

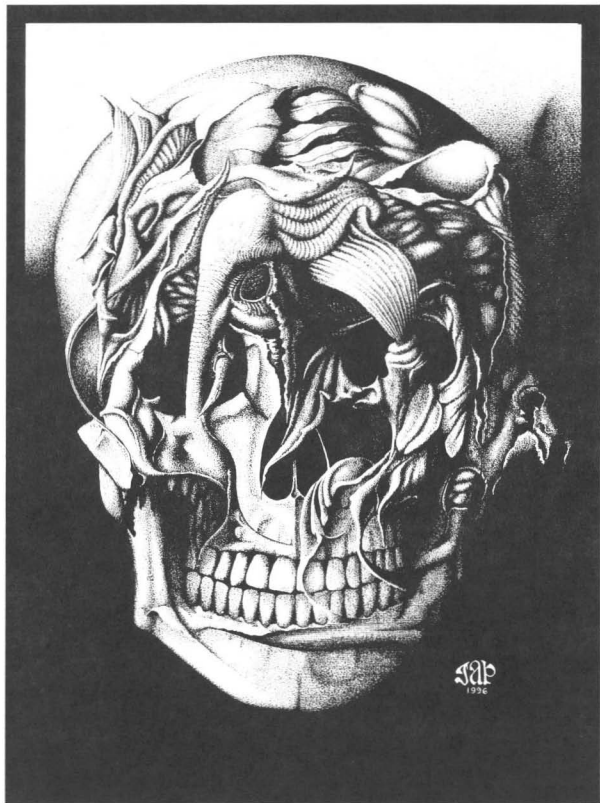
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The News Magazine of the
British Science Fiction Association

Issue 125

May / June 1997



Eastercon Report . . BSFA Awards / Nebula Results . . Forthcoming Movies . . Books . . Letters

matrix

the news magazine of the



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news

Brits Scoop Nebula, Dick Awards

British writers won both the 'Best Novel' Nebula and the Philip K. Dick Award in America recently.

• **Nicola Griffith's** *Slow River* won the Nebula for Best Novel. This year's Nebulas were presented at the Holiday Inn Crown Plaza in Kansas City on 20 April. Now living in Seattle with her partner, Kelley Estridge, Nicola was born in Leeds and moved to Hull when she was 18, where she was the lead singer for the band Jane's Plane. Her previous novel *Ammonite* (1994) was nominated for the 1995 Arthur C. Clarke Award.

Philip K. Dick Award

Stephen Baxter
The Time Ships
(Voyager)

Special Citation
Michael Bishop
At the City Limits of Fate
(Edgewood Press)

• **Stephen Baxter's** *The Time Ships* won this year's Philip K. Dick Award, given for the best novel published in the US as a paperback original in 1996. It was presented at Norwescon in Seattle. A 'special citation' went to **Michael Bishop's** *At the City Limits of Fate*.

Steve flew to the States to collect the Award, which he can add to the growing collection of accolades for his sequel *The Time Machine*: it's also won the BSFA Award, the Kurt Laswitz Award and the John W. Campbell Memorial Award, as well as being nominated for a Hugo and the Arthur C. Clarke Award.

Nebula Awards

NOVEL
Nicola Griffith
Slow River
(Del Rey)

NOVELLA
Jack Dann
"Da Vinci Rising"
(Asimov's, May 95)

NOVELETTE
Bruce Holland Rogers
"Lifeboat on a Burning Sea"
(F&SF, Oct/Nov 95)

SHORT STORY
Esther M. Friesner
"A Birthday"
(F&SF, Aug 95)

GRAND MASTER
Jack Vance

Sam Moskowitz Dies

The American sf historian and critic **Sam Moskowitz** died on 15 April aged 76, following a heart attack on the 7th which sent him into a coma. Born in 1920, he chaired the first Worldcon in New York in 1939, and was the first writer to attempt a history of sf fandom in *This Immortal Storm*, originally serialised in *Fantasy Commentator* from 1945 to 1953 and published in book form in 1954. He had recently been working on a continuation of this to take the story up to the entry of the US into World War II, and also covering UK pre-war fandom; some of this work has also appeared in *Fantasy Commentator*, for which he was an advisory editor.

Moskowitz also did much ground-breaking work on early and proto-science fiction, and argued for a thematic treatment of contemporary sf. Though not an academic, books such as *Explorers of the Infinite* (1963), *Seekers of Tomorrow* (1966) and *Strange Horizons* (1976) laid the foundations for later and stricter examinations of the genre. Much of these books first appeared as columns in magazines such as *Amazing*, and for his contribution to the critical study of sf he received the Pilgrim Award in 1981.

However, probably his most valuable research was in the field of proto-sf, particularly early American writing. He unearthed many neglected writers in anthologies such as *Science Fiction by Gaslight* (1968), which covered the popular magazines and 'dime novels' of the 1890s to the 1910s. His more recent work was extending the boundaries of US sf back in time, with essays on such writers as Edward Everett Hale and William Henry Rhodes, both active in the 1860s.

He was also a prolific anthologist, an expert on Edgar Allan Poe, and provided long biographical introductions to anthologies of many writers ranging from Olaf Stapledon to A. Merritt, William Hope Hodgson to H. P. Lovecraft. Despite suffering from throat cancer in recent years, which necessitated the use of a voice buzzer, he remained active to the last, researching and writing articles. His work is essential reading for any student of early sf, and the flame he lit still burns brightly.

— Chris Terran

Frost Defaults On TAFF Repayments

Last year the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was dealt a severe blow when 1993 winner **Abigail Frost** was not able to pass on the Fund's money in her care, some £2,700 (see *Matrix* 122 and 123 for full story). TAFF, now over forty years old, pays through voluntary donations for a fan to cross the Atlantic and visit a Worldcon or Eastcon. Despite the lack of official funding the 1996 winner **Martin Tudor** was able, through loans and emergency donations, to make his trip to last year's Worldcon in Los Angeles. Last November Frost handed over a cheque for £200 and promised to repay the balance in monthly instalments of £80, starting in January.

In April's *Brum Group News* Tudor – now administering the fund – reports that the £200 cheque has cleared, but he has received nothing further from Frost, and she has not answered the two letters he's sent to her. However, the highly successful fund-raising efforts at Novacon and elsewhere mean that all TAFF's debts have been repaid, and the Fund is now £188 in credit. A large amount of money – possibly around £800 – is also expected from the sale of the 2,000 books left to the fund by the late Brian Robinson. Andy Richards of Cold Tonnage Books is helping with storage and pricing. □

Don't Fear The Reaper

Don't Fear The Reaper was an alleged sf magazine, details of which were being circulated in a letter last December. It does not exist. According to Richard Elks, Community Vice Principal of the John Ellis Community College in Leicester, the letter may have appeared to come from a James Norris and asked for contributions to be sent to Maria Everley. He continued, "This letter is completely fictitious. It is a malicious campaign to cause personal distress to Mrs Everley. Mrs Everley is a tutor on a creative writing course at this College and this letter is targeted against her. This matter is now in the hands of the police and they would be grateful to receive any evidence regarding this matter."

If you've received or seen a copy, or have any information, Mr Elks asks that you do not act on the contents, but contact him urgently at John Ellis Community College, Corporation Road, Leicester, LE4 5PW. Tel. 0116 266 3111, fax 0116 261 0498. □

BSFA Membership Rates

Unwaged Subscription Rate

For those members paying the unwaged rate, the annual subscription has been increased to **£12 per year**.

We are sorry about this, but we found that the previous rate fell so far short of the actual cost of producing the magazines that a change had to be made. The new rate of £12 has been kept as low as possible while still covering a reasonable proportion of the direct costs of magazine production.

— Elizabeth Billinger, Treasurer

snippings...news...gleanings...rumours...cuttings...

LOST IN SPACE Seven grams of the ashes of **Gene Roddenberry** were successfully put into orbit on 21 April, along with those of twenty-two other including **Timothy Leary** and German rocket scientist **Kraft Ehrlich**, a colleague of **Wernher von Braun** in their Nazi days.

YOUR MOVE ... John Jarrold has left Legend (where he was st editor) and from the start of May will be working three days a week for Simon & Schuster, where he will put together their new st imprint, Spectrum.

KEN BULMER is recovering in hospital after suffering a stroke just before Easter, and lying undiscovered in his flat for two days. He's said to be doing fairly well.

INTERVENTION FOUND-UP John Harold won this year's Doc Weir Award, which was presented to him by last year's winner **Mark Plummer**. The 1998 Eastercon bidding was won by Reconnite. The venue will again be the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool, with guests **Peter S. Beagle**, **John Clute** and **Jeff Noon** (see Events for details). Ian Sorensen announced that his bid to stage the 1998 Con in Leeds had won. Corfu - "CORecting FLUID", what we know as Tupper - is an annual fanzine convention usually held in the States. Again, see Events for details. To the accompaniment of a little grumbling (but not that much) Intervention was finally laid to rest when its remaining funds were spent on a free bar. **WINNERS!** Chris Terran and Andy Butler's 'Spot The Author' word-square competition reaped a good entry. No one got all 47 authors - everyone missed M. J. Engh, lee hee - but **Dave M. Roberts** got 46, with **Susan Francis** and **Chris Brooks** on 45. Congratulations, and your T-shirts will be with you shortly.

LEXX is a Canadian/German co-production tv film series featuring **Tim Curran**, **Ryder Hauw** and **Malcolm McDowell**, now being touted around the tv companies. It's pure sf - Lexx is a spacecraft/ weapon hijacked by a group of likeable rogues - and though it's mostly live-action, nearly 65% of the series contains CGI graphics, including virtually all sets and large-scale props. It can be screened as either four 2-hour films or an eight-episode series.

LONDON CIRCLE MEETINGS are suffering from wanderlust, with the Jubilee now getting as crowded as the Wellington was. Possible new venues include the Moon Under Water on Charing Cross Road or a Wetherspoons pub near the One Tun.

ARIPF is the Association for Research in Popular Fiction, recently established by Liverpool John Moore's University and the University of Liverpool. It aims to offer a forum for research into popular fiction, facilitate interdisciplinary contact, promote research and teaching, encourage contact between European and international researchers, hold an annual conference, and establish a network of researchers within the field. Their first newsletter has just been issued, and you can join the Association for £10 (£5 student) (unwaged).

Contact: Nickianne Moody, Media and Cultural Studies, Liverpool John Moore's University, Dean Waters Building, St James Road, Liverpool, L1 7BR.

Email: N.Moody@livjm.ac.uk

JO CLAYTON is recovering in hospital from a non life-threatening cancer, although it has destroyed much of her bone mass and can no longer stand without being in danger of breaking her legs. According to Katherine Kerr in *Anisble*, she's in good spirits and enjoying driving her electric wheelchair complete with 'voodoo-gears' horn.

WRING 'EM DEAD The sf partwork test-marketed in the Exeter and South Borders areas in March did not do well enough for Fabrizi & Brown to continue with it, despite some tv advertising.

FORGOTTEN FUTURES is a scientific romance role-playing game from **Marcus Rowland**, distributed on disc as *shware* (IBM 1.44 Mb only). Various scenarios are available including *Kipling's 'A.B.C.'*, 21st century airship utopia, *Griffith's interplanetary Romance Stories of Other Worlds*, *Conan Doyle's 'Challenger'* books, and *Hodgson's Camacki the Ghost Finder*. All contain the text of the stories, period illustrations, spreadsheets, rules and much else. Also available are a large number of copyright-free 19th century stories and graphics on disc. Prices £1-£10.

Contact: Marcus L. Rowland, 22 Westbourne Park Villas, London, W2 5EA

HAL 9000 PLAYED POOLE and won in 2001, and on 11 May 1997 a modified IBM RS 6000 computer running the 'Deep Blue' chess program beat world champion **Garry Kasparov** after a five-game match. Despite media reporting of this event as a breakthrough for Artificial Intelligence, it really has very little to do with AI - the program operates on a brute-force approach: examining some 200 million moves per second, which has no relation to human intelligence or problem-solving ability (and will not help Deep Blue decide how to spend its \$500,000 prize).

1997 Hugo Nominations

The nominations for the 1997 Hugo Awards were announced on April 21; the winners will be announced at LoneStarCon2, this year's Worldcon in Texas, in September.

- BEST NOVEL** (356 ballots): **Kim Stanley Robinson** *Blue Mars* (HarperCollins); **Bruce Sterling** *Holy Fire* (Orion); **Lois McMaster Bujold** *Memory* (Baen); **Elizabeth Moon** *Remnant Population* (Baen); **Robert J. Sawyer** *Starplex* (Ace).
- BEST NOVELLA** (209 ballots): **Jerry Olton** "Abandon in Place" (*F&SF* Dec 96); **George R. R. Martin** "Blood of the Dragon" (*Asimov's* Jul 96); **Maureen F. McHugh** "The Cost to Be Wise" (*Starlight* 1); **Mary Rosenblum** "Gas Fish" (*Asimov's* Feb 96); **Gregory Benford** "Immersion" (*SF Age* Mar 96); **Jack McDevitt** "Time Travellers Never Die" (*Asimov's* May 96).
- BEST NOVELLETTE** (221 ballots): **William Barton** "Age of Aquarius" (*Asimov's* May 96); **Suzzy McKee Charnas** "Beauty and the Opera or the Phantom Beast" (*Asimov's* Mar 96); **Bruce Sterling** "Bicycle Repairman" (*Intersections*, *Asimov's* Oct 96); **Mike Resnick** "The Land of Nod" (*Asimov's* Jun 96); **Ursula K. Le Guin** "Mountain Ways" (*Asimov's* Aug 96).
- BEST SHORT STORY** (254 ballots): **Michael Swanwick** "The Dead" (*Starlight* 1); **Robert Reed** "Decency" (*Asimov's* Aug 96); **John Crowley** "Gone" (*F&SF* Sep 96); **Connie Willis** "The Soul Selects Her Own Society . . ." (*Asimov's* Apr 96); *War of the Worlds: Global Dispatches*; **James White** "Un-Birthday Boy" (*Analogue* Feb 96).
- BEST NON-FICTION BOOK** (163 ballots): **Patti Perret** *The Faces of Fantasy* (Tor); **John Clute** *Look at the Evidence* (Liverpool University Press; Serconia Press); **Dave Langford** *The Silence of the Langford* (NESFA Press); **L. Sprague de Camp** *Time & Chance* (Grant); **Diana Wynne Jones** *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland* (Gollancz Vista).
- BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION** (283 ballots): *Independence Day*; *Mars Attacks!*; *Babylon 5* "Severed Dreams"; *Star Trek: First Contact*; *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* "Trials and Tribble-ations".
- BEST EDITOR** (248 ballots): **Gardner Dozois** (*Asimov's*); **Scott Edelman** (*SF Age*); **Patrick Nielsen Hayden** (Tor); **Kristine Kathryn Rusch** (*F&SF*); **Stanley Schmidt** (*Analogue*).
- BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST** (226 ballots): **Thomas Canty**; **David Cherry**; **Bob Eggleton**; **Don Maitz**; **Michael Whelan**.
- BEST SEMIPROZINE** (223 ballots): *Interzone* (David Pringle); *Locus* (Charles N. Brown); *New York Review of Science Fiction* (Kathryn Cramer, Tad Dembinski, Ariel Hameon, David G. Hartwell, Kevin Maroney); *Science Fiction Chronicle* (Andrew I. Porter); *Speculations* (Kent Brewster).
- BEST FANZINE** (224 ballots): *Anisble* (David Langford); *File 770* (Mike Glyer); *Mimosa* (Dick & Nicki Lynch); *Nova Express* (Lawrence Person); *Tangent* (Dave Treadwell).
- BEST FAN WRITER** (202 ballots): **Sharon Farber**; **Mike Glyer**; **Andy Hooper**; **David Langford**; **Evelyn C. Leeper**.
- BEST FAN ARTIST** (177 ballots): **Ian Gunn**; **Joe Mayhew**; **Peggy Ranson**; **William Rotsler**; **Sherlock**.
- JOHN W CAMPBELL AWARD** (156 ballots): **Michael A. Burstein** (second year of eligibility); **Raphael Carter** (first); **Richard Garfinkle** (first); **Katya Reimann** (first); **Sharon Shinn** (second).

NOTES

The order of nominations is that given in the press release.

- There are six nominees due a tied vote.
- The *Babylon 5* episodes "War Without End" and "Z'Ha'Dum" received enough votes to be nominated, but J. Michael Straczynski declined.
- Brad Foster and Teddy Harvia declined their nominations.
- Presented for the best new writer of 1996/96, and sponsored by Dell Magazines. The JWCA is not a Hugo, but is traditionally part of the awards.

COMMENTARY

It's a thin (actually anorexic) year for British writers in the fiction categories; in fact, the only non-US writer represented is Ulsterman **James White**. But there's much better news when it comes to non-fiction, with **John Clute**, **Dave Langford** and **Diana Wynne Jones** flying the flag splendidly. • The withdrawal of two BS episodes has two interpretations: JMS may have magnanimously wanted to allow others a look-in, or he may be strategically increasing his chances. • The Fan Writer nominations look awfully familiar. They're identical to 1994 and 1995's names, and only Joseph T. Major in 1996 stopped it being a clean sweep. Are there really no new writers coming through? ☹

Foundation's Empire

Andy Sawyer, librarian of the SF Foundation in Liverpool, reports that nearly 13,000 English-language books have now been catalogued, and they're up to the Smiths. Still to do are graphic novels, non-fiction and anthologies, so there's a lot of work left. Andy says: "We have 123 novels or collections by **Arthur C. Clarke**, two (only) by **Alasdair Gray**, 62 by **Robert Shekley** and 136 by **John Brunner**. We have 280 Ace Doubles and 66 Badger Books."

The detailed database they're building up is proving very adept at throwing up hidden relationships. "For instance, it is easy enough to do a simple keyword search, on 'Dr Who' say, and

discover we have 105 books. But what on earth is **Philip José Farmer's** *Jesus on Mars* doing here? The answer is, simply, that it contains **Harlan Ellison's** essay "Introducing Dr Who". Why, we may leave to the bibliographers, but this is information which may well be left out of a 'normal' catalogue, or at least difficult to discover."

Donations are still needed, however, particularly for magazines. Andy is especially interested in copies of *Weird Tales*, *Cinefantastique*, *SF Age* and *Comics Journal*, for instance.

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BSFA London Meeting

Maureen Kincaid Speller reports

WE WERE DELIGHTED to welcome Colin Greenland to the BSFA's London Meeting in April, hosted by Paul Kincaid as Paul Hood was on holiday. The turnout was very good, considering that many were suffering from 'Intervention Bug' after-effects. It was so reassuring to hear everyone comparing symptoms in the bar beforehand. Those present included Dave Langford, various BSFA Committee members, Marcus Rowland, Brian Ameringer, Bridget Wilkinson, Molly Brown, and several new members including Dylan James, James Hartley and Joanne Bourne.

Colin began with a reading from his latest book, *The Plenty Principle*, which includes a story featuring Tabitha Jute, the heroine of his 'Plenty' novels. Those of you who have never heard Colin read have missed a treat, believe me. I always enjoy listening to him and, when asked by Paul Kincaid, it came as little surprise to hear that he enjoys reading to audiences while "writing is a pain". He went on to contrast the experience of reading to a live audience with recording *Take Back Plenty* for Books for the Blind, when he had had to imagine an audience in order to be responsive in his reading, and to argue that literature is still a social activity. Colin explained that he writes not just for reviewers but for a real audience, and counts himself lucky he has a vocal context for what he does.

So why, asked Paul, did he like Tabitha so much? Colin confessed he didn't know, although he rather suspected she wouldn't like him. The attraction, he thought, was perhaps that she was on her own, dealing with the universe on her own terms, not doing too well, and not your typical competent smiling heroine (here, disparaging remarks were made about cover illustrations for American editions of books). She is, Colin explained, an ordinary person in an extraordinary world. As to how he came up with the character, she just walked into his head.

Discussion about the nature of space haulage broke out when Paul queried the way in which Tabitha 'drives' rather than flies a spaceship, and the meeting came to the conclusion she was probably driving the interstellar equivalent of a BT van with the logo painted out. This led on to a more serious discussion about what sf is: Colin feels it is

very much about the here and now. Sf is not at all shiny, which he feels is often what people would like him to say. He sees it as very much about the past – the present being made of the past – and went on to paraphrase a comment by Ian Watson: the further we go in space the more likely we are to see our own space. Colin observed that as a child he had suspected that the world was not at all what 'they' said it was, and was still inclined to this view.



Somehow we got around to discussing the fire alarm in Paul's new offices, where a voice calmly advises you that a fire has been reported, and to please leave. This delighted Colin, who promptly wrote it down and revealed that a previous comment of Paul's had actually inspired one of the stories in *The Plenty Principle* (we think it's "Talking Through the Word"), before the group got into talking about sf writers, not as extrapolators of scientific ideas but as people writing about society and the effect of ideas and objects upon it, which led to Colin's experience of writing with a word processor and a discussion of techniques. And here the formal meeting ended, with the inevitable accusation of "Fix!" as the raffle was drawn, but discussion was still going strong when Paul and I left for the train.

— Maureen Kincaid Speller

Scribble, Scribble, Scribble

- Stephen King's next novel will be the long-awaited fourth volume in the 'Dark Tower' fantasy series. Called *Wizard and Glass*, it's due from Hodder & Stoughton in November as a trade paperback priced £14.99 (ouch). Inspired by Browning's poem 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came' – written as a result of an 1852 resolution to write a poem a day – King has waited 26 years before continuing the story of young Roland he started in 1970, despite three intervening volumes, and he thinks there may be three further volumes to come. H&S have also acquired the rights to the earlier books, so expect these to be reissued soon too.
- Kim Stanley Robinson visits Antarctica in his next novel. Set early in the next century, a group of radical environmentalists set out on a programme of (hopefully non-violent) 'ecotage' to save the last unspoiled continent, destroying oil-camps and bases, and cutting communications. It's due from Voyager in September.
- Robert Jordan has said his vast 'Wheel of Time' series will contain at least ten books; the eighth is due from Orbit in March 1988.
- Brian Stableford has turned in *Teach Yourself Writing Fantasy and Science Fiction* to Hodder & Stoughton. He says, 'I was allowed twice as many words as were allocated to my *Elm Tree* book (*The Way to Write SF*), and the text has also benefited from the experience of all the writing courses and workshops I've taught since the earlier book appeared, so it's much more comprehensive and (hopefully) a good deal more useful.'
- Brian has also completed and delivered *The Inheritors of Earth* to Tor; it's based on his 1995 novella 'Inherit the Earth'.
- The sequel to Peter F. Hamilton's *The Reality Dysfunction* will be called *The Neutronium Alchemist*. It'll be out from Macmillan in October.
- Forthcoming titles from Liverpool SF Texts and Studies include E. J. Smyth *Jules Verne: Narratives of Modernity* and Roger Luckhurst *Between Two Walls: The Fiction of J. G. Ballard*.
- Thriller writer Daniel Esterman turns to alternative history for his next novel, *K*, due from HarperCollins in October. Set in a 1940 US where Charles Lindbergh is President, public lynchings are condoned, and Jews, blacks and communists are branded with the letter 'K' – for 'Kike' and 'Ku Klux Klan' – the story concerns a British secret agent on a secret mission to this strange world (almost a mirror-image of Kim Newman and Eugene Byrne's alternative US).
- Also from HC in October is tv presenter Muriel Gray's second novel, *Furnace*. Her first, *The Trickster*, was a proficient horror story, and this is a tale of modern alchemists (descended from Scottish immigrants) in small-town America.
- Iain (M) Banks's next book will be called *Song of Stone* and although it's a 'mainstream' novel it is set in the near future.
- HarperCollins have three (autobiographies) of interest due in October: John Baxter's *Stanley Kubrick*, Tom Baker's *On my Earth* is Tom Baker; and Doris Lessing's *Walking in the Shade* (the second volume of her autobiography, covering the years to 1962).
- Elizabeth Hand is the latest writer to succumb to the lure of the tie-in: she's written the first in a series of novels based on Chris Carter's *Millennium* series. It's called *2000* and is due in September.

Gollancz Loses Pratchett

After ten years with the company Terry Pratchett has left Gollancz for Corgi / Transworld. Gollancz have published him in hardback since *Equal Rites*, the third Discworld book in 1987, and Corgi currently publishes the Discworld paperbacks. November's *Jingo* will be Pratchett's last Gollancz hardback. He expressed regret at the move, but said that Transworld are 'much more recognisably an international company, and that's what I need right now'.

Pratchett's first publisher was the small Colin Smythe company. The growing success of the Discworld books brought him a paperback contract with Corgi, and following *The Colour of Magic* and *The Light Fantastic* he signed on with Gollancz, then still an independent publisher; they're now part of the Cassell group. The loss of such a big seller is bound to have a significant effect on Gollancz, as he regularly dominates the bestseller charts.

• Transworld may have one reason to regret signing up Pratchett – he's now the most shoplifted author in the UK.

No Rest For Arthur

Arthur C. Clarke – 80 later this year – was kept extremely busy by the media as part of the publicity for 3001 in March and April, with numerous radio and tv appearances and press profiles, including a large spread in the *Daily Express* in March.

Forthcoming activities include: filming Spielberg's *The Hammer of God* from 21 April; a Space Microbiology Conference in San Diego in July; writing his autobiography for St Martin's Press, working title *Greetings, Carbon-Based Lifelovers*; co-writing *Trapper* with Michael P. Kube-McDowell (nothing to do with the horse); and recording four fifteen-minute 'Letters From Colombo' for the BBC.

Movies currently optioned – with no guarantee of production, of course – include *Childhood's End* and *A Fall of Moondust* (Universal), *The Mountains of Paradise* (Sage), *Phillys* (Robert Swarthall), *Pendulous* (with Rama Polygram), *Mars Bat* (Universal, a tv movie), *Skinner Deep* (Turner TV), and, apparently, something called *The Deplorable Inventions of Arthur C. Clarke* for Yorkshire Television (this information reached *Mirror* on 2 April).

Projects 'under discussion' include 80, *And Counting* – (Granite TV, Discovery Channel), *Last Mysteries* (Granite TV), and *The Lost Worlds of 2001* (Del Rey).

Martin Caidin Dies

Martin Caidin died on 24 March of thyroid cancer; he was 69. Caidin was an aerospace journalist and prolific non-fiction writer, and in 1953 founded the American Astronautical Society. He also wrote sf, mostly in technothriller style, and in this sphere will chiefly be remembered for *Marooned* (in which an Apollo spacecraft is trapped in orbit; it was filmed in 1969 and preciously released just prior to the Apollo 13 flight) and *Cyborg*, on which the tv series *The Six Million Dollar Man* was based.

Many thanks to

Brian Ameringer, John Ashbrook, Elizabeth Billiger, Brum SF Group, Andrew M. Butler, Arthur C. Clarke, Alison Cook, Cardinal Cox, Carol Ann Green, Chris & Penny Hill, John Jarrold, Steve Jeffery, Dave Langford, Tony Lee, Ken MacLeod, Caroline Mullan, Chris O'Shea, Nigel Parsons, Jim Porter, Roger Robinson, Yvonne Rowse, Andy Sawyer, Ken Slater, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Brian Stableford, Julie Venner, Jessica Yates, 'Zine Kat', and all at Intervention.

1996 BSFA Awards

BEST NOVEL

Excession

Iain M. Banks
(Orbit)

Joint Second Place

The Stone Canal
Ken MacLeod
(Legend)

Blue Mars
Kim Stanley Robinson
(Voyager)

BEST SHORT FICTION

"A Crab Must Try"

Barrington J. Bayley
(Interzone 103)

Second Place
"Community Service"

Molly Brown
(Interzone 107)

Third Place
"The East"

M. John Harrison
(Interzone 114)

BEST ARTWORK

Cover of *Ancient Shores*

Jim Burns

(By Jack McDevitt, HarperCollins)

Second Place
Cover of *Interzone* 112
SMS

Third Place
Cover of *Sandman: Book of Dreams*
Dave McKean

Banks, Bayley, Burns Win BSFA Awards

The 1996 BSFA Awards were presented on Monday 31 March 1997 at Intervention, this year's Eastercon in Liverpool's Adelphi Hotel, where Paul Kincaid announced the winners at the convention's closing ceremony. Also presented were, somewhat belatedly, the trophies for the 1986 Awards. Although five of the six winners had been present at the con, by the time of the closing ceremony all but one had had to leave; the awards are normally given out during the interval of the Masquerade, on Saturday night.

And so Dave Langford – who won the 1986 Short Fiction Award for "Cube Roof" – was the only winner to endure the hideous embarrassment of being acclaimed by the large audience (see photo). The other winners will either be sent their awards or be presented with them at a suitable opportunity.

The 1996 awards were designed and made by Mitch Le Blanc and Colin Odell, and took the form of a reclining reader on a wooden base.

Note that there was an unfortunate error on the ballot form: *Ancient Shores* (for the cover of which Jim Burns won Best Artwork) was incorrectly given as *Ancient Echoes*. Our apologies for this.



Why Awards?

Chris Hill, the new BSFA Awards Administrator, introduces himself and explains why you should GET NOMINATING NOW!

THE LIGHTS ARE UP, the fuss is over, the 1996 BSFA Awards have been presented. Time to relax and forget about them for a while. Or is it?

No, it is not. It is time to start sending in nominations for the 1997 Awards.

First, a quick introduction. My name is Chris Hill and I am the new administrator of the BSFA Awards. I am relatively new to organised fandom, but I have been an sf fan since I was about six. I joined the BSFA about eighteen months ago and have been looking for a way I could contribute, and so I'm delighted to take on this position. Despite the general doom and gloom there seems to be about the sf scene at the moment (for very good reasons) there has still been a lot of fine sf published in recent years, and the BSFA Awards are a way of celebrating this. So you may gather that one of the reasons I have taken on the job is that I believe that they are important.

The BSFA Awards are the only science-fiction awards given in this country that are nominated and voted on by us, the readers. I believe very strongly that the BSFA Awards should be as important to the UK sf community as the Hugos are in the USA. Far too much importance is given to the non-UK awards and I believe it is time for this to change. We need to raise the level of awareness of the awards with the general public, the magazines and the publishers, and I will be doing all I can to achieve this. Anything that emphasises the quality of written sf has to be a positive thing.

For new members (and old ones who may have forgotten), three awards are presented in the following categories:

- Novel receiving its first UK publication during the calendar year;
- Short Fiction first published during the calendar year, irrespective of country of publication;
- Book or magazine illustration first appearing during the calendar year, irrespective of country of publication.

For 1997 I will be continuing the rolling nomination procedure first tried last year. This means that you can send nominations to me at any time. All valid contributions will be counted and the most popular will appear on the final ballot paper early in 1998. You may send in as many different nominations as you like through the year, but please, only one nomination per person per work! We will be checking. Don't worry too much if you are unsure about a work's eligibility; send them to me anyway and I will check up. You can also send nominations by email. To help with the administration, please include your membership number with any nominations.

Remember that although Eastercon attendees, as well as all BSFA members, can vote, only BSFA members can nominate.

I will be providing regular progress reports in *Matrix*, and I also hope to point readers in the direction of works to consider. This is particularly important for the Short Fiction Award, which has been dominated by one source, *Interzone*, for a while now.

The 1997 awards will be presented at the 1998 Eastercon, Intuition, at the Piccadilly Jarvis Hotel in Manchester. I hope to see many of you there.

— Chris Hill

How To Nominate

Write your name, address and membership number on a postcard or the back of an envelope, along with details of any eligible work(s) you've enjoyed.

Repeat ad lib. Alternatively, send an email with the same details.

Send to Chris Hill, BSFA Awards, Rook's Cottage, 3 Lynch Hill, Whitchurch, Hants, RG28 7ND

Email: c_phill@compuserve.com

recent & forthcoming books

Legend

Including Arrow, Century, Hutchinson

Robert Jordan *Conan the Magnificent* (6 Feb (R 1984); £4.99 pb, 286pp) — Heroic fantasy.Andrew Harman *A Midsummer Night's Glee* (Legend) (6 Feb; £4.99 pb) — Humorous fantasy.

★ **Paul Barnett** *Strider's Galaxy* (16 Mar; £5.99 pb, 368pp) — Space opera with its tongue wandering around the cheek area. 'Book One of The Strider Chronicles'. Barnett is perhaps better known as 'John Grant', under which pseudonym nearly all his writing has appeared (*The World, Alien, Earthdom*) (with Dave Langford). *The Truth About the Flaming Ghoules* etc.) as well as his technical work on the *SF Encyclopedia* and co-editorship of the *Fantasy Encyclopedia*.

Terry Brooks *First King of Shannara* (6 Mar; £5.99 pb, 489pp) — Fantasy, the prequel to *The Sword of Shannara*.

Robert Jordan *Conan Chronicles II* (6 Mar; £15.99 hb) — Heroic fantasy.

Maggie Furey *Dharmara* (3 Apr; £16.99 hb, £5.99 pb, 473pp) — Fantasy, delayed from November, the finale to the well-received *Arctics of Power* series (note: in *Matrix* 123 Furey's *The Sword of Flame* was incorrectly described thus; Furey will be touring to promote this).

★ **Terri Windling** *The Wood Wife* (11 Apr; £5.99 pb, 318pp) — Fantasy, with a rather beautiful (and slightly Richard Dadd-like) cover by Brian Froud, whose artwork was the original inspiration for the book.

Robert Jordan *Conan the Triumphant* (3 Apr (R 1984); £4.99 pb, 280pp+23pp appendix) — Heroic fantasy, full of fights, toothsome fights ('Catamite topling'), 'Codless spawn of a diseased camel!', top-heavy women who know — or are taught — their place (naked and tied up,

usually), and a vaguely unhealthy preoccupation with the word 'slit'. The appendix is a piece of cod scholarship by L. Sprague de Camp describing the 'attested facts' of Conan's life as described in the books and stories; nowhere is Robert E. Howard, our mighty-thewed hero's creator, mentioned. Have you ever seen a non-mighty then?

Brian Stablerford *Salmander's Fire* (May; £5.99 pb, 518pp) — 'The Second Book of Genesys'.

★ **Brian Stablerford** *Chimera's Cradle* (1 May; £16.99 hb, 507pp) — Concluding volume of the 'Genesys' trilogy; Brian wrote this in *Matrix* 124.

Alan Dean Foster *The Spills of War* (Jun (R 1994); £5.99 pb, 296pp) — SF adventure, Book 3 of 'The Damned': the first two were *A Call to Arms* and *A False Mirror* (note Hemingway echoes). A millennia-long and galaxy-wide war is nearing its close after those upstart critters from Earth show the aliens how to really snuff each other. But can humans stand up to new peace, new harmony? When they threaten their former allies a renegade human and a birdlike alien look for an alternative to another bloodbath.

★ **Peter Haining** (ed.) *The Wizards of Odd* (1 Jun; £4.99 pb, 300pp) — Anth. of humorous — or comic — as the subtitle puts it — fantasy, all 24 stories technically reprints. But note it contains the first book appearance of Terry Pratchett's only 'Disworld' short story, 'Theatre of Cruelty', restored from the editing it suffered on its first appearance in the W. H. Smith freebie magazine *Bookcase* in 1993 (it's still under 400-high) the Josh Kirby cover emphasises this. There's also Douglas Adams's only 'Hitch-Hiker' short, 'Young Zaphod plays it Safe', and stories from Dunsany, Kuttner, Russell, Bradbury, Dick, Le Guin, Donaldson, Cabell, Leiber, Wells, Clarke, Asimov, Niven and Vonnegut, among others. Note the high proportion of writers associated with it rather than fantasy. Haining is known for horror anthologies, and his introductory notes on the authors, though useful, betray a slight unfamiliarity with sf — he thinks Larry Niven's neologism 'organlegger' refers to a 'devicer' rather than a criminal, for instance.

Orion

Including Millennium, Phoenix, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Dent, Everyman



Maggie Slip *Here Comes a Candle to Light You to Bed* (Apr; £3.99 pb, 202pp) — YA time-trip fantasy in which a contemporary girl swaps with a boy in plague-ridden 17th century London (cf. Liza Picard's book below). From the author of the splendidly titled *Memoirs of a Dangerous Alien and Pulling the Plug on the Universe*.

Michael Moorcock *The Prince With the Silver Hand* (7 Apr; £5.99 pb, 440pp) — Volume 10 of the 'The Tale of the Eternal Champion', contains the Prince Corwin *Celtic* (contains *The Bull and the Spear* (R 1973), *The Oak and the Ram* (R 1973) and *The Sword and the Stallion* (R 1974). Moorcock's introduction notes his debt to Irish culture and writers: 'I suppose it's presumptuous of me to wander into territory explored by far greater talent and profoundly by half the great writers of Dublin, but the *Corwin* stories are my acknowledgement of the huge debt I have to both the mythology and the modern literature of Ireland, especially Yeats'. He also mentions the *Cuchulain* stories, Charles Lever, Swift, Lord Dunsany, Cabell and Leiber as early influences.

James Bibby *Ronan's Rescue* (7 Apr; £4.99 pb, 252pp+99pp app) — Humorous fantasy, sequel to *Ronan the Barbarian*. A helpful preface explains common fantasy blubs: 'epic' means '700 pages of lurid drudgery', 'scholarly' means 'desperately dull', 'confrontational' means 'lots of swearing' and so on. No entry for 'humorous fantasy', sadly. The appendices are a glossary and a workable recipe for a fiery curd, of which an essential ingredient is two rolls of toilet paper.

Homer Sykes *Celtic Britain* (Weidenfeld Illustrated) (8 May; £14.99 hb, 160pp ill.) — Heavily illustrated with 130 colour photos, this surveys a selection of Celtic sites and explains their associated history, legends and folktales.

★ **K. W. Jeter** *Blade Runner 3: Replicant Night* (May; £5.99 pb) — Sequel to *Edge of Human*. Here Jeter engages in a typically Dickian reality slip, in which Deckard sells his story to a movie director and watches his life retold as the film is shot.

Gillian Rubinstein *Shinkie* (May; £3.99 hb, £3.99 pb, 192pp) — YA st. third in the 'Space Demons' trilogy; the first two — *Space Demons* and *Skyzmo* (both £3.99 pb, 192pp) — are released in pb simultaneously. All concern computer games which draw in their players.

Lee Smolin *The Life of the Cosmos* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson) (8 May; £20.00 hb, 320pp) — Speculative cosmology from a US physicist, in which he suggests that the universe may be evolving like a living creature. Cosmologist Paul Davies says: 'This provocative book merges key elements of Einstein and Darwin in a breathtaking synthesis. The result is nothing less than a radically new view of the cosmos and our place within it.'

Voltaire *Candide and Other Tales* (Everyman; May; £3.99 pb)

Harry Harrison *The Stainless Steel Rat* (May (R 1961); £4.99 pb)

Harry Harrison *The Stainless Steel Rat's Revenge* (May (R 1970); £4.99 pb)

Key

pb = paperback; hb = hardback; tp = trade (large format) paperback; pp = extent

ill. = illustrated; ed. = edited; R(x) = reissue / reprint (first publication date)

YA = Young Adult; cat. = story collection (same author); anth. = anthology (different authors)

★ = Highlight ☆ = Editor's choice 1 = First UK edition

Treat future dates with caution. All unquoted remarks by Chris Terran.

Quoted comments are from publishers' material — caveat emptor.

Tricia Sullivan *Someone to Watch Over Me* (Millennium) (1 May; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 320pp) — From the author of *Lethe* comes a story which sounds reminiscent of D. G. Compton's wonderful *The Continuous Katherine Mortenhoe*: a woman helps a beaten man outside Zagreb station, and he turns out to be a 'trans', implanted with equipment which enables someone else to experience everything he does.

Yvonne Navarro *Music of the Spears* (Millennium) (1 May; £16.99 hb, 288pp) — Latest *Aliens* book taken from the *Dark Horse* comics.

Sarah Ash *Songspinnings* (May; £4.99 pb)

James Bibby *Ronan's Revenge* (Millennium) (1 May; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 320pp) — Latest instalment in the humorous fantasy series.

Michael Moorcock *Legends From the End of Time* (Jun; £5.99 pb)

★ **James Buxton** *Pyl (Millennium)* (Jun; £16.99 hb, 352pp) — Follow-up to the extremely effective dark fantasy *The Wishing Tree*. A haunted-house story set in Bermondsey.

Michael Swanton (ed.) *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Dent; Jun; £12.99 pb, 320pp) — New translation of a number of pre-Norman annals, written by various monks.

Charles Butler *The Darking* (Jun; £9.99 hb, £3.99 pb, 176pp) — YA supernatural thriller. First novel.

Thomas Richards *The Myths and Legends of Star Trek* (Jun; £12.99 hb, 176pp) — Apparently reveals the secret origins of *Trek* storylines in ancient epics, traditional romances and folk tales, from which Gene Roddenberry nicked his ideas. 'Easily the most cerebral sf show on television' says the *PR*. 'F— my hat, I never knew that.'

Jared Diamond *Why is Sex Fun? The Evolution of Human Sexuality* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson) (1 Jun; £11.99 hb, 176pp ill.) — Snappily-titled non-fiction (it reminds me of *Why Big Fierce Animals Are Rare*), in which physiologist Diamond argues that 'our strange sex lives were just as crucial to our rise to human status as our large brains'.

Kristine Kathryn Rusch *The Key: Changeling* (Jun; £5.99 pb)

★ **John Barnes** *Apocalypses and Apostrophes* (Millennium) (1 Jun; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 256pp) — Coll. from one of the best US sf writers, including some new material. 'Some of the stories depict the end of the world, some are speeches addressed to a non-existent being or something which cannot understand human speech.'

Ellette Abecassis *The Qumran Mystery* (1 Jun; £16.99 hb, 384pp) — Fantasy thriller about the life and death of Christ and the disappearance of a Dead Sea Scroll that would uncover the truth about it. A bestseller in France.

Nathan Arner *Cold War Millennium* (Jun; £16.99 hb, 304pp) — Latest 'Predator' tie-in. **Elizabeth Pewsey** *The Dawnstone Quest* (1 Jun; £9.99 hb, £3.99 pb, 224pp) — YA dragon fantasy, sequel to *The Talking Head*.

Susan Breinfeld *The Most Private Place: Insights into the Brain* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson) (1 Jun; £11.99 hb, 176pp ill.) — Non-fiction account of the workings of the brain from a physicist who was the first woman to give the Royal Institution Christmas Lectures, in 1994. **Mary Corran** *Darkeil* (Jun; £4.99 pb)

★ **Stephen Baxter** *Guliverzone* (1 Jun; £9.99 hb, £2.99 pb, 112pp) — Baxter's first young adult book concerns three children in a virtual reality theme park based on *Guliver's Travels*, and their struggle with the Lilliputians. This is the first of six linked novels using the *World Wide Web* as a starting point; the second is:

Stephen Bowdett *Dreamscape* (1 Jun; £9.99 hb, £2.99 pb, 112pp) — A VR-based D&D game on the WWW goes wrong...

Liza Picard *Restoration London: Everyday Life in London in the 1650s* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson) (1 Jun; £20.00 hb, 320pp ill.) — Restoration London is a popular fantasy setting — Mary Gentle's *White Crow* sequence owes much to it — and this book uses contemporary sources to elucidate how life was actually lived then: 'the houses, gardens, cooking, clothes and jewellery, cosmetics, householding, housework, laundry and shopping, sex, education, hobbies, etiquette, religion and popular beliefs.'

Voyager



Including HarperCollins, Flamingo, Fontana

- Robin Jarvis** *The Raven's Knot* (Collins: 17 Feb.; £4.99 pb, 442pp il.) — YA fantasy novel from the author of the *Defted Mice* books, second in the *Tales From the Wyrd Museum* trilogy. Cover and internal art by Jarvis.
- Clive Barker** *Weaveworld* (7 Apr. (R 1987); £6.99 pb) — Special 10th anniversary edition of the world-on-a-carpet dark fantasy, with a new introduction from Barker.
- ★ **Douglas E. Winter** (ed.) *Millennium* (24 Apr.; £16.99 hb, c400pp) — A "wraparound novella" by Clive Barker frames a series of stories set in the decades of the twentieth century. Contributors include Joe R. Lansdale, F. Paul Wilson, Poppy Z. Brite, Whitley Streiber, Ramsey Campbell, and others.
- ★ **Stephen Baxter** *Vacuum Diagrams* (HarperCollins: 12 Apr.; £16.99 hb, c400pp) — Coll. of Baxter's "Xeelee" short stories, mostly published in *Interzone*.
- Brian Lumley** *Brian Lumley's Mythos Omnibus, Vol. 1* (HarperCollins: Apr.; £6.99 pb, 688pp) — The first volume of Lumley's additions to the Cthulhu Mythos, contains *The Burrowers Beneath*, *The Transition of Titus Crow*, and *The Clock of Dreams*. The second volume will be issued in June.
- ★ **Melanie McGrath** *Hard, Soft and Wet* (HarperCollins: Apr.; £16.99 hb, 320pp) — Non-fiction. Investigation into worldwide cyberculture and its associated lifestyles: road protesters, virus writers, technomads (nice phrase!), neo-Luddites, ambient DJs, email junkies and so forth. McGrath is British, and in the course of writing this travelled widely: London, San Francisco, Wales, New York, Singapore, Moscow, Prague, Berlin, Reykjavik, Wrotham, Northampton.
- ★ **Philip K. Dick** *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (6 May (R 1968); £5.99 pb) — The basis of *Blade Runner*, of course. Francis Ford Coppola is scheduled to produce (and might direct) a movie version of *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*.
- James Van Hise** *The Unauthorized History of Trek* (6 May; £6.99 pb) — Another attempt to mythologise a rather crappy tv series, as if we needed it.
- Jane Welch** *The Runes of Sorcery* (6 May; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, book 3 of the 'Runespell Trilogy'. "Youthful heroes and bloodthirsty action to satisfy the most ardent Edgings fan."
- ★ **Stephen Donaldson** *This Day All Gods Die* (19 May; £5.99 pb) — St. fifth and final volume in the 'Gap' series.
- Isaac Asimov** *Magic* (19 May; £5.99 pb) — Coll. of Asimov's fantasy stories.
- Christie Dickson** *Quicksilver* (HarperCollins: 1 May; £16.99 hb, 320pp) — Werewolf Gothic fantasy set in 17th century England and Holland, with the background of the emerging Age of Reason. Dickson is an American choreographer (at Ronnie Scott's and the RSC) now resident in London.
- Brian Lumley** *Brian Lumley's Mythos Omnibus, Vol. 2* (HarperCollins: Jun.; £6.99 pb, 656pp) — The second volume of Lumley's additions to the Cthulhu Mythos, contains *Spain of the Winds*, *In the Moons of Borea*, and *Elysia*.
- ★ **Barbara Hambly** *The Mother of Winter* (2 Jun.; £5.99 pb) — Fourth (sic) volume in the 'Darwell' trilogy.
- Sharon Shinn** *Joyah's Witness* (2 Jun.; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy which appears, intriguingly, to be rewriting the Bible.
- Noel Malcolm** *The Origins of English Nonsense* (HarperCollins: 1 Jun.; £18.00 hb, 208pp) — Non-fiction investigation of English, medieval and Renaissance nonsense poetry, long before Lear and Carroll came on the scene. Contains much work unpublished since the 17th century.
- Stephen Lawhead** *Byzantium* (2 Jun.; £5.99 pb) — Fantastist Lawhead has moved from
- Christian publishing house Lion, and this stand-alone volume tells of a novice in Ireland chosen to accompany a small band of monks delivering the Book of Kells to the Pope.
- Kevin J. Anderson** *Climbing Olympus* (16 Jun.; £5.99 pb) — A slightly late Mars book, in which Man Plussed humans have to terrify the planet — but this is suicide for them.
- Kevin J. Anderson** *Ruins* (16 Jun.; £5.99 pb) — X-Files tie-in.
- Eric Lustbader** *Dragons on the Sea of Night* (16 Jun.; £16.99 hb) — Erotic fantasy.
- Kate Wilhelm** *Maiden Prey* (HarperCollins: 1 Jun.; £5.99 pb, 352pp) — Associational. Non-st. courtroom thriller.
- Alex Kershaw** *Jack London: A Life* (HarperCollins: 1 Jul.; £20.00 hb, 352pp il.) — Biography of the author of the *Call of the Wild*. The Iron Heart, Delayed from Feb.
- Richard Fortey** *Life: An Unauthorized Biography* (HarperCollins: 1 May; £20.00 hb, 416pp il.) — The history of the first 4 billion years of the Earth.
- ★ **Peter Atkins** *Big Thunder* (HarperCollins: 1 Jul.; £16.99 hb, 352pp) — Delayed from Apr. 96, then Feb. 97 (if it ever came out). A Kim Newman-esque sounding late Valentine Dyson, vicious cloak-and-sword of the 1930's pulp magazine *Strange Thrills*, who materialises in present-day Manhattan when his creator falls into a coma after a car crash. He saves a girl from a mugger who he then tortures to death, the while delivering a lecture on the nature of the Universe, of reality before the Fall, the true significance of the Alchemists' Great Work — and the approaching reconciliation of the living with the dead. Dyson goes on to make a film, "Big Thunder," and extract vengeance on its viewers. Liverpool-born (now Los Angeles resident) Atkins wrote the screenplays for three of the four *Hellraiser* films, and this is his second novel: the first was *Morningstar*.
- Mike Lundon** *Wood Angel Seven* (1 Jul.; £5.99 pb, 320pp) — Techno-thriller about a group of conscience-wracked scientists who attempt to bring about world peace with a super-fast stealth plane.
- Richard West** *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Daniel Defoe* (HarperCollins: 1 Jul.; £20.00 hb, 352pp il.) — Biography. As well as Robinson Crusoe, Defoe also wrote *proto-f*, *fantasy*, and ghost stories.
- Mike Jefferies** *Threads of Magic* (7 Jul.; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, fourth and final volume in the 'Eldundum' series.
- ★ **David & Leigh Eddings** *Poigara the Sorceress* (HarperCollins: 7 Jul.; £16.99 hb, c800pp) — A "companion novel to *Belgarath the Sorcerer*", and the final book in the 'Belgarad' sequence.
- Katherine Kerr & Mark Kneighbaum** *Palace* (21 Jul.; £5.99 pb) — Science fantasy, first volume in a new series.
- ★ **Robert Silverberg** *Ring the Changes* (21 Jul.; £5.99 pb) — Volume 5 of Silverberg's collected short stories, covering the period when he produced the splendid (if gloomy) novels *Wings Inside the Shell* and *The Stochastic Man*.
- Jerry Wurts** *Alliance of Light* (24 Jul.; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp) — Fantasy, fourth volume of *Wings of Light and Shadow*.
- ★ **Stephen Baxter** *Titan* (1 Aug.; £16.99 hb, c500pp) — The NASA/ESA probe Cassini is scheduled to reach Saturn's moon Titan in 2004, and here Baxter postulates that it discovers ammonia-based life. NASA is moribund, and following a Challenger-type disaster grand-mother and astronaut Paula Benacore is appointed to dismantle the Shuttle fleet. But she comes under the influence of a maverick JPL scientist and instead retires the ageing Saturn, Apollo and Shuttle spacecraft with state-of-the-art technology, and, despite opposition from the military, a last-gasp manned mission to Titan is launched. The first fruit of Baxter's researches into NASA and the US space program was the alternative history *Voyage*, with its well-drawn lead female hero; *Titan* returns to near-future sf and promises much.
- Dean Devlin, Roland Emmerich & Stephen Moshel** *Independence Day: The Prequel* (1 Aug.; £16.99 hb, c300pp) — Tie-in intended to plug the holes left by the film: where did the aliens come from? How was their existence kept secret? "Reveals generations of conspiracy."

Gollancz



Including Vista, Indigo

- Duane Frankel** *Bad Memory* (1 Apr.; £15.99 hb, 384pp) — Techno-thriller by a Houston-resident systems analyst about a large computer company subject to extortion from a hacker who's infiltrated their network.
- Thomas Tessier** *Fog Heart* (24 Apr.; £16.99 hb, 256pp) — Supernatural thriller.
- Peter Dickinson** *The Lion Tamer's Daughter and Other Supernatural Stories* (1 Apr.; £11.99 hb, 192pp) — Four tales from the highly-regarded children's writer.
- Peter Dickinson** *The Blue Hawk* (Apr.; £4.50 pb, 240pp il.) — Reissued young adult fantasy.
- Terry Pratchett & Stephen Briggs** *The Discworld Companion* (Vista: May; £4.99 pb) — New updated edition of the *anorak* guide.
- Steve Harris** *The Devil on My Street* (1 Jul.; £16.99 hb) — Haunted house horror.
- Ursula K. Le Guin** *Four Ways to Forgiveness* (Vista: May; £5.99 pb) — Four novelettes.
- Phillip Mann** *The Burning Forest* (Vista: 22 May; £5.99 pb) — Fourth volume of *A Land Fit For Heroes*, an alternative history where the Romans remained dominant.
- Greg Bear** *Tangents* (Vista: 22 May; £5.99 pb) — Coll.
- Gregory Benford** *Matter's End* (Vista: May; £5.99 pb) — Collection of shorts.
- ★ **M. John Harrison** *Signs of Life* (29 May; £16.99 hb, 253pp) — "An up-to-the-minute romantic thriller" set in London and Budapest about a courier for the genetics industry and his relationship with Isabel, who wants to fly. She takes a new DNA-based genetic treatment, and Mick learns what he's carrying. Fantasy and last cars, computers, biotechnology and the Eastern European Mafia! and more.
- Susanna Kearsley** *The Shadowy Horses* (Jul.; £15.99 hb) — Timeslip fantasy about an archeological dig in Scotland searching for the Ninth Legion. This is the Canadian writer's third book. The first, *Mariana*, won the Catherine Cookson Fiction Prize.
- Tim Earnshaw** *Helium* (1 Jun.; £5.99 pb) — A "comedy of weightlessness" in which a rock musician's sudden lightness of step becomes a matter of great interest to NASA. Earnshaw's first novel.
- Stephen Jones** (ed.) *Dancing With the Dark* (Vista: 1 Jun.; £5.99 pb) — "True supernatural experiences from Stephen King, Vincent Price, James Herbert, Ramsey Campbell and other masters of horror." The writers reveal how their encounters with the supernatural are reflected in their fiction.
- ★ **Theodore Sturgeon** *More Than Human* (Vista: 26 Jun. (R 1953); £5.99 pb) — Reissue of the famous story of a group of children with psi powers, and their coming of age. A genuine classic, and recommended.
- Marian Veivers** *Bloodlines* (Vista: 26 Jun.; £5.99 pb)
- Margaret Wells & Don Perrin** *Hung Out* (24 Jul.; £15.99 hb) — Third in the 'Knights of the Black Earth' series. The second is:
- Margaret Wells & Don Perrin** *Rebel Blues* (Vista: 24 Jul.; £5.99 pb)
- N. Lee Wood** *Faraday's Orphans* (Vista: 24 Jul.; £5.99 pb) — Paperback of Wood's bleak dystopia.
- Diana Wynne Jones** *A Sudden Wild Magic* (Vista: 24 Jul.; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.
- Rebecca Bradley** *Soon's Lady* (7 Aug.; £16.99 hb)
- Jenny Jones** *Where the Children Cry* (7 Aug.; £16.99 hb) — New fantasy from the author of the wonderful *The Blue Man*.
- Rebecca Bradley** *Lady in Gil* (Vista: 21 Aug.; £5.99 pb)
- Stephen Jones** (ed.) *Shadows Over Insmouth* (21 Aug.; £5.99 tp)
- S. P. Somtow** *The Pavilion of Frozen Women* (Vista: 21 Aug.; £5.99 pb)

The Rest

B&N TREE

Jonathan Cape
Paper Tiger
Titan

Roger Fulton *The Encyclopedia of TV Science Fiction* (Bantam: 21 Mar. £18.99 pb, 697pp ill.) — Third edition of this comprehensive guide.

Martin Gardner (ed.) *Great Essays in Science* (Oxford: Apr. £8.99 pb, 448pp) — Anthology of the world's best science writers, including Einstein, R. L. Stevenson, Darwin, Chesterton, Asimov, Sagan and Gould.

★ **John Light** *Lights List* (Photon: Mar. £1.25 pb) — The 1997 edition of this extremely useful and comprehensive guide to over 1,100 small-press titles around the world. Photon Press, 29 Longfield Rd., Tring, Herts, HP23 4DG. Tel. 01442 822947. Also available:

John Light *Lights of Hate* (Photon: Mar. £5.00 pb, 226pp) — Self-published sf adventure, sequel to *The Wolf of Time*.

★ **Thomas Pynchon** *Mason and Dixon* (Jonathan Cape: 1 Apr. £16.99 hb, 773pp) — Pynchon is the enigmatic icon of post-modernism, and this — his first novel since *Vineland* in 1990 — concerns Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, 18th century astronomers, surveyors, clock-makers and travellers who surveyed and laid down the Mason-Dixon line, which divides the US North-South, slavery-freedom, past-future. It follows their lives closely, via England, South Africa and St Helena (to observe a transit of Venus in order to measure the Earth/Sun distance) to the US. David Seed has called Pynchon 'a poet of things', and *MaD* is much taken with technology: orreries, escapements, mechanical ducks, iron and steel, clocks — the recent surprise bestseller. Longitude was about the search for a clock mechanism which would be reliable on board ship (and thus enable accurate navigation), and Pynchon's winning design appears here too. Written in quasi-18th century style, it also features talking dogs.

★ **Bruce Boston** *Sensuous Debris: Selected Poems 1970-1995* (Dark Regions: 1 Apr. \$8.00 pb, \$40 hb, 96pp ill.; signed, limited edition) — Choice coll. from this highly-regarded US poet, whose work tends to the surreal: includes many award-winning poems. Collages Thomas Wilcox, introduction 1. Winter-Damon, Dark Regions, Box 6301, Concord CA 94524, USA (probably also available through BBR and specialist dealers).

★ **Nell Ferguson** (ed.) *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals* (Picador: 1 Apr. £20 hb, 560pp) — Eight historians ponder what-if scenarios ranging from Hitler-won and Kennedy-lived (the mundane) to Irish-unification in 1912 and Charles-I-beat-the-Scots-in-1639 (the intriguing). Interestingly, Oxford historian Ferguson uses arguments from biology and physics (especially chaos theory) to justify historians taking this sort of exercise seriously: it was previously left to sf writers and other low-lives. He claims that to understand how it actually was, we 'need to understand how it actually wasn't — but how, to contemporaries, it might have been'.

★ **Mark Twain** *A Connecticut Yankee in the Court of King Arthur* (World's Classics: Apr. £5.99 pb, 410pp ill.) — Classic time-slip story, uses the text of the first US edition. Oxford are also issuing their complete edition of Twain, reprints of the first editions include the original illustrations, and with introductions from such as Kurt Vonnegut, Malcolm Bradbury, Gore Vidal, Arthur Miller and Erica Jong. Complete set: OUP: Apr. £240 (£320 after 1 Oct 97) hbs, 13,900p in 29 volumes, ill. **M. E. George** *The Lexicon: Anti-Wallons to Zulus* (Pan: 4 Apr. £7.99 pb, 177pp) — 'An unofficial X-Files guide to people, places and proprietary phrases'. Now, I've never seen *The X-Files* (off, please!), so this is incomprehensible to me. It's an alphabetical list of things referenced in the show, and is possibly meant to be amusing. 'Trenchcoat: useful for hiding pregnancies'. There are stock photos, an episode guide, and a diary. *George* (a woman) is the author of the *Unofficial X-Files Companions*, has written for Asimov's and lives in Newfoundland.

★ **George Tomkyns Chesney** and **Saki** *The Battle of Dorking and When William Came* (World's Classics: May. £4.99 pb, 160pp) — Two classic future-war stories from 1871 and 1913 respectively, both about German invasions of the UK. Introduced by I. F. Clarke, author of the seminal *Voices Prophecying War*.

★ **Will Self** *Great Apes* (Bloomsbury: 1 May. £15.99 hb, 404pp) — A coke-freak wakes up in a world where humans are apes. More Self abuse, and not written in the toilet of John Major's jet.

★ **David Deutsch** *The Fabric of Reality* (Penguin: 1 May. £25.00 hb) — If Greg Egan makes sense under your skin of your ears, you'll love this. Oxford-based theoretical physicist Deutsch argues that we're much closer to a Theory of Everything than we think (though not the one most physicists are looking for). He draws together four strands — epistemology (the theory of knowledge), quantum mechanics, computational theory and evolution — and couples them to the many-worlds interpretation of QM. This synthesis, he claims, allows a vastly greater depth of understanding of reality than ever before. He also discusses quantum computers (which in effect

use other versions of the machine in parallel universes to vastly increase their computing power), the place of knowledge-bearing structures in the multiverse, and the destiny of evolution and intelligence. Who needs sf? Especially when we're going from the sublime to:

★ **Barbara Hambly** *Solar Wars: Planet of Twilight* (Bantam: 15 May. £12.99 hb, 312pp) — Princess Leo is kidnapped and held hostage by a warlord, and Luke has to rescue her (is there an echo in here?). Complications include a religious cult, power crystals, Luke searching for his lost love Calista, a plague, and a new form of megalomaniacal sentient life.

★ **Phil Rickman** *The Chalice* (Macmillan: 9 May. £16.99 hb, 548pp) — 'A Gastonbury ghost story'. Rickman confidently uses the scale for this fantasy/horror story concerning the Grail allegedly brought to England by Joseph of Arimathea (and its possible offspring), family secrets, travellers and road protesters, a possible reincarnation of Don Quixote (who, though the sounds like a 50s crooner, was in fact a noted fantasist and mystic of the 1920s), dog-eared hippies, John Cowper Powells, feminist pagans, apocalyptic visions, feeble bishops, antiquarian bookdealers, Old Tony New Age conflicts, and a haunted bus. Set in a lightly-fictionalised Gastonbury, it contains characters from Rickman's *Cybbie* — notably Joe Powys (no relation — or is he?) and his three-legged dowsing dog — and, like all his books, gets in a plug for the Incredible String Band, thus immediately endearing himself to his own people. Reminiscent of Kim Newman's *Alder-se* in its pleasingly caricatured evocation of an English country town and its denizens, *The Chalice* is a more enjoyable entertainment though no less enjoyable; it's perhaps only let down by a slightly punctured ending. A smashing one-sitting read, and recommended.

★ **Q. Dead Head** (Sceptre: 15 May. £5.00 pb) — Much-quoted cult novel about a streetwise cyber-traveller tracking down paedophiles on the Internet, written in state-of-the-art 'm' bass prose and London/Jamaican patois. 'Q', black and a long-time citizen of Ladbroke Grove, originally hawked this around dubland, selling chapters and readings, and put it on the net and CD-ROM; now it's finally getting into print.

★ **Stephen Jones** (ed.) *The Mammoth Book of Dracula* (Robinson: 29 May. £6.99 pb, 512pp) — Arth of reprinted and original vampire stories; new contributions come from Kim Newman, Michael Marshall Smith, Christopher Fowler and others, with reprints from such as Brian Stablerford, Ramsey Campbell and Thomas Ligotti. But the coup is a recently-discovered dramatised version of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, reprinted here for the first time since 1897. There's also an introduction from Daniel Fanson, Stoker's great-nephew.

★ **Dante Alighieri** *Inferno* (Oxford: Jun. £10.99 pb, 672pp ill.) — First volume of Robert M. Durling's new prose translation (the first in 25 years) of one of the great works of proto-sf, Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It inspired, among much other sf and fantasy, Niven & Pournelle's *Inferno*, in which an sf writer goes to hell (or possibly Eastern) to slay the original, I'd advise; it's surprisingly readable, even the Dorothy L. Sayers translation which I first came across. Includes the full Italian text, notes and 16 essays on special subjects.

★ **John Sutherland** *Can Jane Eyre Be Happy?* (Oxford: Jun. £4.99 pb, 256pp ill.) — Follow-up to the well-received *Heathcliff a Murderer?* Sutherland examines 32 literary conundrums, enigmas, and mysteries — why does Robinson Crusoe find only one footprint? Where does Fanny Hill keep her contraceptives? — and speculates on possible answers. OK, it's not strictly sf, but I suppose it's fantasy of a sort.

★ **Michael Singer** *Batman & Robin: The Making of the Movie* (Titan: 6 Jun. £9.99 pb, ill.) — Follows the making of the film (released on 27 Jun.) from comic to screen, via screenplay, casting, filming and so on. Includes an interview with director Joel Schumaker, actor profiles, and set design information. Also available are various souvenir and poster magazines, and a comic; *How Cash in, Batman!*

★ **Marcus Hearn & Alan Barnes** *The Hammer Story* (Titan: 19 Jun. £19.99 hb, ill.) — 'A gloriously bloodthirsty celebration of Hammer Films, unearthed to coincide with the 40th anniversary of Hammer's first gothic horror film, *The Curse of Frankenstein*'. Hammer made more than 60 sf, fantasy and horror films, and this book examines every one in considerable detail, with reproductions of every film poster, pre-production artwork, and archive material now made available by Hammer. The first 3 films — *The Curse of Frankenstein*, *The Mummy* and *Dracula* — will be released for the first time on video in May.

★ **Mike Ashley** (ed.) *The Mammoth Book of Fairy Tales* (Robinson: 7 Jul. £6.99 pb, 544pp ill.) — Arth of fairy tales from the last 300 years, from Andersen to Dickens, Grimm to Tanith Lee, A. A. Milne to C. S. Lewis.

★ **Allan Cole** *When the Gods Slept* (NEL: May. £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, first volume in 'The Timura Trilogy'.

★ **Michael Williams** *Allamanda* (Jul. £16.99 hb) — Fantasy from the author of *Arcady*.

★ **Courtney Brown** *Cosmic Voyage* (Jul. £16.99 hb) — Non-fiction.

★ **Richard Bachman** *The Regulators* (NEL: Jun. £5.99 pb) — Horror from the resurrected Stephen King pseudonym.

★ **Steven Spruill** *Daughter of Darkness* (NEL: Jun. £5.99 pb) — Horror.

★ **Amey Stout** *The Royal For* (NEL: Jun. £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.

★ **Mark Carter** *Down to Heaven* (Jul. £16.99 hb) — Sf thriller from the author of *Ember*.

★ **Diane Duane** *The Book of Night With Moon* (Jul. £16.99 hb) — Volume 1 in a new fantasy series, in which cats are revealed to be the secret rulers of the world. Some astute market research there, given sf fans' pet preferences...

★ **David Wingrove** *The Marriage of the Living Dark* (Jul. £16.99 hb) — The eighth and final volume of Wingrove's 'Chung Kuo' series.

★ **Paul Johnson** *Body Politics* (Jul. £16.99 hb) — Sf.

★ **Alan F. Allford** *Gods of the New Millennium* (Jul. £16.99 hb) — Non-fiction.

★ **Stephen King** *Desperation* (NEL: Jul. £5.99 pb) — Horror.

★ **Philip G. Williamson** *Orbus's World* (NEL: Jul. £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, second volume of 'Enchantment's Edge'.

Hodder & Stoughton

Including NEL, Coronet



★ **Mark Pepper** *The Short Cut* (NEL: Mar. £5.99 pb) — Debut horror novel from actor Pepper, written whilst 'resting' — he's recently been seen in Coronation Street, *Pie in the Sky* and *Prime Suspect 3*. 'A Faustian tale of an out-of-work actor tempted by his new, smooth, scary manager.' J. D. Robb *Immortal in Death* (Apr. £16.99 hb) — Sf/crime.

★ **Patrick Huyge** *The Field Guide to Extraterrestrials* (NEL: 1 Apr. £5.99 pb) — Non-fiction (athem). 'A complete overview of alien lifeforms, based on actual accounts and sightings.' Slim book, then.

★ **Brian Lumley** *Necroscope: The Last Years Vol. 2* (NEL: Apr. £5.99 pb) — Horror.

★ **J. D. Robb** *Gory in Death* (NEL: Apr. £5.99 pb) — Sf/crime.

★ **Gene Wolfe** *Exodus From the Land of Sun* (NEL: Apr. £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.

★ **Paul Walle** *Flight of the Mariner* (NEL: May. £16.99 hb) — Fantasy.

★ **Stephen Lawes** *Somewhere South of Midnight* (NEL: May. £5.99 pb) — Horror.

★ **Ben Bova** *Moonrise* (NEL: May. £5.99 pb) — Hard sf.

★ **Gerald Suster** *The God Game* (NEL: 1 May. £5.99 pb) — Horror.

mailbox

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Letters may be edited. If you don't want your full address
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From Philip Muldowney

15 Woodmill Lane, Bitterne Park, Southampton,
SO18 2PA

Thanks for another interesting Matrix. Tell me one thing though, do you type it all yourself? [You can't type the 'x's, can't you?'] As the original two-fingered typist, I must admit I stand in awe. Mind you, the word processor makes experts of us all.

My comment about losing our heritage is perhaps a hyperbolic one [Letters, last issue]. After all, genres and popular fiction are ephemeral things, by their very nature being products of a society at a particular time. How often are Wheatley or Monsarrat read now? On the other hand, it does tie in with various comments and straws in the wind - like Brian Stableford's at the London meeting - which amount to the cry 'Is sf dying / Is it dead?' OK, this is a phrase that seems to have been around ever since it started, but now seems to have two tracks: the deleterious effects that modern publishing / retail methods have had, combined with complete overexposure in the media.

It has been possible this year, in the post-kiddy / news spots (some would debate where one ends and the other starts) around six in the evening, to be watching Star Trek clones nearly every day of the week. As of writing there are: *Next Generation of Superman* (Sat 6.15 BBC1), *ST Voyager* (Sun 6.45 BBC2), *Space Precinct* (Mon 6.45 BBC2), *ST: TNG* (Wed 6.00 BBC2), and *ST: DS9* (Thu BBC2). Let alone *Quantum Leap*, *The Outer Limits*, *The X-Files*, *Space Above and Beyond*, *Dark Skies* etc. What about Sky 1's output, where it is

possible to watch *Star Trek* et al repeats for three hours solid on a Saturday afternoon (God, there can be something more boring than sport on a Saturday afternoon) and whose whole output is stuffed with sf repeats? [Plus the 'Sci Fi' cable channel. - Chris]

The movie industry as well. Most of the top ten grossing films are *sf*, *Independence Day* being the latest in a long line. It really is amazing that when the twenty-year-old *Star Wars* is released, with a few technical tweaks and outtakes, the Hollywood PR machine manages to convince the world that it is the best thing since sliced bread! We now live in a truly global village (whatever did happen to that visionary Marshall McLuhan? [Died in 1980. - Chris]) where the cynical mega-money of blanket advertising, PR and hype can make anything successful, at least for a short time. Of course, *sf* is the perfect tool to fit in with this strategy, the future being the ultimate plastic medium it is.

David Pringle in *Interzone* has argued that all this success is too good to last, and that *sf* might well go the way of the Western film and book, into permanent decline; i.e., *sf* is dying! Leaving aside the myriad reasons for the decline of the Western (not a simple subject) I wonder if the comparison is apt. Visual *sf* has become such a part of our cultural *milieu*, with direct input into everyday language, and the whole synthesis with computers and electronic games, that the images are too embedded to be shifted very easily. Yet what images? What *sf* film has won any decent award? The *X-Files* comes with a paranoid enough storyline to suit our times, and is greeted as a masterpiece.

Of course this had an effect on our own little patch. The publishing mega-mergers, the decline of the NBA, the rise of massive chain-store booksellers with their state-of-the-art stock knowledge which gives books an ever-shorter shelf life; indeed, the very rise of the me-no culture, which wants everything at once, in pre-digested form, and which has an attention span of three minutes. This has led to a completely different publishing industry, with a short-term view, responding like a scalded cat to the latest media-driven typhoon, and essentially conservative. It will not take too many risks. Combine all this, and you have the disaster that has overtaken many *sf* authors, including the decline of the midlist. John Brunner could not get published in his later years; Brian Stableford has to disguise *sf* novels as fantasy doorstops. A brilliant short story writer like Ian R. MacLeod could not get a novel published at all as yet; short story collections have become the province of specialist publishers. Who knows what we have lost? Can anyone imagine an publisher nowadays nurturing an older writer? Say, like Faber did in the 60s with James Blish by publishing *Black Easter*. I very much doubt it.

So, perhaps we are losing our heritage. Perhaps Heinlein's colloquial style has dated too quickly, but what about that legion of authors who are not on the huge list of the bookstalls? Sturgeon, Henderson, Cordwainer Smith, Bradbury... OK, it is a personal choice, and I am sure we could all name dozens of our favourites. Fact is though, they are disappearing. Will modern accountant-led publishing give it one passing thought? Like a snowball in hell....

The world of academia is an esoteric one unto itself. I have always wondered what one did with a post-graduate degree in an *sf*-related area. ☐

*I find myself in the embarrassing position of defending publishers. It's easy to forget how little *sf* was published pre-1970 or so, and how much of that was crap. There is more *sf* - at novel length, at least - being published now than ever before, and much more importantly, it's of far better quality. More books are sold now than ever before, and more people read. I grew up in a house with two books -*

a Bible and the Highway Code - and while there are still many households without books (the horror!), someone's keeping all those swish new bookshops in business.

*Speaking as a reader and consumer, I'm happier with the state of *sf* now than I've ever been before. I just ignore the media stuff - it simply isn't relevant to me. As far as I'm concerned it ain't *sf*; it's a branch of kiddies' entertainment.*

From Steve Jeffery

4 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon., OX5 2XA

Regarding Philip Muldowney's letter on out-of-print authors - what happened to the 'classic *sf*' (e.g. VG&F) lines of paperback reprints? Perhaps we need an enterprising publisher (if that's not an oxymoron) or small-press imprint. Or is it a problem of distribution and the more-of-the-same shelf policies of places like W. H. Smith's?

Which relates back to Allan Blake's comments in the same issue about his selections for a core stock list for *sf* that presupposes some familiarity, and indeed availability, of a number of classic works (by Asimov, Clarke, Heinlein, Bester, and even Gibson's *Neuromancer* - now 13 years old) but which, as Muldowney points out regarding Brunner, might be unwarranted.

A straw poll of fellow APA members suggests that most have read some 20-25 of those Top 100 titles (about right for most people). Perhaps not great, but by no means shameful.

'Home Shopping' and 'Znery' are neatly done and dead useful. I love a good KTF review (*Reality and Beyond*) tee hee. Might even be tempted to test the Case of Jeffery on a trial sub to *The Third Alternative* (on my past record with small-press zines, they might pay me not to).

Neat essay from Brian Stableford on chimeras. ☐

• Although the 'VG&F' imprint is no longer going, Gollancz is one of the few publishers with a vigorous (and various) reissue programme. Their *Vista* and *Indigo* imprints have, in the last year, republished such titles as *The Sirens of Titan*, *Flowers for Algernon*, *The Difference Engine*, *City of Illusions*, *Timescape*, *Ancient Light*, *Fevre Dream*, *Imperial Earth*, *In the Ocean of Night*, *The Fountains of Paradise*, *More Than Human* and a number of others.

I understand that 'KTF' means, er, 'Kill The Fuckers'.

From Gary Dalkin

5 Lydford Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH11 8SN

Just a few thoughts on various points raised in *Matrix* 124.

I once wasted several hours reading Patrick Tilley's mundane techno-thriller and felt very short-changed. Not only does it lack any real imagination, but it just sort of, well... fades-out. Inconclusive and dull, how much less can a reader want from a 'core title'?

As for Steve Palmer's 10 Controversial Things, five are absolutely spot on, five are completely wrong, and as for the rest, well I'll just sit on the fence for now.

Chris Hill feels there are certain authors it's not acceptable not to like (within the hallowed halls of fandom). I can't say I've ever noticed this, but certainly pressures to canonical conformity should be resisted. I never liked Fritz Leiber either, or Robert Heinlein, or Philip K. Dick, or even William Gibson. Dreadfully over-rated, the lot of them. Ballard used to write wonderful short stories, but never penned a novel, apart from *The Crystal World*, which I've been able to finish. Aldiss varies between the brilliant, the pointless and the incomprehensible. If we read what we were told was good for us, we'd all be reading Booker winners and never have any time for *sf* any longer. Moral: read who you like, not who you're told you should like.

Ten Years Ago...

Matrix 69, Apr / May 87... Matrix editor Maureen Porter and BSFA Co-ordinator Paul Kinciad got engaged on 15 March. • Guests of Honour at Conspiracy 87 (the forthcoming Brighton Worldcon) Arkady and Boris Strugatski were in trouble with the Soviet regime, and various writers' organisations were pressuring the USSR government to let them attend. • Iain Banks gained an 'M' and released his first novel, *Consider Phlebas*. • Patrick Troughton died after a heart attack on 28 March at a US Dr Who convention. • BSFA boss Paul Kinciad discussed publicity, recruitment, finances and other external problems, plus *pc change*. • Lee Montgomerie took over from Judith Hanna as Assistant Editor at *Interzone*. • Manchester's finest named Savoy Books. Again. • John Landis and others were in court for 'involuntary manslaughter' following the deaths of actor Vic Morrow and two children aged 6 and 7 during the shooting of *The Twilight Zone* movie. • Paramount sued a confectionary manufacturer for calling their cookies 'Tribbles'. • Jeanne Gomoll won TAFF and Irwin Hirsch won GUFF. • *Earthlight* an electronic fanzine, was announced. It was on Prestel (remember that?), where its predecessor Starlight edited by Dave Langford had also appeared. • Computers were still novelties to many fans, and the no one had heard of the Internet. • Michael J. Bernadi wrote: 'Will editors be their own publisher in future? Will future distribution be via the phone line, printed at home on a laser printer?'

Re: Claire Brialay on *Star Wars*. Both the second and third "widescreen" video releases of the film are direct transfers of the original movie (I can't say for any other video versions), other than the fact that the 'New Hope' subtitle has been added, as on the re-release prints made prior to the original release of *The Empire Strikes Back*. The only other difference is the slightly fast running speed, which is an artifact of the PAL system. The attack on the Death Star on these tapes matches that detailed in the original script reproduced in *The Art of Star Wars*, edited by Carol Tittleman (Ballantine, 1979). There are three runs at the trench. The first is made by Gold Leader, Gold Five and Gold Two. The second, which actually appears successful for a moment, is made by Red Leader, Red Nine and Red Ten. Luke (Red Five) is at this point high above the Death Star providing cover along with Red Two (Wedge) and Red Three. This is the attack in which Claire remembers Luke using his targeting computer. Only after this does Luke make his one and only run in the trench. The special effects may have been 'enhanced' but the events are the same in the 'Special Edition'.

Finally, I'm glad Philip Muldowney found me fascinating in my self-profile, at least until I blew it by entering clichéland. It was always a risk, but I might be allowed to explain why I wrote my essay on why life is, and thus defend myself....

Seeing as virtually no one in fandom has actually met me, indeed, there have been doubts as to my very existence, and as I do have a tendency to spout somewhat contentious opinions which several people have already either taken exception to, or misunderstood entirely, I felt it might be useful to outline just where I am 'coming from'. Perhaps I was wrong, but when I read someone tearing something to pieces which I love, or praising that which I regard

as abysmal, then I do like to have some sort of idea of their general likes, prejudices and critical standpoint. I just thought other people might appreciate knowing the same basics about me. ☹

From Mike Brain

2 Paddock Way, Hr. Kinnerton, Chester, CH4 9BA
Matrix 124 page 9, your article "The View From the Shop Floor". When the Times published the Waterstone's list, I wrote to their editor but they didn't publish it. So I make the same point to Matrix, that my 'personal count' was that I had read about 20/100, but had seen 50/100 on film or tv, so perhaps that may have further influenced the vote. Looking at your list of 55 titles, the film / tv count seems to be 27/55. Perhaps we ought to have an alternative F&SF list from our big mail-order specialist shops, like Andromeda? Even attempting to separate sf from fantasy? Perhaps the lending library system could abstract F&SF loans as another alternative reading popularity picture.

I expect to have skewed the library data from my local area, as most of my loan requests are for F&SF in hardback, so I can buy my favourites to keep as paperbacks.

I believe I have a reasonable grasp of the long-term sf (reading) scene, having started with USA pulp novels like Vargo Statten in the early 1950s! ☹

• 'Vargo Statten' was actually a pseudonym of the extremely prolific British writer John Russell Fearn. Later, Mike sent his response to Steve Palmer's "10 Controversial Things".

From Mike Brain

No. 5, X-Files blind: I would tactically agree, only on the basis of being able to use it as an excuse to drop from the tv schedules other, more unworthy dross.

Game shows, soaps, pseudo-science documentaries. Perhaps with the new BBC Charter we could get the BSFA to lobby the sf issue, or get elected to their buying / selection panel for tv imports?

No. 6 [separating sf and horror in bookshops]: Yes, along with all the *Star Trek* novelisations!

No. 10 [limiting Pratchett books to one per household]: Yes, but one per week!

No. 3 [Gillian Anderson's ugliness]: Yes, compared to Janine Turner (Maggie in *Northern Exposure*).

No. 7 [Marketing clichés]: My company has a 'Guide', but the marketing department was incensed when I showed them the page from *Mostly Harmless* by Douglas Adams citing 'tossports'.

No. 1 [Star Wars]: On that basis I am surprised that we have yet to see a tv series 'spin off' along the lines of *D59* from ST:TNG.

A Wizard of Earthsea on Radio 4. Is this programme likely to be available on BBC cassette or CD? I only caught half an hour by chance, so will it be repeated? I have asked this question before some years ago (Media pages), but would the BSFA ask BBC Radio 4 people to consult / advise them on future sf broadcasts and give us plenty of notice in Matrix? ☹

• It's very difficult getting scheduling information out of the BBC with sufficient notice for it to be useful to us. This isn't entirely their fault - I'd need to know two months in advance, and even they don't know their detailed schedule that far ahead. As to whether papers are released on tape, I suggest you write to the Beeb and ask. That isn't simple either; there are complex rights issues involved, and Le Guin has her own involvement in audio versions of her work.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM Syd Foster, Carol Ann Green, Geoffrey Hunt, Paul Kincaid, Plam Plummer. Thanks to all. And now it's YOUR turn.... —Chris

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city on the edge of the fen

cardinal cox

NORTH OF Cambridge, east of Birmingham, south of Lincoln, west of Norwich, the Peterborough SF Club was founded in 1976, but the city's connections with the genre stretch back further than that. Authors who have lived in the area include Lady Charlotte Guest, Charles Kingsley, E. G. Swann, J. D. Beresford, Lucy Boston, L. P. Hartley and William Le Queux. Later writers include John Kippax, Dan Morgan, June Counsel and Peter F. Hamilton. Two Easterncons were held in Peterborough in the mid-sixties, instigated by another local, book-dealer Ken Slater.

The club was started by Chris Wakelin and her husband Dave after being encouraged by Keith Freeman at ManCon 5, the 1976 Easterncon held in Manchester. The first few months were covered in an article Chris wrote for *Matrix* many moons ago, and as with all local groups (I suspect) the beginning was slow. It must be underlined that Peterborough does not have a seat of higher education. When it was mooted that Cambridgeshire should have a polytechnic, instead of Peterborough it went to the educationally underprivileged town of Cambridge. Thus our club has never had a core of students to replenish its membership.

Around 1980 the club went through a thin patch while Chris and Dave were in Africa, though this changed when they returned in 1982. Though never fully active after this, they provided a much-needed boost. This period culminated in a widely appreciated convention, Congregate 88. This was part of a boom time on cons in Britain and ours certainly caught the spirit of the time. I vaguely remember it being favourably reviewed in *Concatenation*, but that might just be part of rosy-tinted memory.

From then on the club focused on bringing authors etc. to the city, promoting the genre locally rather than trying to maintain a national 'fanish' profile. Over the past twelve months our guests have included Nicholas Royle, Gary Kilworth, Fred Clarke (talking about his brother Arthur), Oliver Johnson, Mike Jefferies, Freda Warrington and most recently the *Interzone* artist Russell Morgan.

a brief history of the peterborough sf club

Since 1992 the club has helped to organise the local Fantasy Fairs. These, as we are quick to point out, aren't conventions. They're a mix of large dealers' room, gaming demos and a couple of special guests. The aim is to introduce aspects of sf to the general public, such as comics, gaming, art etc. The entrance fee is fixed low, and in previous years we've managed to attract about 700 punters in. Obviously, we hope to attract new members to the club, but to be honest that doesn't always happen. Though perhaps the ten-year-old who has a go at *Star Fleet Battles* (for instance) might, in seven years' time, be a committed RPGer.

We are not, however, the only club in Peterborough. We also have an Anime Club (PAniC), a Dr Who / media group (Nth Dimension), a *Star Trek* and gaming groups, and an sf writing circle. There is some overlap between these groups and a combined Nth Dimension / SF Club team won *Telly Addicts* in 1994. Members of both clubs have helped to organise the annual Cult TV convention on the Norfolk coast.

Looking to the future and the next century, I hope that the club will continue to bring both established names and new talents to area as well as encouraging and promoting local writers and artists. We will always remain searching for new sf, fantasy, horror, gothic and surreal entertainments.

— © Cardinal Cox 1997

The Peterborough SF Club

meets on the first Wednesday of the month at the Bluebell Inn, Dogsthorpe, and on the third Wednesday of the month in the bar of the Great Northern Hotel, opposite the BR station.

There are meetings on 4 Jun 97 (when the guest is Simon Ings); 18 Jun 97; 2 Jul 97; 16 Jul 97; 6 Aug 97; 20 Aug 97; and 3 Sep 97.

If you'd like more information on any of the groups mentioned above, send an SAE to 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5RB.

LOOK AND LEARN YVONNE ROWSE

I LEARNED something about myself at Intervention. Something shameful. I'll tell you about it later.

Intervention was my first convention. Sort of. I tried Follycon all those years ago but I didn't go all the way. My fiancé, who had been on a walking holiday in North Wales, came into the con looking for me. He was wearing an orange cagoule, walking boots and carrying a rucksack. Security had no trouble at all identifying him as an alien. He was ejected and I slunk out after him, blushing. This time I left him at home, shackled to the kids.

So anyway, I arrived at the Adelphi on Friday afternoon carrying a bag empty but for a couple of changes of underwear and socks. I remembered the dealers' room from last time and I left the rest of my bag with books. I did. I dumped the bag in the hotel room.

I'd read somewhere that it was a point of principle with some people never to go to a programme item but to spend the entire convention in the bar. I went to look at the bar. They had no real ale except for Old Peculier. It's been a habit of mine for some time to avoid beers that begin with the word 'old': Old Tom, Old Peculier, Old Hooky, Old Roger etc. They make me fall over, gibber wildly and sometimes throw up. I hesitated. The keg beer was John Smith's. I compromised on a half of O.P. I'd missed the opening ceremony (curse the train times) so I decided to go to "A Young Person's Guide To The Convention". In the programme it said the item was a Frequently Asked Questions session for first-timers. I missed it. I was talking to someone and missed the first five minutes. Later during the convention it became clear to me that as long as you were carrying a pint of beer you could wander through any programme item at any time and no one would mind. Especially if the item was in BoSh's, which was confusingly called The Derby Room in the Big Black Book.

I went to listen to Dave Langford, Guest of Honour. I was impressed. I continued to be impressed by his wit and intelligence until I found him serenading a group of television people in front of the lifts when I wanted to go to the sixth floor with two carrier bags full of books, but that was later. I wandered, lonely as a cloud of cigarette smoke, until I'd drunk enough beer to stop being shy, then I imposed myself on a group from Bolton. While talking to

them it began to dawn on me that my problem, which in the outside world is regarded as a minor eccentricity, is treated with derision and cruelty in sf circles. I nearly admitted to it – they were a sympathetic lot – but I caught myself in time. I went to bed at midnight.

I gave up the idea of spending the entire convention chatting in the bar, mainly because I am too shy to push my way into conversations while I'm still sober enough to talk coherently. I know, shyness is a character flaw. My mother told me so. Compared to my big problem though, shyness is nothing.

So, I went to some of the programme items. I found I was one of the two per cent of fans who don't have an email facility but, though shameful, I could live with it. I did a bit of gophering. In four hours of this my only jobs were to go out to buy four Easter eggs and a bag of chips. Well worth the effort to have four hours when people would talk to me. I spent a lot of money in the dealers' room. I drank cold John Smith's beer, I talked to June (thanks June), and I played cards with Matt's group of silly card-game players (thanks Matt). Oh, and I nursed my growing realisation that that if I admitted my secret I would be a social outcast.

The people who go to conventions seem to be amazingly tolerant. You needn't feel an outcast if you're disabled, if you're gay, if you're fat, if you're a feminist, if you like playing with guns and / or dressing in strange clothes. You're even allowed to be a kid without being automatically loathed. You can even drink lager. It's amazingly liberating. But there is one blind spot, one prejudice that no one seems to care to change. I



As high-tech amusement for jaded fans, Intervention offered propeller-driven balloons rather than the usual paper-planes made from lovingly prepared and printed con flyers. On Saturday night great cheers could be heard whenever one of these contraptions reached the Adelphi's ornate ceiling, hundreds of feet above the throng. And which table was responsible? Perhaps Ken Macleod and Paul J. McAuley can help ...



INTERVIEW THE 1997 BRIT

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Text

Janet Barron, Mar
Yvonne Rowse, Mauree
Chris Terr

Cartoon:
Dave Moor

Photograph
Chris Terr

Thanks to
Andy Butler, Pau

In the Real World, the 199 campaign was getting under was predicting an unprecedented Tories. And around the UK, that the 1997 Eastercon at Liverpool would be... well, anyway. Major got it over so slightly i

Octavia E. Butler



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htly wrong. Did the fans?

Fantasy humorist Tom Holt props up the bar (or vice versa) and researches his next novel. I did not experience Tom's singing, which is probably reason enough to include the following, mysteriously escaped from "Forthcoming Books":

Tom Holt Bitter Lemmings (Beacon: ● 26 Apr; £4.00 pb (A4 spiral), 40pp, ISBN 1-870824-38-5) — Subtitled "Several good songs spoilt by Tom Holt", this is a collection of 39 song lyrics to tunes by others — that is, it's like, But these subvert all expectations by being extremely funny: "My Innam / Sad follow Isgin / And don't shilly-shally on the way", and guess the tune for that one. There's "The Wild Canadian Boy" (a tribute to a certain Mr. Clute), "Et in Intersectione Ego" (about a recent Scottishish E'nterpretion: the tune is G&S's "The Nightmare Song", and Tom says it's possible to sing if you take a run at it. I can confirm this, though my neighbours might disagree), songs about Ladyshaves, lovebites, lemmings and cheese. Proceeds go to a liking charity, and there's also a signed and illustrated limited edition for £5. Available from: Beacon Publications, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG. Cheques / POs payable to "Beacon Publications". Add 75p P&P.

wouldn't reveal my problem in this way if I hadn't seen others suffering, hadn't seen the sneers and heard the sniggers. It's time to come out. It's time to reject shame.

Here is my confession: I like *Star Trek*.

I know, I know. *Star Trek* is an in-joke. It's full of technobabble, the technical details change to fit the plot, there's very little continuity of storyline, it's morally simplistic, D9 is just a 'feebler copy of *Babylon 5*, and sometimes the storylines make me cringe, e.g. the *Voyager* episode where they found Amelia Earhart, abducted by aliens and kept in suspended animation on a planet 70 million light years from Earth.

I know, because I've been told forcibly, that *Babylon 5* is the Real Thing. It's subtle, complex, realistic. That's OK. I like *Babylon 5* as well. It is possible. It doesn't have to be either / or. Hell, I've even got a nostalgic affection for *Blake's 7*. There's so little sf on tv that if I have to give up *ST* to be *PC* I'll be not-OK.

So next year in Manchester will be different. I'll break through my reserve. I'll hold drunken discussion groups at two in the morning. I'll corner people and force them to listen to my tirades. I'll wear a witty pro-ST badge. I'll enter the masquerade as Dawn French plays Deanna Troi and if anyone makes a joke at our expense I will counsel them earnestly, sincerely, boringly and at great length. You have been warned.

Goodness, I *did* get carried away. Right. Intervention. Yes, well, I really enjoyed it, mostly. I'd do it again. What would have made it better? Drinkable tea, decent beer, mayonnaise-free salad, fresh fruit, a shy people's corner.

I staggered, squinting, into daylight on Monday and caught the train home. The journey took a long time because of vandalised power lines just north of Stafford, but the hour and a half spent sitting in Crewe station gave me time to devise my excuses for having spent all that money and to complete a planning permission request for another twenty feet of bookshelves.

—© Yvonne Rouse 1997

Jon Bing, with beer.



Jenny, Matt and Ramsey Campbell, proving that conventions are family affairs.



Ken MacLeod is very cheerful about something — perhaps he'd laid a bet on the size of Labour's majority.



Simo (a.k.a. M. J. Simpson) of *SFX* (Files) magazine, moaning about something or other and drinking what looks suspiciously like orange juice. He'll never be a real hack like that.

GOING DOWN SMOOTHLY MAUREEN KINCAID SPELLER

Following an unbelievably tortuous trip through the motorways of middle England, Maureen finally arrived in Liverpool on Friday morning:

NEVER WAS the sight of a bottle of Beck's more welcome than when we finally got into Liverpool, survived the one-way system (and the 'interesting' map in the convention's Progress Report 4), parked the car and persuaded the hotel that yes, we were visible, yes we did have a room reservation, and yes, we would quite like to have the keys.

It was at the Adelphi, at Sou'Wester in fact, that the BSFA first took up residence in the dealers' room (and it was Sou'Wester who later made a donation to the BSFA which helped finance *A Very British Genre*), and here we were, back in the same corner of the dealers' room, just like old times, alongside Peter Garrett for *Interzone*, Chris Reed and Manda Thompson for BBR, and Roger Robinson, Andy Sawyer and Peter Wright for the Foundation, though we all swapped around so much that the whole run of tables became an exercise in communal support, which is part of what makes working in the dealers' room such fun. Friday morning's set-up was quick, so we were all raring to go by the time the Billings arrived with new recruits Colin Odell and Mitch Le Blanc, an assortment of book boxes, BSFA Awards and luggage.

And when the dealers' room opened, it was business as usual, selling tombola tickets, selling books, making memberships, sorting out queries. Considering that money is always tight these days, we did well: what was especially pleasing was

that we took so many new memberships, though equally cheering was the way that people would see us and remember that it was time to renew their membership. The tombola was as popular as ever, and we unveiled our new secret weapon alongside the sherbet flying saucers. I confess it's a mystery to me why anyone would like marshmallow bananas, but the Paul Collective (Kincaid and Billinger) assures me they're delicious.

The AGM went smoothly; I was pleased with the turnout of members (very high indeed) and extremely pleased to have John D. Rickett running the meeting for me. An old hand at this sort of thing, John conducted matters with wit and grace, which put me to shame as I'd mislaid my notes (our room was one of those burgled during the convention, and while we lost only our kettle and telephone, the papers in my desk had been left in a bit of a mess. I found the notes eventually; the thought of someone burgling my room for my notes was just too bizarre for words).

The Awards Ceremony did not go as smoothly as we'd hoped. Although the convention had contacted us to check that we wished to present the BSFA Awards, they hadn't told us that the event was to be part of the closing ceremony rather than in the interval of the Saturday night Masquerade as has been the custom in the last few years, an unfortunate lapse in communication all round. So, from having five of the six award winners present, we were down to one by 7pm on Monday night, though Dave Langford was suitably covered in confusion when he received his retrospective 1986 award. Paul Kincaid was complimented by various people on his handling of a difficult situation, and great interest was shown in the new trophies, designed and made by Colin and Mitch.

All in all, the BSFA had a good Eastercon. It's always a pleasure to catch up with those BSFA members we wouldn't otherwise see. All that remains is to thank those who worked on the desk or donated prizes, including Paul and Elizabeth Billinger, Lorna Bootland, Roy Gray, Carol Ann Green, Chris and Penny Hill, Sue Jones, Steve Kerry, Meredith McArdle, Mark Plummer, Jilly Reed, Moira Shearman, and Mike 'Simu' Simpson. Apologies to those I may have missed as I wasn't always at the desk.

— © Maureen Kincaid Speller 1997



One of these is true. Above, Dave Mooring's view, and below, the BSFA Committee pondering weighty matters – like, whose bloody round is it – before the AGM. From left: Publications Manager Steve Jeffery (seated); Publicity and Promotions (a real Pub Pro) man Mark Plummer (leaned); Vector Reviews Editor Paul Kincaid, who apparently wants to shoot our other Pub Pro Claire Brialley; Chiefless Maureen Kincaid Speller; Vector layout wizard Tony Cullen behind Treasurer Elizabeth Billinger (who is obscuring Focus's Carol Ann Green); yet another Vector editor in the shape of Andy Butler; and Membership Secretary Paul Billinger.



LOOKING BACKWARD MARK PLUMMER

SITTING ON the sofa in my living room, a mere three days after my return from Eastercon, the tangible memories of the convention are everywhere around me. There's the huge and – in as much as I can tell on a cursory examination – rather magnificent new Clute and Grant *Fantasy Encyclopedia*, which is virtually smothered by a distressingly large pile of British Reprint Edition *Asoundings* and *Analogs*, bought, so far as I can recall, because they were cheap. There's a beautifully produced programme book, nestling amongst a smattering of new fanzines and a rather larger pile of old fanzines courtesy of Greg Pickersgill's Memory Hole fanzine recycling scheme. Plenty to remind me of Intervention, the 1997 British Easter Science Fiction Convention.

Sadly, I suspect that when it comes to the non-tangible memories those that will loom highest in the minds of the attendees will be the security problems which continue to plague conventions held in the Liverpool Adelphi. A shame really, as in many respects it's a near perfect convention hotel for events of an Eastercon size (membership just over the thousand mark, with attendees approaching nine hundred). However, rumours of room break-ins and, in one case, a rooftop chase all amounting to a situation whereby we were, as one person commented during the bidding session, virtually "under a state of siege" and it didn't make for a convivial atmosphere. Then again, despite all this I had a good time and I believe that most other attendees did too. I can't speak much about the main programme – I was in the dealers' room most of the day and, generally speaking, I didn't find the evening items to be that interesting – but the fan lounge hosted a number of lively discussions on burning issues such as further European Worldcons, the upcoming UK Corflu convention and the place of fan history. Of the guests – and no disrespect intended to the others – Octavia Butler proved to be incredibly popular with convention members and, interestingly, booksellers who reported good takings throughout the convention. Sales of the *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* were not as great as the sales of the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* at the Jersey Eastercon in 1993, but this is perhaps proof that, despite rumours to the contrary, the Eastercongoer has not lost sight of the "sf" bit in the term "sf fandom".

For those who wish to do so, I'm sure there is plenty to analyse in the actual running of the convention, especially as the 1999 Eastercon will be returning to the same venue. For the rest, next year in Manchester...

— © Mark Plummer 1997

EASTER HOLIDAY

Janet Barron

THE WRITERS' workshop, taken by writer and editor Liz Holliday, was definitely one of the highlights of Intervention.

OK, I have to declare an interest – I did help organise it.

It started with a mingling session, and had all else failed this would have served the purpose of introducing folks with common interests. In my case, one of the things that has ultimately come out of this is the intention to join the IMPS, a Compuserve writers' forum of which I was casually aware, but it needed a personal and warm recommendation to get me to investigate it further. The session attracted an additional ten or so participants, in addition to the half-dozen people who had responded to the publicity handout a month earlier and so had brought manuscripts for comment. So the workshop reached critical mass and began to evolve. Manuscripts were circulated as intended, but feedback was moved from within the allotted sessions. Some, like me, hung on to manuscripts and sent them back with comments after the con, and Liz herself gave comments in *à la* style for those who wanted them. The workshops proper – which expanded into seven hours spread out over the next three days – were devoted to exercises, advice and discussion.

Their success rested on Liz's ability to present information clearly, and her willingness to devote massive amounts of time to the workshops, far beyond the call of duty.

Liz's topics were comprehensive: viewpoint, pace, dialogue, character, plot structure, style, emotional arc, world-building. The core of each was of relevance to any writer, since good writing transcends genre boundaries, but the emphasis was genre-based, and the discussions focused usefully on sf demands and expectations.

The exercises reinforced the advice, such as writing the same scene from three different viewpoints, or a scene in which explanation of emotion (*she felt tense*) was forbidden, only direct sensory input (*the key cut into her hand*) being allowed.

The last session centred around market information, manuscript presentation, and useful sources for research, ranging from the phone resource Science-Line, to planetary-design shareware, to specialist libraries.

So, were there any drawbacks?

An open workshop may attract writers of widely differing abilities. In a perfect world you would put together a group of similarly talented writers with different approaches, who can stimulate each other. Deviance from this ideal turned out to be a minor problem, given the flexible nature of the sessions.

There was another drawback with a capital D: Distraction. Maybe the reason Eastercons are not known for their writers' workshops is that there is so much else going on. I was on the committee as Guest Liaison (last year saw me attend my first convention, and little did I realise this was some sort of event horizon, ready to suck me in) and could be seen introducing Octavia Butler, for instance, or wandering around with a wallphone looking vague and harassed. Others had commitments to the Masquerade, or would reluctantly miss a bit of workshop to see a programme item. So the main problem was not what was on offer in the writers' workshop but perhaps not being able to make the best use of it. My exercise attempts were token efforts, my contributions to discussions less than acute.

The Spice Girls of the BSFA, JoJo, Mo S. Penni and Soo. (Oh, all right then: Joanna Hinken, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Penny Hill and Sue Jones. God knows what they were doing, but Mo seemed to enjoy it.)



A BBC film crew prowled the convention, shooting for a fly-on-the-wall 'A Month in the Life of a Hotel'-type programme. They were usually seen pestering small children and Ian Banks.

Despite this I found the whole thing well worth while. Oh yes, I did root for some of the pearls that Liz was scattering in front of my glazed eyes, and have been pondering them in my heart.

To those asking eagerly whether I will be organising something similar again, the answer is no. This was one of those events which can only be done so wholeheartedly once, and I wouldn't have dared put so much upon Liz if I had realised I was asking for such a chunk out of her life.

Liz makes her living as a writer, her short stories being mostly in anthologies, with tv novelisations to bring in the bread and butter while she works on her own novels, and as the fiction editor of *Valkyrie*, the gaming magazine. She is about to launch *Odyssey*, a new sf/f/h magazine. She also runs Milford, an annual science fiction workshop for published writers.

In the wake of her experiences at the convention, this year she is organising a seven-day residential workshop for selected applicants; for further information contact her at 31 Shottsford, Wessex Gardens, London, W2 5LG. Manuscript critiques will be supplemented by sessions along the lines described above, and it will take place in Devon on 20-27 September 1997. For the budding sf/f writer, I can heartily recommend it.

— © Janet Barron 1997

... and then there was the impromptu BSFA origami session on the floor, the Curious Case of the Fugitive Chinese Wall, Dave Langford's *Like Thog is Alastair*, Ian Sorensen being abused by Greg Pickersgill for daring to hold a Con in the UK (all those Americans!), the final burial of *The Scottish Convention* in the free bar which used up its remaining funds, the marvellous and scary sight of Liverpool's Sam night life (busier than most cities in the day), the Adelphi's worrying similarity to *The Shining's* Overlook Hotel ... and occasional mentions of sf. What have I missed?

What did YOU miss? — Chris

Andy Butler says to Chris Hill, new Awards Administrator. "Hey, I can push you right through this tiny piece of paper 'ere." Chris scoffs, but our Andy knows a trick or two Do we really go to conventions for this?



film

'til his daddy takes the T-bird away...

SUMMER is traditionally a lull period for tv, all the investment going in spring and autumn shows, whereas it is box-office bonanza time at the movies. This year, films of sl interest are at a particular premium (nothing whatsoever to do with the success of *Independence Day* last year, of course).

In the States, the summer season kicks off frighteningly early, with the most anticipated movie of the year. The story is, as ever, slightly different in Britain, so British release dates precede the US ones. All these are subject to change depending on each film's American business.

Space Truckers - 23 May (US TBA)

Dir. Stuart Gordon; cast Steven Dorff, Dennis Hopper.

Not based on the 2000 AD comic strip, unfortunately, this curiosity was made in Britain, employed British CGI companies for the effects, but has an entirely American cast and is, on the face of it, a straight-to-video film with delusions of grandeur.

The Fifth Element - 13 June (US 9 May)

Dir. Luc Besson; cast Bruce Willis, Gary Oldman, Ian Holm, Lee Evans (7), Tricky (7).

Neither a sequel nor a remake, this is one of the few dark horses in this year's line up. Directed by French maverick Besson, it allegedly cost \$90 million, is allegedly set in the 21st century and allegedly concerns an invasion by aliens seeking water. That's about as much as is (unknown at time of

writing, as the film has been shot and cut under a veil of secrecy the CIA would be proud of).

What is definite is that Bruce Willis and Gary Oldman star. It will also definitely be worth watching as all Besson's movies (including the elegiac *The Big Blue*, the cyberpunk *Nikita* and, of course, the action-movie template *Leon*) have proven to be THE stand-out movies of their respective years. Can you tell I'm quite excited about this one?

Batman and Robin - 27 June (US 20 June)

Dir. Joel Schumacher; cast (in order of salary) Arnold Schwarzenegger, Chris O'Donnell, George Clooney, Uma Thurman, Alicia Silverstone.

Fourth film, third actor to play Batman. No one pretends this is anything other than a circus show now, packed full of lights and noise and spectacle but entirely devoid of substance. The sets and effects will steal the show, like last time.

The Lost World - 18 July (US 23 May)

Dir. Steven Spielberg; cast Jeff Goldblum, Richard Attenborough, Julianne Moore, Pete Postlethwaite, Peter Stormare.

In case of *The Rex* skeleton on the poster is too subtle a hint, this film's full title is *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*. This time the dinosaurs are being bred for hunting purposes. Once again the script seems to have deviated from the plot of the 'original'

book. Once again the digital dinosaurs will out-perform the humans. Once again this will be half a billion dollars in the bank.

Spielberg recently had the audacity to complain that Hollywood is overrun with huge budget sequels which leave no room for medium budget midlist films. Oh, and who's to blame for that, I wonder?

Men In Black - 1 August (US 4 July)

Dir. Barry Sonnenfeld; cast Will Smith, Tommy Lee Jones.

Messrs Smith & Jones are government agents secretly monitoring alien activity on Earth. The trailer shows them pointing a gun at a huge crashed spaceship and yelling, 'You're under arrest!' From this you can tell that the film isn't entirely serious. Will Smith's last film opened on 4 July last year - and was a little item consequently named *Independence Day*. Needless to say, the powers-that-be hope this will do similar business.

Face Off - August (US 27 June)

Dir. John Woo; cast John Travolta, Nicolas Cage.

It's the old killer-with-my-face routine. Assassin Cage has his face changed to Travolta's to go under cover, whilst secret agent Travolta has his changed to Cage's. Or was it the other way round? Either way, the team that brought you *Broken Arrow* last year are back.

radio

Riddley Walker

BBC Radio 3, April 1997. 105 mins.
Dramatised for radio by Dominic Power from the novel by Russell Hoban.

Directed by Michael Fox.

Cast: Matthew Dunster, Russell Dixon, Robert Whelan, Joe Mella.

Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker* (1981) is a complex and multi-layered novel of the sort that is notoriously difficult to dramatised. Famously, the first layer of complexity, the first barrier the reader has to overcome, is the language: a broken and compacted demotic that, on the page, bears little resemblance to familiar English. The trick, of course, is to read it aloud; like hearing invisible ink, this helps to reveal a comprehensible language hidden within the words.

A radio dramatisation, therefore, automatically takes you through that first barrier. Inevitably, it does so at the expense of the words on the page which provide a visual representation of the debased and fragmented society of Hoban's post-apocalyptic world. This is not a great loss, however, given how well the deliberately rough voices of the actors get around the language and capture the grubby and ugly nature of their existence. The language as spoken does work surprisingly well on radio, though once or twice it was clear the producers didn't trust the audience to get it all, so that occasionally "Camby" comes out as "Canterbury" or "Fork Stone" as "Folks'n".

Fortunately this lack of trust manifested itself as no more than an occasional retreat into received pronunciation, otherwise it would have been disastrous. The novel works by a series of complex, interlocking puns and you have to be allowed to discover for yourself all the different levels of meaning they reveal. At the centre of the book, for instance, there is the confusion of the story of St Eustace - as told in a (genuine) wall painting at Canterbury Cathedral - with the USA in the core myth of St Eusa. Within this myth is the confusion of the Biblical Adam with the atom, which comes out as "adom", the little shining man, who also has aspects of Christ in his portrayal as being crucified between the horns of a stag, the 'hart of the wood', which is also an elaborate pun for charcoal.

These puns provide both the background and the underlying plot of the novel: America's atomic power was misused, resulting in a devastating war after which only a few fragments of civilisation cling to survival. Now a few ambitious people -

such as Abel Goodparly, the PriMinster - are trying to recover some of that feared and forbidden knowledge. Goodparly (Russell Dixon) and his colleague Ernie Althing (Robert Whelan) tour the villages of East Kent with a puppet show whose propagandist message is the nearest thing to national unity that remains. In each village the message is interpreted by a 'connection man', and following his father's death 12-year-old Riddley Walker (Matthew Dunster) finds himself the new connection man for his village. Unfortunately, Riddley is a genuine visionary who sees, if imperfectly, through Goodparly's plans and who also finds himself cast into exile from his village. He then tours East Kent, meeting and re-meeting the very limited cast of characters who eventually come together in the disastrous rediscovery of gunpowder. (Among many other things, *Riddley Walker* is also a *bildungsroman* and an *odyssey*; Riddley's growth is reflected both in his journey and in the gradual assemblage of materials and knowledge to make the explosive.)

All of this is complex enough for an hour-and-three-quarters play, but when you add that the majority of the information we, as audience, need to understand the background is conveyed by stories, brief flashbacks, Punch-and-Judy-like puppet shows, rhymes and songs, and all of it in the debased, ungrammatical and often inaccessible language, you can understand what an incredible burden is placed on the actors. Their script garbles their speech, but there is so much that has to be clear.

It is a juggling act that most of the cast carry off with considerable aplomb. The weakest actor is probably Robert Whelan, playing the eternal sidekick, much of whose speech seems to trail away into diffidence; but Matthew Dunster who, as Riddley, has to carry by far the greatest part of the play, succeeds far more than we can have any right to expect.

Of course, even 105 minutes of radio time is not enough to contain the whole of *Riddley Walker*, and there are certain meetings along the way that are far too short to carry all the information they should (Riddley's first meeting with the 12-year-old "archbishop" of Camby seems particularly truncated, especially as, in the book, this is the scene that conveys much of the religious and mythic weight of the story). And the transitions from one scene to another became more abrupt as the story went on, so that as it reached its climax it was sometimes difficult to disentangle the fact that one vital meeting had ended and this was another event in another place. That said, though, this is a play that captures the spirit of the novel better than most of us who read the book might ever have thought possible. ↴

— © Paul Kincaid 1997

Paul Kincaid is Administrator of the Arthur C. Clarke Award and Reviews Editor of *Vector*.
He lives in Fork Stone.

Reviewed by Paul Kincaid

John Ashbrook on summer movies

Event Horizon - TBA (US 1 August)

Dr. Paul Anderson; cast Laurence Fishburne, Sam Neill, Kathleen Quinlan, Sean Pertwee.

At the outer reaches of our galaxy, a ship, the Event Horizon, is found floating in space. The rescuers / salvagers find all sorts of nasty surprises waiting on board.

This looks exactly like Ridley Scott's *Alien*, but it may be simply because they were both shot entirely on sets at Pinewood. The plot sounds like a mix of *The Black Hole* and the computer game *Marathon*.

Spawn - TBA (US 22 August)

Dr. Mark Dippe; cast Michael Jai White, John Leguizamo, Martin Sheen.

This looks set to follow in the tracks of *The Mask and The Crow* as big comic-book hits. Director Dippe has been promoted from special effects director for ILM, so expect the CGI monsters to get more screen time than the flesh and blood characters.

Contact - 26 September (US 11 July)

Dr. Robert Zemeckis; cast Jodie Foster, Matthew McConaughey, James Woods, John Hurt, Tom Skerritt and Angela Bassett.

Carl Sagan's 1985 novel arrives on the big screen. Although it

promises to be the most Earth-bound of this year's sci-fis, it has possibly the most impressive track record.

Zemeckis redefined the rôle of movie special effects with the *Back to the Future* films and *Roger Rabbit*. Foster is one of the finest actors in Hollywood today, and the supporting cast is breathtaking. Looks like it'll be a refreshing change from the whizz-bang empty-headed pyrotechnics of much of this year's crop.

Hercules - 10 October (US 27 June)

Dir. Ron Clements and John Musker; voice actors Danny DeVito and James Woods.

Disney's 35th full-length cartoon feature (depending on how you define full-length). Helmed by the men who made *Aladdin* the biggest earner of its year. Expect madcap comedy, action and a lot of songs.

The Truman Show - Autumn (US Summer)

Dir. Peter Weir; cast Jim Carrey, Ed Harris. Carrey discovers that his life is really a tv show. Sounds a bit like *The Twilight Zone* to me.

Titanic - Autumn (US 4 July if finished)

Dir. James Cameron; cast Leonardo DiCaprio, Kate Winslett, Bill Paxton and a cast of 1000s.

Proudly touted as the most expensive film ever (\$200 million they reckon) this film has suffered the same rocky production process as *Raise the Titanic* (of which it was said, "it would have been cheaper to lower the Atlantic").

It's a love story, and a barrel-full of special effects have been assembled to make a spectacular sinking.

Aliens Resurrected - Christmas (US November)

Dir. Jean-Pierre Jeunet; cast Sigourney Weaver, an alien. Looking back at that. Despite popular demand, I was really leaning forward to *Aliens vs. Predator*, but that idea was squashed flat when Siggy said she wanted to do another. Getting alienated and killed at the end of *Alien* didn't strike her as an obstruction to this. With *City of Lost Children*'s Jeunet at the helm, this may be a lot better than it sounds.

Starship Troopers - Christmas (US 7 November)

Dir. Paul Verhoeven; cast no one you've ever heard of. Fleeting in panic from some of the above, this film has been pushed back to an autumn release. Does this mean that the *Robocop* director's take on Heinlein is a stinker? Are they redoing bits of it to make it better, or is it just a marketing ploy to generate a few column inches? Like these ones here. We'll have to wait and see.

— © John Ashbrook 1997

Zinery Chris Terran

on small-press magazines

Visionary Tongue 5 (Eloise Cogoio; A5, 48pp; £2.40 inc. p&p, cheques to 'Visionary Tongue')

6 St Leonard's Avenue, Stafford, ST17 4LT

Email: 73022.11@compuserve.com

Web: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/vtongue>

• Visionary Tongue exists to promote new writers of 'dark fantasy for the millennium', and was nominated for a British Fantasy Award last year. Where it differs from the large number of other magazines with a similar aim is the extremely high quality of its editorial consultants, who include Storm Constantine, Cleo Cordell, Joe Donnelly, Christopher Fowler, Graham Joyce, Brian Stableford, and Freda Warrington. All these have substantial input into the magazine, both as readers / critics / editors of submissions and by providing articles on aspects of writing; here Freda Warrington writes about the importance of viewpoint, for example.

As in much dark fantasy, sex and death feature strongly, often combined as in Suzanne Barbieri's effective 'Weird Sisters'. Suzanne's the lead singer with the band Indigo Falls, and the story demonstrates an interest in audience manipulation. Emma Hooper's 'Blood and Violets' is a cruel vampire tale, and along with a number of other stories here shows a disdain for the ordinary, the mundane, perhaps a lack of sympathy for the little people of the world; this is also a feature of much dark fantasy, and - depending on the writer - can appear either seductive or repellent. Fortunately the writers here are all good enough to draw you in despite your occasional distaste. V's editorial team has a wealth of writing experience, and it shows: the tendency to overwrite, so prevalent in the genre, is kept strictly in check.

There's also poetry, and some very effective low-key illustrations, notably Ruby's. The magazine is clean, rich and elegant, both in content and design, and is highly recommended.

ALSO RECEIVED (mention does not preclude a future review):

Inception 11 (Vikki Lee France & Steve Jeffery; A5, 32pp; Unpublished, SAE for sub details)

44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 2XA

Email: pevere1@aol.com <http://members.aol.com/pevere1/inception.htm>
• Magazine of the Storm Constantine Information Service. Storm reports - very jovially - on her recent US trip, various dark fantasy reviews, some superb artwork from Ruby, Dean O, Stewart Brown, Melanie Williams-Manton and others. Storm on Tanih Lee, SC news. Not just of interest to her fans.

Monas Hieroglyphica (Jamie Spracklen; A4, E1.20+SAE, cheques to Jamie Spracklen)

58 Seymour Road, Hadeigh, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 2HL

• Unsen. "Zine full of haunted poetry, dark art, crazed stories, Storm Constantine, Dr John Dee, and much more."

Kimota 5 (G. Hurry; £2.50 inc. P&P, £9 for four, cheques to G. Hurry)

52 Cadley Causeway, Preston, PR2 3RX

• Unsen. "St. horror and fantasy" from Joel Lane, Peter Tennant, Mark Chadborn, Anthony Cawood and others.

— Chris Terran

Intervention Prize Crossword - Solution and Results

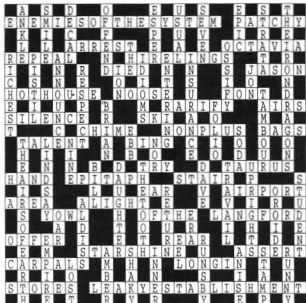
Last issue's crossword - 'Terran's Terror' - proved excessively hard, unfortunately. There was a small but very select entry, all of whom declared it to be very difficult. So much so that no one got it all correct - so 'Close, but no cigar' for Sue, Stan and Terry.

Anyone wanting details of how any clues worked after perusing the answers, please contact Chris at the editorial address.

Anyway, I hope you all find John English's (welcome back, John!) offering in this issue - see back page - more to your liking. — Roger Robinson

Chris Terran writes:

After my own feeble effort last time - it broke various standard rules of crossword design, not the least of which were unsymmetricality and unsolvability - I'm absolutely delighted to welcome back John English as our regular crossword compiler. Regular readers will need no reminder of his splendid puzzles, and you can sample a selection of these (along with some new ones) in his book *Cruciform Variations*, which includes fully annotated solutions. It costs £2.50 including P&P (part of the proceeds go to charity), and you can get it from Beacon Publications, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG. Cheques / POs to 'Beacon Publications'. — Chris



profile

Tom: OK, Jerry, so you've got a proposal for a new movie? Let's hear some details.

Jerry: Well, Tom, it's kinda like *The Untouchables* ya know. The accountant is the hero, only this time the accountant's a chick.

Tom: Great idea, Jerry. Like the twist. So what's her name, this accountant chick?

Jerry: Elizabeth.

Tom: She have another name?

Jerry: Yeah. I want ... something *dangerous*, a bit threatening. Thought maybe Dillinger?

Tom: Nope. Too obvious. Change it a bit. Dollinger, Dippinger, Dissinger, Kilinger ... Billinger?

Jerry: Yeah, Billinger. I can go for that. I want someone really glamorous for this part, Jerry. I see Elizabeth as a stunning redhead. Tall, great body. I was thinking maybe Sharon Stone, or —

Tom: Hold it, hold it, Jerry, ya know we don't have that kinda budget for you. Red hair we can do, but you can forget the body; you'll just have to work with what's available, and I can tell you now that there ain't much available. Not that you can afford.

Jerry: Aw, Tom, not again! When am I going to get the chance to work with some real talent? I'm never gonna make it big if ya hold me back this way.

Tom: Maybe next time, Jerry. Maybe next time.

Jerry: So, Elizabeth works for this organisation no one's ever heard of, Bsf.

Tom: Kinda hard to say. Bssssa. Think you should work on that one, Jerry.

Jerry: Maybe. Anyway, she's the Treasurer in this organisation. Been doing it for a few years now, I guess, four, maybe five. She used to be a mysterious figure, no one ever met her. Kept herself to herself, did the business with the books. I thought we'd show her sitting in an untidy office, feet up on the desk, only one lamp. The pool of light on the desk draws attention to the calculator and the mobile phone. You can't see her face.

Tom: Maybe you should go for Marlow, not Billinger? We need some background here, Jerry. Tell me about her life before she joined Bssssa.

Jerry: Well, she's experienced —

Tom: Experienced, eh ...?

Jerry: I mean she's an experienced accountant. Seen life both sides of the tracks. Worked for a slick top firm once upon a time and slogged it out for a few years at a small place in a one-horse town. She knows her stuff this gal.

Tom: And before that? She always counted beans?

Jerry: Nah. Thought she needed to have specialist knowledge in another area. Ya know, some kinda scientist, so she can figure out how the guy did it when everyone else is just scratching their heads. Figured on a chemistry degree.

Tom: OK, but why ain't she a chemist now? How come she's pushing pens and cooking books?

Jerry: Well, chemistry's a bit dull and she's the kind that needs an exciting, dangerous kinda lifestyle. So she just had to make the move into accountancy.

Tom: Yeah, makes sense.

Jerry: I said she used to be a mysterious figure. Well, just recently she's gone public. I wasn't sure if we could work in a reference to Stella Rimmington here? Maybe not. Anyway,

WHO THE HELL DOES ELIZABETH BILLINGER THINK SHE IS?

Well, she loves money. Uh-huh. And perhaps this exchange, covertly recorded in a dingy Soho office, will help explain why she wants to

CARRY ON TREASURING



Elizabeth, apparently having a good scratch. Or possibly checking her money-belt.

Elizabeth's been seen. Only in all the right kinda places, of course. The sorta gatherings where lots of Bsf agents are lurking in the maze of twisting corridors. All ... alike? So she contacts a few of the other agents, tries maybe to recruit some more, drinks a few beers and buys a few books — that's because she's trying to blend in with the locals, don't want to be picked out as a Bsf Big Wheel, that could be dangerous. There are a lot of people out there with grudges against the organisation.

Tom: Hang on. I thought you said no one had ever heard of Bssssa?

Jerry: Well, you know what I mean, not *many* have heard of it, but those who have ... well, you know. It depends on what dropped through your letterbox one day from Bsf. And when you got it. There are people out there who just know that their time has come, it's *their* turn to get a mailing from Bsf, and they wait and wait and wait ... it's all part of the organisation's techniques, a message to those they *don't* trust.

Tom: And why is Elizabeth letting people see her face now? What's changed?

Jerry: Well, she was forced to go on a mission to Glasgow a couple of years back. Sort of undercover. Big international gathering, too many people there for her to be noticed. She kinda got hooked then. Liked the bright lights, the danger, the camaraderie with other agents (all the Top Agents were called in for this Glasgow job). Bsf's done quite a few missions since then, but she's made the mistake of showing herself too often, speaking to the same people. She's been recognised ...

Tom: And what's the moider she's trying to solve?

Jerry: This bit's still at the outline stage, Tom, so I'd welcome your input.

Tom: One of the other Bssssa agents?

Jerry: Hmm. Not the guys at the top. Yeah ... that's it. Someone's bumping off Bsf agents. There are lots of agents out there, sleepers like, placed all over the world, just waiting for their mission to come along. And suddenly, when they're needed ... nothing, no response. Someone is determined to kill off all the Bsf members. There's just a few guys at the top trying to solve the mystery, but Elizabeth comes along, seduces the right people, sits on barstools and crosses her legs at the critical moment, you know the kind of thing.

Tom: I know the kind of thing, but when you see who's available you may want to rethink that last bit.

Jerry: Whatever. Maybe she's a bookish type, finds all the answers in dusty old tomes. Could be dusty toms?

Tom: How about the closing scene? Got any ideas how you're gonna end this one?

Jerry: Yup. This is a scene I've had in mind from the beginning. She's solved the mystery of the disappearing members, and everyone is happy about that. She goes back to the office. Everything is dusty and untidy, because she's been away for a while. There's a knock at the door. It's a courier with a parcel. She eyes it cautiously. Listens, but no hicking. She thinks for a while, but decides to open it. Turns out it's from another secret organisation, one that wants to keep quiet about its links with Bsf: an organisation referred to only in whispers as 'The Tombola'. She rips the rest of the packaging off the parcel, and it's money. Lots and lots of money. She picks up handfuls of the stuff and lets it trickle through her fingers. She laughs and rubs some of the notes against her cheek. Then as the camera pulls back she tips the box full of money on the floor, rips off her clothes and starts to roll around in the pile of dough.

Tom: Love it, love it! That'll leave 'em panting for more. Got any ideas for a sequel, Jerry?

— © Elizabeth Billinger 1997

out of focus

Out Of
Focus

— Out of Focus —

... will be a regular column in *Matrix* during the mailings when *Focus* is absent. This way we hope to keep all members up-to-date with competitions, market news, workshops, and information about *Focus* itself. If you are a new member and haven't yet seen a copy of our magazine, the next one is scheduled to appear in the autumn. *Focus* is the BSFA's writers' magazine. It publishes stories, articles and poetry from members and non-members. Thinking of sending us a piece of your work? Fiction should be of good quality and up to 5,000 words; poetry to a maximum of 50 lines. We seek articles on all aspects of writing and publishing, especially those relating to sf and fantasy, up to 4,000 words. We also seek cover art, illustrations and fillers.

— Forum —

This time round, *Focus* invites you to let us know what you think about **Writers' Books**. What experience have you had of these? Have you found them helpful, or a hindrance? Can you have been involved in producing such a book? If so, can you tell us of your experiences (as Sarah LeFanu does in *Focus* 37)? What do you think are the good parts and the bad parts of books for writers? Should there be specialist books for sf and fantasy writers? Let us know your thoughts on this subject for the forum in 600-800 words. Deadline for next issue is 30 June 1997.

— Focus Competition —

Look at Ruby's wonderful picture on the back cover of *Focus* 37. Can't you feel it drawing you into it? Why is the woman at the window blindfolded? Is she a prisoner? Does she suffer from an eye condition? What is the woman in the chair writing? Important documents that could save her country from war? Or a love poem? Is there something magical going on here?

So many questions from one drawing. *Focus* invites you to write a short story based on what you see in the picture. Entries should be no longer than 5,000 words in length, be in normal manuscript format (i.e. double-spaced on one side of the paper only) and your name(s) should appear on your MS. **Deadline for the competition is 30 June 1997.**

Prizes of a book token will be awarded to the winner and runners-up.

— Competitions —

We hope in this section to bring you details of any writing competitions of which we are aware. If you know of any up-and-coming competitions please write to Julie or Carol (our addresses appear at the front of this magazine) so details can be made available to a wider audience.

• **NESFA Short Story Contest** The New England SF Association is running a short (under 7,500 words) story contest, closing date 30 November 1997. Entries can be sf or fantasy, and the competition is open to anyone who has not sold a story to a professional publication before 15 November 1997. The prize is a plaque, membership of the US Con Boskone, publication in the society's journal, and \$50 to spend on NESFA Press titles (this includes such goodies as

Focus Contacts

Carol Ann Green
Flat 3, 141 Princes Avenue, Hull, HU5 3DL
Tel: 01482 494045
Email: Metaphor@enterprise.net
Julie Venner
42 Walgrave Street, Newland Avenue, Hull,
HU5 2LT

Carol Ann Green
— and —
Julie Venner

Dave Langford's *Silence of the Langford*. The judges are Walter Jon Williams, Jane Yolen and Ian Randal Stock.
Contact: Send SAE for full rules to Chris Terran, 9 Beechwood Court, Back Beechwood Grove, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS4 2HS.

• **UPC SF Award** This annual competition is run by the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya in Spain, and offers a first prize of 1,000,000 pesetas (about £4,200 at current rates) and publication for a work of science fiction in English, Spanish, Catalan or French between 25,000 and 40,000 words long. The deadline is 15 September 1997. Entries are anonymous, and it's **essential** to get the full rules before submitting anything.

Contact: Edifici NEXUS, Gran Capità 2-4, 08034-Barcelona, Spain. Tel: (93) 401 6343. Fax: (93) 401 7766.

• **Phone Pome A** poetry competition with a difference is announced by *Writers' News*. Every entrant will receive a mint-condition Scottish £1 banknote commemorating Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone... and the telephone is the theme for the poem of up to 36 lines. You might write about the telephone in detail or simply include a phone call as an important incident.

Contact: Send £2.50 for an entry form and full competition rules to *Writers' News*, PO Box 4, Nairn, IV12 4HU.

Unfortunately we can't have a deadline for this so it might be worth dropping them a line to see if it is worth spending your £2.50.

Don't forget to enclose an SAE or International Reply Coupon when writing to editors and for competitions.

— Market News —

• **Odyssey**, editor Jason Lecky, is looking for science fiction, fantasy, artwork. Payment in copy.
Odyssey, 3 Bentley Terrace, Waterside, Londonderry, N. Ireland, BT47 1BN.

• **Peeping Tom**, editor Stuart Hughes, is looking for horror fiction. Payment: £2.50 per 1,000 words.
Peeping Tom, 4 Pottery Close, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 0HU.

• **The Third Alternative**, editor Andy Cox, is looking for fiction, non-fiction, artwork. Payment £20 flat fee. Reviewed in *Matrix* 124, p21.
TTA Press, 5 Martins Lane, Witcham, Ely, Cambs., CB6 2LB

— Writing Workshops —

The **Arvon Foundation** continues to run residential writing courses this year, though **Fen Farm** have decided that after five years of holding writing course they require somewhere more spacious if they are to continue. There will therefore be no courses from this year. **Arvon** in the meantime are offering courses including 'Fiction Writing' in June, 'Poetry in July', 'Starting to write' in August, 'Writing Half-hour TV Comedy' in September, 'Screenwriting' in October and 'The Novel' in November - see *Matrix* 123 p9 for a review of an Arvon course. Full details can be obtained by sending an A5 stamped addressed envelope to: Arvon Foundation, Tolleigh Barton, Sheepshead, Beworthy, Devon, EX21 5NS. Tel: 01409 231338. Fax: 01409 231144.

— Carol Ann Green & Julie Venner

radio

Seymour the Fractal Cat

BBC Radio 4, Feb-March 1997 11.00pm

Wednesdays, 6x30 mins.

Written by Gary Parker. Directed by Joe Higgins.

Cast: Greg Proops, John Hegley, Paul Bown, Robert Bathurst.

Reviewed by
Maureen Kincaid Speller

In 1997, it comes as a shock to discover that there is a corner of Radio 4 that is forever 1978, or would like to be. 1978, you'll recall, was the year Radio 4 first unleashed *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* on an unsuspecting world, in an obscure late-night slot. Nineteen years on, and similarly scheduled, R4 has made a bid to recapture those glory days with *Seymour the Fractal Cat*, a series that looks almost but not entirely like *HHGTTG*, crossed with the bastard child of *Red Dwarf* and *Neuromancer*. The major difference, of course, is that *HHGTTG* was funny, and *Seymour the Fractal Cat* is a long way from being that.

One wonders which towering genius thought it was a good idea to regurgitate the old storyline of a hapless computer programmer pitted against the universe, accompanied only by the girl, the friend, the computer and the cat, but to make it different by ensuring that the guy gets the girl, the friend gets his come-uppance, and the cat thinks it's Zaphod Beeblebrox crossed with Danny John-Jules. The computer Omnithe, meanwhile, is planning to take over the world; it's linked to the Internet, which has taken on a life of its own thanks to the Chaos Analysis Transformer, Jeremy Stone's amazing new computer program, and has reformatting Seymour's brain so he can provide help, overlooking the small problem of opposable thumbs.

The great beauty of *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide* was that it was entirely new: there had been nothing like it, and while it appeared utterly chaotic, once all five episodes were assembled it had a bizarre but entirely consistent internal logic. In *Seymour*, by contrast, chaos has become part of the plot, with cute jokes about human minds and more references to butterfly's wings than the mind can comfortably accommodate, while the plot is so clumsily bolted together you can see events coming from a mile off. The sense of inevitability is palpable. Even so, I couldn't quite believe the moment when Jeremy met a statue of himself in the Metanet, a direct reference to the statue of Arthur Dent throwing the plastic cup.

Seymour lacks that joyous delirium in the totally absurd which made *HHGTTG* a breath of fresh air in the radio comedy department. It's an embarrassment to hear the likes of poet John Hegley (Omnithe) and stand-up comic and improviser Greg Proops (Seymour) mousing stale jokes about neutered tomatoes and the illogicality of the human mind, for all that their execution of this material is impeccable; while actors of the quality of Paul Bown and Robert Bathurst have to hack their way through a plot that seems to involve too much running around doing nothing. The phrase Gary Parker came up with as a substitute for 'Don't Panic' was the lacklustre 'And at the end is bed', which curiously proved to be more of a comfort than might have been initially expected, for at least it held the promise of delivery from poor sf and poor comedy. —

— © Maureen Kincaid Speller 1997



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
of the
British Science Fiction Association Ltd.
Held at the
Britannia Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool
Sat. 29 March 1997, 3pm**

The Chairman **John D. Rickett** informed the meeting that it was proposed to receive the Treasurer's report before rather than after the Administrator's report. There being no objections to this the meeting was formally declared open.

Apologies for absence from **Howard Dean** and **Caroline Mullan**.

1. It was proposed by **Tony Cullen** that the minutes of the previous AGM as published in *Matrix* be approved. The motion was seconded by **Paul Kincaid** and carried unanimously.

2. The Treasurer's report was presented by **Elizabeth Billinger**.

As members will have seen from *Matrix* 123 the results for the year ended 30 September 1996 showed a loss of £545. The retained profits carried forward – that is, the accumulated profits over the lifetime of the BSFA – now stand at just £556. Comments further to that are a reiteration of the Treasurer's comments in *Matrix* 123, that the turnover for the year to September 1996 is significantly lower than the turnover for the previous year. This is largely because the 1995 results were boosted by the activities at Worldcon (sale of T-shirts, *A Very British Genre*, tombola etc.) and by the influx of new members at Worldcon which has not really followed through. The cost of sales – the direct cost of producing the mailings – fell in 1996. Sadly, that is not principally due to efficiency savings, but rather because there were only five mailings in the twelve-month period to September 1996, rather than the six mailings that we would have hoped to have produced and that were produced in 1995.

A question was raised by **Bridget Wilkinson**, who wished to know the BSFA's annual turnover. **Elizabeth** responded that the turnover in 1996 had been £10,638 and in 1995 £13,668; that is, there had been a decrease of approximately £3,000.

To summarise, obviously this level of loss cannot be sustained and we need to do something about it; I believe that this is one of the things Maureen would like to tell you about.

The Chairman obtained assurances from the meeting that the above report had been duly considered, and was satisfactory.

3. The Administrator's report was presented by **Maureen Kincaid Speller**.

Maureen offered her apologies to the meeting since she had mislaid her notes and would have to present the report from memory.

As may be recollected from the previous AGM things were not going smoothly last year. For example, the Administrator was shouldering far too much of the work, and it was decided to hold a committee meeting to examine the running of the BSFA. A full meeting was held last summer in Folkestone at which a programme of restructuring was drawn up. The process of reorganisation is still going on (the Administrator is happy to report that she is doing less work than formerly). Some of the

benefits of the restructuring are beginning to show, in particular with respect to magazine production, now under the aegis of **Steve Jeffery**. Steve has done an excellent job (under the great strain of having to travel abroad for work) and has put a lot of effort into examining the cost of production and postage and has made many helpful suggestions in this area.

What was not appreciated at the time of the Committee meeting was the level of inefficiency of The Mailing House (used since 1992 for sending out the magazines). The problem came to a head when one mailing was despatched to The Mailing House, but failed to appear. When contacted it appeared that the mailing labels had either failed to reach them or had been mislaid. They had, however, taken no steps to inform the BSFA of the problem. **Paul Billinger** produced another set of labels and delivered it personally to The Mailing House's premises in London, where he found conditions described as 'Dickensian'.

We are grateful to our printers, PDC Copyprint, for recommending Bramley Mailing Services, who, apart from a slight hitch to be discussed later, have been providing an excellent service, with mailings arriving only three days after being delivered to Bramley.

The magazine editors have been doing a splendid job over the last year. The editors are **Carol Ann Green** and **Julie Venner** for *Focus*, **Tanya Brown**, **Andrew M. Butler**, **Gary Dalkin** and **Paul Kincaid** for *Vector* with production by **Tony Cullen** (particular thanks to Tony for taking this on), and **Chris Terran** for *Matrix*. **John Ashbrook**, a BSFA member from Coventry, is now helping Chris with media information. He has excellent contacts within the industry and we are extremely pleased to have him looking at an area in which we have previously been rather weak.

Bramley Mailing Services has been most helpful and efficient, but we still have been unable to find out what happened to the missing labels for the last mailing. It is unclear at what point the labels went astray. Whether it was the Post Office or Bramley, however, we were able to respond promptly to the problem, mailing the membership to identify those people who had not received a mailing. We are grateful to the surprisingly high number of members who took the trouble to inform us that they had received their mailing. We shall be sticking with Bramley for the time being, but if any other problems should occur we have already spoken to another mailing service to whom we can transfer if necessary.

It was considered last year that the BSFA Awards should be revamped and **Kevin McVeigh** agreed to take the project on. This has not been very successful because Kevin became ill during the summer and subsequently tendered his resignation which has been



Chairman **John D. Rickett** addresses the masses, flanked by Treasurer **Elizabeth Billinger** and **Maureen Kincaid Speller**

Conditions were described as 'Dickensian'

Since last Easter **Paul Billinger** has taken on the rôle of Membership Secretary, utilising a database written for us by **Dave Langford** and into which Dave had transferred the membership information. Paul has been working through this information and can confirm that there are now just under 800 members, which came as something of a shock to the Committee who had previously been led to believe that the total membership was closer to 1,000. Paul has been doing much work to trace unpaid subscriptions and people paying out-of-date amounts under standing orders. It is pleasing to note that many people seem to appreciate the BSFA sufficiently to not only renew, but also to pay older outstanding amounts. Paul is now in charge of producing the mailing labels and is the one who applies a pink highlighter to those labels with a 'subs due' message. We do intend to start backing up the mailing label messages with reminders about subscriptions falling due, and Paul will be dealing with this.

accepted with regret. The Committee has, however, discussed the matter and appointed **Chris Hill** as the new Awards Administrator. Chris will be pleased to hear from anyone with ideas or suggestions on the Awards and their administration. We are delighted to have Chris on board and hope that with his enthusiasm and commitment we will be able to put the BSFA Awards right in the public eye, where they belong. The 1995 Awards were delayed, but were duly presented at a ceremony in London. Two of the three winners were there to receive their awards, which had been lovingly crafted by **Maureen** and **Paul Kincaid**. A picture of Brian Stableford proudly clutching his award can be found in *SFX* magazine. The 1996 Awards will be presented here at Eastercon. Following on from the 1995 awards designed by **Maureen** and **Paul** (geological specimens mounted on wooden blocks) the 1996 awards have been specially designed by **Colin Odell** and **Mitch Le Blanc**, two more members from Coventry. We are grateful to Colin and Mitch for their efforts.

We made a loss in 1996 and we need to do something about it. One area of last year's restructuring which has not been fully attended to is that of publicity and promotions. It is intended that a meeting will take place between **Maureen**, **Mark Plummer** and **Claire Brailey**, who form the nexus of our publicity and promotions team together with **Paul Kincaid**, who will be offering advice in his capacity as an advertising copywriter. The plan is to institute a membership drive which will result in a steady flow of new members, not the sort of sudden large influx

which has caused problems in the past. The idea will be to introduce a steady and consistent programme of putting the BSFA's name in front of as many sf fans as we can. This will be in part paid advertising, but as much as anything will be in the form of free mentions in places such as *SFX*, generating as much news interest as we can. We also need revenue and plan a very thorough drive to sell advertising to publishers and other people who may be interested in advertising in BSFA publications. We shall be instituting a policy of mailing all publishers with a full mailing (rather than voucher copies) and will be instituting a letter and details of advertising rates.

So far **Paul Kincaid's** book *A Very British Genre* has been mainly promoted within the BSFA but a significant number were printed, and it would appear that those members who require a copy have now requested one. We shall now be instituting a drive to bring it to the attention of interested parties, for example, we



... and the enthralled masses engaging in the cut and thrust of debate

have discovered that it has been identified amongst librarians as a very useful reading guide and we shall be taking advice on promoting it within this market. **Amy Sawyer** has been interested in using *VBG* within the SF Foundation and there is a new MA course being launched at Reading which may well provide a further academic market.

It is unwise to make a lot of elaborate promises about what the BSFA is going to do since unfulfilled promises would be extremely embarrassing all round. What we shall be doing is a great deal of careful planning, and the membership will be kept informed through *Matrix*. A series of fund-raising measures are envisaged, which will be introduced one by one. As usual we are fund-raising at Eastercon with the infamous tombola, which despite its tacky appearance is much-loved, and is still a successful means of raising funds.

A thorough survey of BSFA members has been undertaken, the response to which has been astonishing: 225 compared with the direct mailing expectations of about 5%. We are very grateful to members for this response. **Claire Briailey** is analysing the data, and this information will be utilised as part of the advertising drive. It is intended to survey the membership regularly, though not always on such an extensive basis. We expect to gain immense help from the survey information.

Tanya Brown has now been appointed to take charge of a BSFA Web site. This will be carefully planned, and some discussion in *Matrix* is expected. It is anticipated that the site will be available by the late summer.

The meeting expressed its appreciation of the Administrator's report by applause, and indicated to the Chairman that it had considered and accepted it.

4. Council members retiring by rotation were **M. J. Edwards**, **D. R. Langford**, **A. Sawyer** and **M. K. S. Speller**, who had all expressed their willingness to stand for re-election.

M. J. Edwards's re-election was proposed by **Paul Kincaid** and seconded by **Paul Hood**. The motion was carried with one abstention.

D. R. Langford's re-election was proposed by **Colin Harris** and seconded by **Mike Ford**. The motion was carried with one abstention.

A. Sawyer's re-election was proposed by **Chris Terran** and seconded by **Bridget Wilkinson**. The vote was unanimous.

M. K. S. Speller's re-election was proposed by **Terry Hunt** and seconded by **Paul Allwood**. The motion was carried with one abstention.

5. A Special Resolution was introduced by **Elizabeth Billinger** as being a change necessary to bring the BSFA's Articles of Association into line with current company law, which no longer requires an audit of companies with a turnover below £90,000. The amendment to the company's Articles was proposed by **Elizabeth Billinger**, seconded by **Mark Plummer** and carried with one abstention.

6. Under Any Other Business **Bridget Wilkinson** as chair of the European Science Fiction Society proposed a formal link between her organisation and the BSFA. This was discussed by the meeting which received the idea favourably and confirmed it would not add to BSFA costs. It was proposed by **Mike Ford** that the issue be remitted to the committee with a mandate to act as they see fit. This was seconded by **Moira Shearman** and carried unanimously.

The fortieth anniversary of the BSFA was discussed and celebrations mooted.

A vote of thanks to the Committee was proposed by **Moira Shearman**, seconded by **Penny Hill** and carried with nine abstentions.

The Chairman thanked the meeting, the Administrator and the Treasurer.

A vote of thanks was proposed by **Maureen Kincaid Speller** to **John D. Rickett** for acting as Chairman, to which the meeting responded with warm applause.

The meeting was formally closed by the Chairman.

Thanks to: **Elizabeth Billinger**, **Paul Billinger** (memo machine maestro), and **John D. Rickett** (for chairing the meeting so splendidly).

turn on turn off?

cardinal cox & suzie kuba

report on the sf panel at the tv industry's annual trade show in The Business Design Centre, Thursday 13 March 1997

THE TELEVISION SHOW is an annual trade show for the various companies supporting the tv industry. Amongst the various seminars and workshops, late Thursday afternoon saw a panel on sf. The Chair of the panel was **Carl Franklin**, editor of *Broadcast* magazine (one of the industry's trade papers) and self-confessed *Star Trek* fan. Also on the panel were **Susan Deeks**, the editor of BBC2 for BBC Acquisitions (and to whom Carl was eternally grateful for ensuring the present run of *Next Generation* repeats) and **Richard Pembroke**, head of programming at the Sci-Fi Channel.

First up **Richard** showed a Sci-Fi Channel video entitled "Why Sci-Fi" which emphasised the global cultural nature of sf and its range of media incarnations.

The discussion that followed attempted to look at why there is so much sf on television at the moment. The general consensus was that the good ratings *The X-Files* pick up meant that more sf was produced. **Sue** said that *The X-Files* got its ratings because she thought it was good drama, glossy, and well acted with good scripts. She continued that the success of the show also generated a lot of bad sf programmes which she saw in the international media markets. For every single series she picked up, another twenty were rejected.

The panel revealed that *The X-Files* and much of the current crop of tv sf was the result of a brainstorming session held by **Murdoch's Fox / Sky News International** group. This was an attempt to nail down what is popular. Their answer was sf: had it been Westerns, recent tv and cinema would have been very different.

While **Carl** thought that the *Next Generation* was the second-best tv series ever (after *MASH*), he had a low opinion of *Bugs* and *Crime Traveller*. This he put down partially to an over-familiarity with the scenery. **Richard** felt that special effects alone do not make a series. He likened it to watching an hour of *Nintendo 64*. He said it was the stories that pulled in audiences. *The X-Files* attracts an audience that might find true sf a turn-off.

Carl finished by asking the others what they would be looking to buy for two or three years' time. **Sue Deeks** said the Beeb would probably be looking for a nice family of show, away from the dark gritty style of *The X-Files* and filling the slot that will be vacated in mid-evening when *Superman* ends. **Richard** was also expecting to be looking away from the conquest of space as spaceships, he said, were off-putting for some people.

An interesting hour, learning what the people who put sf on tv think of the genre, and a shame that the advertised fourth panelist, **Jeremy Boulton**, head of acquisitions for Sky One, was ill and unable to attend.

— © **Cardinal Cox** and **Suzie Kuba** 1997

events

read me first

- Please enclose an SAE when contacting conventions.
- Efforts are made to ensure the accuracy of all the information here, but always check first.
- If you run, or know of, any unlisted conventions or events please let me know at the editorial address.
- Please mention Matrix when enquiring.
- Guests at media conventions appear 'subject to work commitments'.
- Special thanks to: **Dave Langford, Chris O'Shea, Bridget Wilkinson**, errors are mine.

regulars

BSFA London Meetings

The BSFA's regular London meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month (except December), in the upstairs room of the Jubilee Tavern on York Road, London SE1, between Waterloo and Westminster Bridges. Nearest stations Waterloo (mainline or Underground) or Westminster (Underground). Things start about 7.00pm; if you get there early and the upstairs room is closed we'll be in the main bar and, if it doubt, the landlord will be able to point us out to you. Meetings are open to all.

Paul Hood on 01621 816440 for further information.
28 May 97 (cancelled); 24 Jun 97 (guest **Diana Wynne Jones**); 23 Jul 97; 27 Aug 97; 24 Sep 97; 22 Oct 97; 26 Nov 97.

London Circle Meetings

The move to the Jubilee Tavern (see above) now seems to be permanent. London Circle meetings are held on the first Thursday in each month, and usually start about 5pm. No special events but very popular and crowded.

Just turn up!
5 Jun 97; 3 Jul 97; 7 Aug 97; 4 Sep 97; 2 Oct 97; 6 Nov 97; 4 Dec 97.

Birmingham — The Brum SF Group meets on the second Friday of the month at a pub in Birmingham; contact them for details. Membership is £15 per year, which includes a monthly newsletter.

Marlin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarks Lane, Wilkenhall, West Midlands, WU13 1HX.
* bsf@btccas.demon.co.uk

Cambridge — Cambridge SF Group meets on the second Monday of the month in The Wrestlers, New Market Road, Cambridge.

Cardiff — Cardiff SF Group meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in The Golden Cross, 283 Hayes Bridge Road, Cardiff.

Colchester — Colchester SF / Horror / Fantasy Group meets on the third Saturday of each month at 12.30pm in The Playhouse pub on St. John's Street.

De Lewis on 01255 821119

Hull — The Hull SF Group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, 8pm to 10.30pm at Ye Olde Blue Bell, Market Place, Hull.

Ian & Julie on 01482 447953 or Dave & Estelle on 01482 444291.

Leicester — Leicester SF Group meets on the first Friday of the month; venue varies.

Tim Groome on 0116 279 2280
* rbeanglobalnet.co.uk

Manchester — FONT meets in Wetherspoon's pub (on the corner of Piccadilly Gardens, near the BR station) on the second and fourth Thursdays in the month, 8pm onwards.

Mike Don on 0161 226 2980

Peterborough — The Peterborough SF Club meets on the third Wednesday of the month at the Bluebell Inn, Dogthorpe, and on the third Wednesday of the month in the bar of the Great Northern Hotel, opposite the BR station.

SAE to 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5RB

4 Jun 97 (guest **Simon Ings**); 2 Jul 97; 6 Aug 97; 3 Sep 97.

Reading — Reading SF Group meets weekly on Mondays at 9.00pm in The Sun, Castle Street, Reading.

To 2 Jun 1997: Star Trek Exhibition

Gas Hall, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham: 10am-5pm daily, admission £3.95 adults, £3.00 children / concessions.
0121 235 1966 or 0121 236 5622

23-26 May 1997: Year of the Wombat

Humour convention at the Bestwood Lodge Hotel, Nottingham, themed on hangers. Now full.
01509 240000
01509 240000
01509 240000

24-26 May 1997: Fantasticon UK

General convention at the Harrogate International Conference Centre. Guests include Harry Harrison, David Gemmell, Lisa Tuttle, Ramsey Campbell, Jack Cohen and Reg Poyton. Events include items on cult radio and a comprehensive video programme. Enquire for current rates.

SAE to Fantasticon UK, 38 Planetree Ave., Fenham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE4 9TH
* air95@aber.ac.uk

28 May 1997: Arthur C. Clarke Award

Science Museum. Invitation only.

4-6 Jul 1997: Nexus 97

Media convention at the Forte Posthouse Hotel, Bristol. Guests are Jennifer Hetrick (Trek, X-Files), Jason Carter (Babylon 5), Richard Arnold (Trek consultant), John Freeman (Titan magazines), E42 membership, £15 supporting, instastime scheme available. Non-profit, fan-run.
01275 376 100
* nexus@nexus.demon.co.uk

5-6 Jul 1997: MancheXtreme 97

Unofficial X-Files convention at the Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester. Guests tba. Registration £30, £23 unwaged, various discounts for groups, families, one-day attendance etc.
* MancheXtreme 97, PO Box 89, Manchester, M14 7GE
* convention@xfiles.org.uk
* http://www.xfiles.org.uk/xfiles/con/

11-14 Jul 1997: The Alliance

Major Babylon 5 con at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. The enormous guest list includes J. Michael Straczynski, Reg. £70.

The Alliance, 141 Warden Road, Carvery Island, Essex, SS8 9BE

18-20 Jul 1997: Convocation

The 16th Union combined with the British role-playing game convention. Venue is New Hall in Cambridge and the guests are Stephen Brust, Andrew Rillstone, James Wallis, Reg. £20.

Convocation, 19 Uphall Road, Cambridge, CB1 3HX

25-27 Jul 1997: Voyage 97

The second Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea convention, held at the Novotel, Arundel Gate, Sheffield. Reg. £30, £10 to 31 Jul, hence £35; one-day £15/£17.50.
01424 444444
01424 444444

25-27 Jul 1997: Ratze-Con

YMCA Community Centre, Ratzeburg, Germany. Guests include Brian Stableford, Reg. £14. Acc. £40 for two nights full board in 4-bed rooms. Tents / campsites available.

Eckhard D. Marwitz, Postfach 1524, D-22995 Ahrensburg, Germany

+49 4531 861 06
* D2Marwitz@compuserve.com

* http://jourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/EDM/arwitz

26-27 Jul 1997: Oakleaf Circle Camp

"The Pagan Event of the Year" at Bridlington, live music, talks, workshops, magic, ghosts, Morris dancing, Mummers, musical instrument making, and a Wicker Man. Open air, so you'll need a tent. Reg. £12.50 adults, £2.50 under 14s.

Oakleaf Circle, PO Box 513, Bamber Bridge, Preston, PR5 6UZ

01772 499009

15-17 Aug 1997: Quartercon

Bergen, Norway. Guests Katherine Kerr, Ingar Knudsen, Reg. NOK 200 to 23 Jul, hence NOK 250.

Quartercon, c/o Bjorn Tor Sund, Lebergsvien 100 A, 5032 Minde, Norway

* bjorn@ii.uib.no

* http://www.ii.uib.no/~bjorn@quartercon/

3-5 Sep 1997: LoneStarCon

The 55th World sci convention in San Antonio, Texas. Guests include Algis Budrys, Michael Moorcock.

PO Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755-2277, USA
* lsc@io.com

* http://www.io.com/~lsc/

UK agent: Mike Moir, 27 Hampton Road, Worcester Park, Surrey, KT4 8EU

5-7 Sep 1997: Festival of Fantastic Films

Three days of spiffing sci flicks at Sacha's Hotel in Manchester. Registration is £45 (£55 from 1 April).

50 South Mesnesfield Road, Salford, Manchester, M7 3QP

26-28 Sep 1997: Masque 5

Costuming con at the Sheringham Youth Hotel, Sheringham, Norfolk. Reg. £25 to 31 Jul, hence £30. Hotel accommodation £25 pppn full board.

35 Ivierley Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 3EP
* Masque5@compant.computlink.co.uk

27-28 Sep 1997: Hypotheticon '97

"Scotland's Other National Convention", Central Hotel, Glasgow. Guests Anne Gay, Brian Waugh, Reg. £15 att, £5 sup. (to 1 Jun).

Hypotheticon '97, Flat 3/L, 38 Scotstoun Street, Glasgow, G14 0UN

* http://web.ukonline.co.uk/hypotheticon/

23 Oct-2 Nov 1997: Coachcon

Coach trip starting in London, via Portmeirion, to Euro-Opticon in Ireland, and back to London for the World Fantasy Convention.

SAE or 2xIRCs to 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX

24-27 Oct 1997: Euro-Opticon '97

The 1997 Eurocon and Ireland's national sci con combined. The guest of Honour is Robert Jordan, Reg. £25 (£30 on the door). Accommodation must be booked well in advance.

Euro-Opticon '97, PO Box 5130, Dublin 4, Ireland
* rde@ireland-web.ie

* http://arrogant.ltc.ici.ie/OctoCon.html

31 Oct-2 Nov 1997: World Fantasy Convention

Theme is Dracula, 100 years old. Venue is the Britannia International Hotel in London's Docklands. The vast guest list includes Iain Sinclair, Joan Aiken, Bob Eggleton with Rob Holdstock as MC. Reg. £100 att, £30 sup.

PO Box 31, Whitby, North Yorks., YO22 4YL

14-16 Nov 1997: Novacon 27

The 1997 Novacon moves out of Birmingham to the de Vere Abbey Hotel in Great Malvern. Guest is Peter F. Hamilton and registration is £30 until 30 Sep.

14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS

14-16 Nov 1997: Cozy Con 2

Relaxacon at the Atlanta Hotel, The Hague. Reg. £18 att, £9 sup. Hotel £20 pppn shared.

Annermarie van Eyck, Obrechtstraat 4, 2517 VT Den Haag, Netherlands

* vanten@gew.eur.nl

21-23 Nov 1997: ArmadaCon IX

Astor Hotel in Plymouth. Guests Colin Greenland, David Hardy, Registration £25, £20 unwaged.

4 Gienagee Avenue, Mannamere, Plymouth, Devon, PL3 5HL

01752 267873 or 01752 673295

13-14 Dec 1997: Babylon 5 Academic Conference

Presented in association with the SF Foundation at University College of Ripon & York St John in York. Cost inclusive of accommodation is £75, or non-residential with meals £48. Both include the conference dinner.

Farah Mendoson, Faculty of Humanities, University College of Ripon & York St John, Lord Mayors Walk, York, YO3 7EX

* fm7@york.ac.uk

6-8 Dec 1998: Decadence

The tenth British Filk (sf music) convention at the Forte Posthouse Hotel, Gatwick. Reg. £24 att, £10 sup.

Top Flat, 11 Evesham Road, Cheltenham, GL52 2AA
* decadence@z9m2.demon.co.uk

13-16 Mar 1998: Corlú

to Ian Sørensen presents Corlú – the fanzine fans' convention – to the UK for the first time. Location is the Griffin Hotel in Leeds. Reg. £25 ant., £5 sup., rooms £25 pppn double/twin. £40 pppn single.

✉ Ian Sørensen, 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton, ML3 7HY
✉ ian@sorenson.demon.co.uk

27-29 Mar 1998: Deliverance

Blake's Seven con at the Royal Moat House, Nottingham. Reg. £45 ant., rising 1 June.

✉ Deliverance, 18 Bury Ave., Newport Pagnell, Bucks, MK16 0ED

10-14 April 1998: Intuition

The 1998 Eastercon at the Piccadilly Jarvis Hotel in Manchester. Guests **Connie Willis, Ian MacDonald and Martin Tudor**. Reg. £30 ant., £15 sup.

✉ Intuition, 1 Waverley Way, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey, SM5 3LQ
✉ INTUITION@smf.demon.co.uk
✉ http://www.ssf.cam.ac.uk/~acsb/intuition/intuition_index.html

22-25 May 1998: Lazlar Lyricon II

Hitch Hiker's Guide con run by the Z29 fan club celebrating the 20th anniversary of the series; venue Scotch Corner Hotel, Darlington. Reg. £30, guests **Kevin Davis, Dirk Maggs**.

✉ 67 South Park Gardens, Berkhamshead, Hertfordshire, HP4 1HZ

3-5 Jul 1998: Intercontact '98

University of Oslo, Norway. Guests **Gwyneth Jones, Pat Cadigan, Johannes Berg**. Reg. £15 ant., £5 sup.

✉ Intercontact '98, PO Box 121 Blindern, 0313 Oslo, Norway
✉ eif@origo.no

10-12 Jul 1998: Infinity

Angel Hotel, Cardiff. Guests include **Colin Baker, Ed Bishop, Dave Prowse, Jack Cohen, Lionel Fanthorpe, Andy Sawyer**. Reg. £40.

✉ Infinity, Swny 140, 12 Stuart Street, Treherbert, CF42 5PR
✉ infinityscificon@hotmail.com
✉ <http://www.cf.ac.uk/ccin/main/ents/sf/infinity.html>

5-9 Aug 1998: Bucconeer

The 56th Worldcon at Baltimore, Maryland. Guests **C. J. Cherryh, Milton A. Rothman, Stanley Schmidt, Michael Whelan**. Reg. £80 ant. (plus various complications if you voted or pre-scheduled).

UK Agent:

✉ John Dallman, c/o EDS Unigraphics, Parker's House, 46 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1DB
✉ 01223 570179
✉ jgd@eds.complink.co.uk

General info:

✉ baltimore98@access.digex.net
✉ <http://www.access.digex.net/~balt98>

21-24 Aug 1998: The Wrap Party

Celebrate the conclusion of Babylon 5 at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow. Confirmed guests are **J. Michael Straczynski, Harlan Ellison, Jack Cohen, John Ridgeway, Bryan Talbot, Adam 'Mojo' Lebowitz, John Matthews**. Reg. £65 (instalment scheme available), under 17s half price, under 12s free. Room rates: £40ppn triple, £42ppn double or twin, £47ppn single.

✉ The Wrap Party, PO Box 505, Reading, RG1 7QZ
✉ TheWrapParty@btlp.in.co.uk
✉ <http://www.btlp.in.co.uk/TheWrapParty>

18-21 Sep 1998: Discworld Convention II

The second convention devoted to all things Pratchettian takes place at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool, with guests including **one-guess, Stephen Briggs and Dave Langford**.

✉ PO Box 3086, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8TY

25-28 Sep 1998: Albacon '98

Central Hotel, Glasgow. Reg. £25 ant., £15 sup. Guests to be.

✉ Albacon '98, F1/2, 10 Atlas Road, Glasgow, G21 4TE

2-5 Apr 1999: Reconvene

The last Eastercon of the twentieth century at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Guests **Jeff Noon, Peter S. Beagle, John Clute**. Reg. £25 ant., £12.50 sup., discounts for unwaged.

✉ 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 65Z

2-6 Sep 1999: Aussiecon 3

The Worldcon goes down under to Melbourne. Guests **George Turner, Greg Benford, Bruce Gillespie**. Reg. £90 (with

complicated variations – ask 'em).

✉ UK Agent: Martin Hoare, 45 Tielhurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT
✉ martinhoare@eicx.co.uk

27 Dec 1999-2 Jan 2000: Millennium

See in the new millennium (a year early if you're a pedant) at this con, to be held somewhere in northern Europe, probably the UK or a Benelux country. £4.00 per year, to be deducted from the eventual membership cost.

✉ Millennium, c/o Malcolm Reid, 186 Casewick Rd., West Norwood, London, SE27 0SZ

29 Dec 2000-1 Jan 2001: Hogmanaycon

Central Hotel, Glasgow. Reg. £20 ant., £201 sup. (har har).

✉ 26 Avonbank Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2PA

BIDS BIDS BIDS BIDS BIDS**2000: Worldcon**

Chicago Presuppressing \$10.
✉ PO Box 642057, Chicago, Illinois 60664, USA
✉ <http://lacon3.worldcon.org/www/bids/bids.htm>

2001: Worldcon

Boston Presuppressing \$8.
✉ PO Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701-0205, USA
✉ <http://world.std.com/~sbarsky/b2001.html>
Philadelphia Presuppressing \$10.
✉ Suite 201, 402 Huntington Pike, Rockledge, PA 19046
✉ 2001@cyber.com

2003: Worldcon

UK (Scotland?) Tentative at present.
✉ KIM Campbell, 69 Lincoln St., Leeman Rd., York, YO2 4YP
✉ kim@circon.co.uk
Toronto Presuppressing \$9.
✉ Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, RG1 5AU
Cancun, Mexico Presuppressing \$5/\$7.
✉ KIM Campbell, 69 Lincoln St., Leeman Rd., York, YO2 4YP
✉ PO Box 905, Eufess, TX 26039-0905, USA
Bácon (BERLIN) No further details.

smalls

Members' Noticeboard

Advertisements and announcements are FREE to BSFA members. Send your ad to the editorial address.

WANTED

BOOKS NEEDED FOR A LOVING HOME: The Player of Games by Ian M. Banks. One paperback with Jim Burns cover please! John Crowley Egypt Gardner Dozile. One of The Year's Best SF. Eighth Annual Collection in the US edition, also known as Best New SF. Five in Britain, either edition will do. Kim Stanley Robinson The Gold Coast and The Wild Shore. Paul Park Sugar Rain. And C. J. Cherryh Charn's Venture and Charn's Homecoming in the Methuen paperback editions of the late 80s (to join the ones I've got. These are all for reading, despite my stipulations, so cheapness is appreciated (condition is not a condition). Contact: Syd Foster on 01792 206729. Thanks gang!

WANTED: a copy in any condition of The Rabble Rouser by Eric Frank Russell. Contact: John Ojima, 51 Belmont Road, Luton LU1 1LL.

MINISTER CLASSICS WANTED – not for me, for a friend, honest gub. Market rate is around a quid, will pay up to 12p depending on condition or will swap for duplicates. Titles wanted include: Asaph's Fables, Gulliver's Travels, Hamlet, Just So Stories, Legend of Sweeney Hollow, Macbeth, Moll Flanders, Pride and Prejudice, Turn of the Screw / Daisy Miller, Prince and the Pauper, Wind in the Willows, Wuthering Heights. **Andy Butler**, Flat 3, 28 Louis Street, Huls Hill TLY, Tel: 01423 219198.

BOOKS REQUIRED – Ace Doubles, Banks, Corey, Delany, Niven, Saberhagen, Stabford, Sterling, New Writings series, and many more. Send SAE for wants list to Ian Forsyth, 12 Kingston Way, Farset, Cambs, PE7 3BU. Tel: 01733 241836.

BOOKS WANTED: Original Ace paperback editions of

the following books by Megan Lindoorn: Herpy's Fight: The Windrangers; The Labyrinth Gate; and Wizard of the Pigeons.

Any copies in any condition of The Unicorn Treasury edited by Bruce Coville, published by Doubleday in 1988, and Strategies of Fantasy by Brian Atterbury, published by Indiana University Press in 1992. Please contact **Michael Braithwaite**, 27 Marsh Drive, West Hendon, London, NW9 7DE or phone 0181 202 9018.

FOR SALE

PRODUCE A MAGAZINE LIKE YOU'RE HOLDING. For sale: Acom 4500 computer, 4 meg RAM, 40 meg hard drive, 14 inch colour monitor, Cannon / Computer Concepts LPB4 Lite Laser Printer, plus all the DTP software – Impression II, Let It Well Plus, Acom DTP. All manuals, discs etc. Immaculate. Arrival of new baby PC into the family forces reluctant sale. £500 Quid. Cost £3,000 new. Contact: **Howard Watts** on Brighton 01273 689055. Buyer collects.

ABOUT 300 FANTASY & SF MAGAZINES FOR SALE: FANTASY Galaxy, If Worlds of Tomorrow, Science Fantasy, Venture, New Worlds, Amazing, Future, SF Adventures, SF Horizons, Famous, Famous, Fantasy, ASFM. Mainly from the 60s with some 70s and a few late 1980s. For list contact **Tom A. Jones**, 92 Manor Road, Kewstons, Bristol, BS14 1RF, or email T.A.JONES@EE.co.uk

COLLECTION CLEARANCE I have lists for Paperbacks, Hardcovers, Aerospace, and Magazines including sets and runs and SAE / Analog for 1934 to 1995. Send SAE for lists, please say which. Contact **Terry Jeeves**, 56 Red Star Road, Scarborough, N.Y. NY012 5RQ

DANCER FOR THE WORLD'S DEATH, an illustrated signed and numbered limited-edition booklet by Storm Constantine with cover art by Dave Morning. Due October from Inception at £3.50 inc. p&p. Cheques payable to 'Inception'. Also available by Constantine from Inception. An Elemental Tale (a fantasy) and Colvastes (a poem). We also have stocks of now out-of-print books: Aleph, Monstrous Regress, Sign for the Scare, Burying the Shadow, plus a few copies of the original Voodoo! books. Please send SAE for details / booklet. Contact Inception, Steve Jeffrey & Vicki Lee, 44 White Way, Kington, Oxford, OX5 2XA

HARM'S WAY by Colin Greenland – 'What if Charles Dickens had written a space opera?' (Locust – large paperback, the one with the pretty cover, £3.50). Also two linked fantasy novelettes, The Hour of the Thine and Other Voices (great covers by Roger Dean and Ian Miller), £1.50 each. Prices include postage. **Colin Greenland**, 48 Sturton Street, Cambridge, CB1 2DA

THE WAY TO WRITE SCIENCE FICTION by Brian Stabler. Signed pb copies available at £5. Also available: The Empire of Fear, £10 hardcover, £5 C-format pb; Sexual Chemistry: Sardonian Tales of the Genetic Revolution £8 hb; The Agard Trilogy, £10 pb. All books sent post-free. Order from **James Stabler**, 113 St Peter's Road, Reading RG6 1PG.

COLLECTION FOR SALE New review copies of SF and Fantasy fiction and related nonfiction (criticism, books about film / TV, author studies etc.), plus my personal collection of fiction, related nonfiction, American magazines about fantastic literature. Handovers and paperbacks, most in excellent condition. Some collectables. All very reasonably priced from £1 up. US \$11 brings complete lists. Please contact **Nail Barron**, 1149 Line Place, Vista, CA 92083-7428, USA.

CRUCIFORM VARIATIONS a collection of 12 science-fictional cryptic crosswords (including annotated solutions) by John English is now available! Price £2.00

from Beacon Publications, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG.

SF BOOKS / MAGAZINES FOR SALE The Science Fiction Foundation Collection has a large number of science fiction / fantasy books and magazines for sale at bargain prices. Proceeds to the SFF. Contact Andy Sawyer on 0151 794 2696 / 2733 or email asawyer@liverpool.ac.uk for further details.

MISC

HELP FILL THIS COLUMN! Been looking for a book for years but can't find it? Got a fanzine you want to distribute or solicit articles for? Books, tapes, videos for sale? Want to make contacts? 'Publicise your local group? Find penfriends? Use this FREE service and reach every BSFA member! Send your ad to the editorial address.

CAMBRIDGE MEETINGS: If you live in the Cambridge area and would be interested in getting together for regular Sunday meetings, John Oram would like to hear from you. Contact John Oram, 3 Orlands Avenue, Bar Hill, Cambs. CB3 9EQ or phone 01954 781797 after 5pm.

Mrs. LOVELY MAN sent me – that's Jilly Reid – that a copy of Emma Bull's War for the Oaks a couple of months ago in response to my ad here and I LOST HIS NAME AND ADDRESS. If you have it, please write or ring so I can pay what I owe and not expire of mortification.

Please contact **Jilly Reid** at: Hill House, Moats Tye, Suffolk, IP14 2EX. Tel: 01449 616222.

JAUNTING ON THE SCORPIA TEMPESTS AND REELING BULLIONS OF HELL, a century essay on M. P. Sherry's Shapes in the Fire, by Brian Stabler, in the latest Radford Newsletter. Free from **Mark Valentine**, 23 Southfield Terrace, Addingham, Ilkley, Ws, LS29 6PA.

INFORMATION SOUGHT: After nearly forty years of involvement in SF, I was intrigued to have my first trace of the 30's writer Robert J. Hogan, described as one of the pupils in the latest Encyclopedia of SF. I would be



Skull C Roger Robinson's Crackers

COMPETITION 125: "ALPHABETTI SPAGHETTI"

While playing with my alphabet soup one day I noticed that I could spell out the first and last names of several authors, and that the lengths of their names gradually increased. Also to my amazement there were three Hugo winners, three women, three born before World War I, three British residents, and three whose surnames started and ended with the same letter. (Yes, I know that makes fifteen clues, but there are only ten authors.)

Can you find the authors if I tell you that the 115 letters in the rather large bowl of soup were:

8 A, 3 B, 5 C, 3 D, 13 E, 4 F, 1 G, 5 H, 5 I, 2 J, 2 K, 6 L, 3 M, 13 N, 12 O, 14 R, 4 S, 6 T, 2 U, 1 V, and 3 Y.

RESULTS OF COMPETITION 124: "AUSTRIAN ARMIES"

You may recall that I asked you to give the plot synopsis of a well-known sf or fantasy book in a verse of six or more lines in which each line's words started with a different letter. Well, the Muse obviously was away at Eastercon because there was only one entry – but it was so good that I decided to award the £5 book-token prize anyway.

Karen McCreedy, a leading light in the James Mason Appreciation Society, offered the following summary of Verne's 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea:

Aronax, acting advisor and adept,
Spied submarine sinking ships.
Falling from fo'c'sle, found fantastic fellow
Named Nemo – nautical nemesis.
Nuclear "Nautilus", netting Navy,
Took tils toward topside tub.
Craft's course cunningly charted covertly:
Squalls, squid, shot skipper, sunk sub!

Please send all competition and
crossword entries, together with any
related correspondence, to:

Roger Robinson
75 Rosslyn Avenue
Harold Wood, Essex
RM3 0RG

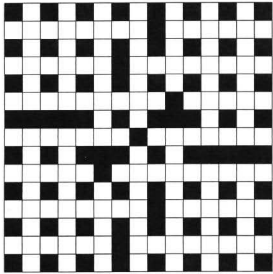
Or email: becon@dia1.pipex.com
by Friday 20 June 1997

Worlds Without Number

A Perimetric Jigsaw
by John English

The grid for this puzzle is deliberately unnumbered. Solve the clues and insert the solutions jigsaw-fashion into the diagram; there is only one possible arrangement for the solutions. The 28 letters around the border of the completed diagram, when read clockwise starting from the top left-hand corner, will spell out the full name of a well-known book (seven words), although the book in question is normally only known by the first two words of the full title. The author's name appears within the puzzle itself. The clues are arranged in alphabetical order of their solutions.

(Hint: the two nine-letter solutions are unambiguously tied down by the four radial seven-letter solutions, and these will in turn tie down the rest of the puzzle.)



1. Bah! 'imp mistreated frogs etc. (8)
2. McCaffrey laid about, seeing red-blooded worms. (9)
3. Headless bird of prey guards Delany's jewels. (5)
4. One man initially involved in thrilling mystery, a property this puzzle lacks? (9)
5. Sailor in broken barrel can be excluded from pub, perhaps? (8)
6. Troll tangled with web woven from campanula. (8)
7. Being in love brings out primary characteristics of perimetric protagonist. (5)
8. Fredric and Dean's gun? (8)
9. Medieval instrument: the old king holds it. (6)
10. Opener moved rook, captured by returning spy. (8)
11. Warriors taken aback by Moria's rodents. (6)
12. One that Bill is assigned to terminate or observe. (8)
13. Tree creature's anger is unimpaired. (6)
14. Partial to suspense: there, "Alien" is heavenly. (8)
15. Doomed to be overweight, one like Doozits perhaps? (5)
16. Make fan glad to see this perimetric character? (7)
17. Filter taking horse, or horse trader? (7)

18. Gas found on Barsom. (6)
19. Author discovered in another berth. (7)
20. Jovian satellite using sine waves to generate charge. (6)
21. Strong reaction to protection money? (8)
22. Titanium used in whip, a bit behind. (6)
23. Van Vogt's tale regarding a mob: stone thrown? (9)
24. North-eastern winter has the cure for sorrow. (8)
25. Strangely unwell lumpy hollow. (5)
26. Nun tries to be sick after first attempt at sex. (6)
27. Singers of note at either pole? (6)
28. Incoherent? Not like perimetric author? (7)

CROSSWORD
SOLUTION
See page 17

Big Butt Aleph votes on the news

- **INTERVENTION BLUES** Fans at this year's Eastercon took its theme of 'Communication' seriously (unlike the organisers. 'Newsletter? We don't need no steenkin' newsletter') by telepathically deciding to all go for breakfast at once, from orderly queues at the bar, and sniffing into the camera crew (usually spotted dogging Iain M. Banks's heels).
- Despite security imported from Prisoners of War, one badgeless soul wandered unchallenged for hours. Was Kev McVeigh incognito for his own safety or was he being ignored? Following a 'Legendary editor's' perceptive characterisation of the Clarke Award judges, at least two of them were seen proudly sporting 'Official John Jarrod Dickshead' badges.
- What went wrong with the BSFA Tombola? People kept winning. Apart from, it is traditional, Chris Terran, who spent a liver before they took pity and gave him an ancient Terrans' and Artists' Yearbook: 'Just what I always wanted!' Perhaps he was consoled when Caroline Mullan dropped to her knees before him in the dealers' room and started bowing and growling, we didn't like to ask why.
- Aleph's previous convention was marked by narrow-eyed enquires as to his identity, but people at Intervention seemed eager to press gossip on his spies. One person was determined to relate his fascination with a certain buom lady and precisely where she deposited his business card. Nice to see librarians keep abreast of things and displaying their knowledge of Foundation garments.
- **ONE DAY MY IMPRINTS WILL COME** Voyage's publication of Steve Baxter's Voyager (or vice versa) suggests a degree of product placement is creeping it sideways. Watch out for Anne McCaffrey's Dragonstringer: HarperCollins of Pern, tie-in Third Rock From The Sun and Alfred Bester's Penguin! Penguin! (UK vs Panther! Panther).
- **TECHNOBABLE YVONNE ROWELL** s'spelchecker program corrects Anisble to Unisable, and we couldn't possibly comment.
- **If Irs Any Gooo...** From the programme of the Birmingham Readers' and Writers' Festival: '14 May Iain Banks: Novelist and science fiction writer Iain Banks discusses his life and work.' Novelist and I writer? Gosh.
- **OUT OF CONTEXT** Aleph likes interzone, possibly because it is, according to William Burroughs in The Naked Lunch, 'a haven for the mongrel soul of the Earth' and 'an engorged parasite on the underbelly of the West'. Has 'Brian' Pringle told the Arts Council?
- **HALE-BOPP-A-LULA** Following the departure of Comet Hale-Bopp, here's Be-Bopp (with a syncretized orbit), Hale-Rock-n-Roll (which reveals sinister messages when its path is extrapolated back in time) and Teeny-Bopp, which will shine for a year and then be forgotten.
- **ENEMAS OF THE SYSTEM** Aleph received this heart-tugging letter:
Dear Dr Aleph
My friend Victor has this terrible pain all down his colophon and it's making his life a complete misery. Some impacted foreign material has become infected, and no matter what he does he just can't shift it. Prof. Jeffery recommends a full course of high colophonic irrigation – do you think this will work? Please, please help, as I'm worried that it will spread.
Yrs, Matt (A Worried Editor)

- Answers on a postcard, please.
- **THOSE CRAZY, MIXED-UP SF WRITERS** The splendid Visionary Tongue magazine reveals the alter-egos of Editorial Consultants **Stefm Fred Warrington** – Wonder Fart Grain and Toning Dwarf Rear – and Dark Lord of the Underworld **Brian Stableford** – Starboard of Bile and the ineffable Dribbler of Satan.
 - **THEIR A GUY IN THE DEALERS' ROOM...** According to Intervention's official membership list, member number 666 was one E. A. Presley. $\bigcirc - N_s < ? < N_s$

BIG BUTTERS: Elizabeth Bilingier, Andy Butler, Penny Hill, Steve Jeffery, Yvonne Rowell, Chris Terran. • Aleph welcomes scandal, rumour, clippings, cuttings, droppings, small pieces of cheese, and bribes (to editorial address).



the dangerously marginal matrix stands on an acorn a5000 platform, and is proportionally represented by various bits of software (notably zap, the jeremy paxman of text editors), spin-doctored by an hp laserjet 5i, griddled mercilessly by pdc copyprint, flyposted by bramley mailing services, sent out on the hustings by the royal mail, and tactically voted on by you

—matrix 125—soundtracked by kate rusby, the chemical brothers, kevin ayers (—whatwesherehingswings—), dodgy, the links, marlin canthy, shirley and dolly collins, anton dvorak, lush, mouth music, vincent barnis and eversonary politicians
—"you scream and shout 'all day long"