there are always some survivors. Science Fiction is, therefore, the literature of hope.

However, Fantasy represents a world which can never, by definition, exist. It is escapism in that it deliberately entices the willing reader away from the miseries of a routine, ordinary existence. It is possible to criticise Fantasy in general for lazy writing. If something out of the ordinary is required to get the hero in or out of mischief, it is easy enough to wave a magic wand, produce an explosion of light for a paragraph or two and move on to the consequences of this particular action.

That is not to say that SF authors are innocent of this particular crime. SF authors have realised that the science of SF need not mimic current scientific knowledge: all the reader needs is some sense of wonder about science so that time machines, black holes and space rockets are not dismissed as magical plot devices.

Yesterday, there was a TV programme called "Cyberpunks and Technophobes" which examined the particularly British aversion to science. Craig Charles helped to present this and willingly admitted that when he is galloping through the galaxy in "Red Dwarf" or presenting his virtual reality show, he does not really understand the science -- and wishes he did. The summit of his school science career consisted of drawing beards and moustaches on line drawings of sperm.

The findings of the programme were very routine. Children are interested in science until they become teenagers and the British education system encourages teenagers to specialise in either arts or science before they are really old enough, emotionally, to make an informed choice. What the programme did not, however, show was poorly equipped school science labs with mediocre teachers and a badly designed syllabus.

To put the facts bluntly, exciting scientific equipment is expensive and school budgets, never totally adequate, are under increasing strain as each school takes responsibility for its budget. Secondary science teachers may start idealistic, but this gets eroded by continual reminders about safety glasses or not setting the lab alight with bunsen burners or volatile liquids poured down sinks. However, it is too easy to simply accept that teenagers are turned off science by second-rate conditions. The syllabus offers a tempting stalking horse: examination papers tend to look dry, lessons tend not to show the practical uses of theoretical science. Some subjects, like valency, are taught in such a simplistic way that they have to be re-taught at a more advanced level. Parents are an easy target to blame by not encouraging the children or being too tired to respond to their needs.

However, whatever the reasons, British teenagers are finding science and technology uncool. It could perhaps be because it is blindingly obvious that higher education now only postpones entry to the dole queue and that scientists are perceived (even the female ones) as spotty, crew-cut nerds.

This may explain why there are ten Fantasy books in bookshops to every one SF book. Fantasy is a way of escaping the reality of no hope, no job and no self-esteem. In Fantasy, the reader can be a surrogate dragon, prince, villain, mouse or monster. But in reality?

Deadline

15 January 1994

News

No credits on the news this time: a chapter of accidents involving a dodgy disk drive almost managed to thwart us completely, and almost everything was redone at literally the last minute. We hope you can bear with the slightly shorter *Matrix* and put up with the odd typographical infelicity.

World Fantasy Awards

Life Achievement Award: Harlan Ellison
 Best Novel: *Last Call* by Tim Powers
 Best Novella: "The Ghost Village" by Peter Straub
 Best Short Story: "This Year's Class Picture" by Dan Simmons tied with "Graves" by Joe Haldeman
 Best Collection: "The Sons of Noah and Other Stories" by Jack Cadyp
 Best Anthology: "Metahorror" by Dennis Etchison
 Special Award/Professional: Jeanne Cavelos, Dell Abyss editor
 Special Award/Non-Professional: Doug and Tomi Lewis, Roadkill Press
 Best Artist: James Gurney

Publishers

BAEN: "Wing Commander" is the top-selling SF interactive computer game in the States, so it's not surprising that there should be literary tie-ins. "End Run" by Christopher Stasheff and Bill Fortschen is a January lead, a struggle between the higher technology of the Terrans and the vast resources of the feline aliens; "Freedom Flight" by Mercedes Lackey and Ellen Guon is also published in January, concentrating on the Kilrathi Empire misfit pilots including Rikik, K'kai's niece, hereditary leader of her clan, who only wants to follow in her notorious relative's footsteps and fly the stars. William R Fortschen's "Fleet Action" will be published in March where the Kilrathi Empire is caught in a bind because of the success of the Confederation of Earth's backing for raids. The Kilrathians therefore decide to sue for peace until their new fleet is ready, then launch a surprise offensive. Fortunately, there are a new Earth people who don't believe this offer and while the Confederation president starts negotiating with relief, Admiral Tolwyn, aided by a couple of veteran pilots, fight a delaying action against the relentless advance of Prince Thrakthah and his new fleet. The author has written "The Gamester" series and "The Ice Prophet" trilogy as well as "The Lost Regiment" series. As he is also a professor of military history, this gives an interesting sidelight on the various peace proposals currently being negotiated in terrestrial countries.

Other January publications are "War World: Blood Feuds", created by Jerry Pournelle, hack and slash Holy War military SF (no mercy -- on either side); "The Children's Hour" by Jerry Pournelle and S M Stirling which analyses the results of starving a bunch of young teenage Kzin full of hormones and aggression and lock them together for a week (the cover indicates a book full of escapes and hurried journeys) and "Go Tell the Spartans" by the same authors, more military SF in an attempt to squash the Spartans. It's a very aggressive monthly output; February leads with a reissue of Robert A Heinlein's "Farnham's Freehold", together with "Revolt in 2100" and "Methuselah's Children" and "The Guide to Larry Niven's Ringworld"

A new "Wild Cards" series has started. Book 1 was "Card Sharks" and "Marked Cards" is scheduled for March, edited by George R R Martin and written by Stephen Leigh, Walton Simons, Victor Milan, Leanne

C Harper, Walter John Williams, Sage Walker, Laura J Mixon and Melinda M Snodgrass. The Card Sharks are a secret conspiracy with a terrifying secret, but a beautiful (of course) young report and a small group of jokers and aces have unearthed vital evidence which can bring the Card Sharks to justice... or death. But the Card Sharks do not, naturally, want to co-operate. Another March publication is Lois McMaster Bujold's "Mirror Dance", the latest Vorkosigan adventure, this one, echoing "Brothers in Arms" featuring Miles' cloned brother, Mark. It gets very confusing having an identical twin, especially when the brother has a similar (identical?) mindset, lacking only the experience from seeing mercenaries die and feeling the agony of one's own broken bones. The final March publication from Baen is Harry Turtledove's "Agent of Byzantium", a new expanded edition with an introduction by Isaac Asimov. It has been out of print since 1987 and is an alternate world adventure where Mohammed became a Christian and the Byzantine Empire has not only survived but flourished. Basil Argyros, the .007 of Byzantium, is terribly busy making the world safe for Byzantium, but the novel has a sound historical background, since Harry Turtledove has a Ph.D. in Byzantine History which he once commented made him totally unemployable, save as an author.

HARPERCOLLINS: The second volume of Isaac Asimov's complete short stories is scheduled for January. Included in these forty Science Fiction stories are "Galley Slave" which concerns Asimov's loathing for printed book galley sheets; "Light Verse", inspired by a headache and a good dinner, not necessarily in that order; "Feminine Intuition", which Asimov was not eligible to have and "The Bicentennial Man", a tale of a robot accidentally endowed with artistic ability who spends its existence seeking to become human. Also included are "The Martian Way" and "The Life and Times of Multivac". There will also be three Asimov reissues with this: "The Rest of the Robots", "The Robots of Dawn" and "Robots and Empire" with John Varley's "Steel Beach" (stunning SF) and Clive Barker's "Rawhead Rex".

February will lead with the A format paperback edition of Colin Greenland's "Harm's Way", although there will also be Stephen Donaldson's "The Second Chronicles of Thomas Covenant" and Piers Anthony's "Executive" and "Statesman", both reissues, plus "Mouvvar's Magic" by Anthony and Margroff.

Sheri S Tepper's "A Plague of Angels" is scheduled for March. After The Great Upheaval, there was no world population problem thanks to disease and starvation, but some people had fled to Betelgeuse or Alpha Centauri in time. They were lucky, because the monsters of faery and fable emerge on Earth, setting the scene for one last battle against Quince Ellel.

"Green Mars" will come in paperback in April. It appears that most of the "Red Mars" characters have gone, demolished by the violent and failed revolution of 2062. Only a few of the First Hundred have survived, mostly Hiroko, Nadia, Maya and Simon, and they must now combat the transnational corporations who seek to plunder Mars, for the sake of a ravaged Earth.

Robert Silverberg's "Hot Sky at Midnight" will come in May, the story of Victor Farkas, a fugitive from justice and from Dr Wu, who interfered with Farkas' genes, eliminating his eyes, but giving him "blindsight", 360 degrees of geometric insight into reality.

LEGEND: Peter Morwood leads in December, with "The Golden Horde" in paperback -- the third volume of the "Prince Ivan" series, where Prince Ivan faces the Mongols and, after some unpleasant blood'n'guts episodes, uses some lateral thinking to find a safe future and "Greydale: Clan Wars 1" in trade paperback (it will appear in normal size in June, together with the second in that series "Widowmaker", but in trade paperback format). Peter Morwood reports that "the book that's been sitting on my shoulder screaming

'Pieces of Eight!!!' for the last six months will be out next" called "Blood Ruby". Greg Egan's "Quarantine" is a December publication, as is Robert Sheekley's "The Status Civilisation/Mindswap".

January introduces Andrew Harman's hilarious "The Frogs of War", before an Orson Scott Card dominated February with "The Ships of Earth" in both hardback and trade paperback, also "The Call of Earth" in paperback. March has two Brian Jacques books: "Redwall" and "Mossflower" with Terry Brooks' "The Talismans of Shannara", then April is split between Tad Williams and Harry Harrison.

PAN: Fantasy leads in January, with Dwina Murphy-Gibb's two "Cormac" books, "Cormac the Seers" and "Cormac the King Making". It's Fantasy, describing the rise of Cormac mac Airt, the greatest of the Celtic High Kings, who does not occupy a very prominent position in the history books, but who is, none the less, doomed to greatness although many people will inevitably try (and fail) to stop him. The author has won many awards for her poetry and art. Jane Yolen's "Briar Rose", also a January publication, starts with a young journalist coming to Europe to investigate the mystery of her grandmother's life. She does not know that it will tie in with thorns and barbed wire, castles and camps. By contrast, archaeologists W Michael and Kathleen O'Neal start a dramatic series to chronicle the colonisation of the American continent with "People of the Wolf". A small group of ice-age nomadic hunters have crossed the fragile land bridge between Europe and the Americas and find a land of incredible natural wealth and danger. There are several more to come in this series.

There's a medical thriller, near SF, in February, with Robin Cook's "Terminal". The famous Forbes Clinic achieves high success with certain forms of cancer. Medical student Janet Reardon joins in the staff in an attempt to find out why and finds that she has encountered an amoral enterprise with boundless greed. Pamela Belle has created a fantastic world with "The Silver City". That refers to Zithrian, a beautiful city, but full of political intrigue and dangerous magic. The savage Ska'i are poised to conquer it, and only Halhrith, of the nomadic Tanathi tribe, knows this and can, possibly, save the city.

There's a different "The City" created by James Herbert and Ian Miller coming in March. It's the fourth book in the "Rats" sequence. The Rats are in control in the post-apocalyptic City and mankind is the servant, the victim, the prey and does not like it. Nor does ex-private eye Greg Mandel like being persuaded out of retirement in Peter F Hamilton's "A Quantum Murder", but when a Nobel prize winning physicist working for the commercial Event Horizon is murdered, that is industrial espionage on a grand scale. Except that the victim was ritually slayed. This seems a trifle odd, even to Mandel, there's a tight and exciting thriller here.

TOR: The December releases lead with Ben Bova's "To Save the Sun" twinned with Fred Saberhagen's "Wayfinder's Story" as Fantasy lead. Charles Sheffield's "One Man's Universe" continues the chronicles of Arthur Morton McAndrew, and Patricia C Wrede has a romantic and charming retelling of the Brothers Grimm tale with "Snow White and Red Rose". January is dominated by Orson Scott Card, with "The Call of the Earth: Homecoming Saga #2", predictably the second book in a new series. Other publications are Michael Bishop's "Count Geiger's Blues" concerning a modern day superhero, Helen Collins' "Mutagenesis", a first novel in the tradition of "The Handmaid's Tale" and a collection of Rudyard Kipling's Fantasy stories, a companion volume to "Kipling's Science Fiction".

TRANSWORLD: All the holes in the "Star Wars" world are now being filled in, one by Kathy Tyers' "Star Wars: The Truce at Bakura", coming in January, which follows immediately after "Return of the Jedi". Darth Vader has just died and the Alliance intercept a call for help from Bakura, on the edge of known space. Princess Leia sees this

as an ideal opportunity for diplomatic victory, however a vision of Obi-wan Kenobi appears to Luke Skywalker to inform him that he, too, must go to Bakura, or risk everything he has fought for. Later, in June, there will be Dave Wolverton's "Star Wars: The Courtship of Princess Leia", where the impetuous and moderately attractive lady considers a proposal from the Hapes consortium, which is ruled by the Queen Mother, who wants Princess Leia for her son, the dashing and wealthy Prince Isolder. Hans Solo objects and tricks Leia into accompanying him to the beautiful untamed planet Dathomir, where he is tracked down by Luke Skywalker and his unlikely ally Prince Isolder. And this is only the beginning.

The Shock of the New

Stephen Baxter has turned in his fifth novel to HarperCollins. It is entitled "Ring" and is the third Xeelee book. Hardback publication will come in 1994. He has also signed for his sixth book, also with HarperCollins, "The Time Ships", a sequel to H G Wells' "The Time Machine", which will appear in 1995 (Spring hardback, Autumn paperback), the centenary year of Wells' original.

Patrick Stewart, who plays Captain Jean-Luc Picard in "Star Trek: The New Generation" commented recently on his personal stand towards sexism: "If something demeans women, it demeans me. One of the areas of our show about which I still feel much discomfort is its treatment of women. Our series clearly indicates that the glass ceiling has been shattered: we see women occupying the most senior positions of command. But the stereotyping of female behaviour in our series, and the male attitude towards females, still remains trapped where it was thirteen years ago. I think it stinks". When asked why he thought "Star Trek" was so popular, he replied "There is a mystery at the heart of "Star Trek" that touches people. It's composed of elements like hope, optimism, companionship, comradeship and courtesy, legitimacy and boldness. It lies in this assurance, which can only be a theoretical assurance, that we're going to survive -- that some of us will make it".

F Paul Wilson, when interviewed by Ian Covell, commented on his personal values: "As a devout agnostic, I don't have the comfort and convenience of checking the Bible or the Koran to find out how I should live, so I'm always feeling my way. But I use certain values as a compass. Foremost is life. It's the most precious thing you have: no one has a right to yours, and you have no right to anyone else's. I guess my reverence for life led me into medicine. It influences my writing as well. It's landed me on both sides of the political correctness fence: on the wrong side of the abortion issue with "Buckets" and on the right side of the fur issue with "Pelts". But both stories are informed by the same reverence for life -- all life.

"Personal accountability is another value, I guess. So is truth. This sounds so uncool and old-farty, but these seem to be things in diminishing supply, and I miss them. So they wind up in my stories. It's hard to keep your values and "weltanschauung" from seeping through to your fiction. I guess I'll never make it as a post-modern. But I can live with that".

Katherine Kurtz is tidying up "The Bastard Prince", the conclusion to the "Heirs of Saint Camber" series, which will be published in hardcover next June, probably by Del Rey. After that, her next book will be "King Kelson's Bride", which follows "The Quest for Saint Camber".

Iain Banks, when interviewed by Douglas McCabe, admitted that his favourite writer was Jane Austen. His reaction to being asked if any characters were based on real people was "God, no, I would never do that" and he explained that his characters were not real, but representative. On being asked for the inspiration for his latest book,

"Complicity", which relates how a news journalist becomes involved with a serial killer who seems to choose his victims on the basis of their political leanings, he said: "The idea for the book goes back many years to when there were a series of news stories about the quality of British judges, and this vigilante character started to take shape".

Diane Duane reports that her "Door into Starlight" will be outlined soon. It will contain all her background material on that universe, since she does not know if she will be returning to it in a further book. She also reports that there may be more "Space Cops" books, but not by her and Peter Morwood.

William Gibson mentioned recently, in an interview with Richard Guilliat, that he had pieced his ideas together from video arcades, eavesdropping on hacker slang and looking in computer magazines, rather than being a computer freak himself. He said: "I'm just a product of my time. And even though I perhaps didn't realise this when I was writing 'Neuromancer', computers in a sense were invented by acid heads. Fractal geometry, as far as I can tell, was more or less discovered by old acid heads looking for the mathematical formulae that resembled an LSD hallucination".

Still with Gibson, we hear that TriStar pictures are budgeting \$36M to make "Johnny Mnemonic". The film marks the directorial debut of artist-turned-music video-maker Mark Longo, and has been shooting in Toronto since late November. Casting is incomplete, but Dolph Lundgren and Ice-T are already signed, as is Takeshi. Set against a chaotic global canvas run by multinational corporations that control entire economies, "Johnny Mnemonic" is the story of a high-tech courier who carries information in his brain and winds up with a price on his head.

Karen Ripley, writer, farmer and veterinarian, uses the winter for writing. She says "I've always viewed Science Fiction and Fantasy as less of an escape from reality than as a possible explanation for it, a sort of buffer zone between logic and what really happens in the world. I suppose I could write about some of the things that I've seen in veterinary practice, but if I did, I'm not sure that anyone would believe me... Every character I create comes from two sources. Because they are my creations, each one of them must come at least partially from something inside of me. But beyond that, each one is a composite of real people, people I have had either the fortune or misfortune of having known in my everyday life. If I've done my job well, most of those people will never recognise themselves!"

Colin Greenland will run a Writers' Workshop entitled "A Game of Consequences" at Wincon III. This will be part of an "SF Arts and Crafts" programme which will accompany programme streams on Science and its relationship to SF. Wincon III will take place at King Alfred's College, Winchester, 29-31 July 1994. Membership rates are now £23 attending. Guests of Honour at Algis Budrys and James P Hogan. Contact: Keith Cosslett, 12 Crowsbury Close, Emsworth, Hants PO10 7TS.

The launch party for Terry Pratchett's new hardback "Men at Arms", combined with the launch of the paperback "Lords and Ladies" and the map of "The Streets of Ankh-Morpork" was held at Planet Hollywood on Thursday 28 October. Most of those present were either booksellers, or staff at Gollancz and Transworld, but there were also some leading SF critics. Elizabeth Young of "The Guardian" was luxuriating in the reflected glory of Pratchett-worship, having successfully persuaded her newspaper to run a leading feature in the Weekend section on October 23, illustrated by Josh Kirby in colour.

Terry was welcomed by his three publishers: Colin Smythe (now his agent), Gollancz and Corgi, with plenty of jokes about the money he was making for them. One referred to the "Observer" article ("Give the

Booker to Terry"), but Terry responded that he didn't want to win the Booker, as he could not afford to drop in sales. He was worried about piling up a "karmic debt", as he was being paid so much money to do what he wanted to do. He was given two presents: the original artwork of the Josh Kirby illustration shown on the front of "The Guardian" feature, which shows Terry's face and hat with little Discworld figures swarming all over it, including the Luggage, Granny Weatherwax and the Librarian; and a real surprise -- a silver statuette of Death riding Binky. Terry then hoped that he would live as long as his grandfather -- over ninety years old -- and then he would have written one hundred and twelve Discworld books, and if you brought them all to a signing session you would need three shopping trolleys!

Penultimately, a genuine shock of the new: our first book on disk. *Deus Ex Machina* is a novel by Ivan Millett published on 3.5" disk by TITM, 10 Tennyson Avenue, Takapuna, Auckland 1309 NZ and available for \$6.95 or £4.95.

Finally, not so much shock of the new, as of the old. John Brunner is finally relinquishing his Logica VTS 2200 for a PC and having problems tracking down software that can be used to read the old diskettes on the new machine. If anyone can help, could they please get in touch with him c/o the editorial address (we have a few of his disks, but have been unable to read any data from them).

Obituary

The death of John James at the age of 69 was announced in "The Sunday Telegraph" on 10 October. He was a historical novelist of distinction -- the heir to Henry Treece -- whose regrettably slender output included three Celtic fantasies in the Renault-Treece tradition of taking a legend and writing out what might really have happened, with a suggestion of real supernatural events at work. His first novel was "Votan" (1966), purporting to be a real story of the saga of Asgard, as narrated by Photinus, a trader and rogue, who becomes "Votan". The sequel, "Not for all the Gold in Ireland" (1968) reworked tales from the Mabonogion and the legend of Cuchullain in a story of why the Roman invasion of Ireland failed. The third was "Men went to Cattraeth" (1969), the tale of the Gododdin, hardly fantasy, apart from the presence of Arthur as a little boy; however, Dark Age historians tend to place King Arthur before the Cattraeth expedition. John James's next two books, "Seventeen of Leyden" (1970) and "Lords of Loone" (1972) were set in a milieu of seventeenth to eighteenth century intrigue in Britain and on the continent. His final novel before giving up writing for many years was "The Bridge of Sand", a cynical tale of the Roman occupation of Britain, narrated by the poet Juvenal, doing military service under Agricola (1976). James became a "cult author" among aficionados of Celtic fantasy, aided by the issue of the first three novels in Tandem paperback in 1971-2.

A chance "where is he now" comment in the book pages of "The Spectator" brought a swift response: he had been ill and was now writing again. (He was not a full-time writer, and had continued with his career in the Civil Service while his pen was silent). John James had planned a whole series of "Talleyman" novels about a naval officer in the mid nineteenth century; "Talleyman" was published by Gollancz in 1986; "Talleyman in the Ice" came out in Futura, and the Celtic "trilogy" was reprinted by Bantam in 1987-8. But, alas, they didn't sell, and were remaindered, James was unable to get the rest of the Talleyman saga into print, and as far as I know, his Arthurian novel is still unpublished. Several of his fans were able to make his acquaintance, and he spoke on his theories of Merlin at the Merlin Conference in Mold. I, myself, was delighted to hear of two more Photinus novels describing his adventures in Africa, China and America, where he apparently became the original of the god

Hotchilpoochli. Alas, my hopes may be forever frustrated, unless his typescripts have been preserved for fans and scholars. – Jessica Yates

Unfinished Business

from the BSFA co-ordinators

For the first time in some years, the BSFA took a desk in the dealers' room at Novacon. The weekend started eventfully with Maureen Speller's car breaking down at the end of Aston Expressway, followed closely by the discovery that her bedroom was missing a bed. Meanwhile, Catie Cary was demonstrating that she still can't get the hang of Birmingham's geography. The full-scale fire alarm and evacuation of the hotel in the early evening was almost incidental. However, we got all the crises out of the way on Friday night and the rest of the weekend went smoothly.

At Mark Plummer's suggestion, we ran a tombola and this proved to be very popular with the convention members, that and the free Smarties. Using mostly sweets and books as prizes, we raised just over £300 for BSFA funds and also welcomed five new members to the organisation. Thanks should go to Paul Allwood, Alison Cook, Carol Ann Green, Steve Grover, Stephen Payne, Mark Plummer, Ian Sales, Moira Shearman and Brian Stovold for their help in running the desk over the weekend. And thank you to all those people who bought tickets. Neil Tomkinson and Phil Rogers stick in the memory as two people who patronised the tombola extensively. Well done, guys!

Encouraged by this success, we're intending to do something similar at Eastercon, but we need your help. We need volunteers to help staff the desk during the weekend, on Friday afternoon, Saturday and Sunday. We've found that running a tombola ensures that there are always plenty of people around the desk, so you are unlikely to be bored. Even more importantly, we need prizes for the tombola. For the Novacon tombola, we drew on our own piles of unwanted books but obviously we'll need many more for Eastercon. If you have any unwanted books, SF, Fantasy or general, fiction or non-fiction, in good condition, we will be very happy to take them off your hands. In most cases, collection can be arranged or else bring the books to the convention. If you have books or other material you think would be suitable for the tombola, please contact Maureen Speller at the usual address and we will make arrangements for its collection. If you have suggestions for other material to raffle, please pass them on. We would also appreciate hearing from someone with calligraphic and sign-writing skills.

This is a good moment to talk more generally about fund-raising. The Worldcon is less than two years away and the BSFA will, of course, be at the convention. We're looking for all sorts of fund-raising ideas and instant competitions to promote interest in the BSFA and hope you can help us. Most people have had some experience of fund-raising, if only at school fêtes. So tell us about any money-spinning ventures which impressed you.

As you may know, Intersection, the 1995 Worldcon, is appealing for ideas for the serious programming strand. Naturally, the BSFA ought to participate in making suggestions and, we hope, organising some programme items. At this stage, we'd really like to hear from you about the sort of programme items you'd like to see at a convention. Is there a subject you'd like to hear discussed? Tell us about it. If you're a regular con-goer is there any item you've seen which would merit a second airing? Is there anything you've seen which you feel could have been done better if only the right people had been involved? Tell us about all these things and we will do our best to collate all your ideas and then present them to the Worldcon programmers. Even the merest

wisp of an idea may be all it takes to generate a successful programme item, so tell us. Send your ideas to Maureen Speller. We will keep you informed of the ideas we have received.

So far, there have been no suggestions for matters to be raised at the Annual General Meeting which might be taken as an encouraging sign. If there is anything you wish to have raised at the meeting, please tell Maureen Speller, otherwise there won't be time to discuss it through the pages of "Matrix".

As ever, if you have any queries or problems and aren't sure who to speak to, write in the first instance to Maureen Speller and she will direct your letter to the correct person.

Magazines

Grotesque 3 (52pp, A4, £2.50 per issue from David Logan, 24 Hightown Drive, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim, N Ireland BT36 7TG).

Fiction by Lawrence Dyer, Lyn Funnell, Shaun Jeffrey, Jim Johnston, Trevor Wentworth, John Gaunt, Paul Pinn, Frank Swannack and Roddy Williams. This issue showcases the art of Cathy Buburuz. Also letters column and magazine reviews.

Night Dreams 1 (A4, 48pp, £2.50 per issue from Kirk S King, 47 Stephens Road, Walmley, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B76 8TS).

Tales of the Weird, the Frightening, the Gruesome. Fiction by D F Lewis, Tina Bishop, David Logan, Raymond K Avery, Conrad Williams, Lt Willis, Kirk S King, Steve Castle and William Smith. Poetry by Steve Castle and Christopher Turner. Artwork by diverse hands.

Peeping Tom 12 (A5, 48pp, £1.95 per issue from David Bell, Yew Tree House, 15 Nottingham Road, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire LE65 1DJ).

Fiction by Joel Lane, Martin Feekin, Anthony Bennett, Bruce Boston, G N Neary, Simon Clark and Nicholas Royle. Art by Rik, M V Finnegan, Kerry Earl, Julia Saunt, Debs Dumbrell and Dallas Goffin.

Ghosts and Scholars 16 (A5, 44pp, £2.75 from Rosemary Pardoe, Flat One, 36 Hamilton Street, Hoole, Chester CH2 3JQ).

Fiction by M R James, C E Ward, A F Kidd and Anonymous. Illustrations by Dallas Goffin, Alan Hunter, Nick Malore and Douglas Walters. Articles on John Dickson Carr and 'The Haunted Dolls' House' by M R James. Also letters column and reviews.

The Third Alternative (A5, 52pp, £2.50 per issue from Andy Cox, 5 Martins Lane, Witcham, Ely, Cambs CB6 2LB).

A magazine of speculative and slipstream fiction, poetry and comment. Articles by Nicholas Royle, Joel Lane, Steve Sneyd, Rupert M Loydell, P J L Hinder, Peter Crowther, Mike O'Driscoll, Conrad Williams and many more.

The Loxley Times

This is a forum for news and views about the series "Robin of Sherwood" and/or Robin Hood and will review any tv, film, literary work or theatre past, present and future. Contributions welcomed, especially on any of Nickolas Grace's early theatre work and Clive

Mantle's production of "Of Mice and Men". More details from Rowena Sayer, 111 Farndale Avenue, Palmers Green, London N13 5AJ.

Tales from the Cajun Sushi Bar

This is an anime fiction magazine (£2.50 an issue including UK post and packing), with approximately seventy two pages and full colour cover containing entertaining fiction from many fan and semi-pro writers. Stories will feature plots from Gall Force, Applesseed, Dominion, Bubblegum Crisis, Project A-ko and the fiction is generally described as being "armed and dangerous" ie entertaining and interesting to read. More details from Jim Swallow, 21 Wadham House, 12 College Close, Edmonton, London N18 2XT. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope or two IRCs with your query.

The Wizard's Knob

£2 per copy from John Penney, 50 Sunnysbank, Kirkham, Preston, Lancs PR4 2JF. Queries to David Baxter, 43 Bridge Road, Sutton Bridge, Spalding, Lincs. PE12 9SA.

This is a magazine devoted to the works of Terry Pratchett and provides some news about his activities including an excellent interview with Stephen Briggs, who said that it takes about two to three weeks to do an theatre adaptation of a Terry Pratchett novel, working just in the evenings. The news is interesting, but the quality of the humour is variable.

Alternate Worlds

Edited by Michael Morton, 19 Bruce Street, Rodbourne, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 2EL (and also available from R M Schmunk, 611 West 111th Street #26, New York, NY 10025-1811, USA). This is a magazine for the investigation and discussion of alternate history. Issue 1 in January 1994 will include "An Introduction to Alternate Worlds" by Brian Stableford and "The Year it Might Have Been: An Alternate History Divergence List" by R B Schmunk and Evelyn C Leeper. The second issue, due in April, will have an article on Operation Sealion, the Nazi invasion of Britain and will discuss the possible futures resulting from a successful invasion. The third issue in July is scheduled to concentrate on the events of 1812 and how the map of North America may differ. Then the fourth issue in October will focus on the early American Civil War.

Each issue will have a centrefold two page map and, hopefully, original art work, short fiction, cartoons and reviews of recent or obscure Alternate History publications, not forgetting opinionated letters. The editors are hoping to produce a quarterly magazine with approximately forty pages per issue.

Undiscovered Countries Journal

This is a commercial press magazine covering Science Fiction and space news (\$5 per issue). The focus is to provide the articles and photographs other SF magazines miss or overlook. The current issue includes articles on "Jurassic Park", on the set of "ST:TNG" and science articles on Martian water and space junk, plus a new Science Fiction story by Marg Petersen called "Submergency". More details from Michael Breckenridge, Stars Media, 9792 Edmonds Way, Suite 252, Edmonds, WA 98020, USA.

Stop Press

The death of Anthony Burgess was announced as this issue went to press. There will be more information next time.

Media File

Skywatching

Mark Ogier

UK Gold, the BBC/Thames-owned channel that, would you believe, screens programmes made by the BBC and Thames, celebrated its first birthday in October with a five hour marathon of "The Bill". While I question whether this was a fitting way to throw a birthday party, the soap has been one of the mainstays of the channel since its launch, so I suppose it's understandable. UK Gold has been a fairly poor provider of SF fare in its first year. In fact, the only genre offering has been "Dr Who", but as this has been shown every week-night, with an omnibus edition on Sundays, it would be churlish to moan.

And, rather more than the BBC, UK Gold is determined to join in the celebrations for the Timelord's 30th birthday. In late November, they gave over most of their Saturday and Sunday programming to a "Dr Who" weekend. The last time anything like this was tried was way back in the days of BSB and I take my hat off to UK Gold for recognising the importance of "Who" in TV history. I, for one, was either glued to the set or having my videos whirling away to make sure I didn't miss a minute.

Of course, the BBC produced more SF-orientated programmes than "Dr Who", and over the coming months the likes of "Blake's Seven", "Moonbase 3" and even "Star Cops" are rumoured to be heading for UK Gold. Another classic series that the BBC produced which, to the best of my knowledge, has never enjoyed a repeat on terrestrial television, "Survivors".

I was surprised to see this "end of the world" series reappear, because it was created and frequently written by Terry Nation, the man behind the Daleks, who has reportedly been denying UK Gold the rights to screen his "Dr Who" stories. However, hot on the heels of the repeats of "Survivors" beginning came the news that Nation and UK Gold had apparently settled their differences. The result is that the chronological repeats of "Dr Who" (we're currently on Tom Baker) will be put on ice while UK Gold go back to the very first Dalek story, and start repeating all of them. I've never been a great Dalek fan, if the truth be told, but no doubt I'll be watching.

But back to "Survivors" — one of the few SF series that managed to appeal to a non-genre audience. Its theme — one person in five thousand survives a modern version of the Black Death — captured the imagination of Britain in 1975, and for two series audiences watched as the survivors of the plague gathered together and began to rebuild society.

The true origin of the plague is never revealed (to the best of my recollection; it might be uncovered in later episodes) although the biggest clue is in the haunting opening credits. Those who have seen the programme could not fail to remember the close-up of a bespectacled face holding up a glass bottle. The bottle slips and a hand reaches for it as it falls towards the camera in slow motion and shatters.

For most of the first series, we follow the fortunes of a trio of survivors as they wander around the countryside rather aimlessly, although one is searching for her son. Eventually they find a place to settle, and a community begins to build.

Despite the clear SF theme, the series managed to appeal to a wider audience because the idea that we could suddenly find ourselves in such a situation seemed very real back in the 70s, with the nuclear threat still in the news. But because Nation made the killer of the human race a virus, the theme is still plausible today. Pondering how we would cope when faced with the complete removal of everything we rely upon — proper medicine, electricity, law and order — is still a sobering pastime and it does not take much thought to realise that many of us would probably not last very long.

There are problems with the programme, most notably its apparent contention that the only survivors would be from the middle classes. Were it not for the presence of the excellent Talfryn Thomas as the Welsh dropout Tom Price, the only accent one would hear is that of the well brought up middle class English. And the programme is not helped by the presence of two truly awful "cute" kids whose screen time is, mercifully, limited. Class attitudes aside, the fact that this is a 1970s series would be evident even if there was a decent mix of characters — there's nothing like a pair of flared trousers to really put a TV programme in its historical place.

Given that there are so many SF series running on satellite at the moment, I have had little time to catch the few genre films that are around. In the last couple of months, we've been treated (if that's the right word) to Sky and TNT (a recently launched film channel) screening SF seasons. Now, on the BBC or ITV this usually means that the likes of "The Day the Earth Stood Still", "Forbidden Planet" and "This Island Earth" are trotted out for the umpteenth time. Not so on satellite. Sky's season covered both the major movie channels, which alternately broadcast a "SF" film at 6pm every night. Forget the timeless, oft-repeated classics. Sky gave us instead "Knight Rider 2000", "Not of This World", "Crack in the World", "Krull" and Hulk Hogan in "Suburban Commando". Ten out of ten for breaking the SF season mould, but not enough for the selection (I could be generous and say four, but that's only for "Crack in the World").

TNT screen a handful of films every night, all on the same theme, or featuring the same star. Their "SF" night (8pm to 4.35am) featured such gems as "Night of the Lepus", "Soylent Green", "The Green Slime", "Battle Beneath the Earth" and "The World, The Flesh and The Devil". Certainly not the best ever collection of SF, but an improvement on Sky's attempt.

Good grief! A whole column without mentioning "Star Trek"!

Damn...

Evil Dead III: Army of Darkness

Leigh G Barlow

Bruce Campbell plays Ash, a guy who is having a bad life, never mind a bad day. First he and his girlfriend were attacked by an evil demon when they discovered the Necronomicon: The Book of the Dead ("Evil Dead 1"). Then Ash has to chop off one of his hands when the demon possesses it, and to replace it, he fixes a chainsaw to his arm ("Evil Dead 2"). Now Ash finds himself thrown back in time to 1300 AD. To add to what is already a bad situation the demon is also there, and protecting the Necronomicon which holds the secret of how to send Ash back to his own time.

This film will certainly surprise those who have seen "Evil Dead 1", a serious and very bloodthirsty tale, but perhaps not so much those who saw the second of the "Evil Dead" series, which was forced to become a comedy, just to keep the censors happy. "Army of Darkness" is definitely a comedy, but not the slapstick kind. Nor is it full of cheap

stabs at other horror movies. What makes this film funny is the throwaway lines that Ash uses, the strange coincidences and the terrible punishment that the main character is forced to sustain. Don't let the horror aspect of the film put you off going to see it, for there is very little blood and guts, and it certainly isn't frightening. If you want a light-hearted film to watch at a late night showing, that will have you quoting lines from it for the following week, go and see "Army of Darkness".

Fantasy on Video

Geoff Cowie

Current releases:

Wicked City (Manga Video MANV 1023, PAL, 83 mins, cert. 18 £12.99) Also known as "Supernatural Beast City", this is a demonic thriller concerning the imminent renewal of a non-aggression treaty between the human world and the realm of the demons. The Black Guards, who are undercover operatives from both sides, try to hold the peace against the actions of demonic terrorists and make sure that psychic expert Dr Malyart lives long enough to make the signing. Taki, a Black Guard, forms a partnership with Mackie, a female Black Guard from the Darkside.

The plot is fairly lively and contains the expected quota of heart-thumping demonic attacks, and some startling erotic scenes. The women from the Darkside are supposed by Earthside men to have exquisite erotic powers. Altogether, this is a very good-looking and stylish movie. The music soundtrack is quite pleasant though the dubbed dialogue sounds a little stilted and mid-Atlantic. The character of the priapic two hundred year old Dr Malyart, the good guys' psychic expert, affords some comic relief.

Heroic Legend of Arislan Part II (Manga Video MANV 1022, PAL, 58 mins, cert. PG, £10.99) Part II continues in the same likeable manner as Part I. However, about fifteen minutes into the second video, one begins to suspect that there isn't going to be a resolution. A different team of scriptwriters introduce more characters instead of developing those from Part I, and Prince Arislan has doubts about his legitimacy. There follows a section in which the heroes are involved in a civil war with an untrustworthy Indian prince and his brother. The "politically correct" will probably be upset by this characterisation! A slightly disappointing "middle episode"; two more are said to be in production.

Crying Freeman, Chapter 1 (Manga Video MANV 1020, PAL, 51 mins, cert. 18, £8.99) The second volume of the "manly fantasy adventure" is disappointing; the hero's promotion seems a bit implausible and the fat Bayasan, who was apparently a more sympathetic character in the graphic book version, comes over as a childish nutter. There is a silly James Bond-ish plot and little else to interest the more discerning viewer, except that the American villainess is rather good looking.

Doomed Megalopolis Chapter 2 (cert 15, 46 mins) The second volume of this dark fantasy is just as good as the first. The children's song sticks in your brain a while...

Tetsuo II (ICA, ICAV 1005, PAL, 81 mins, subtitled, Cert. 18) A follow up to Shinya Tsukamoto's debut movie, this time with colour and a much bigger budget. It was hailed as a cinematic masterpiece by William Gibson and gained critical applause from film buffs, but was not a hit with the mass audience: the film's weirdness and the difficulty of identifying with or sympathising with any of the characters evidently deterred the average viewer. Fans of cyberpunk will probably enjoy the movie's theme and treatment; against a background

of tower blocks, empty streets and factories the hero is harassed by a gang of punks who kidnap his son; his rage causes his body to mutate into a ferocious cyber-gun. Personally, I found it rather disappointing compared with "Tetsuo 1": the music isn't as good as in the first movie, the characters are uninteresting and the action baffling. The colour is mainly used to give the action a permanent blue cast. The art movie at its worst? Essential viewing for cyberpunk fans.

At a recent video festival, I saw several fantasy and SF videos that made the average made-for-TV fare look like pap:

"Karula no Mau", a gripping ghost/horror fantasy with psychic twin sisters as heroines.

"Roujin Z" about the problem of caring for the elderly and what happens when a high-tech medicare robot develops a mind of its own - quite astounding.

"Battle Angel", a stunningly realised cyberpunk science fantasy about a robot, built from salvaged parts, who develops a mind and heart of her own.

"Mermaid's Forest", not explicit horror, but still one of the most horrifying videos I've seen.

Bastard! Ogle those princesses! Polish those swords! Bash those orcs! Curse those sorcerers! 110% swords and sorcery hokum. None of these, alas, is available in PAL.

Ken Campbell's "Jamais Vu"

Benedict Cullum

Pondering the many questions raised and answered during Campbell's monologue performed in The Green Room in Manchester recently, I found myself wondering how I was to justify the inclusion of any review in the pages of "Matrix": were credentials and/or justification really important -- to which a voice replied, to some people, yes, and after all, wasn't that what his monologue was all about; questions, connections, credentials and justification?

So, Ken Campbell has performed with Sylvester McCoy (the last Dr Who), with Brian Aldiss sometime SF writer, was a force (the force?) behind the SF Theatre and years ago set about presenting the conspiracy-theory laden "Illuminatus!" series for the stage. He is also a self-confessed Philip K Dick fan which, in itself, is good enough for me!

As might be expected following those last two credentials, paranoia abounds, both his own and that of those he meets *en route*, from Ken's encounter with his former lawyer in Cardboard City near the National Theatre, or National Fortress as he prefers to call it, to the majestic volcanic climax on the Isle of Vanuatu in the New Hebrides, fifteen hundred miles from Oz. We have dark demi-urges; Manichean gods; cargo cults; secret societies that stretch from the early history of Christianity to the imminent demise of the British monarchy.

Campbell's monologue charts a voyage of discovery starting, appropriately enough, on the day he is asked to prepare this piece for inclusion in a projected series of trilogies at the National Fortress; the previous two in his particular series being "Memoirs of a Futuristic Nudist" and "Pigsput". A seemingly spur of the moment visit to a Jeremy Isaacs discussion with, of all people, John Birt, leads to chance encounters galore and -- in the second half of a value for money three

hour performance -- we are taken to the Island of Vanuatu, being the actual and the thematic territory of the aforementioned "Pigsput".

Campbell will seduce you into believing that everything connects. If you are minded to experience a thought-provoking, frequently hilarious, helter-skelter exposition of just exactly what is going on around you whilst you wander in a daze, I'd recommend that you "go with the flow" to a theatre near you if you see this advertised. That way, of course, you'll learn the derivation of the title, because I'm not telling.

Beccon Publications:

An Unreliable History

Roger Robinson

It all started in July 1981 when, together with a group of friends, I was part of the first BECCON committee. We had invited Barry Bayley to be our Guest of Honour, and decided to produce a mini-bibliography to honour the event. Luckily, Mike Ashley agreed to do the research, and I typed up the results on the computer at work and we had a nice little souvenir booklet for the con. There were a few copies left over and the committee agreed that I should see if I could sell any at a nominal price, just really to cover postage. Another outcome of the convention was a booklet entitled "The Voice of the Shrimp" wherein the committee committed to paper their thoughts on the organisational problems of running a small SF con. Once again, I typed up the results and got the copying done.

My first real involvement with research was in the preparation of the biblio for BECCON's 1983 Guest of Honour: Ken Bulmer. Having been given a massive start on the mass of Ken's work by Ian Covell, I tweaked the data around a bit and rifled through various boxes in Ken's house and eventually came up with a fairly substantial booklet. Again, it was produced for the con, with me dealing with any sales afterwards.

There followed various con-running booklets (from Jon Cowie), a cookbook (from Bernie Peck) and a book of plays (as performed at BECCONs and including "Spock in Manacles") before Ian Sorensen persuaded me do "The Best of Conrunner" -- a collection of articles from his long-running fanzine. During the time I was also persuaded to formalise, and publish some checklists I kept in my Filofax. The main one of these was the Magazine Checklist, which is still selling after nine years, having been through various changes of format, most caused by change of computer.

Over the years, I had, together with most of the BECCON committee, been a member of an SF evening class in London run by various SF luminaries. When John Clute took over the class, he persuaded me to stop just jotting down pseudonyms as I found them, but to grasp the bull by the horns and publish the list. After a couple of years and (much) more egging-on from John, I eventually published "Who's Hugh?" in August 1987. Although the rest of the BECCON committee had gone from running small cons to running the Eastercon in 1987, I had stepped down in order to try and get "Who's Hugh?" out. Luckily, they agreed that I could still use the name BECCON, although this did give rise to (totally unfounded) rumours that all the convention profits were going into setting up this international publishing empire. Which profits? Which empire?

While I was working on the pseudonym list, two people (separately) collared me in some convention bar or other -- Gytha North and Rob

Meades. Gytha just wanted to know the ins and outs of getting a filk book printed and distributed -- this was the start of a line of (up to present) six filk books, which sell as well in the States as here. They all have made a modest profit, which is ploughed back into buying essentials (computers, beer, etc).

The second meeting was the start of the saga of drabbles [a drabble is a story consisting of exactly one hundred words, excluding the title and hyphenated-words-are-argued-about]. Possibly due to the venue of the meeting, Rob and Dave Wake's idea of a fanzine of fifteen or so drabbles turned into a limited edition hardbound book of a hundred drabbles. Very early on in the project, we decided to donate any profits to the RNIB Talking Book Library — this being a safeguard against having to split royalties one hundred ways. We were very pleasantly surprised at the number and variety of authors who donated stories. So far, three books, all of one hundred drabbles, all of one thousand handback editions, have been produced. "The Drabble Project" is sold out with over fifteen hundred pounds already donated to RNIB. "Double Century" should make about twelve hundred if/when we sell out (cover price five pounds plus fifty pence p&p) and the latest tome, "Drabble Who" should make about four thousand pounds if all goes well. As you may guess from this last title, it is a collection written by people involved with Dr Who — from Doctors to Script Editors to fans. Copies are available from BECCON, 75 Rosslyn Ave, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG for eight pounds ninety nine pence (plus seventy five pence p&p).

Meanwhile — other projects and pipedreams continue...

Stars' End

Andy Sawyer

Since the last message from Stars' End (or Star's End, as it is punctuated in the book), some minor updates of information. I can now be contacted at 051-794-2372 or 2696; the former number is my office and the latter is the Special Collections Department of the University Library. I also have an email address (asawyer@liverpool.ac.uk).

The press announcement of the opening of the SFF Collection caused a burst of media excitement. I suppose if I had a hit record or slept with a Member of Parliament, I could have had more attention, but it was enough to keep me busy. Within the week, David Seed and I became quite the little experts on being interviewed by local radio presenters who all wanted to make the same "Beam me up, Scotty!" jokes. The publicity resulted in a satisfactory number of enquiries from people who wanted information which the Collection could supply, or who wanted to know about the M.A. course. We have since been visited by or had enquiries from anyone from University academics engaged in serious research to people interested in the Flat Earth Society.

We are now working towards an "official" linkage between the University of Liverpool and the Friends of Foundation at Eastercon. I hope to see as many of you as possible there.

To set us on the right path, Ramsey Campbell, winner of more British Fantasy Awards than any other writer, has deposited his manuscripts on long loan with the Science Fiction Foundation Collection. On Monday 1 November, Ramsey (who of course is a Liverpoolian by birth) read an unpublished extract from "The Parasite" (set less than thirty yards away from where we were sitting) to an audience of University staff and guests. He then signed the Collection's copy of his new novel, "The Long Lost" and presented several boxes of papers including mss of "The Doll Who Ate His Mother", "Obsession" and "The Parasite".

There may be those of you counting the number of spaceships in Ramsey's fiction with a puzzled expression on your face. Take into account that not only is Ramsey Liverpool's premier writer of imaginative fiction, but that the unease which he so brilliantly raises in his fiction is not a million miles away from that raised by certain types of SF; much ink (even blood, they tell me) has been spilled over the question of whether H P Lovecraft, Ramsey's fictional mentor, was horror or SF. Secondly, this area — especially its "crossover" manifestations — is one in which we need to expand now we have the space and the academic interest. And, in any case, Ramsey is a well-known figure in SF as well as horror fandom. This man is no literary purist. He'll accept a drink from you no matter what you read.

Thank you, Ramsey.

Over the past few weeks, David Seed and I have been in negotiations with the literary executors of two major SF writers (one with a very strong Liverpool connection) and there will be more to announce in the near future.

Meanwhile, donations have been rolling in, ranging from copies of fanzines to four thousand books and magazines, which has taken me and my volunteer labour weeks merely to get in order! Rosemary Pardoe (who donated copies of "Ghosts and Scholars" and other "Haunted Library" booklets) and the Gothic Society get this column's seal of approval. Small-press editors, why not follow their example. I'd also like to thank those more mainstream (though still "Small" by conventional standards) publishers who donated books and magazines.

On the topic of donations, I have had at least three enquiries from people thinking about leaving their SF collections to the Foundation in their wills. This is a great idea, and I can assure anyone interested in the idea that we do not as yet have an operating hit squad. If anyone is interested by the idea, please do get in touch.

Finally (almost): if there are any BSFA members/Friends of Foundation in the Liverpool area who have time free during the day or early evening (just a couple of hours every so often, not full-time employment!), I'd be glad to hear from you.

To end with: no wonderful undiscovered jewels this time, but I was fascinated by the way my mention of Berl Cameron's "Sphero Nova" turned out to be a forerunner of Ian Watson's recollection (in an "Interzone" interview) of the book as a major influence on his childhood reading. What other obscure but seminal works are there lurking in the library stacks, I wonder?

"Foundation: The Review of Science Fiction" edited by Dr Edward James is now published c/o New Worlds, 71-72 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0AA.

Donations of material can be sent to the SF Foundation c/o Special Collections, Liverpool University Library, PO Box 123, Liverpool L69 3DA.

For information about/offers of help and money to Friends of Foundation, contact Rob Meades, 75 Hecham Close, Walthamstow, London E17 5QT.

Inquiries about the MA in SF Studies, due to start in October 1994, should be addressed to Dr David Seed, English Department, Liverpool University, PO Box 147 Liverpool L69 3BX.

WriteBack

If you want to reply to any of the letters here, or introduce a new topic yourself, please write to Jenny and Steve Glover, 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP

by the deadline 15 January 1994.

Space Analysis

Harry Cameron Andruschak

Just a note to say that I wish to make a note about Barton's comments on page 14 of the last "Matrix" about sexism.

The simple fact remains that women are weaker than men, and probably always will be. This is biology, and biology is destiny. No amount of screaming feminists can change that. Women are weaker than men, since they have smaller bone structures and smaller muscles. As such, the average woman will use less oxygen, water and food in space than your average man. An all-women space crew will use substantially less water, oxygen and food than an all-male crew. Even assuming a certain amount of re-cycling, an all-women crew is obviously the best for long term space travel. Leave the men in the earth-orbiting space station and let the women explore the solar system.

Bookshop Wit

John Madracki

In the last issue, Jenny Glover reported a brief exchange between herself and an assistant in a SF bookshop. She regretted the death of Heinlein: the assistant regretted the loss of what he immediately thought was possibly a customer. This brought to mind a recent incident that I am assured is quite true -- A mature student, researching European dictators, entered a well-known bookstore and approached a thirtysomethingish assistant.

"Do you have any biographies of Mussolini and Stalin, and a copy of 'Mein Kampf'?" enquired the customer.

"I don't know" said the assistant, picking up her biro. "I'll check. Now then -- Mussolini -- how do you spell that?"

The student told her.

"And Stalin?"

When the bookseller got to "Mein Kampf" she asked if that was the name of the author.

The would-be purchaser, at first bemused, was now becoming incredulous.

"It was written by Hitler" she said.

"Hitler who?"

"Adolph Hitler!" said the customer, through gritted teeth.

"Look!" retorted the assistant, clearly offended, "I can't be expected to know the name of every bloody writer".

Can anyone top that?

Book Search

Phil Nichols

There have been a few comments in recent issues about Waterstones' Booksearch, and I have received several letters on the subject myself -- some of them bordering on the abusive -- following my remarks on the subject a couple of Information Service columns ago. Just to make it clear to everyone:

First, yes, I know Waterstones is owned by W H Smith. But then, so is Do It All. That they are all part of the same conglomerate does not mean that they have the same policy when it comes to the goods they stock. If I want a wide selection of books, I go to Waterstones. If I want a cheap biro, I go to Smith's. And if I want a 6mm masonry bit, I go to Do It All. (Actually, I go to B&Q, but that's owned by Woolworths and Boots and so doesn't do much to support my present argument).

Second, in reply to John Ollis in last issue, yes, there are a number of book dealers who offer a book search service which -- as far as I know -- is every bit as good, quick and cheap as that offered by Waterstones. However, I wasn't fully aware of this when I wrote my column. All I was doing was passing on a recommendation given by a satisfied customer, with the specific thought in mind that Waterstones' service, being postal, might appeal to the more remotely situated BSFA member. I have on several occasions asked readers to recommend suppliers of obscure/deleted books, and am happy to pass on any such recommendations.

No Abbreviations, Please

Margaret Tout

Firstly, what are NESFA and NSSFA, which were mentioned in the last "Matrix"? It would be nice to know what I'm reading about.

Secondly, please publish the rates of membership for standing orders as well as for other forms of payment. It would make it much easier to change the standing order if I knew how much to change it to. I realise it appeared several issues ago, however, that issue has disappeared into the black hole or read but unfilled paperwork in my house, which is unlikely to be sorted out before Christmas. Some people may be organised enough to get this sort of thing done immediately it arises; they may not have young children, a full time job and other interests besides SF.

Anyway, I think those active in the BSFA are doing a pretty good job in general. I certainly couldn't cope with it.

[Apologies for the abbreviations. NESFA is the New England Science Fiction Association, NSSFA is the National Students' Science Fiction Association. We will have the membership costs for standing orders and overseas members in the next issue].

Hugos and CD-Roms

Philip Muldowney

It is that time of year again, when Hugos march across the news. The most striking thing to me about the Hugo voting, is literally how few people actually voted. One of the main reasons d'être of being a Worldcon member, has been promoted as being able to vote for these Hugos, yet at ConFrancisco, the maximum number of ballots just scrapes over the seven hundred mark. I do not know the membership

number of the 1993 Worldcon, but I would not be surprised if the Hugo voting represented not much more than ten to fifteen per cent of the actual attendance figure. Now that is pathetic! More important, perhaps, why has the Hugo voting decreased to such an abysmal level? Have worldcons reached the stage where they are a giant beanfeast party, and things like literary merit in SF hardly interest anyone?

The low voting figures do tend to suggest that the nature of those who do vote, has a disproportionate influence over the end result. Okay, the results are not quite as loony as in previous years. "A Fire Upon The Deep" and "The Doomsday Book" have the general consensus of being the very best novels of the year. However, is "Asimov's SF" that great a source of prize-winning SF? It is not that good! In particular, I find the novelette award for "Nutcracker Soup" by Janet Kagan, somewhat baffling. Gardner Dozois did not even think it was good enough to include in his "Best SF" of the year. A curious story, a sort of time warped Christmas simplicity tale for twelve year olds, one that would have been eminently suitable for "Astounding" in the Fifties, or Mills and Boon today. Albeit an entertaining slightness, but the best of the year??? So the Hugo banquet and awards are the centre of the worldcons? Well, there is certainly no danger in anybody getting over-excited at the adventurous nature of the awards. If you were a betting man, then go for the stories which are well-written, giving a different or entertaining twist on an old theme, but, above all, go for those that are safe and middle of the road, and you will probably win hands down. Is Ladbroke going to offer any odds for the Hugo awards in Glasgow? Should be money for old rope... predicting made easy.

The review of the Hugo CD was fascinating. Trouble was, it gave me that little twinge of jealousy over not having the means to view it. Indeed, how many have? Despite the massive price war that there has been in the PC computer industry, a decent 486 machine, with a CD Rom drive, and maybe a sound card, is going to set you back £1200-1300 in what is still a fast changing technology. The war between the various electrical-computer-media behemoths to achieve the holy grail of electrical consumer goodies is a fascinating one. Billions have been, and are being spent, by companies who have really started flying by the seat of their pants. Laserdisc? Digital tape? Mini-disc? HD TV interactive television? Whole slews of different products are being produced, and are bombing. So is it wise to spend out too much on the latest fad? After all, have you tried doing anything with a Beta machine lately? The very fact led Sony to spend billions in purchasing Hollywood studios and recording companies to obtain the "software". That, of course, is now backing on them, the George Michael court case being only one of them... SF writers always assumed the technology of the global village and beyond would be there but they very rarely made any use of the fascinating stories to be made of getting there!

So, I still think it is only worth getting a CD Rom if you are basically interested in the images. How many of us would want to view all the thousands and thousands of words of the Hugo nominees from a PC screen? Few, I bet. Christmas must be coming. I seem to be thinking in money terms, especially those ripoffs of primitive technology, known as Sega and Nintendo, can one weep ffffff?

The Treasurer Replies

Elizabeth Billinger

I feel that the last "WriteBack" requires a response from the BSFA Treasurer. Firstly VAT. The BSFA income is largely comprised of membership subscriptions, not the sale of printed matter, and in the unlikely event that our membership income reaches the current VAT limit, we will be liable to register and to apply VAT to our subscriptions. The current limit for VAT registration is £37,600 (from

17.3.93) rather than the £36,000 Philip Muldowney refers to in his letter in "Matrix" 108. The imposition of VAT on printed matter is likely to increase our costs in which case the pros and cons of voluntary VAT registration would have to be re-considered. This is an exercise which I have recently carried out anyway, in order to determine what is in the BSFA's best interests. Philip Muldowney under-estimates the current Treasurer's commitment to the BSFA, and perhaps her qualifications for the position. I would not consider maintaining VAT records for the BSFA to be a particularly frightening prospect, and as a professional accountant deal with far more onerous tasks!

Next the question of Standing Orders: The suggested loss to the BSFA on out of date subscriptions seems to have been somewhat overstated. I am assured by Keith Freeman that such members have the period of their subscription reduced in line with the reduced payment. This does, however, present an administrative headache and adds to our not inconsiderable bank charges. The possibility of introducing Direct Debits has already been investigated, and would reduce bank charges as well as keeping subscriptions up to date. Unfortunately, Barclays consider the amount of income received in the BSFA bank account to be too low for the viable operation of a Direct Debit scheme and have turned down my application.

Life Membership: Colin Greenland's commitment in taking out life membership should be applauded, rather than causing other members to throw up their hands in horror. I should point out that we have not been inundated with similar offers, and that in my experience people in their twenties with a passionate interest in Science Fiction struggle to find £15 let alone £150. Will Jim England be taking advantage of what he obviously considers to be a golden opportunity?

Mailing Costs: There appears to be some confusion over this, I think due to the use of rather loose terminology. Using the services of The Mailing House to send out our magazines is obviously more expensive (it includes VAT apart from anything else) than the cost of postage plus lunch for volunteer labour. The increase is not enormous though, and is within our limited resources. However, the additional cost of having the magazines collated, ie stapled and folded, by the printers rather than by volunteers has increased printing costs by around fifty per cent and is putting a serious strain on our bank account.

I hope this clarifies the various points raised in "Matrix" 108 and reassures members that as Treasurer I am doing my utmost to manage and maximise the finances of the BSFA. If anyone has any further ideas or queries about cutting costs or increasing funds, I would be delighted to hear from them (please write to me at 82 Kelvin Road, New Cubbington, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 7TQ).

Stop Press

Filming on "Batman 3" is to start next September with a release date of summer of 1995. Joel "The Lost Boys" Schumacher will be the Good Guy and if the villain is to be the Riddler, he is likely to be played by either Robin Williams or John "In the Line of Fire" Malkovich.

Author William Shatner will have a cameo role in the first "Tekwar" film though Greg Evigan will play Jake Cardigan. Madeline L'Engle's book "A Wrinkle in Time" is being adapted by Miramax by Linda "Beauty and the Beast" Woolverton. The live action budget is rumoured to be \$15US.^(p.116,66) Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment is negotiating with the BBC to co-produce some "Doctor Who".

Many thanks to A G Wagner for this information

MSS Found in a Wine Bottle

A funny thing happened on the way to the programme item: I was late and stumbled over this sort of outstretched arm. There was a fanfold of papers at the end of it, held together with a couple of staples which looked as if all they wanted to do was go AWOL. I raised one eyebrow. When I did it in the bathroom, my reflection looked sombre and sophisticated: but the arm did not retreat in disorder and the flapping paper simply came closer to my new t-shirt. The blob at the end of this thing seemed to be wanting me to have it, he (or she, there was so much hair, glasses and trousers that I could not really be too precise as to gender) kept smiling. His cheek muscles must have been hurting like crazy. (Or hers). Huh? I said, trying to indicate puzzlement in the minimum number of words. It's for you, said the hairy thing. It's a fanzine. I do hope you like reading it. But why me? I responded, forced into saying more than one word per century out of sheer curiosity. Because you're there could have been the answer, but I couldn't accept that I was just a random piece of microcosm. The thing, person I guess, must have given out these fanzine sort of things to all the people they (yes, that's a safe choice of words concerning sex) knew. There were a few spare copies. I'd be gracious. Uh, sure, said my voice, but what do I do with it. I think the answer concerned "the usual". But my body language must have conveyed some sort of jerk, as if that geezer was talking in double Dutch, though if it had been single Dutch it would have been just as goobledy-gook, which is not a word I use too often, people tend to mistake it for something, well, alien. So he/she/it explained in clear English which was about as clear, concise and human as it comes that I was to withdraw instantly to some quiet corner, say under the tables in the dining room, and read it. If I'll ink it, I was to communicate in any script form except muddy ink on grained green paper to say constructively what I thought of it and that would unlock the knowledge, except that these fanzine guys they don't spell proper and call it a loc. Er, no, LOC, it's all abbreviations, hey! I knew that all the time, it's a letter of comment and if it's legible they might print it in the next issue for all the other readers to comment on. I could start a whole chain of correspondence, me and my moustache (and my dinky laptop which has a printer with a so far unused cartridge). Some of the articles are on Science Fiction, yeah, that's my sort of thing. I feel cool investigating Heinlein's characters if there's nothing more modern and those bits about people's lives, they're kind of, well, I guess I want to read it again. This chap had CFS and got into spirit healing? That babe wrote all that about her travels and then called the mag after a cocktail, not that I drink Wallbangers now, that's the sort of thing I get for my doll when she's been real good, know what I mean?

Maybe I wouldn't insist on being struck from behind with a flat kind of steaming iron if I stumbled over another one. I've walked round the bar twice, though, and I'm out of luck. Not that I'm every out of luck for long. I got my shot of tequila and cherry juice (the latest man's drink - drink it and survive in my part of town and they'll say that you're a man, my son) and looked inside to see that there's a few more mentioned. Write or phone. Contact this address or look over to the other side of the bar at that guy handing out more paper. There's a crowd of people round him, if I stick with my drink, I'll end up stuck without this new fanzine sort of thing. It's an easy choice: the tequila is too much like jelly for me ... or is that the cherry juice. Excuse me please, I want to get this fanzine. Yeah! I am genuine. Excuse-me. You'll get "THE USUAL" out of me, just see if you don't.

Of course, if I was to start writing my own one, I could get to chat up all the cool guys and bright new chicks next year. Well, real soon now.

All Our Yesterdays:

December 1983 — January 1984

Dave Bell

The "SF-Lovers Digest" is one of the older electronic newsletters, possibly the oldest to be widely distributed. It was created on 14 January 1980 by Roger D Duffey II, replacing the earlier SF-Lovers mailing list which was badly overloading the computer system at MIT-AI. In December 1983, Saul Jaffe took over as the moderator, the electronic equivalent of the editor of a paper magazine. The last I heard he was still doing the job. Unlike many paper fanzines, it is still possible to obtain copies of the earliest issues. This article is based on material published in "SF-Lovers Digest" in the winter of 1983-84.

Ten years ago, everybody was talking about George Orwell and his book "Nineteen Eighty-Four". Was the year going to be anything like the book? Late on the night of 7 December, Mark Callow made the following observation:

"1984" has more to make you think than just about any other work of fiction. It is frightening how accurate some of his observations and predictions have turned out to be.

'Take, for instance, MiniLuv, the Ministry of Love (War) and its slogan "War is Peace" then remember that Reagan calls the MX missile the "Peacemaker". Has he read "1984"?

"1984" is the fourth most frequently censored book in the USA according to a list compiled by Dr Lee Bures of the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point. This is based on six surveys from challenged books in the nation's libraries taken from 1965 to 1982."

After speculating on why people might ban a book, including the possibility that they might understand it too well, he went on to list some of the other most-censored books:

"The Catcher in the Rye" - J D Salinger
 "Forever" - Judy Blume
 "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" - Mark Twain
 "To Kill a Mockingbird" - Harper Lee
 "Slaughterhouse Five" - Kurt Vonnegut Jr.
 "The Learning Tree" - Gordon Parks
 "One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest" - Ken Kesey
 "Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl" - Anne Frank.

This prompted an account of how, somewhere in Oklahoma, an attempt had been made to ban "The Grapes of Wrath" from the local public library. The man who was trying to do this was the local banker. But that does not really have much to do with Science Fiction. One advantage of the growth in computer networks has been the way in which news travels faster. For instance, I once heard of a guitar theft near Bristol by way of a computer system in Denver, Colorado. This snippet of news comes from the World Fantasy Convention of October 1983:

'Harlan Ellison has turned "The Last Dangerous Visions" in to the Publisher. It will come out in three volumes early next year. It will include a previously unknown "People" story,

found among Zenna Henderson's effects after her death.'

At about this time, several messages deal with verses for the folk version of "Old Time Religion", which is a sort of theological portmanteau song. At the time, it was claimed that there were at least three hundred verses, a belief which can be traced to a Frank Hayes song. This is one of them.

I hear Valkyries a-comin'
In the air their song is coming
They forgot the words they're humming
Yet they're good enough for me.
(Chorus).

There are other subjects which do not change much. I didn't find any mention of the other big event of November 1963 (I was at the Grassy Knoll Creche and Rifle Range at the time — where were you?) but at least the BBC were still making the series back then. A "Doctor Who" fan, Michi Fore, provided the following answer to a question about Susan Williams, prompted by the character's appearance in the Twentieth Anniversary Special, "The Five Doctors".

'Susan was not from 1963 Earth. She was attending school on 1963 Earth while the Doctor tried to find materials to fix the TARDIS. Susan always called the Doctor "grandfather". Whether she actually was the Doctor's granddaughter or only adopted was never specifically said. Susan's exact origins were never stated.'

Another argument of the time brings back a few personal memories. I used to be a member of the Tolkien Society.

'TOLKIEN UNREAL!!! I believe in Middle Earth more than I believe in New York.'

'After all, I've never been to New York, but I have been to Middle Earth, and I'd rather return to Middle Earth than go to New York.'

— Mary.'

Back to the science. The third "Star Wars" movie was still pretty new in those days, and Ed Turner applies some simple science to reach an interesting result.

'A recent discussion concluded that the probable diameter of the Death Star is in the range 80-160 km based on several lines of argument.'

'umcp-cs'rene raised the question of the probable population of a "ship" of this size.'

'A simple calculation shows that an 80km radius sphere has a volume of $270,000\text{km}^3$ and assuming decks separated by 3m, a total deck space area of 90 million km^2 (roughly half the land area of the Earth). If this structure were manned by the same crew density as a modern nuclear aircraft carrier (say CVN Enterprise to be specific), its population would be about 2 trillion! This figure could be brought down to about 20 billion if the crew density were reduced to a level comparable to that in a crowded country (eg Japan or the Netherlands). At levels comparable to a rather empty country (say Australia), the number would be down to about 200 million (ie comparable to the population of the US). This last number would

be roughly like manning a CVN with only one person! The crew would have a hard time finding each other!

'If the per capita energy consumption in the Death Star were equal to that in the US today, the Death Star's surface temperature would be 2300 degree K (3700 degrees F = glowing a dull red hot), 730 degree K (855 degrees F) or 230 degree K (-45 degrees F) respectively for the three population figures mentioned above. This would be required simply to radiate waste heat into space. The interior temperatures would be higher.'

Tom Laidig went a little further with these figures, which incidentally knock some holes in the idea of tunnelling into an asteroid and building up a very large population.

'Ed's calculations of the surface temperature of the Death Star (temperature required to radiate heat from "normal" energy consumption) give a possible reason why the Death Star would have to be so large. In order to support a large population (such as 200 million), you would need to have a large surface area simply to radiate the waste heat, even though the population density is extremely low. Perhaps this also explains why they have passageways large enough for spaceships penetrating from the outer skin to the main reactor area: to allow heat to escape (although it wouldn't radiate out of the hole very well — you'd probably need to allow some gases to escape to carry away heat. Obviously, the loss of a little raw materials is not a major concern to someone who could build something that big.

So now you know. At the time other people were talking about "Sundiver" by David Brin, which uses a laser to dump the heat from the vessel probing the sun's atmosphere. Maybe this has something to do with the way the Death Star destroys planets. "Don't move! This air-conditioning system is loaded!"

Another common topic was the new books of the time. It might be the latest Gene Wolfe, or publisher's plans for the last two volumes of "The Belgariad". Ten years ago, David Eddings was still a fairly new writer. Ten years on, he sells a lot of books. Sometimes they were fairly detailed reviews and criticisms, sometimes the report was less formal.

Date: Sun, 11 Dec 1983 at 10:41 EST
From: Alan L Zeichick
Subject: New ST Book

Look for "The Wounded Sky" by Diane Duane; as Star Trek books go, this is pretty good, even though the blurb on the back cover seems a bit misleading; the alien scientist K't'lk sounds very nice, but hardly pretty! Ms Duane is obviously a profound thinker, and I look forward to more of her books. This book is very new; publication date was this month.

Meanwhile, after a discussion of SF about cats and cat-like aliens:

Date: 14 Jan 84 14:35:21-PST (Sat)
From: Bruce Smith, UNC-Chapel Hill
Subject: Wombats in SF

Does anyone know any SF stories with wombats?

Is this guy serious? Well, there is an answer.

Date: Tuesday 17 Jan 1984 09:36:26-PST
 From: Paul S Winalski
 Subject: Wombats in SF

Zelazny's "Doorways in the Sand" has an alien in it disguised as a talking wombat.

[Moderator's note: Thanks also to the following for the same information - Chris Heiny, Mark A Rosenstein].

In fact, there are several answers, which spin off into a whole new territory.

Date: 17 Jan 1984 1432-EST
 From: Wang Zeep
 Subject: Wombat SF

"Charles Fort Never Mentioned Wombats" by either Coulson or Weese. About a bunch of fans who save the world at Aussiecon.

The one problem with international computer networks is that messages do not travel instantly. You often get the same answer from several people. The advantage of moderated discussions is that a lot of the repetition can be edited out. This message was in the next issue, and goes into a bit more detail.

Date: Wednesday, 18 Jan 84 17:19:01 PST
 From: Phil Jansen

Well, I know of one SF book with wombats in it. The book is "Charles Fort Never Mentioned Wombats". It is about strange occurrences at Aussiecon (Australia). You see, Aliens only show up on Earth when there is a SF convention there, so they can blend in with the (costumed) crowd ...

Many Fans who show up at a Con are psychic too. That's why they like SF - they can identify with the main characters in the books.

Does anyone know the author? This is GREAT SF (well SF anyway).

Meanwhile, Wang Zeep had left his terminal to check the details. It only took him twenty-nine minutes. This message prompted a diversion into fiction about fans and fan fiction, but that is for another month.

Date: 27 Jan 1984 1501-EST
 From: Wang Zeep

I did check the authors for "Charles Fort Never Mentioned Wombats". They are Coulson and DeWeese. MITSFS has a copy, but I have a feeling most others are out of luck. There are a couple of other books by Coulson and DeWeese about fans saving the world "Now You See It/Him/..." comes to mind. Gee, another subclass of SF: fans saving the world SF. Any other suggestions?

The material quoted appeared in "SF-Lovers Digest" at various times from November 1983 through to January 1984. Messages are the intellectual property of the original authors.

List of 1993 Ig Nobel Prize Winners

The winners of the 1993 Ig Nobel Prizes were announced in a ceremony held on October 7 at MIT. The prizes honor individuals whose achievements cannot or should not be reproduced.

A number of dignitaries participated in the ceremony, including: Nobel Laureates William Lipscomb (chemistry, 1976), Sheldon Glashow (physics, 1979), Jerome Friedman (physics, 1990), Mel Schwartz (physics, 1985) and Dudley Herschbach (chemistry, 1986); Russell Johnson, professor emeritus from Gilligan's Island; Alan Lightman, author of "Einstein's Dreams"; jazz harpist Deborah Henson-Conant, MIT economist Marcia Krugman; "New England Journal of Medicine" executive editor Paula Angell; past president of the American Bar association John J. Curtin; and Tufts University Dental School's Philip Molloy, who has performed more than 10,000 root canal procedures.

The new winners:

Psychology John Mack of Harvard Medical School and David Jacobs of Temple University, mental visionaries, for their leaping conclusion that people who believe they were kidnapped by aliens from outer space, probably were - and especially for their conclusion that, in Professor Jacob's words, "the focus of the abduction is the production of children." [Both Mack and Jacobs have written and spoken extensively on the subject. A good introduction is the book "Secret Life," by David Jacobs with an introduction by John Mack, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1992.]

Consumer Engineering Ron Popeil, incessant inventor and perpetual pitchman of late night television, for redefining the industrial revolution with such devices as the Veg-O-Matic, the Pocket Fisherman, the Cap Snaffer, Mr. Microphone, and the Inside-the-Shell Egg Scrambler.

Biology Paul Williams, Jr. of the Oregon State Health Division and Kenneth W. Newell of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, bold biological detectives, for their pioneering study, "Salmonella Excretion in Joy-Riding Pigs." [The study was published in "The American Journal of Public Health," vol. 60, no. 5, May, 1970. Kenneth Newell died in March, 1990.]

Economics Ravi Batra of Southern Methodist University, shrewd economist and best-selling author of "The Great Depression of 1990" (\$17.95) and "Surviving the Great Depression of 1990" (\$18.95), for selling enough copies of his books to single-handedly prevent worldwide economic collapse.

Peace The Pepsi-Cola Company of the Philippines, suppliers of sugary hopes and dreams, for sponsoring a contest to create a millionaire, and then announcing the wrong winning number, thereby inciting and uniting 800,000 riotously expectant winners, and bringing many warring factions together for the first time in their nation's history.

Visionary Technology Presented jointly to Jay Schiffman of Farmington Hills, Michigan, crack inventor of AutoVision, an image projection device that makes it possible to drive a car and watch television at the same time, and to the Michigan state legislature, for

making it legal to do so. [Michigan House Bill 4530, Public Act #55 was signed into law by the Governor on June 6, 1991.]

Chemistry James Campbell and Gaines Campbell of Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, dedicated deliverers of fragrance, for inventing scent strips, the odious method by which perfume is applied to magazine pages. [Additional historical information about the invention of scent strips can be obtained from the Campbell's' former colleague, Ronald Versic, President of the Ronald P. Dodge Company in Dayton, OH.]

Literature Awarded jointly to E. Topol, R. Califf, F. Van de Werf, P. W. Armstrong, and their 972 co-authors, for publishing a medical research paper which has one hundred times as many authors as pages. [Source "An International Randomized Trial Comparing Four Thrombolytic Strategies for Acute Myocardial Infarction," "The New England Journal of Medicine," volume 329, number 10, September 2, 1993, pages 673-682. The co-authors come from 15 different nations: Australia; Belgium; Canada; England; France; Germany; Ireland; Israel; Luxembourg; the Netherlands; New Zealand; Poland; Spain; Switzerland; and the United States.]

Mathematics Robert Faid of Greenville, South Carolina, farsighted and faithful seer of statistics, for calculating the exact odds (8,606,091,751,882:1) that Mikhail Gorbachev is the Antichrist. [Faid's complete calculation is contained in the book "Gorbachev! Has the Real Antichrist Come?" published by Victory House, Tulsa, Oklahoma. The pertinent section of the book was reprinted in the January, 1989 issue of Harper's Magazine.]

Physics Louis Kervran of France, ardent admirer of alchemy, for his conclusion that the calcium in chickens' eggshells is created by a process of cold fusion. [For an English language version of Kervran's research see the book "Biological Transmutations, and their applications in chemistry, physics, biology, ecology, medicine, nutrition, agriculture, geology," by Louis Kervran, Swan House Publishing Co., 1972.]

Medicine James F. Nolan, Thomas J. Stillwell, and John P. Sands, Jr., medical men of mercy, for their painstaking research report, "Acute Management of the Zipper-Entrapped Penis." [Nolan is Associate in Urology at the Guthrie Clinic in Sayre, PA. Stillwell is in private practice at North Urology, Ltd., in Robbinsdale, MN. Sands is Chairman of the Department of Urology, Naval Hospital, San Diego, CA. Their report was published in "The Journal of Emergency Medicine," vol. 8, 1990.]

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The Periodic Table

EVOLUTION - The Next Step - A bid for the 1996 EasterCon

Bridget Hardcastle

Holidays by the sea! SF by the sea! It's time for you to think about **Evolution - The Next Step - a bid for the 1996 EasterCon.**

We are bidding for the 1996 Eastercon, which we want to hold on the South Coast of England on Easter Bank Holiday weekend, April 1996. The committee is a mixture of "young enthusiasts" and people not spending all their available time running Intersection, and at the last count comprised (in alphabetical order) Simon Bisson, Mary Branscombe, John Bray, Mark Charsley, Bridget Hardcastle, Rhodri James, Alex McIntock and Pat McMurray, and we are promised others after Intersection. Most of us have worked at conventions and on committees before, and the rest of us have been diligent attendees. But enough about this. You want to know what **EVOLUTION - The Next Step - A bid for the 1996 Eastercon** will be like! Well, we are taking evolution and its many aspects as a theme, and there will of course be the usual items - amasquerade, film programme, filking, dealers and (we hope) mushrooms!

Remember - Sou'Wester is the place to vote for us! You could even presupport - a bargain at only #1. For further details please contact: **EVOLUTION**, 13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London NW3 6PX, UK or Email bmh@ee.ic.ac.uk

From Glasgow to the Ends of the Universe

Dave Clements

People get involved with running WorldCons for many reasons. But I'm sure Jenny Glover got involved with running the Fan Program for Intersection with an eye to arm-twisting other programme areas into writing articles for Matrix. That is how you get to be reading this little piece about our plans for the Science program of 'The Scottish Con'.

The science programming group is headed up by the triumvirate of Amanda Baker, John Bray and myself, Dave Clements. We were all at least partly responsible for the programming of Illumination, the 1992 Eastercon. Also, we are all professional scientists - Amanda and I are astrophysicists, whilst John works for the Met Office. We are aided and abetted in our task by an international group (including Bill Higgins who organised the science programme at Chicon 5, the 1991 WorldCon), connected via the computer network known as the Internet.

Our aim for the Intersection Science programme is to provide innovative, exciting and high quality coverage of science and real-world issues at the convention. To achieve this we will primarily use the considerable scientific expertise present within fandom. But in areas where that expertise is lacking, we will bring in professionals from outside fandom to make contributions. A number of special guests have already agreed to participate in this capacity. We are also liaising with the Edinburgh International Science Festival to capitalise on their resources, both speakers and exhibits.

The subject matter of the Intersection Science program will not only cover areas traditionally expected of convention science programs, such as space projects, physics, astronomy (especially with two astronomers on the committee!), but also will look into 'softer' sciences which are not always so well covered. In addition, we intend to have a number of items on the crossovers between science, science fiction and the real world, which are becoming more obvious as the predictions of past generations of writers come true. We wish to raise questions concerning the environment. How much longer can industry delay before making a real commitment to sustainable use of resources? Can technology continue to advance but in an ecologically responsible manner? We are interested in privacy issues being introduced by the evolving status of computers in society at large. Genetics and eugenics have troubled the world for decades. But as controversial techniques such as gene therapy, chromosomal manipulation and use of foetal tissue become more commonplace, these issues take on a new urgency. Can a realistic compromise be found between medical vision and ethical reticence? As scientists, we on the Intersection science programming committee have a vested interest in the problems of funding scientific research. Researchers are asking where particle physics can go now that the Superconducting Super-Collider has been cancelled? But we are even more concerned about the implications which government research cuts have for the fundamental economic and technological basis of Western society. Does there need to be a simple, obvious link with advances in theoretical astrophysics to the GNP for curiosity-driven research to be indispensable?

As the next step in this overall plan we have already put together a very long list of potential items. But another main plank to the science programming strategy is that items should be timely and topical. As Intersection approaches, we will be watching the news and scientific journals to ensure that some of the newest developments can be discussed at the Convention. We will also be canvassing fanfannish opinion to find out which items most interest you.

In this area, you can help us immediately. If there are specific scientific issues or subjects you would like us to cover, please let us know. If you wish to get involved with the programme, we are particularly looking for people who are keen to 'sponsor' items. This is because we firmly believe that the best convention programme items are driven by someone who is excited about them. We can be contacted at my address: Flat 3, Bishop's Court, John Garne Way, Marston Road, Oxford OX3 0TU, or over email on dlc@astro.ox.ac.uk (note that Intersection PR2 contains a misprint in this address).

A further area where we hope to make an impact is in the fixed exhibits area in the Fan Fair. We intend that the Intersection Science Programme will not just consist of panels, talks, workshops and so on. We are also looking for 'poster papers'. If you have an idea or project which can be briefly described in a poster display, we would like to put it up for general viewing in the public area of the convention. This idea is based on the short papers often displayed at scientific meetings, and we already have a number of people working on posters. Subjects offered so far include designs for launch vehicles, as well as rigorously devised planetary ecologies, and the alien lifeworlds that might evolve in them. Other areas of the Intersection programme will also be sponsoring poster papers. If you'd like more information on this scheme, please contact us at the address given above.

We are in the process of organising the WorldCon science programme that we would like to attend. I've told you about as much as I can about our plans at the moment, but rest assured you will be hearing more from us in the not-too-distant future. To help make this the science programme which you would like to attend, we need to hear about your ideas too. We hope to hear from you soon!

See you all in Glasgow!

Contour Mapping

A little sparse this time as neither of us made it to Novacon to pick up vast bundles of fliers.

February 4-6, 1994 (England)

Vibraphone. Oak Hotel, Brighton UK. GoHs: Talis Kimberley, Tom Smith, Fox. Memb: just gone up from £22 waged, £18 unwaged. Info: *Minas Istarion*, 2 Duncan Gate, London Road, Bromley, London BR1 3SG, UK.

March 4-6, 1994 (England)

MASQUE III. Stakis Victoria Hotel, Nottingham UK. British Costume Con. Memb: L20 until 12/30/93, L25 after; L5 supporting. Info: Masque III, c/o Mike Percival, 4 Ednaston Court, Yeldersley Lane, Ednaston, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 5BA, UK.

April 1-4, 1994 (England)

SOU'WES'ER/EAS'ERCON '94. Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, UK. GoHs: Barbara Hamby, Diane Duane, Neil Gaiman; FGOH: Peter Morwood. UK National Con. Memb: L25 attending, L10 supporting, L12.50 Child (9-14 years). Info: (U.S. address) Eastercon '94, c/o Mary & Bill Burns, 23 Kensington Ct., Hempstead NY 11550. (UK address) Eastercon '94, c/o 3 W. Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol BS6 6SZ, UK.

June 22-23, 1994 (Spain)

STSF '94. Barcelona, Spain. International workshop on Science & Technology through SF. Info: Miquel Barcelo, Facultat d'Informatica, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Pau Gargallo 5, E 08028 Barcelona, Spain; email: blo@lsi.upc.es.

July 29-31, 1994 (England)

WIINCON 3. King Alfred's College, Winchester, UK. GoHs: Algis Budrys, James P. Hogan. Memb: L20 until 11/14/93, L20 after; L13 support until 11/14/93, L16 after. Info: Wincon 3, c/o Keith Cosslett, 12 Crowsbury Close, Emsworth, Hants. PO10 7TS, UK.

Noticeboard

Brian Stableford books: "The Asgard Trilogy", special slipcased edition signed by the author, limited to five hundred numbered copies. £10 + £1.50 UK postage and packing. Also "The Way to Write Science Fiction" is offered to BSFA members at a reduced price: £8 hardcover, £5 paperback. Signed copies of "The Empire of Fear" are also available, £10 hardcover, £5 C-format paperback. Post free within the UK. Order from Brian Stableford, 113 St Peter's Road, Reading RG6 1PG.

Klub Filmowy: We are interested in seeing magazines and recent Science Fiction, such as Neil McAleer's "Arthur C Clarke - The Authorized Biography". In return, we can send you some best Polish science books of an equal value. Please write to Klub Filmowy, Bogdan Barys, 43-506 Czechowice-Dziedzice, ul. Junacka 1, Poland.

SF Booksellers: Does anyone know of a list of SF booksellers and dealers? I am interested in the one Steve Edgell was working on in 1978 and am currently working on an updated version. If so, please

write to Roger Sheppard, 117 Kent House Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JJ.

Zed Shift: This is an organisation for fans of the SF comedy television series "Red Dwarf" which allows members to meet other people with similar interests, and provides a forum for discussion. For more details, contact Zed Shift, PO Box 10104, Wellington, New Zealand.

Peterborough Fantasy Fair: Fantasy Fair 4 is now scheduled for Sunday April 10 1994. Expect the usual mix of gaming, comics, art, collectables, modelling in SF and F. Contact Pete Cox at 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough PE2 0RB for more details.

Are you a small business looking for artwork? Look no further. Write to me, Steven Deane, at Archangel Artwork, at 24 Wolverton Road, Leicester LE3 2AH (Tel: 0533 631186/559008).

Diane Duane's E-mail address is changing from dduane@owlsprings.win.net to dduane@owlsprings.win-uk.net. (A lot cheaper to call into London than Kentucky....) The old address will be lightly monitored until January 31, 1994, when it will close.

BSFA Profile

Steve Glover

I'm not quite sure how I got here. I started as Jenny's production assistant, gopher and general foil, but when we changed computers a few years ago, I began to seriously get to grips with the nice DTP toys: if you look back over your back issues of Matrix, the nice, neat consistent ones are designed by Jenny, while I sort of, erm, *played*. You know the sort of thing: those mysterious dark grey bars that may or may not have had page numbers on them... that bloody Hallowe'en typeface, and so on. There's not been a lot of that in the last year, though, because I was back as a full-time student for the first time in a decade, and I've been Jenny's assistant i/c finding weird stuff on the net, rather than a proper co-editor. Still, it's been fun putting this issue together. Quite like old times, what with hard disks dying, viruses oozing out of everywhere, and articles disappearing off into some kind of Black Hole (no, this doesn't mean they'll be appearing in the Leeds University SF Society fanzine). Up all night, drinking the house dry of tea and coffee after a lam pizza and getting high on adrenaline, sleep toxins, caffeine and monosodium glutamate all together at once. This is what I've been missing!

So, what sort of stuff do I read? These days I've been unashamedly reading for fun: Michael Scott Rohan and Tim Powers for escapist fantasy, and a whole slew of "Mars" books during the time I should have been writing database programs. As soon as I've got a spare week, I hit the pile of Delany's that are waiting for me. I blush to admit that I've hardly ever finished anything of his: my excuse is that I read the good and heavy stuff slowly so an interruption is more likely to throw me off it. I mean, bad stuff I can read in the bath — heck, there are authors (I won't name them) I can read while *running* a bath.

SF interests outside the bath, I mean books? I enjoy fanzines and apas a lot, but I'm a lousy correspondent, so I'm glad to have Jenny around positively leaking articles out her fingertips onto the keyboard. My real spiritual home in fandom used to be conventions, but I've not been to quite so many recently, and rather than finding them more special, with some special individual flavour of their own, they've all started seeming the same: good plain institutional conrunning. I'd like to see more conrunners take risks to provide something different, rather than yet more highest common factor stuff.

Health and SF

Simon Bradshaw

SF has long touched on medical matters - consider "Frankenstein" - but actual SF about medicine is rather more rare. The best known example is James White's "Sector General" series of stories, concerning a multi-species medical facility and exploring not only novel biologies but also differing cultural views on medical ethics. White has been fairly isolated in concentrating so much on future medicine (although some others, including Alan E Nourse, have made repeated forays into the field) but many authors have, at least briefly, put on the white coat and speculated on the future of healing arts. Some efforts have been less serious than others, Piers Anthony's epic of interstellar dentistry, "Prothro Plus", being an especially, er, tongue-in-cheek example. Other writers have hit home harder - such as Cyril Kornbluth in "The Little Black Bag". What would you do, presented with a medical kit from the future - particularly one intended to be foolproof enough for even an idiot to work miracles with...

Much SF about medicine is concerned with our common reactions to the whole field - fear and mistrust. In particular, there has been an explosion of near-future medical technothrillers, cashing in on anxieties generated by techniques such as organ transplants, IVF treatment, prosthetics and cloning. Authors such as Robin Cook, Michael Stewart and Michael Crichton have expressed in print the uncertainties generated by each advance in medical technology, whilst Brian Stableford, Larry Niven, David Brin and Paul McAuley have all taken looks - often far from reassuring - at how such developments may shape future societies. The genre has often overspilled onto the screen - indeed, Crichton has directed films of both "Coma" and his own "The Terminal Man". As regards medical media SF in general, "Star Trek" and "ST:TNG" provide probably the best examples, both having a doctor as a regular character, with a fair number of medically oriented plots - some of very high quality, such as the fifth season "TNG" episode "Ethics", which explored the morality of experimental treatments and "right-to-die" euthanasia.

Medicine has also been used as a vehicle for horror, for instance in Thomas Disch's "The MD: A Horror Story". Such fiction is often a development of the medicine-as-anxiety fiction mentioned earlier, drawing on our deepest fears of the doctor as arbiter of life and death. Less overtly horror-oriented examples of "corrupted medicine" fiction include Norman Spinrad's "Bug Jack Barron" (life extension through exploitation of children's bodies) and the spare-part harvesting dictatorship of Larry Niven's "A Gift From Earth". A number of writers have made use of the scope for satire inherent in such possibilities, ranging from Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" (how to make good use of surplus babies) to Michael Blumlein's "Tissue Ablation and Variant Regeneration: A Case Report" (how to make good use of surplus US presidents...)

As public awareness of - and concern about - health issues continues to grow, we are likely to see still more future-medicine fiction, be it speculation, horror or satire. With "hard physics" and, lately, "hard biology" SF making a comeback, there is a definite niche for "hard medicine" SF writers to follow White's lead. Media SF may even get a look in; if "Star Cops" was "Juliet Bravo" in space, what might follow on from "Casualty"?

Points of Information

What if?

I had a query about a "Historical" novel possibly called *The Eagle Flies from England*, which was hinged on the suggestion that if Napoleon's parents had emigrated from Corsica to London when he was young, he would have made a name for himself in the Army of the East India Company, eventually necessitating the sending out of a General Wellesley to quell his youthful exuberance (with which he'd conquered most of Alexander's old empire), leading to the same exile on St Helena. I wasn't able to track down that particular book (perhaps it wasn't written in this timeline), but here is a list of parallel-universe stories and novels that "branch off" from our own world in what may be loosely referred to as the Napoleonic period. Funnily enough, the listing (scavenged, as so much in this issue, from the internet) leaves out my own personal favourite alternate world story: H Beam Piper's "And He Walked Around the Horses", which deals with the sad fate of an Ambassador from our Napoleonic Europe in a rather different Europe dominated by the Prussians.

- 1789 Delisle de Sales, Jean Claude Izouard, **Ma Republique**
 1790 Laumer, Keith, **Worlds Of The Imperium**; also 1911
 1792 Chamberlin, Joseph Edgar, "If Lafayette Had Held the French Reign of Terror in Check"
 1792 Droit, Jacques, **Malheureux Ulysse**
 1793 Belloc, Hilaire, "If Drouet's Cart had Stuck"
 1794 Laumann, E.M., & Rene Jeanne, Si, **Le 9 Thermidor....**
Hypothese Historique
 1798 Friesner, Esther M., "Jane's Fighting Ships"
 1801 Carr, Jayce, "The War of '07"
 c 1801 Merwin, Sam, **The House Of Many Worlds**
 1803 Long, Norton E., "What If Napoleon Had Not Sold Louisiana? (1803)"
 1804 Leinster, Murray, **Time Tunnel**
 1805 Barbier, J.-B., **Si Napoleon Avait Pris Londres**
 1805 Caron, Carlos Maria, "La Victoria de Napoleon"
 1805 Lawrence, Edmund, **It May Happen Yet: A Tale Of Bonaparte's Invasion Of England**
 1805 Morris, Howard L., "Not by Sea"
 1808 Masters, Roger D. "What If Napoleon Had Not Invaded Russia? (1808)"
 1812 Geoffroy-Chateau, Louis-Napoleon, **Napoleon Apocryphe**
 1813 Chamberlin, Joseph Edgar, "If the Pirate Jean Lafitte Had Joined the British at New Orleans"
 1813 Meacham, Beth, "One by One"
 1814 Laumer, Keith, **The Other Side Of Time**
 1815 Aron, Robert, **Victoire A Waterloo**
 1815 Chamberlin, Joseph Edgar, "If James Macdonnell Had Not Closed the Gate of Hugomont Castle"
 1815 Collyn, George, "Unification Day"
 1815 Fisher, H.A.L., "If Napoleon had Escaped to America"
 1815 Gotschalk, Felix C., "The Napoleonic Wars"
 1815 Keen, Tony, "Napoleon's Airship"
 1815 Thiry, Marcel, **Echec Au Temps**
 1815 Trevelyan, G.M., "If Napoleon had Won the Battle of Waterloo"
 1815 Van Herck, Paul, **Caroline Oh Caroline**
 c 1815 Jørgensen, Per C., "Neste aar i Jerusalem"
 c 1815 Van Herck, Paul, **Operation Bonaparte**
 c 1815 Noel-Noel, **Voyageur Des Siecles**

Competition Corner

Roger Robinson

Results of "Matrix" Competition 108 — Linkages

A reasonable entry of thirteen this time, with all but three with the full fifteen correct answers, this in spite of one error and one typo. Thanks to all who pointed them out — in Q11 the author's first name should have been Nicholas, and in Q12 the spelling of Viriconium was wrong. The winner, first out of the hat, was Chris Terran (who I think is a first-time entrant) with Stanton Hatch and Joseph Nicholas as runners-up.

Answers

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Hothouse | Illuminatus! series |
| | Brian WILSON Aldiss | Robert Anton WILSON |
| 2 | Babel-17 | Mark Twain |
| | SAMUEL Delany | SAMUEL Langhorne Clemens |
| 3 | The Long Walk | Fay Wray |
| | Stephen KING (Richard Bachman) | KING Kong |
| 4 | Alex Raymond | Dorsai |
| | Flash GORDON, | GORDON R Dickson |
| 5 | A Torrent of Faces | Kate Wilhelm |
| | Norman L. KNIGHT | Mrs Damon KNIGHT |
| 6 | Discworld | Daleks |
| | TERRY Pratchett | TERRY Nation |
| 7 | Film 93 | The Sodom & Gomorrah Business |
| | BARRY NORMAN | BARRY NORMAN Malzberg |
| 8 | Rama II | The Six Million Dollar Man |
| | Gentry LEE | LEE Majors |
| 9 | Puckoon | The Sword in the Stone |
| | TERENCE (Spike) Milligan | TERENCE H White |
| 10 | All 58 Laser book covers | Planet of Whispers |
| | KELLY Preas | James Patrick KELLY |
| 11 | Sidney Jordan | Nicholas Yermakov |
| | Jeff HAWKE | Simon HAWKE |
| 12 | J B DiGriz | Viriconium |
| | Harry HARRISON | M John HARRISON |
| 13 | The major SFWA award | A Scottish SF magazine |
| | NEBULA | NEBULA |
| 14 | The No. 1 SF fan | Dr McCoy |
| | FORREST J Ackerman | DeFORREST Kelly |
| 15 | Riverworld | Come, Hunt an Earthman |
| | PHILIP José Farmer | PHILIP E High |

Results of Crossword Competition No 9

Again, there were thirteen entrants — but a different thirteen from the quiz (an overlap of eight). There were the usual complaints of "too easy" and "when are you going to give us a REAL crossword" — but I think John is setting a reasonable test for both crossworders and fans. First out of the hat this time was John Rickett, with Terry Jeeves and Martin and Abigail Sutherland close on his heels. Again, apologies for the two small typos in the clues — I don't think they fooled anyone. In 10A the last word should have been WORMS and in 24A the last word should have been NEAR.

Answers to Crossword No 9

Across: 1 eggcup; 5 fantasy; 10 planaria; 11 pillow; 12 scone; 13 free trade; 15 hitching; 17 intend; 18 jewels; 19 naturalist; 20 spindizzy; 21 smart; 24 arisen; 5 untested; 26 ishmael; 27 cherry

Down: 2 galactic empires; 3 conan; 4 park; 6 appreciate; 7 tolerant; 8 sword and sorcery; 9 balrog; 14 bioscience; 16 cheongsam; 19 nazgul; 22 maser; 23 itch.

Competition 109 — "Resolutions"

At New Year, it is traditional to make resolutions for the next year, and then to see the next time around how long we kept to them. I thought it might not tax your brains too much over the holiday period to think up some resolutions on behalf of the SF community. The choice of authors, fans, organisations, characters is up to you — but you will have a better chance of winning if I understand why the resolution is appropriate. Send as many as you like, but I'll only award prizes for the best five from each of you — unless there needs to be a tie-break.

My examples are—

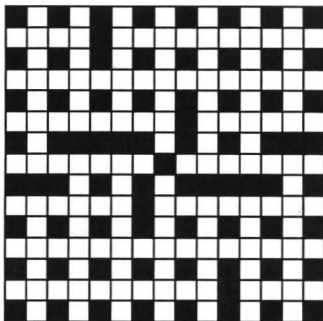
1. H*rl*n Ell*s*n — I resolve to publish "Last Dangerous Visions" and have added a dedication "to my friend Chris Priest".
2. Roger Robinson — I resolve to poof-red better next year.

Matrix Christmas Crossword: Perimetric Jigsaw.

Method: Solve the clues and insert the solutions jigsaw-fashion into the diagram. The 28 letters around the border of the completed diagram when read clockwise starting from the top left corner will spell out the name of a well-known author (6,6) and the title of one of his novels (3,10,3). The clues below are arranged in alphabetical order of their solutions.

If you have never tried a puzzle like this before, you may find a useful approach is to prepare a list of clues giving answers of each different length (i.e. which clues have 4-letter answers, which have 6-letter answers, and so on). Note that there are only two 4-letter answers, two 10-letter answers, two 15-letter answers and four 7-letter ones; if you can solve these clues there is only one possible way to fit them into the diagram. When you have a few clues entered, the perimetric author and title should become apparent.

*And Best Wishes
Season's Greetings
to All Our Readers*



1. Strange sailor is followed by shifty Romulan lacking uranium (8)
2. Jazz rap: "Alien Flying Machine" (8)
3. Forebear (crone) sat in disarray (8)
4. Burroughs' work so far can impress if presented properly (1,8,2,4)
5. Suddenly comes out with first of battleships: Luna unilaterally repudiates Terran sovereignty... (6)
6. ... bishop's office taken aback, besieged by revolutionary; smile for camera? (6)
7. Frantic deacon: "I'm supernatural!" (8)
8. Docks in small parts? (7)
9. Pieces for two disturb us at first; alien takes it badly (6)
10. Utopian need to crash microprocessor (6)
11. Man sounds sincere (6)
12. Last of race buried in Jovian satellite, noticed originally by continental (8)
13. Former French coin on board can be carried out (10)
14. Swordsman makes fans go to church, right? (6)
15. Benford and Brin's tome: chat thereof excitedly (5,2,3,5)
16. Uncle with two kilos gets fuddled by joint (7)
17. Tie up flashy centrepiece (4)
18. Imposed tax for wearing jeans, perhaps? (6)
19. With key mechanism not disabled, nothing is found afterwards — this is what missiles do to their target (4,4)
20. Only upset by being from Vance's fabulous island... (8)
21. ... bureaucrat learns Oriental language (8)
22. Chant used by male worker to male animal (7)
23. Fine Northern Irish church (4)
24. Greek wine made from extract of ferrets in alcohol (7)
25. Ought to be wearing shoes, keeping uppers laced at first (6)
26. Past master adjusted devices to keep vapour in (5-5)

Answers please to Roger Robinson, 75 Rosslyn Ave, Harold Wood, Essex RM3 0RG, by 15 January 1994. The special crossword prize this issue is a cheque for £25, donated by a British author who prefers not to be named, but whose generosity is much appreciated.