

•MATRIX•

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· JANUARY / FEBRUARY 1998 ·



ARTHUR · C · CLARKE
eighty years of life

THE · BSFA
forty years of sf

PLUS

DAVE · LANGFORD
twenty years of uproar

JOHN · GRANT on sf art • RUBY artwork

MATRIX

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

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and photography
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his study, with his crystal set and
other scientific equipment.

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BSFA

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news

RICHARD EVANS PRIZE PLANNED

RICHARD EVANS, the much-loved sf editor who died tragically young in May 1996 aged 46, had a fund set up in his honour. Now the Trustees of the Fund, which has recently gained Registered Charity status, have announced their plans: to establish a literary prize to be awarded to "an author published in the UK whose work has been consistently original and imaginative, but which has received inadequate public – or indeed critical – acclaim." The Richard Evans Prize will be awarded every two years.

What distinguishes the prize from other literary awards is that although a payment will be made to the winner, by far the bulk of the prize money will be directed towards a marketing campaign for the winner's body of work, an aspect of the publishing process that most authors feel is inadequately funded. The intention, say the organisers, is to create a platform for the winner in both trade and national press, and hopefully in due course on radio and tv.

The fund has secured the backing of Books Etc, and the organisers will be approaching other trade bodies when further details are finalised. Judges will be chosen from "the widest possible range of book trade professionals as well as celebrities and

members of the book-buying public". The current proposal is for publishers to send examples of authors they feel qualify, to a maximum of three per imprint. "As the prize is for an author rather than a particular work, one of the entrance criteria would be that the author would have to have at least three books in print at the time of submission."

Meanwhile fundraising efforts continue, with a view to ensuring the long-term viability of the Richard Evans Prize. □

Contact: SAE to The Richard Evans Fund, c/o 62 Grafton Way, London, W1P 5LD

• See Matrix 121 for appreciations of Richard Evans by Mary Gentle and John Jarrold.

OKTOBER IN SPRING

STEPHEN GALLAGHER has scripted and directed an adaptation of his 1988 novel *Oktober* for transmission on ITV in Spring 1998. The Carnival Films production is in three one-hour episodes and features Stephen Tompkinson. *Oktober* is a techno-thriller about an evil Swiss-based multinational drug company, one of whose employees discovers what they're really up to. Gallagher's 1982 novel *Chimera* was serialised for tv in 1991, to mixed reviews. □

WILLIAM ROTSLER

WILLIAM ROTSLER, the popular fan cartoonist, died of cancer on 18 October; he was 71. He won Best Fan Artist Hugos in 1975, 1996 and 1997, and also in 1996 won a 'Retro Hugo' for his work in 1945.

He also wrote sf, starting in 1970 with "Ship Me Tomorrow" for *Galaxy*. His 1974 novel *Patron of the Arts* is well-regarded, and his collaborative novel *Shiva Descending* (1980) with Gregory Benford is probably his best-known contribution to fiction. In 1995 he compiled a collection of sf quotations, *Science Fictionisms*. □

• A full obituary will appear next issue.

MARGARET ALDIS

MARGARET ALDIS, wife of Brian Aldiss since 1965, died from liver cancer in early November. Margaret was often to be found bringing good cheer to conventions, and compiled a succession of standard bibliographies of her husband's work.

Our deepest sympathies on their loss to the children and to Brian, who in the 1960s was President of the BSFA. □

NORMAN BESWICK

REGULAR BSFA reviewer Norman Beswick died of prostate cancer on 5 November, aged 71. His last months were helped by the response of fans to news of his illness, many of whom sent fanzines and books: shortly before his death he wrote that he was "overwhelmed by the response of fandom to news of my illness... I am immensely grateful." Since 1993 he had contributed a number of articles and many book reviews to *Vector*; he will be very much missed, and our sympathies to his family. □

GIGER SLAMS FOX

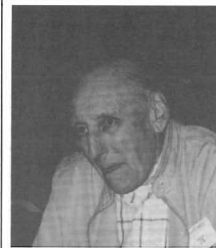
H. R. GIGER, the Swiss artist and designer of the 'Alien' monster, has accused Twentieth Century Fox of "cheating" him out of a credit and "stealing" his designs for the film *Alien Resurrection*.

In an open letter to the company Giger says, "The designs and my credit have been stolen from me, since I alone have designed the Alien. So why does not Fox give me the credit I rightfully earned?" Giger is also incensed about *Alien*, claiming he was cheated out of an Oscar nomination (he won an Oscar for his designs in *Alien*) because his credit was for 'Original Alien Design' and not 'Alien' Creature Design, which "was my rightful title in accordance to my contract and the work I had performed on the film". The letter ends with Giger hoping that those behind the "conspiracy" get an alien "breeding inside their chests, which might just remind them that the 'Alien Father' is H. R. Giger". □

• *Alien Resurrection* will be reviewed next issue.

TAFF RUNNERS

THE RUNNERS in the 1998 Europe-to-US TAFF race are Chris Bell, Bridget Hardcastle and Maureen Kincaid Speller. For voting details and the contestant's platforms, send an SAE to the Matrix editorial address. □



1997 World Fantasy Awards



— Best Novel —
RACHEL POLLACK
Godmother Night
(St Martin's Press)

— Best Novella —
MARK HELPIN
"A City in Winter"
(Viking)

— Best Short Story —
JAMES P. BLAYLOCK
"Thirteen Phantasms"
(Omni Online Oct 96)

— Best Anthology —
PATRICK NIELSEN HAYDEN (ed.)
Starlight 1
(Tor)

— Best Collection —
JONATHAN LETHEM
The Wall of the Sky, the Wall of the Eye
(Harcourt Brace)

— Best Artist —
MÖBIUS (Jean Giraud)

— Professional Award —
MICHAEL J. WELDON
(for *The Psychotronic* Video Guide to Film)

— Non-Professional Award —
BARBARA & CHRISTOPHER RODEN
(for Ash-Tree Press)

— Lifetime Achievement —
MADELEINE L'ENGLE

— Special Award —
HUGH B. CAVE

The 'Special Award' given to veteran pulp writer Hugh B. Cave (left) was a presentation made by the convention Committee. • Blaylock's "Thirteen Phantasms" is the first ever winner of a major award to be published on the net. • The judges for the Awards were Paul Barnett, Nancy A. Collins, Rachel Holman, Joe R. Lansdale and Diana L. Paxson. • The full shortlists can be found in Matrix 128.

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

KATHY ACKER, the American writer, died on 30 November aged 49. She had been suffering from cancer for some years, and after insisting on 'holistic' treatment appeared to recover; but a sudden relapse in early November led quickly to her death. Her last public performance was with the group The Mekons, whose line-up includes **Jon Langford**, brother of Dave.

Acker was a transgressive writer, in the William Burroughs sense – much influenced by such artists as Burroughs, William Gibson and cyberpunk in general (*Empire of the Senseless* (1988) contains cut-ups of Gibson texts). Pasolini and Jean Genet, she wrote of dark sexuality, violence and drugs. SI and fantasy was a tool, one of many, to explore the underside of the world, and of herself.

In her novel *Blood and Guts in High School* (1978) she wrote, in the course of a pornographic fantasy about President Carter: "Cancer is the outward condition of the condition of being screwed up." — **Chris Terran**

GERARD TURNER, the Australian sci writer who died recently, is to be honoured by the George Turner Prize. Set up by Transworld Australia, it'll be awarded to unpublished Australian sci or fantasy novels showing "traditional narrative strengths of action, plot and character". The award will be judged by a panel made up of booksellers, chaired by Louise Thurtell, Transworld Australia's Commissioning Editor. The winning novel will be published by Transworld and the author will receive \$510,000 advance against royalties.

DIANA WYNE JONES fans can indulge themselves with *Charmed Lives*, a new fanzine devoted to her and her books. Editor **Meredith MacArde** presents the first part of an interview with Diana conducted by **Maureen Kincail Spiller** at June's BSFA London meeting, articles by **Chris and Penny Hill**, a **Neil Gaiman** poem, reviews and information. There's also a bibliography, though unfortunately a bit lacking in publication details. Write Meredith a nice letter with an A4 SAE (31p) and she'll send you a copy of this well-produced and friendly zine.

Contact: Meredith MacArde, 121 Dalryell Road, London, SW9 9UJ
IAN GUNN is better! Moments of chemotherapy for cancer have worked, and the Australian cartoonist is now off the drugs.

CLARION WEST 1998 will be held in Seattle from 21 June to 31 July. The instructors will be **Paul Park**, **George R. R. Martin**, **Connie Willis**, **Lucy Sussex**, **Gardner Dozois** and **Carol Emshwiller**, and the six-week writing course will cost you \$1,300 excluding accommodation. See *Matrix* 127 for Janet Barron's view of the 1997 Clarion course.

Contact: Clarion West, 340, 15th Avenue E. Suite 350, Seattle, WA 98112, USA. Email: 74634.2056@compuserve.com

ROBERT JORDAN cancelled his Guest of Honour appearance at October's Eurocon/Octocon in Ireland, for personal reasons.

ARTISTS UK supplies the work of top fantasy and sci artists directly to the public – many artists work directly with Artists UK which cuts out the middlemen, giving cheaper prices and a better deal for the artists. They have prints and original work by such people as **Josh Kirby**, **Alan Lee**, **Chris Achilleos**, **Jim Burns**, **Patrick Woodroffe**, **Les Edwards**, **Roger Dean**, **Tim White**, **Danny Flynn**, **Frazzetta**, **Valerio**, **Chris Foss**, **Arthur Rackham**, **Julie Bell**, **H. R. Giger** and far too many others to list. Other services offered include framing and 'Arsearch' for those hard-to-find pictures. You can buy print samples for £2, refundable against future purchases.

Shop at: **Merton Abbey Mills** craft market (Sats, Suns, Bank Holidays), Mermaid Way, Colliers Wood, London (behind Savacentre on the High Street), Tel: 0181 543 7309 for prices and stock details.

DEATHS **Sidney Newman**, producer of many *Dr Who* episodes and *The Avengers*, died on 30 October aged 80, after a heart attack a fortnight earlier. • **G. Harry Stine**, sci writer and (under the name **Lee Coney**) founder of model rocketry and promoter of spaceflight, died on 2 November aged 69.

SINGALONGA PROGRAMMER Gather round the old keyboard and have a go at these, spotted floating around the net by **Molly Brown** and others. The tunes should be fairly obvious.

• Yesterday / All those backups seemed a waste of pay
Now my database has gone away

• I believe in yesterday.

• He's a real UNIX man / Sitting in his UNIX LAN

Making all his UNIX plans / For nobody

• When I find my code in tons of trouble

Friends and colleagues come to me

Speaking words of wisdom:

"Write in C"

EOS ONLINE CON

EOS, the new sf imprint of US publishers Avon, gets its official launch on Saturday 10 January 1998 with a day-long 'online convention' at their web site. It'll run from 12pm-8pm EST (from about 4pm GMT). Planned events include:

- A lecture and discussion from **Gregory Benford**, **Ben Bova** and **Raymond E. Feist**;
- **Rudy Rucker**, **Eric S. Nyland** and **Dennis Danvers** on "The future of cyberpunk";
- **Bova**, **Carolyn Ives Gilman**, **Severna Park** and **Eon's Jennifer Brehl** on "Getting and staying published";
- **Benford**, **Matthew Broderick**, **Susan R. Matthews** and **Amy Stout** on "Is sf dead?";
- **James Alan Gardner**, **Gilman** and **Stephen Leigh** on "Gender bending: trend or trope?";
- **Feist**, **Adam Lee** and **Victoria Strauss** on "Traditional v. Epic fantasy".

All panels will have Q&A sessions. There'll also be audio readings every hour, an art gallery, a fan-lounge chat room, and a live evolving sf story. □

• <http://avonbooks.com/eos>

• See *Matrix* 127 p11 for a profile of Avon Books.

1997 British Fantasy Awards

— **Best Novel** —
GRAHAM JOYCE
The Tooth Fairy (Signet)

— **Best Short Story** —
MARTIN SIMPSON
"Dancing About Architecture"
(*The Third Alternative* 11)

— **Best Anthology/Collection** —
THOMAS LIGOTTI
The Nightmare Factory (Raven)

— **Best Artist** —
JIM BURNS

— **Small Press Award** —
S. T. JOSHI

H. P. Lovecraft: A Life
(Necronomicon Press)

— **Special Award** —
JO FLETCHER

BRUM GROUP TREASURER 'BORROWS' MONEY

BIRMINGHAM SF GROUP has instituted proceedings in the Small Claims Court against its former Treasurer **Sarah Freakley**, for recovery of approximately £400 (including profits from Novacon 26) which she failed to hand over to the new Treasurer, **Alan Woodford**, when she stepped down from the post in late 1996. The December issue of *Brum Group News* carried a statement on the affair from Group Chair **Tony Morton**, who explained that when confronted with the shortfall **Freakley** promised to attend the February meeting, where she would repay the £25 she had "borrowed" from the cashbox, and further promised to "pay off the remaining shortfall at £50 per month, or (if we preferred) get a loan so that she could repay it all at once."

"Sarah did not attend the meeting," continued **Morton**, "nor did she repay the £25, but in a letter to the committee in that month she admitted to 'borrowing' money from the cashbox and failing to bank profits from Novacon 26. Effectively, once **Alan [Woodford]** had checked the accounts, there was a shortfall of about £400." The Group's Legal Officer, **Tim Stannard**, was consulted and it was agreed that **Freakley** should be given the opportunity to repay the money.

Unfortunately, "things did not go according to plan: due to Sarah's ill-health, she lost her job and 'couldn't afford to pay'. Several other delays compounded the situation and by May only £80 had been repaid."

No further money was received over the summer, and court proceedings were initiated. **Morton** said: "We can only say that in the light of Sarah's previous work for the BSFG, her recent bouts of ill-health and the periods of unemployment which resulted, we felt it only fair to give her every opportunity to repay the money. It was only when it became obvious that she intended to procrastinate forever, that we finally resorted to legal action." □

• Despite their financial problems, the *Brum SF Group* is laying on a galaxy of guests at forthcoming meetings: **Stephen Baxter** (13 Feb); **Graham Joyce** (13 Mar); **Tom Holt** (10 Apr); and **Robert Holdstock** (15 May). If you're in the area go along and support them in their hour of need – and, incidentally, meet some of the best authors in the UK in friendly and convivial surroundings.

Contact: **Martin Tudor**, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarks Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX. Email bafg@btcc.demon.co.uk

AWARDS MISCELLANY

• The **Eurocon Awards** were given at this year's Eurocon in Dublin. Winners: **AUTHOR: Rafal A. Ziemiakiewicz** (Poland). **ARTIST: Michael Marrak** (Germany). **MAGAZINE: Albedo 1** (Ireland – congratulations!). **TRANSLATOR: Lech Jędrzejak** (Poland). **PUBLISHER: Hans-Joachim Berndt** (Germany). **Dorota Malinowska-Proszynski** (S-KA) (Poland). **PROMOTER: Concatenation Team** (Romania / Spain / UK and others).

• The **Prix Aurora** is Canada's national sf award. Winners this year: **BEST BOOK (FRENCH): Yves Menard** *La rose du desert*. **BEST BOOK (ENGLISH): Robert J. Sawyer *Starplex*. **NOVELLA (F): Jean-Louis Trudel "L'amentio, Sagesses". **NOVELLA (E): Robert J. Sawyer "Peking Man". **OTHER WORK (F): Solaris (magazine). **OTHER WORK (E): On Spec (magazine). **ARTIST: Jean-Pierre Normand**. **FANZINE: Sol Rising** ed. **Theresa Woljaskiewicz**. **FANBOY ACCOMPLISHMENT (ORGANISING): Yvonne Penney**. **FANBOY ACCOMPLISHMENT (OTHER): Llyod Penney**.**********

• Each year *SF Chronicle* runs a poll of its readers, with categories remarkably similar to the Hugos. This year's results: **NOVEL: Bruce Sterling *Holy Fire*. **NOVELLA: Greg Benford "Immersion". **NOVELLETTE: Bruce Sterling "Bicycle Repairman". **SHORT STORY: James Van Houten "Unholy Boy". **DRAMATIC PRESENTATION: "Tritons and Triton-ables"**. **ST.DS9: PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Bob Eggleton**. **EDITOR (MAGAZINE): Gardner Dozois (*Asimov's*). **EDITOR (BOOK): Patrick Nielsen Hayden**. **SEM-PROFANE: SF Chronicle (gosh). **FANZINE: Tangent**. **FAN WRITER: Dave Langford**. **FAN ARTIST: Ian Gunn**.************

• The **Delta Awards** were given out at the Festival of Fantastic Films in Manchester on 7 September. The judges included **Steve Green**, who also announced the winners: **INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM: Darklands** (UK, dir. Julian Richards). **The Assassin** (Japan, dir. Masatoshi Takeuchi) was commended. **INDEPENDENT SHORT FILM: Zuyupe** (UK, dir. Jonathan Randall). **Carl's Code** (Australia, dir. Liz Hughes) and **Case** (UK, dir. Ken Hom) were commended. **AMATEUR FILM: Legend of Roy** (UK, dir. Rob Richardson & Keith Wright). □

Scribble Scribble Scribble...

Colin Greenland has delivered the third and final Tabitha Julia novel to HarperCollins in the UK and Avon in the US. It's called *Mother of Plenty*, and Colin says there will be "Plenty more treats and surprises in this one... especially for everyone who's read *Seasons of Plenty* and thinks it's all over for Captain Jude." It's scheduled for summer 1998.

Alison Sinclair (below) has an sf novel *Cavalade* out next July from Orion.



A group of humans accept an alien invitation to travel to a better world. There are no aliens present – instead the ship itself seems to be a life-form. "Only one woman is wise enough or mad enough to believe communication is possible – or desirable..."

Bruce Sterling has delivered the near-future of novel *Distraction* to Bantam.

David Zindell's epic, metaphysical, hard-sf *Requiem for Homo Sapiens* series reaches its conclusion with *War in Heaven*, due from Voyager in June. It tells of Danilo Ringess, son of man-become-god Malroy, and his attempt to prevent a war between his father's followers and the terrorist Architects who control the killing star.

Bo Fowler is a new writer and graduate of Malcolm Bradbury's Creative Writing course at East Anglia University. His satirical debut novel *Scepticism Inc.* (spot the Dick reference) is narrated by a God-obsessed supermarket trolley born in 2022. It – or he – meets Edgar Malroy, who takes bets on metaphysical propositions and never loses. The novel is due from Jonathan Cape in April.

Terry Pratchett's visits to Australia finally bear fruit in his next *Discworld* book, *The Last Continent*, wherein Rincewind ends up on the fabled continent of XXXX (a.k.a. Terra Incognita) and encounters many Australian jokes; there's also a much-needed explanation of the platypus. It's out from Transworld, probably in the Spring.

Peter Ackroyd's next book is a biography, *The Life of Thomas More*, who gave us the idea of Utopia. It's due from Chatto & Windus in March.

"Robin Hobb", a.k.a. Megan Lindholm, starts a new fantasy series in March with *Ship of Magic* from Voyager, book one of "The Livestrip Traders".

Ric Alexander follows up his well-received reprint anthology *Cyber Killers* with *The Unexplained*, due next March from Orion. It's themed on the paranormal, but the list of contributors shows that it's a long way from your standard X-Files cash-in: it includes stories from J. G. Ballard, Clive Barker, Ramsey Campbell, C. J. Cherryh, Roger Zelazny, Ian Watson and others.

Greg Benford's *Cosm* has been acquired by Orbit for May publication.

Anne Rice is starting a new series of short vampire novels with *Pandora*, the story of the eponymous vampire last seen in *Queen of the Damned*. It's due from Chatto & Windus in April.

John Gribbin has *Q* for Quantum out in March from Orion – it's an A-Z guide to particle physics. Meanwhile, his hard-sf novel *Time Switch* is still looking for a home – it's "the best thing I've ever written," he says, "which nobody will publish because there is no demand for that sort of stuff."

Stephen Laws has delivered the apocalyptic horror novel *Chasm* to Hodder & Stoughton for publication in June. A small English town suffers a strange earthquake which leaves many buildings isolated on pinnacles of stone above a bottomless gulf. Rescue doesn't come, the survivors try to cope... and the chasm an evil force stirs.

Linda Jivlin enters *Space Grrl* territory with *Rock 'n' Roll Babes* from Orbit under Space, due next April from Orion. "Three spunky alien babes are trapped on the most boring planet in the entire yoon," whatever that is; they "steal a spaceship and arrive at Sydney, Earth, in search of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll." The blurb glooms: "The big bang was never so much fun."

Garry Kilworth concludes his Polynesia-set *Navigator Kings* trilogy with *Land-of-Mists*, out in May from Orbit.

Clive Barker's dystanic dark fantasy *Galilee: Scarlet Gospels* is due from HarperCollins next summer. It continues Barker's move into a kind of mid-Atlantic dark soap opera with the story of two US families, the Gearys and the Barbarosas, at odds over the centuries.

Patrick Tilley is to continue his 'Amtrak War' series in collaboration with Paul Barnett (who may be credited under his 'John Grant' pseudonym). Meanwhile, Orbit will be reissuing the first six 'Amtrak' books at two per month starting in January.

Katherine Kerr is working on her next *Devany* novel for delivery later in 1998; it's called *The Black Raven*.

Dan Simmons has delivered *The Crook Factory* to Avon.

Ken Russell – yes, that Ken Russell – has written an sf novel and sold it to Tim Holman at Orbit. Called *Mike and Gabby's Space Gospel*, it features "two unforgettable aliens and the birth of mankind".

Douglas Hurd – yes, that Douglas Hurd – has *The Shape of Ice* due in May from Little, Brown. It's a near-future political thriller in which PM Simon Russell battles prison riots, bombs in Ireland, corporate blackmail in China and civil unrest in Russia... while at home small events threaten to grow alarmingly.

Brian Stableford's sf novel *For The Inheritors of Earth*, is completed and tentatively scheduled for publication in September.

Kim Stanton Robinson's *A World Without Europe* is an alternative history in which the Black Death killed 99% of Europeans rather than 66%. It's been sold to HarperCollins in the UK and Bantam Spectra in the US.

Iain M. Banks's next sf novel is due in June from Orion; it'll be a joint promotional tour with *Ken MacLeod*, whose *The Cassini Division* is out in May.

Hilary Bailey, editor in the 70s of *New Worlds*, sf writer, and married for many years to Michael Moorcock, has written a sequel to Christopher Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin*, source of the fabulous film *Cabaret*. Her novel, due in June from Little, Brown, is called *After the Cabaret: Sally Bowles at War* and takes Sally to London in 1940 where she finds employment as a singer and postman. In the 1990s an American academic is surviving her civil war, and contacts her recurring old flames...

Elizabeth Hand is writing her next novel, working title *Labyrinth of the Sun*; she describes it as a "dark, fantastic, gothic romance."

Gwyneth Jones is working on a new sf novel – "a different departure, not another Aleutian episode," she says. Meanwhile she has a collection of essays from Liverpool University Press due sometime in 1998, "which is going to be called (after some soul-searching) *Deconstructing the Starships*." And her next *Ann Halam* children's novel is *Crying in the Dark*, out in May 1998.

Richard Calder's *Cythera* is out from Orbit in March. It's described as "bizarre, perverse and brilliant," but not surprise those who've read his *Dead...* trilogy.

Greg Bear's contribution to the *Asimov* share-out 'Third Foundation' series is *Foundation and Chaos*, due from HarperCollins next this year.

Tom Holt's next comic fantasy is *Wish You Were Here*, out next April from Orbit. Like *Chicopee* in America has a legend: immerse yourself in its waters and the ghost of Okeawana will give you your heart's desire. Wesley Higgins from Birmingham pays a visit...

Robert Nye's *The Late Mr Shakespeare* is due from Chatto & Windus in April. It's a fantastical biography of Our Willie.

Profit Of Dune

Yes, Frank Herbert rises from the dead... Bantam Books has paid \$3million for the North American rights to a trilogy of prequels to the 'Dune' series, to be written by their creator's son Brian Herbert and Star Wars wookieebook author Kevin J. Anderson. It will be based on notes and outlines Frank Herbert left after his death in 1986, and on conversations with his son. The books will be set mostly on Arrakis itself and the first should be out in 1999.

Meanwhile, the Sci-Fi Channel is producing a six-hour *Dune* miniseries (unrelated to the 1984 David Lynch movie) for broadcast in 1998.

Butler On Film

Octavia Butler's 1979 novel *Kindred* is set for filming by Del Pictures and Polygram Filmed Entertainment. They have bought an adaptation by Nicholas Brandt and Bridget Blake-Wilson, with the former set to direct. Butler, who guested at last year's Easterncon in Liverpool and was the recipient of a McArthur Foundation 'Genius' grant, has previously been reluctant to allow her novels to be filmed – across Taina Shire held the rights to *Kindred* for eight years, but when she failed to renew in 1996 they were bought by Brandt. The tale concerns a black woman transported back in time to the 19th century Deep South, where she becomes a slave.

A Clockwork Radio

Anthony Burgess's infamous novel *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) has been adapted for radio and will get its Radio 4 transmission on Saturday 7 February 1998. The play features Jason Hughes and Jack Davenport, who both appeared in the popular BBC2 series *This Life*. We may not be able to see Kubrick's 1971 film of the novel (officially, that is: Kubrick will not let it be shown in the UK, though you can pick up imported videos on market stalls) but we will at least soon be able to hear Alison Hindle's production. [Eileen Cheshire]

Rushdie Out Of Sri Lanka

Salman Rushdie's difficulties continue. As reported last issue, filming of the BBC adaptation of his 1980 fantasy *Midnight's Children* was shifted from India to Sri Lanka after the Indian government, fearful of provoking Islamic opinion, withdrew permission for location work. But in late November the Sri Lankan government did likewise after pressure from Islamic groups there, and the pre-production team on the five-part serial, retitled to *Saleem's Story*, left the country. Rushdie described it as "a colossal blow," and said that those who objected did not object to the novel, but to him personally.

Midnight's Children is about 1,001 magically and variously gifted children born in 1949 when India gained its independence, and follows the group, telepathically linked through Saleem, through the years. The BBC's production was intended to be the flagship programme in its celebrations of the 50th anniversary of Indian independence in 1999. Now the entire project is on hold.

Greenland Paper Chase

In a small ceremony on 7 November at the University of Liverpool, Colin Greenland officially handed his papers over to Andy Sawyer for deposit in the Science Fiction Foundation Collection. Available for consultation on application, the deposit includes manuscripts and working notes for all three Tabitha Julia novels, the early novels, *Ham's Way*, and the short stories collected in *The Plenty Principle*, as well as correspondence, tapes and transcripts of interviews with Michael Moorcock, Ursula K. Le Guin, Kurt Vonnegut, William Gibson and others.

In his speech Colin recalled that it was in the SFF journal *Foundation*, to which he still contributes, that his first non-fiction appeared in 1979, and that his period as the SFF's Arts Council Writer in Residence in 1980-82 enabled him not only to develop a considerable body of criticism and journalism, but also to write "the essential preliminary novels every author has to produce but never publish."

CROYDON SCOOPS NOVAS AGAIN

THE 1997 Nova Awards were voted on and presented at Novacon, held on 14-16 November at the Abbey hotel in Great Malvern. As it did last year Croydon fandom dominated the results: the Best Fanzine, as in 1996, was **Claire Briailey** and **Mark Plummer's *Banana Wings***; Best Fanwriter was last year's runner-up **Mark Plummer**, with Claire as this year's runner-up; and the Best Artist award went to **Sue Mason**, the first time since 1986 that the award hasn't gone to Dave Mooring or D. West. "Has D. died and no one told me?", asked Sue as she choked on her orange and lemonade. Mark was again caught blushing - "You know I can't do this... thanks," he said, and hurried offstage back to the tech ops box. Claire thanked everyone for making Mark so incredibly embarrassed twice in a row.

At Eastercon a collection was started to mark the fact that 1997 saw **Ken Slater's** eightieth birthday and marked his fiftieth year in fandom and as a sf book-seller. At Novacon's opening ceremony **Rog Peyton**, proprietor of Birmingham's *Andromeda* sf bookshop, made a surprise presentation to Ken of a Special Nova (only the second to be presented) and announced to great acclaim that Ken was to be Fan Guest of Honour. He also received a cheque for £220 towards a computer upgrade, and at the closing ceremony a more immediately useful bottle of rum.

A sad note was struck by the news of the death of **Margaret Aldiss**, Brian Aldiss's wife. Brian had been due to give a performance of his theatre piece *SF Blues*, which was cancelled. A card of condolence was available for everyone to sign.

The annual raffle in aid of the RNIB's Talking Books project raised £177.70. TAFF benefited to the tune of £87.38 through 'turkey readings' - in which examples of bad sf are read out until a member of the winning audience pays for it to stop. The United Fan Funds auction raised £361.50, of which £50 went to GUFF, £150 to Friends of Foundation and £161.50 to TAFF.

Next year's Novacon, again chaired by **Martin Tudor**, will take place on 13-15 November 1998 at a venue to be announced the Abbey, a popular and welcoming venue, is being refurbished (at the time). The guest of honour will be **Paul J. McAuley**. See the 'Events' page for further details. □

Claire Briailey reports . . .

NOVACON is an institution, although in the general spectrum of sf conventions it's more of a home for distressed gentilefolk than an outright asylum. The Abbey Hotel, Novacon's first jaunt outside the Birmingham area in many years, fitted right into this convention: a peculiarly gothic setting for a science fiction image associated with fans who take their sf, their fandom and their fun pretty seriously.

Novacon's established literary emphasis, however, has been diminishing in the past few years. There was little to fault in the credentials of Guest of Honour **Peter F. Hamilton**, and some other authors (including **Ken MacLeod** and **Freda Warrington**) also attended, but there are undeniably fewer published writers and hardly any publishers in evidence at Novacon these days. This year, the World Fantasy Convention two years earlier, with its specific opportunities for sf professionals, may have provided an additional reason for the low representation at Novacon.

Nonetheless, the programme tried to reflect a balance of literary and fanish events, including a 'Desert Island Books' item fronted by **Maureen Kincaid Speller** with a desert island populated by BSFA luminaries Dave

1997 Nova Awards

— **Best Fanzine** —
Banana Wings
(135 votes)

Eds. Claire Briailey & Mark Plummer

— **Best Fanwriter** —
Mark Plummer
(95 votes)

— **Best Fanartist** —
Sue Mason
(107 votes)

— **Special Nova** —
Ken Slater

OTHER PLACINGS

Fanzine

2-*Attitude* (76), 3-*Ploka* (67), 4-*BW* (30), 5-*BOB*, *Snuflink's Burn* (28), 7-*Götterdämmerung* (26), 8-*Never Quite Arriving*, *Shooting Stars* (19), 10-*Scragglydie* *Hy* (10), 11-*Year of the Cow* (8), 12-*Wallbanger* (7), 13-*Taffon Tudor* (6), 14-*Strange Delusions* (5), 15-*FTT*, 16-*Balcons Over Bristol* (3), 17-*Babes With Attitude*, *Railings* (2), 19-*Immaculate Inflection*, *Pogonophobia*, *Thingumbob*, *Drunken Fuckwit*, *Gerald* (1).

Fanwriter

2-Claire Briailey (53), 3-Dave Langford (39), 4-Christina Lake (38), 5-Mike D. Siddall (30), 6-Alison Scott (26), 7-Mark McCann (24), 8-Maureen Kincaid Speller, Ian Sorensen (23), 10-Paul Kincaid (15), 11-Martin Tudor, 12-Alison Freeborn, 13-Pam Wells, 14-Tanya Brown, John Dallman, Bridget Hardcastle, Steve Jeffery (5), 18-Judith Hanna, Dave Hicks (4), 20-Marianne Cain, Eve Harvey, Mike Scott (3), 23-Chuck Connor, Steve Davies, Tommy Ferguson, Stubs (1).

Fanartist

2-Dave Mooring (84), 3-D. West (80), 4-Dave Hicks (47), 5-Steve Jeffery/Esjay (45), 6-Anne Stokes (20), 7-Jim Barker (19), 8-Shep Kirkbride (6), 9-Harry Turner (1).

Langford, Paul Kincaid, and Mark Plummer. Panels on future law, science, and the interface between sf and crime also featured, together with fanish quizzes and comedy items and a more serious discussion about TAFF (Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund) between candidates for the 1998 Europe-to-US race - **Chris Bell**, the BSFA's ubiquitous Maureen Speller, and Bridget Hardcastle. Some of the single-stream programme suffered from a lack of preparation and some last-minute participant changes as well as from a curious arrangement of function space, which left the main hall and its bar several flights of stairs and a stroll through the restaurant away from the rest of the convention.

Novacon does, however, do a good line in sf fanish tradition, and the nomination of **Ken Slater** as this year's Fan Guest of Honour was in tune with this. Ken - who, even to those who don't know him as a fan, will be a familiar figure to anyone who frequents convention book rooms - is currently enjoying his fiftieth year in fandom and is also about to celebrate his eightieth birthday; he was a very popular choice as GoF.

As for the serious fun: despite hotel and programme grumbles there did seem to be quite a lot of fun (and quite a lot of fanzines). Perhaps we do all need to be in an institution . . .

— © Claire Briailey 1997

BSFA AWARDS

Send awards nominations to

Chris Hill
Rook's Cottage, 3 Lynch Hill,
Whitchurch, Hants, RG28 7ND
Email chhill@enterpriser.net

It is nearly the end of the year now and approaching your last chance to send me any nominations for this year's BSFA Awards. I will accept nominations until 15 January 1998, for work first published in the UK during 1997. So you've got all the Christmas holidays (if you are lucky enough to have them) to catch up on all that reading!

What happens next? Well, in the next day or so after 15 January I will put together the shortlist on which you will be asked to vote. A voting form will be issued with the first mailing of 1998, due in mid-February. But if you would like to know the nominations before this so you can start searching them out as early as possible, please feel free to phone or email me. Alternatively you could write, but please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Below are the shortlist nominations at 17 November 1997. Please remember that it's the items with most number of nominations which will end up on the eventual shortlist, so don't ignore anything just because it is already on the list!

— Chris Hill

Best Novel

Kirsten Bakes *Lines of the Monster Gods* (Sceptre)
Stephen Baxter *Titan* (Voyager: £16.99 hb)
Greg Bear *Slant* (Legend: £16.99 hb)
David Brin *Infamy's Edge* (Z: £7)
Jack Deighton *A Son of the Rock* (Orbit: £5.99 pb)
Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni *The Mistress of Spices* (Doubleday: £12.99 pb)
Greg Egan *Diapora* (Orbit: £16.99 hb, £9.99 pb)
Neil Gaiman (ed.) *Michael Zulk, Jon J. Muth, Charles Vess, Dave McKean* *Midnight: The Wake* (Titan: £12.99 pb)
Peter F. Hamilton *The Neutonium Alchemist* (MacMillan: £17.99 hb)
Kim Stanley Robinson *Antarctica* (Voyager: £16.99 hb)
Robin Hood *Assassins* (Quest/HarperCollins: £16.99 hb)
**Donald James Munster *Century* (Gollancz: £9.99 pb)
Diana Wynne Jones *Deep Secret* (Gollancz: £16.99 hb)
Gwyneth Jones *Phoenix Cafe* (Gollancz: £16.99 hb)
Jeff Noon *Nymphomaniac* (Transworld: £15.99 hb)
Stephen Palmer *Gliss* (Orbit: £5.99 pb)
Tim Powers *Earthquake Weather* (Legend: £17.99 hb)
Kim Stanley Robinson *Antarctica* (Voyager: £16.99 hb)
Mary Dorra Russell *The Sparrow* (Black Swan: £5.99 pb)
Brian Stableford *Chimera's Cradle* (Legend: £16.99 hb)
Tricia Sullivan *Someone to Watch Over Me* (Orbit: £16.99 hb)
Michael Swanwick *Jack Faust* (Orbit: £16.99 hb, £9.99 pb)
Alan Warner *These Deserted Lands* (Cape)
Ian Watson *Oracle* (Gollancz: £16.99 hb)
Jack Womack *Let's Put the Future Behind Us* (Farrago: £9.99 pb)**

Best Short Story

Eugene Byrne "Thymos" (Interzone 120)
Terry Dowling "No Hearts to be Broken" (Interzone 117)
Paul Filipo "The Cobain Sweater" (Interzone 120)
Rhys Hughes "Lunar Hampton" (The Third Alternative 12)
Richard Kadrey "The First Man not to Walk on the Moon" (Back Brain Review 23)
Paul Kincaid "Last Day of the Carnival - 36 Exposures" (Back Brain Review 23)
Jeff Noon "DJNA" (Disco Disques: Sceptre)
Martin Simpson "Dancing about Architecture" (The Third Alternative 11)
Brian Stableford "The Black Blood of the Dead" (Interzone 115-6)
Lisa Tuttle "Soul Song" (Interzone 118)
Ian Watson "Secrets" (Interzone 124)

Best Artwork

Jim Burns *Cover of Vector 191*
Brian Potter *Cover of The Wood Wife* by **Tim Wendling** (Legend: £5.99 pb)
Tony Krons *Cover of the Walkabouts: Death Valley Days CD*
Michael Whelan *Cover of The Golden Key* by **Melanie Rawn**, **Jennifer Robertson** & **Kate Elliot** (Pan: £7.99 pb)
Paul Young *Cover of Child of the River* by **Paul J. McAuley** (also cover of Interzone 123)

DOO-WOP SHOWADDY-WADDY...



LOOKING LIKE they're about to break into a doo-wop chorus are the *Fantasy Encyclopedia* crew, captured enjoying a pint by Roger Robinson after a Forbidden Planet signing session in London. Note the frozen position of their right hands. Left to right: John Grant, Dave Langford, John Clute and Ron Tiner.

SHOTS

SCREEN

MERLIN is a four-hour Arthurian miniseries being made by NBC. Filming started in Wales on 27 Oct and continued in various locations in England and Scotland; it features **Helena Bonham-Carter** as Morgan Le Fay, **Sam Neill** as Merlin, **Isabella Rossellini** as "love interest" Nimue, and **Rutger Hauer** as the evil Lord Vortigern. It's due to be shown in the US in May, with a UK screening later in the year.

WING COMMANDER MOVIE Origin System's space-combat game / simulator *Wing Commander* has been optioned by Digital Anvil for a film/live-action production based on the characters, storylines and themes from the first four *WC* titles. The fifth, *Prophecy*, is just out.

DEEP IMPACT production work began in the summer. Produced by Stephen Spielberg's Dreamworks SKG, it's based on **Arthur C. Clarke's** asteroid-hits-Earth novel *The Hammer of God*, and features **Morgan Freeman** and **Robert Duvall**.

UPCOMING MOVIES in the next couple of years include *The Tenth Victim*, a remake of the 1965 Italian/French coproduction *La Decima Vittima*, based on **Robert Shekley's** 1953 story "The Seventh Victim"; Shekley also wrote the 1966 novelisation.

• **Phillip Noyce** will direct *Blast Off*, about a terrorist on a near-future space station.

• **Disney's** *Armageddon* finishes shooting in January. It's an asteroid-hits-Earth story featuring **Bruce Willis**, **Will Patton** (soon to be seen as the baddie in Kevin Costner's movie of David Brin's *The Postman*) and **Tim Tyler**.

• *The Crow 2037* is the third "Crow" film; it has been written by rock group **White Zombie** frontman **Rob Zombie**, who will also direct.

• From 20th Century Fox and Spielberg's Dreamworks SKG comes *Five Day Forecast*, about a government weather control programme going wrong.

media news . . tv . . film

• Dreamworks also paid a huge \$3million for a "werewolf-comic-horror-thriller" script by **Dale Launer**.

• **Small Soldiers** from Dreamworks began shooting in November – toy soldiers equipped with AI run amok in a small town.

• **Soldier** is an sf action film with **Kurt Russell** and **Jason Scott Lee**. Russell plays a soldier made obsolete by a new breed of warrior (Lee), who moves to a colony planet as a mercenary.

• **Ben Stiller** will direct *Mystery Men*, based on the *Dark Horse* comic about a group of superheroes with bizarre powers.

• **Australian Geoffrey Wright** makes his Hollywood debut directing the United Artists sf thriller *Supernova*, about a hospital spaceship on a rescue mission.

• **Mutant Chronicles** is based on the eponymous game, and was written by *Event Horizon's* **Phillip Eisner** and **Stuart Hazeldine**.

• **Jeff Rovin's** forthcoming novel *Vespers* is set to be filmed by the team who brought you *Men in Black*, **Barry Sonnenfeld** and **Josephson**. It's about giant mutant bats who take over New York. *Rovin*, it turns out, is the ghost writer who pens the "Tom Clancy's Op Centre" techno-thriller books.

• More speculative (and possibly even datter) is *The Mercury Effect*, a script by **Alexander Torres** optioned by Warner Bros for \$250,000. It's about two of the chimps shot into space on the test Mercury flights in the early 60s who turn up on Earth gifted with the power of speech.

• Warner have also optioned **Philip Kerr's** *The Second Angel* for \$2.5million. It's set 100 years hence when most of humanity is infected with a fatal "flu virus, and all the remaining uncontaminated blood is kept in orbital facilities.

• **Jack Frost**, about a jazz musician who returns after death as the eponymous weatherman, was due to be directed by **Sam Raimi**, but he pulled out after **George Clooney** left the project. Raimi's place may be taken by **Troy Miller**. □

•MATRIX•

AMONG THE inky marks left on your soul by any involvement in the mag trade – even at my lowly level – is a twitchy awareness of anniversaries. Some get missed – we've unfortunately neglected to mark the 100th birthday on 1 November of **Naomi Mitchison**, sister of J. B. S. Haldane, and the author of *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* among other works of genre interest. Perhaps it's apt that she was born in the year that saw the publication of Wells's *The Invisible Man*, which we did manage to remember (see *Vector* 194).

Circumstances have serenitously conspired to bring together a number of anniversaries in this issue of *Matrix*. Most importantly, we're celebrating the 80th birthday, on 16 December, of the UK's best-known sf author (and the BSFA's President), **Arthur C. Clarke**. It's a great pleasure to be able to present an article from Arthur for your enjoyment – and I hope you'll join me in wishing him a very long and happy retirement... wait a minute. *Retirement*? Arthur's work rate puts those of us half his age to shame. Happy birthday, Arthur! And lots more to come.

Next, 1998 is the BSFA's 40th anniversary year. During the year we'll be celebrating this in various ways – one of which is our poll for the best sf/novels published during the period, so send your votes in soon – but our eye will be firmly on the future as well as the past. And on the subject of polls, don't forget this is your last chance to vote for the shortlist for the 1998 BSFA Awards (see previous page); if you're interested in sf – and of course you are – support your favourite author / artist and send those votes in!

This also happens to be the eighteenth *Matrix* I've produced, and so marks its coming of age. It's also three years since I took on the job. Time for a new masthead, I thought, and some tinkering with the design (editors do this kind of thing, to prove that they're necessary). For my first issue **Dave Langford** got things off to a flying start with "You Do It With Mirrors", and this time there's another Langford gem for your holiday enjoyment. Just think: way back in 1994 he only had nine Hugos; now he's got fourteen, and if you've ever wondered why he keeps winning the damned things just read the article.

And now, as *Matrix* is 18 and legal, it's going to go out and get drunk. And why not? Happy Christmas, to all of you!

— Chris Terran

Many thanks to

Michael Abbott, Brian Aldiss, Paul Barnett, Stephen Baxter, Chris Bell, Elizabeth & Paul Billington, Claire Brien, Brum SF Group, Andrew M. Butler, Ellen Cheshire, Arthur C. Clarke, John Clute, Andy Cox, Cardinal Cox, Tony Cullen, Gary Dakin, Angie Edwards, Danny Flynn, Roy Gray, Colin Greenland, Jon Courtenay Grimwood, Andy Heide, Chris Hill, Steve Jeffery, Gwyneth Jones, Dave Langford, Meredith MacArdle, Ken MacLeod, Angela Murphy & Rebecca Willets of the Science Museum, John Ollis, Mark Plummer, Roger Robinson, Ruby, Andy Sawyer, Ian Simpson, Ian Sorensen, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Brian Stabelford, *The Twilight*, Martin Tudor, Ian Watson, Bridget Wilkinson, Philip Williamson, and the hard-working publicists of Avon, the BBC, Gollancz, Hodder, Orbit, Orion, Paper Tiger, Raven, Titan, Transworld, Voyager, and Waterstone's. Thanks, and the very best for 1988 to all of you!

WHAT'S THE BEST BRITISH SF NOVEL OF THE LAST FORTY YEARS?

Let us know! Send your five suggestions in order (annotated if you like):

Andrew M. Butler, 33 Brook View Drive, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5JN

Email: vector-bsfa@rocketmail.com (subject line "Poll")

—recent & forthcoming books—

Voyager

Including HarperCollins, Flamingo, Fontana



- Matthew Sturgis Aubrey Beardsley: A Biography** (HarperCollins: 1 Dec; £20.00 hb, c320pp ill.) — An early and very influential fantasy artist, who died astonishingly young, aged 25.
- ★ **Sheri S. Tepper Family Tree** (1 Dec; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, c500pp) — New sf novel. 'Trees are suddenly growing at a fantastic rate, and police officer Dora Henry thinks she knows where the plague of trees began. Elsewhere, in the far future when technology has all but vanished, two princes go on a quest that takes them further than they wanted. Dora will find out about the future. Meanwhile, the trees keep growing...'.
- ★ **Sheri S. Tepper Gibbon's Decline and Fall** (1 Dec; £5.99 pb) — Paperback of the Clarke Award-nominated sf novel.
- Raymond E. Feist Rage of a Demon King** (1 Dec; £9.99 tp) — Third in the 'Serpentwar Saga'. Feist is married to fantasy novelist Kathlyn S. Starbuck.
- Andrew Neiderman The Devil's Advocate** (HarperCollins: Jan; £5.99 pb, c320pp) — Tie-in to the Keanu Reeves / Al Pacino film. An aspiring attorney is taken on by New York law firm John Milton & Co. (nudge, nudge) which appears never to lose in court, and has a file marked FUTURES containing details of cases the company will defend even though the crimes haven't yet been committed.
- ★ **J. R. R. Tolkien Roverandom** (HarperCollins: 1 Jan; £12.99 hb, c128pp) — First appearance of an unpublished children's story in which a dog is turned into a toy by a wizard and dropped on a beach by a small boy. The story is transported to the moon on the path of light it makes on the sea, and the Man in the Moon renames him 'Roverandom' and gives him wings. The story was written by Tolkien on holiday at Filey in Yorkshire in 1925, to comfort four-year-old Michael who had lost his toy dog there. Illustrated with paintings and drawings by the author, there's also an introduction by Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull.
- George R. R. Martin A Game of Thrones** (5 Jan; £5.99 pb) — Despite being lumbered with the appalling publicity line 'the most imaginative, ambitious and compelling fantasy epic since Lord of the Rings', this has been extremely well received and was nominated for a World Fantasy Award. The second volume, *A Clash of Kings*, is due in April. > Mar 97

- Robert J. Sawyer Illegal Alien** (22 Jan 98; £5.99 pb) — An alien starship arrives in need of spares, which Earth will manufacture in exchange for alien technology, but one of the aliens ends up in court on a murder charge. Then some different aliens arrive...
- ★ **Geoff Ryman 253** (1 Feb; £5.99 pb) — First book publication of Ryman's hypertext novel first seen on the Internet last year.
- ★ **Julian May Perseus Spur** (2 Feb; £16.99 hb) — First volume in a new space-opera series, 'The Rampart Worlds'. Humorous-named Helmut Locke is a low-life on a planet far from civilisation. 'Next thing I know, some giant sea-toad has eaten my house and I'm caught up in a galactic conspiracy! From gently coaxing an ageing submersible around the shores of Kedge-Lockaby to plotting a state-of-the-art Javelin starship may seem like a big jump: but when it looks as if the future course of human civilisation is under threat, it's a hell of a motivator.'
- ★ **Kim Stanley Robinson Antarctica** (2 Feb; £11.99 tp) — Large-format paperback release of KSR's ecological tale.
- Jack McDermott Eternity Road** (2 Feb; £5.99 pb) — Far-future archaeologists study ancient 20th century culture.
- ★ **Robert Silverberg Edge of Light** (16 Feb; £9.99 pb) — Outstanding coll. of five of Silverberg's best — and darkest — novels, all from his astonishing period of creativity in the late 60s / early 70s: *A Time of Changes* (1971 > Jun 86), *Downward to the Earth* (1970 > Jun 72), *The Second Trip* (1972 > Dec 79), the superb *Dying Inside* (1972 > May 73) and the Hugo-winning *Nightwings* (1969). Excellent value, and highly recommended.
- ★ **Robert Silverberg The Alien Years** (16 Feb; £16.99 hb) — Silverberg touches all the bases with this tale of the millennium, first contact, alien abductions, UFOlogists, and the effortless enslavement of Earth by BEMs. 'Only Cindy Carmichael's stiff-necked military in-laws keep alive the slender hope that the natives of Earth may one day be free.'
- David & Leigh Eddings Polgara the Sorceress** (16 Feb; £11.99 tp) — Epic fantasy, the large-format paperback release of 'the companion novel to *Belgarath the Sorcerer*'.
- Victor Koman Millennium #3: Weeks** (4 Mar; £5.99 pb)
- Jenny Wurts Fugitive Prince** (2 Mar; £5.99 pb) — Epic fantasy. Book 1 of 'The Alliance of Light'. Wurts — 'expert horsewoman, sailor, musician and archer' — is married to artist Don Maltz; they collaborated on the cover.
- Jack Vance Night Lamp** (16 Mar; £5.99 pb) — Well-received far-future sf. > 193

Hodder & Stoughton

Including NEL, Coronet



- ★ **Robert A. Heinlein Starship Troopers** (NEL: 16 Oct (R 1959); £5.99 pb) — Reissued to coincide with the delayed film. This book, originally intended as a juvenile but rejected for this market because of its violent content, is probably responsible for more arguments in sf circles than any other (warning: here's my two-pen'orth). It won the Hugo in 1960, and its influence is still felt today in the militaristic sf of David Drake and Jerry Pournelle, films such as *Terminator*, and, more perniciously, in the extreme right-wing libertarian militias now active in the US where it — along with RAH's later and even more objectionable *Farnham's Freehold* — serves as a kind of sourcebook of paranoia and fear. In my opinion, it helped to warp mainstream American sf for many years by fossilising it into a 1950s Cold War derived xenophobia and denying it the productive 'exogamy' (as John Clute terms it) which came to humanise the genre when it grew up in Europe during the 60s. However, it's undeniable that the book is immensely readable and thrilling. Its homosexual subtext is perhaps more obvious today than it was in 1960, and there's also the interesting (and often unnoticed) fact that the protagonist is black. It's a book which you should have read (if only to disagree with everything I've just said). Recommended.
- ★ **Stephen King Wizard and Glass** (6 Nov; £14.99 hb) — Fourth volume in the fantasy 'Dark Tower' series.
- Mark Pepper Man on a Murder Cycle** (28 Nov; £16.99 hb, 404pp) — Horror with metafictional overtones and a title worthy of Piers Anthony. Pepper's second novel. 'Tom Raker's first novel was an instant best-seller. Its four successors, however, have convinced reviewers and the public that it was just a one-off. But now it looks as though he's about to pull off a remarkable comeback with his new novel, *Man on a Murder Cycle*, the story of a vengeful killer called Milton. But Tom knows that the book's real author is dead, and he is being stalked by a threatening figure on a motorbike...'.
- ★ **C. J. Cherryhy Finty's End** (28 Nov; £16.99 hb) — Sf, a new 'Merchant' novel.
- W. A. Harrison The Crystal Skulls** (NEL: 28 Nov; £5.99 pb) — Sf.
- Gerald Suster The Labyrinth of Satan** (NEL: 28 Nov; £5.99 pb) — Horror.
- Paul Ware The Flight of the Mariner** (NEL: 28 Nov; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.
- A. A. Attanasio Centuries** (NEL: 4 Dec; £5.99 pb, 437pp) — Sf, a 'novel for the millennium'. Attanasio says it's 'a science fiction epic that spans the ten centuries between our own apocalyptic age and the next millennium. It's a bridge to the futuristic era of Solis, my novel set on Mars a thousand years in the future.'
- Michael Williams Allamanda** (NEL: 4 Dec; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy from the author of *Arctady*.
- W. A. Harrison Otherworld** (NEL: 15 Dec; £5.99 pb) — Sf, a new edition.
- ★ **Harry Turtledove How Few Remain** (15 Jan 98; £16.99 hb) — Sf.
- ★ **Jon Courtonay Grimwood Lucifer's Dragon** (NEL: 15 Jan 98; £5.99 pb) — Sf.
- Allan Cole Timura Trilogy 2** (5 Feb 98; £16.99 hb) — Sf.
- Will Baker The Raven Bride** (5 Feb 98; £16.99 hb) — Sf.
- C. J. Cherryhy Finty's End** (Feb 98; £5.99 pb) — Quick release for the paperback.
- Chaz Brencley Light Errant** (Feb 98; £5.99 pb) — Horror / crime hybrid.



'Gabriel King', a.k.a. M. John Harrison and Jane Johnson, whose fantasy about cats *The Wild Road* is out now in paperback from Arrow. Former partners, their long-planned collaborative novel only got written after they'd separated. A sequel is due in November.

Key

pb = paperback, hb = hardback, tp = trade (large format) paperback, pp = extant

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

> x = review in *Vector* #x/date; GN = Graphic Novel; ab = Audiobook; YA = Young Adult coll. = 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!

— Thanks to Michael J. Cross for his index: <http://www.ajckeh.demon.co.uk/topbafa.htm> —

Orbit



Including Little, Brown, Warner

Terry Brooks *Running With the Demon* (Orbit: 1 Oct; £16.99 hb)David Feintuch *Voices of Hope* (Nov 6; £5.99 pb, 527pp) — Fifth volume in the 'Seafort Saga', intelligent Forester-like space adventure. Nicholas Seafort is now an elder statesman, and this takes up the story of his son Philip.Michael White *The Science of the X-Files* (Nov; £5.99 pb)

★ **Tanith Lee** *Vivia* (Warner: 4 Dec (R 1995); £6.99 pb, 395pp) — Lush, erotic and blood-soaked vampiric dark fantasy from a two-time winner — pictured right — of the World Fantasy Award (and writer of two Blake's Seven episodes); an intensely sensual book. Recommended. 2-184



★ **Jonathan Wylie** *Magister* (Orbit: 4 Dec; £5.99 pb, 388pp) — Fantasy from Mark & Julia Smith, this one inspired by the life of English composer Sir Arnold Bax (1883-1953). He was much influenced by Celtic legends and stories, and by Yeats; though not Irish himself he travelled there widely and eventually died in Cork. Works include the overly-lush symphonic poem *Tintagel* and in *The Garden of Fand*. Like other Wylie books, this novel, frustratingly, sounds better in summary than it turns out to be: an alternative-universe London in 1993, a world where magic works and is institutionalised, and performed at 'concerts'. Daniel Gillespie is a student at the Royal Academy of Magic and is told to research the life of an obscure originator of magic 'scores', Edward Beck — whose work has powers that begin to touch the real world. 'Wylie' says: 'If we have created even a minute fraction of the magic that Arnold Bax brought into the world then we can be satisfied.'

★ **Larry Niven** *Destiny's Road* (4 Dec; £16.99 hb) — "Descended from a group of settlers around there 250 years before, the inhabitants of Destiny have only one link with their Earth origins: the Road, a wide smooth track burned into the ground when the landing craft departed." This is the story of a young farm boy who sets out on a quest to discover what

happened to the craft and its crew. Niven regards the novel as his magnum opus, and it continues his obsession with degenerated and abandoned societies.

Larry Niven *The Ringworld Engineers* (4 Dec (R 1980); £5.99 pb) — > Oct 80

Tom Holt *The Waited Orchard* (Warner: Dec; £5.99 pb) — Associational historical novel.

Simon Archer and Stan Nicholls *Jerry Anderson: The Authorised Biography* (Jan; £7.99 pb)

Patrick Tilley *Cloud Warrior* (Jan (R 1983); £5.99 pb) — Prior to the resumption of the series by Tilley and Paul Barnett, Orbit is reissuing the six-book 'Amtrak' series, two per month — amazingly, Vector appears to have reviewed none of them. This is volume one, and the second is:

Patrick Tilley *First Family* (Jan (R 1985); £5.99 pb)

Alexander Beshir *Rim* (Jan; £5.99 pb, 288pp) — The 'novel of virtual reality' gets a late mass-market paperback release. 2- Dec 95

★ **Alexander Beshir** *Mir* (Jan; £9.99 pb, 288pp) — New cyberpunk novel from the American Jeff Noon. 'It's the ultimate nightmare, I suppose' says Beshir modestly. 'Tattoos begin wearing the bodies that they are supposed to be adorning. These are sentient, intelligent tattoos — epidemic software programs that are designed to perform the owner's tasks in various on-line worlds. But a diabolical virus, codenamed 'Mir', is being transferred from one tattoo to another. Hey, the aliens have landed on your skin and are burrowing inside to capture your soul!' Beshir was born in China to White Russian parents and was brought up in Japan; he's now based in San Francisco, where he's worked as a 'consulting futurist in corporate planning' (nice work if you can get it).

Alan Dean Foster *The Howling Stones* (1 Feb; £5.99 pb) — Sl.

David Darlington *The Dreamland Chronicles* (Little, Brown: 1 Feb; £16.99 hb, c320pp ill.) —

Non-fiction about Area 51, the US military base alleged to contain captured alien spacecraft.

Elizabeth Moon *Deed of Allegiance* (1 Feb; £5.99 pb, 528pp) — Heroic fantasy, book two of 'The Deed of Paksenanton'.

David Brin *The Postman* (Feb (R 1985); £5.99 pb) — Tie-in to the film. 2- Apr 86

L. E. Modeest Jr. *The Soprano Sorceress* (1 Feb; £5.99 pb, c672pp) — Fantasy, first in a new series. A music teacher at Iowa State University is drawn into the fantasyland *Erde*, and finds her singing has magical powers.

Joseph Skibell *A Blessing on the Moon* (Little, Brown: 1 Feb; £14.99 hb, 268pp) — Literary fantasy. A Jew is shot during the Holocaust, and instead of resting peacefully in the World to Come he is led to wander the Earth accompanied by his rabbi, who has taken the form of a crow. A debut novel which "weaves magical occurrences with vividly real events."

Shaul Heston *Purly* (Little, Brown: 1 Feb; £15.99 hb, 352pp) — Horror about a radio phone-in host who encourages callers to discuss their fantasies.

Paul Barnett *Snyder's Universe* (1 Mar; £5.99 pb, c352pp) — Tasty space opera, second volume of the 'Snyder Chronicles'. Retitled from *Kaantalech* and rescheduled from Nov 97.

Orion



Including Millennium, Phoenix, Weidenfeld, Dent, Everyman, Dolphin

Michael Moorcock *Earl Aubrey* (Dec; £6.99 pb)Allison Sinclair *Blueheart* (Dec; £4.99 pb)

Various Publications (Phoenix: £2.00 each pb, c80pp) — 25 short books in which leading thinkers attempt to forecast the next fifty years. Titles include John Gribbin *Cosmology*, Robert Winston *Genetic Manipulation*, François Heisbourg *Warfare*, John Clarke *Population*, Conor Gearty *Terrorism*, Dave Hill *Men* (Women to come in March, as it were).

★ **Ian Stewart** *The Magical Maze* (1 Dec; £17.99 hb, c320pp) — The book of the 1997 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures, published to coincide with their broadcast. Stewart is a fine populariser of mathematics, and this year's lectures are about maths as a problem and puzzle-solving activity.

Poppy Z. Brite *Courtney Love: The Real Story* (1 Dec; £16.99 hb, c256pp) — Associational biography of the rock singer / actress.

★ **Terry Goodkind** *The Winds of Mind* (Millennium: 1 Dec; £16.99 hb, 512pp) — Fourth in the 'Sword of Truth' fantasy series. The third is:

Goodkind *Blood of the Fald* (Dec; £6.99 pb)

Lee M. Silver *Remaking Eden* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: 1 Jan; £20.00 hb, 320pp) — Molecular biologist John on 'cloning and beyond in a brave new world'; includes speculative stories illustrating future possibilities thrown up by cloning technologies, with emphasis on moral, legal and ethical implications.

Joseph LeDoux *The Emotional Brain* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: 1 Feb; £20.00 hb, 384pp) — 'Explores our increasing understanding of how crucial our emotions are to our evolutionary survival.'

★ **Peter F. Hamilton** *Lightstorm* (Feb; £9.99 hb, £3.50 pb, 112pp) — Fifth in the first series of 'Web' books. The sixth and last of the current batch is:

★ **Maggie Furey** *Sorceress* (Feb; £9.99 hb, £3.50 pb, 112pp) — Contributor Eric Brown described the background to the 'Web' series in *Matrix* 127.

Various Darwinism Today (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: Feb; £3.99 pb, 64pp) — Essays on the concept of Darwinism on today's society. Titles are John Maynard Smith *Evolution and the Embryo*, Robert Foley & Maria Lahr *Humans: An Evolutionary Biography*, Kingsley Browne *Women at Work: An Evolutionary View and the Glass Ceiling*, Martin Daly & Margot Wilson *The Truth About Cinderella: An Evolutionary View of Child Abuse*.

Joseph LeDoux *The Emotional Brain* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: 1 Feb; £20.00 hb, 384pp) — 'Explores our increasing understanding of how crucial our emotions are to our evolutionary survival.'

★ **Leslie Forbes** *Bombay Ice* (Phoenix: 1 Feb; £16.99 hb, £9.99 pb, c320pp) — Science-based literary thriller, a debut novel. A Bombay film director is suspected of murdering his former wife. His current wife's sister returns to India from England, and the two women find themselves threatened by the brutal murder of a transvestite: "Roz finds her best weapon is not a gun but her knowledge of science."

Corgi



Including Bantam, Doubleday, Black Swan

Kristine Kathryn Rusch *Star Wars: The New Rebellion* (Bantam: 9 Oct; £4.99 pb, 532pp+trailers) — The New Republic faces threats of assassination, plots and disruption of the Force. Can Luke rescue Leia? Is Han Solo involved in the plots? Will the universe be saved? No prizes....

Dave Duncan *Present Tense* (13 Nov; £5.99 pb, 477pp) — Fantasy, 'Round Two of the Great Game', continuing the story of Edward Exter who here returns from the fantasyland *Nexdora* to a Flanders battlefield in 1917. Duncan is a former Scottish geologist who moved to Calgary, Canada in 1955.

★ **Maria Doris Russell** *The Sparrow* (Black Swan: 13 Nov; £6.99 pb, 503pp) — Sl, a first-contact tale and winner of the 1997 *Tiptree Award*; the book comes blurbled with an enormous number of good reviews. Geek picks up radio transmissions at Areco; Jesuit priest takes a starship and visits the aliens; disaster ensues. Good (if sugary) characterisation and fine writing is slightly marred by some implausible plotting and a distinct sense of discomfort about the science. But the core of the book is a morality tale and an examination of Jesuitical conscience, and this lifts it easily into award-winner class. Highly recommended.

★ **Perry Pratchett** *Wyrd Sisters: The Illustrated Screenplay* (11 Dec; £9.99 pb)

★ **Perry Pratchett** *Soul Music: The Illustrated Screenplay* (11 Dec; £9.99 pb, 128pp) — Illustrated with 153 colour stills, the text of the Cosgrove Hall adaptations, which do include many new jokes not in the books so there is something new for your money. For some reason each page has the text underlined with a variety of dingbats whose relevance largely escapes me. The artists have done a pretty good job with most of the characters, though DEATH doesn't quite work. This and the *Wyrd Sisters* adaptation are available on video at £19.99.

★ **Timothy Zahn** *Star Wars: The Specter of the Past* (Bantam: 11 Dec; £12.99 hb) — The New Republic faces threats of assassination, plots and disruption of the Force. Can Leia hold the Republic together? Will she be rescued by Luke? Is Han... Solo... or, I get this weirdest déjà vu feeling. But wait: there's a free Darth Vader bookmark with this one, so you can tell them apart.

George Lucas & Chris Claremont *Shadow Dawn* (Bantam: 11 Dec; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, sequel to *Shadow Moon*.

Peter Schweighofer [ed.] *Star Wars: Tales From the Empire* (11 Dec; £5.99 pb, 324pp+trailers) — Stories from the *Star Wars Adventure Journal*, with tales from Timothy Zahn and Michael A. Stackpole.

★ **Timothy Zahn** *Star Wars: The Specter of the Past* (Bantam: 11 Dec; £12.99 hb)

George Lucas & Chris Claremont *Shadow Dawn* (Bantam: 11 Dec; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, sequel to *Shadow Moon*.

★ **Robert Rankin** *Spyral Mask Raptica* (11 Dec; £5.99 pb)

★ **Robert Rankin** *The Brentford Chainsaw Massacre* (Doubleday: 11 Dec; £16.99 hb) — Sl comedy, in which Jesus is cloned from blood on the Turin Shroud.

The Rest



Jonathan Cape
Paper Tiger
Bantam
Vintage

James Craig Holte *Dracula in the Dark* (Greenwood Press: £1 97; £43.95 hb, 160pp; 0-313-29215-9) — This study traces the changing nature of film representations of Dracula. It provides a history of the vampire, an examination of Stoker's work, a survey of contemporary criticism and a bibliography of vampire film, fiction and criticism.

★ **Robin Anne Reid** *Arthur C. Clarke: A Critical Companion* (Greenwood Press: £1 97; £27.95 hb, 208pp; 0-313-29529-8) — Includes detailed analyses of Clarke's last eight novels, including *Rendezvous with Rama* and *2010*.

★ **Sam McReddy** *A William Butler Yeats Encyclopedia* (Aldwych Press: £1 97; £69.50 hb, 520pp; 0-85172-106-3) — Yeats's output was steeped in Irish mythology and folklore, and he had a strong interest in the occult — he was a Theosophist and a member of the Golden Dawn sect, along with Aleister Crowley (see various *Fantasy* Encyclopedia entries for more details). This volume aims to be a comprehensive sourcebook for all things Yeatsian.

★ **Peter J. Reed** *The Short Fiction of Kurt Vonnegut* (Greenwood Press: £1 97; £43.95 hb, 250pp; 0-313-30235-9) — Demonstrates that Vonnegut's short stories are an integral part of his overall canon. Also looks at KV's whole career as a writer, emphasising the later periods of his life.

★ **Bart Kosko** *Nanotime* (Avon: £1 8 Oct; £24.00 hb, 302pp + bibliography) — The word 'technopunk' comes to mind here. Aiming to combine Gibson and Clancy, Kosko — a professor of electrical engineering at the University of Southern California, and it shows — revels in lovingly-described ultra-high-tech weaponry and 'net ideas', with, unfortunately, little grasp of consequences. But the story is exciting and moves well enough: in energy-starved 2030 a terrorist incident in the oilfields of Dharan starts the countdown to World War III. Meanwhile, John Grant (sic) has discovered and patented a new way of extracting energy from water, and finds himself on the run from 'Sinister Groups™' — his only ally an AI modelled on John Stuart Mill. It's all good fun if you leave your morality at home.

★ **Steve Harris** *Challenging the Wolf* (Squance's Press: £1 Nov; £5.00 pb) — Lycanthropic horror. No ISBN or details on the publisher, unfortunately.

★ **Eugene Byrne & Kim Newman** *Back in the USSR* (Ziesing: Nov; \$7) — Import of their novel set in an alternative socialist America in the early part of the century.

★ **Michael Moorcock** *The War Amongst the Angels* (Avon: 5 Nov; £24.00 hb, 298pp) — Subtitled 'An Autobiographical Story', this is the third volume in the trilogy begun with *Blood and Fabulous Harbours*. A word on presentation: like all Avon books this is a beautifully produced product, from the embossed monogram on the Avon front-cover (different for each author) to the chapter titles and overall design. It's noticeably better looking than the UK hardback (Orion 1996), apart from the dustcover — here Orion does a better job. > 193

★ **Nicholas Royle** *The Matter of the Heart* (Abaus: £1 6 Nov; £9.99 pb) — New novel about which the PR is frustratingly silent, but it featured in the *Bad Sex* competition.

★ **Marguerite Quintell-Neary** *Folklore and the Fantastic in Twelve Modern Irish Novels* (Greenwood Press: £1 Dec 97; £39.50 hb, 135pp; 0-313-30490-4) — Twelve novels, six novels: Joyce, O'Brien, Mervyn Wall, Darrell Figgis, Eimar O'Duffy and James Stephens.

★ **Mike Chinn** *The Paladin Mandates* (Alchemy Press: £1 Dec; £4.00 pb) — 'The collected adventures of Damian Paladin, detective, aviator, mercenary and ghost hunter', set in America's Prohibition era. Note the price is a pre-publication offer so check first. Alchemy Press, 46 Oxford Road, Acorns Green, Birmingham, B27 6DT.

★ **David Harwood** (ed.) *The Science Fiction Century* (Raven: £1 Jan; £15.00 hb, £10.24pb) — Huge amount of sf that has shaped the last 100 years.

★ **Gwyneth Jones** *Phoenix Café* (Vista: Jan 98; £5.99 pb) — > 194 Third 'Aleutian' novel,

following on from:

★ **Gwyneth Jones** *White Queen* (Vista: Jan 98 (R 1991); £5.99 pb) >

★ **Gwyneth Jones** *North Wind* (Vista: Jan 98 (R 1994); £5.99 pb) > > Aug 94, Sep 95

★ **Vera Chapman** *The Enchantress* (Gollancz: £1 Jan 98; £16.99 hb, £2.95pb) — Arthurian fantasy, hitherto unpublished and found among her papers after her death in 1996.

★ **Paul Kearney** *The Iron Wars* (Gollancz: £1 Jan 98; £16.99 hb, £3.20pb) — Fantasy, Book 3 of *The Monarchies of God*.

★ **Ian McDonald** *Kirinyi* (Gollancz: £1 Jan 98; £16.99 pb, £4.48pb) — Sequel to *Chaga*, continuing the story of Dr Shepard (on the Big Dumb Object), Gabby McAslan (living within the Chaga zone in Africa in an experimental artistic community), and their daughter Serena. ★ **Mike McCormack** *Crowe's Requiem* (Cape: £1 Jan 98; £9.99 pb, £2.24pb) — Story of Crowe, born into a village with no history or contact with the world. 'Love story and Gothic fairy tale, teeming with ghosts, sorcerors and vagrants, an eerie and treacherous meditation on the nature of storytelling by one of Ireland's finest new writers.'

★ **Jon Stephens** *If He Lived* (Vintage: Jan 98; £5.99 pb, £3.20pb) — A modern ghost story.

★ **Gregory Benford** *Cosm* (Jan 98; £23.00 hb, £4.48pb) — Hard sf, more akin to *Timescape* (1980) and *Artificial* (1985) than his

'Walmisley' books, in that it concentrates on scientists at work and play, a black female physics professor in California conducts an accelerator experiment, but a mysterious bowling ball sized object appears and wrecks her equipment. She struggles it back to her lab and with another physicist and her students tries to work out what it is: a created universe, in which time is passing exponentially faster than here. Full of absorbing scientific detail and sensuward goosebumps, it's slightly let down by Benford's sneering straw-man approach to environmentalists and politicians and reporters and religious people and administrators and... well, anyone who isn't a scientist, basically. In this he's following in the footsteps of Fred Hoyle's *The Black Cloud* and many other books since, but the reason *Timescape* remains GB's best novel is more sophisticated approach to those who don't share his worldview. Readable, exciting, but flawed.

★ **Dennis Danvers** *Circuit of Heaven* (Avon: Feb 98; £14.00 hb, £3.39pb) — A century hence, most of humanity exists in the 'Bin', a virtual reality environment.

★ **Ann Patchett** *The Magician's Assistant* (Fourth Estate: £1 Feb 98; £14.99 hb, £2.95pb) — In Los Angeles, Sabine was apprenticed for 20 years to the gay magician Parsifal. Now he and his lover have gone, and Sabine journeys to snow-bound Nebraska to discover his mysterious past.

★ **Jenny Randles** *Twelve* (Real-life Cases of the Paranormal) (Collins & Brown: £1 Feb 98; £14.99 hb, 160pp ill.) — Twenty weird events and the evidence for them.

★ **Carmel Morris** *Paper Planes* (Collins & Brown: £1 Feb 98; £14.99 pb, 128pp ill.) — 'Over 30 designs plus 24 colour, ready-to-fold planes.'

★ **Ron Miller & Pamela Sargent** *Firebrands* (Paper Tiger: £1 Feb 98; £7 pb, 112pp ill.) — Portraits of the heroes of science fiction, with text by Sargent.



Gregory Benford

You know the feeling: you find a book, it grabs you, and you want to read more by this wonderful author. But as has been noted in *Matrix* before, there's an enormous amount of sf out of print, and so bookshops can't help. And 'also written by' lists in the front of books appear to be a thing of the past. What novels did she write? Where did a short story appear? Bibliographies are the answer, but they're usually horribly expensive, being published by and for academics.

Galactic Central offers one solution. Run by Phil Stephenson-Payne, it publishes 'bibliographies for the avid reader', and they're accurate, comprehensive, and affordable. Take the Keith Roberts one which I happen to have handy: for £2 you get 33 pages of extremely detailed information covering every aspect of Roberts's work. There's details of the awards he's won; all known pseudonyms; when and where each of his 121 short stories appeared (including reprints in anthologies etc.); every fiction book Roberts has published (including foreign editions, collection contents and so on); information on linked stories and series; a section on poems, songs and plays; non-fiction articles; details of interviews, cover art, letters to magazines; critical articles on Roberts; when and where reviews of his books appeared; notes on possible confusions (e.g. other writers/books with the same name); and much more. It really is a very impressive piece of work.

Phil, a computer programmer, will be known to long-time members of the BSFA as the founder of *Paperback Parlor* (later renamed to *Paperback Inferno* and then merged into *Vector*) and the BSFA's Business Manager in the 1970s. In the 80s he compiled the invaluable 'UK Books' column for the American magazine *Locus*, and came across Gordon Benson's *Galactic Central* series of bibliographies. They became partners in the project until Gordon's death in 1996.

On the right you'll find details of all the bibliographies produced by Galactic Central. Format is *Author* (Eprice, last updated); the price simply reflects the length. The most recent publications are on *Brian Stableford* and *Margaret St Clair* (a revised edition). Phil is currently working on bibliographies of John Sladek, Manly Wade Wellman (a new edition), Grant Allan and Ray Cummings.

— Chris Terran

How to order: All prices include P&P in the UK; enquire for overseas rates. Cheques payable to 'Phil Stephenson-Payne'. All titles are AS chapbooks; all except Blish, Moore & Kuttner and van Vogt are also available in 8.5"x11" format.

Contact: Phil Stephenson-Payne, 'Imladris', 25A Copgrove Road, Leeds, LS8 2SP
Email: philsp@compuserve.com

Galactic Central

Brian Aldiss (E5, 3/90)	Andre Norton (E3, 12/91)
Poul Anderson (E4, 5/89)	Edgar Pangborn (E1, 5/89)
Piers Anthony (E2, 9/90)	H. Beam Piper (E1, 5/89)
Michael Bishop (E2, 2/92)	Frederik Pohl (E1, 5/89)
James Blish (E7, 8/96)	Keith Roberts (E2, 5/93)
Leigh Brackett & Edmund Hamilton (E2, 5/86)	Eric Frank Russell (E1, 7/88)
Morton Zimmer Bradley (E2, 3/91)	Fred Saberhagen (E1, 5/89)
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Philip Jose Farmer (E2, 7/90)	Arthur Bob Tucker (E1, 5/94)
Charles L. Harness (E1, 5/90)	Jack Vance (E2, 7/90)
Harry Harrison (E3, 8/89)	A. E. van Vogt (E5, 5/97)
Robert A. Heinlein (E4, 2/93)	Manly Wade Wellman (E2, 5/87)
Frank Herbert (E2, 11/90)	James White (E1, 5/89)
Cyril M. Koblunth (E1, 7/89)	Jack Williamson (E1, 7/85)
Keith Laumer (E2, 3/90)	Gene Wolfe (E2, 12/91)
Fritz Leiber (E3, 7/89)	John Wyndham (E1, 7/89)
George R. R. Martin (E1, 12/89)	Roger Zelazny (E3, 8/91)
Anne McCaffrey (E4, 8/96)	An Index to DAW Books (E2, 5/89)
C. L. Moore & Henry Kuttner (E6, 4/96)	An Index to Melitt Press (E4, 2/95)

LETTERS TO MATRIX

THE NEW MOVIE OF THE MONTH

Send letters to **Matrix**

9 Beechwood Court, Back Beechwood Grove
Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS4 2HS, UK

Or email bsfa@enterprise.net

Or fax 01327 361661

(marking emails and faxes clearly 'For Matrix')

Letters may be edited. If you don't want your full address printed please indicate this clearly.

Anonymous letters will be printed at the editor's discretion.

BEST LETTER WINS A BSFA T-SHIRT

Philip Muldowney

7 Colson Road, Bittern Park,
Southampton, SO18 1HG

YOU SEEM to have this whimsical desire to have the *Matrix* letter column awash with a sea of debate, reverberating to the clash of controversy, scintillating with wit... unfortunately, all you get is treatises on the minutiae of the Clarke Award, and boring scribbles from the likes of myself. Never mind.

How do you encourage the controversy that makes for the scrape of the pen or the plip of the word processor?

Well, perhaps someone could do a Tracey Emin, as in the Channel 4 debate that followed the end of the Turner Prize presentation. Sit there pished as a newt, often swearing and slurring, while the other talking heads get on with the unintelligible academese, and then get up, tear your mike off, and with the odd "fuck this", exult left. Or is this too much like convention behaviour anyway?

[I missed the programme, but heard the eminent Emin on the radio next day sounding very contrite (and likeable enough to make me wistfully daydream about being immortalised in her most famous work). — Chris]

Trouble is, controversy ain't what it was. In an age when multi-mass murder is fun entertainment, when every perversion of the human body and soul is the coinage of the everyday, it is difficult to be controversial in the shocking sense. It seems one has to pick the scabs off the appropriate PC items of the moment. So what are the appropriate shibboleths and tender spots within the cf community?

Ballard is crap? Philip K. Dick was a borderline loon, whose ravings should have stayed buried at the back end of *Ace* doubles? *Blade Runner* is pretentious boredom? Perhaps you could run a competition for outrageous statement of the month. Trouble is, getting people to believe them....

Talking about belief, Ian Watson has a deliciously wacky explanation for the UFO conspiracies. Trouble being, is there any real evidence that we are capable of remembering that far back? It is an amusing speculation though; something must explain the huge interest in the whole UFO area and associated patterns of thought. As society abandons religious beliefs and values, do we have

to search for another crutch to our existence? Indeed, while two million claim to have had Close Encounters (what busy little green men they are!) many, many more believe that the aliens are around or watching us. While the literal regard sf as crap, perhaps we can have the consolation that sf tropes are taking over the world... ☹

• Ian Watson's article also generated this, at first sight *Matrix*'s first 'nuf' letter:

Keith Walker

KWalker77@aol.com

I CURRENTLY have a survey plus a whole pile of material from over forty therapists of various persuasions all involved in treating 'experiences', as they are now rather more respectably called, which say that Ian Watson is wrong. I also have a small but growing collection of alien abduction books, some written by abductees themselves, which attest to the only true explanation of 'experiencing' being actual abduction by alien beings.

These also include sensationalist heavily-edited material from 'witch hunters' such as Budd Hopkins (note the coincidental surname — the theory and methodology are remarkably similar).

Hopkins freely admits to trashing any reports from abductees which do not fit his sensationalist scenario.

I also have the actual first-hand accounts of a number of alleged abductees. These are mostly at wide variance with Hopkins et al in that they do not follow the rape, sexual experimentation, etc. pattern but still conflict and contradict Watson's simplistic explanation.

Why then with all this evidence staring me in the face do I find myself, for once at least over several years, on the verge of agreeing with Ian? Perhaps it is because like the UFO phenomenon itself I find the simplest explanations more attractive. UFOs have become an industry and provide a livelihood for a large number of people. The abduction aspect is currently providing a good income for a number of people, especially the therapists. The mystery or mysteries will never be solved because it is not in the best interests of those profiting from the industry to find a solution.

Perhaps I owe Ian a drink for his

solution; it will however be gin and orange sans gin, knowing the mood the former can put him in. ☹

• A vile calumny with no basis in truth. And what's wrong with beer?

Fantasy writer (though not for much longer — he's working on a near-future reality-breakdown novel) Philip Williamson gets around:

Philip Williamson

London

Hm, spent much of last night [19 Nov, 12-2am] at the Beeb on Radio 5 Live, discussing fantasy in all its diverse forms.

Other panellists included two psychotherapists, a man who thinks he's a vampire, a woman obsessed with Elvis, a hooker, an actor who can't let go of his parts (so to speak), a man addicted to Internet role-playing games, and the editor of an S&M mag.

A merry time was had by all, with phone-ins affirming that life really is stranger than we can ever hope to imagine.

And I made some interesting new friends.... ☹

Here's Andy Butler again, still complaining after all these years:

Andy Butler

33 Brook View Drive, Keyworth,
Nottingham, NG12 5JN

EVERY SUMMER it's the same story. Half a dozen blockbusters thunder along, trying to give you more bang for your buck, whilst demanding you check your brain at the door. So here we have your two reviewers, Gary Dalvin and John Ashbrook, mopping up the dregs of the summer.

Well, it's been, hasn't it?

In rightly condemning *Men In Black*, Mr Ashbrook suggests that it was one of only two non-sequels out this summer.

Excuse me, how about *Palookaville*, *Swingers*, *Roseanne's Grave* or *Wilde*? OK, one of only two non-sequels of genre interest out this summer. How about *Event Horizon*, *Spawn* or *Contact*, reviewed in these very pages? Or even *A Life Less Ordinary* or *Hercules*? Without any *Star Trek*, *Lethal Weapon*, *Elm Street* or *Bond* franchises this summer, I would have thought it was a relatively dry sequel summer. We had *Batman* and *Robin* (with too many damn' villains and too many sidekicks who weren't Michael Gough or Chris O'Donnell) and the sequel to *Jurassic Park* [sic]. This last had the distinction of breaking one of the two cardinal rules of 1990s cinema: a) if Kevin Spacey is in it, go see; and b) if Pete Postlethwaite is in it, go see.

I've long despaired of agreeing on what constitutes a good film with Mr Dalvin, but we both agree *Contact* is drek. The opening sequence is great, but Zemeckis's insistence on doing it 'right' — with an attempt to avoid the brain-dead

taxi-dread climax which merely led to a

brain-dead climax without even the the consolation of fx. And how come, if we transmitted those pictures of the 1936 Olympics and the aliens from 25 or 26 light years away, being used to such things, responded immediately, Clinton is in the White House when the answer is received? Maybe Reagan or Bush were already special effects.

Meanwhile, let me recommend a fantasy movie that restores one's faith in the film industry. *Lawn Dogs* is the sort of title that suggests a horrific bloodbath, but the horror here is much more psychological. Ten-year-old Devon (Mischa Barton) has a heart murmur and lives in Camelot, a private walled and policed suburb in Kentucky. When she is sent out to sell cookies for charity, she is warned not to go beyond the walls, but you just know she is going to disobey. The Little Red Riding Hood parallels are reinforced by her own telling of a fairy tale. In a trailer in a wood she finds Trent (Sam Rockwell), gardener and odd-job man, whom she befriends, and weaves into her story. Her curiously innocent Lolita-/Leon-like relationship is central to the film, and yet at odds with the adulterous and gay relationships she is exposed to at home. Eventually the contrast and conflict between white collar and white trash comes to a head, with a psychologically satisfying and yet entirely fantastical outcome. A gem to search for, if you can still find it. It's not perfect, but more appealing than any of this year's blockbusters. ☹

Philip Muldowney

(Ibid)

I DID NOT see any comment on the new British magazine *Odyssey*. [Sorry — I haven't seen a copy. — Chris] One of the most handsome-looking British sf magazines that I have seen, with nice covers by Daniel Woods on issue 0 and Jim Burns on issue 1, produced on slick paper; it even has some good stories by Stephen Baxter and Brian Stableford among others. On the other hand, its reviews section needs seeing to, and it does not give a very strong idea of its own personality. A professional magazine that starts off with three pages of news that could have come straight out of *Matrix* is maybe not too sure of its own identity and audience. One can only wish it luck — given the casualty rate of new sf magazines, it will need it.

Distribution being the problem: I've counted up to seventeen sf-related titles on newagents' shelves at any one time, most media related and only the American *SF Age* being infrequently encountered. Has anyone ever seen *Interzone* on a newagents' stand? The same old Catch 22: poor distribution = small circulation; small circulation = poor distribution. W. H. Smith will not put a magazine in their shelves with a circulation of less than 15,000. ☹

ARTHUR · C · C

"If you have to ask what science fiction is, you'll never know." — Anon

ATTEMPTING TO DEFINE science fiction is an undertaking almost as difficult, though not quite as popular, as trying to define pornography. Even the choice of an acceptable abbreviation has caused heated debate. The older generation of readers and writers insists on 'sf' and scornfully rejects the recent invention 'sci-fi', self-explanatory and unambiguous though it is.

In both pornography and sf, the problem lies in knowing exactly where to draw the line. Somewhere in the literary landscape, science fiction merges into fantasy, but the frontier between the two is as fuzzy as the boundary of 'fractal' images like the famous Mandelbrot Set. As a first approximation, sf is something that could possibly happen, in the universe as we think we know it.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, or *The Modern Prometheus* is widely regarded as the prototype, complete with mad (or at least obsessed) scientist, using the latest technology. Jules Verne hugely expanded the genre with such classics as *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, and *From the Earth to the Moon* – though it would be unwise to look too closely into the mechanics of the latter. (*A Journey to the Centre of the Earth* is even more vulnerable to such criticism, and not merely on geological grounds. In addition to several hundred kilograms of food and other provisions, each of Verne's intrepid explorers must have carried at least a ton of the primitive electric batteries they used with such abandon.) But this is being grossly unfair; the spirit of Verne's stories is pure science fiction, because they are (with a few tongue-in-cheek exceptions) realistic and practical; they could not have been written before the Age of Steam. This places them at the opposite pole from fantasy, which has flourished for at least three thousand years, in worlds that do not exist and often never could have existed. Every culture has its favourite examples; the English archetype is Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Our century has seen an unexpected revival of the genre, sparked by J. R. R. Tolkien's epic *The Lord of the Rings*. Though the extreme cases are easy to identify, it is the middle ground that is in dispute. The frontier between science fiction and fantasy is not only ill-marked; it is also continually on the move. Over the years, what once appeared to be science fiction can turn into fantasy – and vice versa. Thus all the pre-Space Age stories of adventures on the Moon, Mars and the other worlds of our solar system, no matter how scientifically accurate the writers attempted to be, are now pure fantasy. There are, alas, no ancient Martian cities or lush Venusian jungles; NASA's space probes blew them out of the sky. The metamorphosis from fantasy to science fiction is less common, but considerably more interesting. Thus if someone had written a story before 1938 in which the explosive power of ten thousand

tons of TNT was produced simply by banging two pieces of metal together, that would have been pure fantasy. Anyone with the slightest knowledge of physics or chemistry would have known that the idea was utterly ridiculous. But when *Astounding Stories* printed just such a tale in its March 1944 issue – to the consternation of the FBI – it was hard-core sf, because uranium fission had now been discovered. And in August 1945, of course, fiction became history.

To give a more benign example, today's pocket calculators, holding in their memories the equivalent of entire libraries of mathematical tables, would have appeared utterly impossible to any pre-1950 scientist. They provide an excellent demonstration of Clarke's well-known Third Law: "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

instigator of *Amazing Stories* (1926) and *Wonder Stories* (1930) – for most of this century the genre has been identified with garish magazines, and the crudest forms of 'pop art'. Whether "Uncle Hugo's" impact on science fiction was malign or benevolent has been endlessly debated, but it was certainly enormous.

Pre-Gernsback, an author could produce a work of imaginative or speculative fiction (yet is there really any other kind?) without having it relegated to a literary ghetto. *Frankenstein* has already been mentioned: other examples are Edgar Allan Poe's "Mellonta Tauta" (Greek for "These things are in the future"), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Bulwer Lytton's *The Coming Race*, Herman Melville's "The Bell-Tower", Jack London's "The Red One", Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*,



Arthur C. Clarke (right) with, from left, Robert Bloch, Harlan Ellison and Evelyn Gold at a convention in Wisconsin. Undated, but possibly around 1960. Photo by Dean A. Grennell.

Although robots and intelligent machines have always been a popular ingredient of sf, no writer (to the best of my knowledge) ever anticipated the advent of the personal computer in the form that it actually materialised – not merely as a calculating device for specialists, but as a universal household appliance serving a multitude of functions from word-processing to music-making to the creation of 'artificial realities'. This highlights a basic problem of science fiction: most of it has built-in obsolescence. Does this mean that it is necessarily ephemeral – unable to produce works of permanent literary value?

The quick answer is that it has already done so, though not often; after all, sf has not been around for as long as other forms of fiction, nor has it had an opportunity of being fairly judged by the literary establishment. Owing to an accident of publishing, and the influence of one man – Hugo Gernsback,

Rudyard Kipling's *With the Night Mail: A Story of 2000 A.D.* – there are countless examples of 'mainstream' authors expanding their territory. US critic H. Bruce Franklin has even asserted, in the introduction to his *Future Perfect* (1966) that "there was no major nineteenth-century American writer of fiction, and indeed few of the second rank, who did not write some science fiction." But only after Gernsback did the genre become proudly – even arrogantly – self-conscious, and a whole category of writers began to specialise in the field. Many of them wrote virtually nothing but sf, which appeared only in cheap magazines or, if they were lucky, in limited editions from one-man publishing houses. (Though this seldom brought them much benefit; I can recall my agent attempting, in vain, to extract a few dollars from one such publisher – whose books today change hands at four-figure prices.)

ASPECTS · OF · SCIEN

CLARKE

The widespread popular awareness – and appreciation – of science fiction which now exists is partly due to a vast improvement of literary standards. There are so many excellent writers – in so many countries – practising in the field today that it is unfair to list names. Though the period 1938-47 has often been called the Golden Age of science fiction, that age is really now. The earlier decade was only gilt – but the very best gilt.

Yet it must be admitted that some of science fiction's current prestige is based on a fallacy. Sf is not predictive: very seldom do its practitioners attempt to describe the real future – quite the contrary, in fact. Ray Bradbury summed up this attitude perfectly: "I don't try to predict the future – I try to prevent it." Books such as *Nineteen Eighty-four* act as Early Warning Systems: Kingsley Amis once wittily christened them "New Maps of Hell". They may help us to avoid certain Hells; paradoxically, they are most successful when they become self-unfulfilling prophecies. No one would have been happier than Orwell to know that the real world of 1984, though it still contained rather too many Little Big Brothers, was a much better place than his imagined one.

Anti-Utopian (or Dystopian) stories have been a major theme of science fiction, because they allow writers the enjoyment of 'viewing with alarm' without suffering the fate of Cassandra. It must also be admitted that stories devoted to Utopias would be insufferably dull, since by definition ideal societies would have eliminated all the problems and conflicts that make for good fiction. Wars, rebellions, conspiracies are much more exciting than the good works of benignly efficient bureaucracies. As William Blake remarked: "Damn braces: bless relaxes." If we ever achieve Utopia, we may relax into terminal boredom.

Fortunately, science fiction writers have shown many ways of avoiding this doom, by inventing natural disasters – ranging all the way from strictly local ones (e.g. Sakyo Komatsu's *Japan Sinks* (1973)) up to global and cosmic catastrophes like new Ice Ages, asteroid bombardment, or the sun going nova. And, of course, there are always invasions from space, of which H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* remains the classic example.

Outer Space has long been the most popular venue for imaginative writing, and in this case there is little doubt that fiction has helped to create reality. All the pioneers of astronautics were inspired by Jules Verne, and several (e.g. Goddard, Oberth, von Braun) actually wrote fiction to popularise their ideas. And I know from personal experience that many US astronauts – and USSR cosmonauts – were inspired to take up their careers by the space travel stories they read as boys. (One of my proudest possessions is a little monograph, *Wingless on Luna*, bearing the inscription "To

Arthur – who visualised the nuances of lunar flying long before I experienced them! – Neil Armstrong.")

Unfortunately, besides accelerating mankind's emergence into space, science fiction may have aroused expectations that cannot be fulfilled – at least for centuries to come. Part of the present disenchantment with space travel may be due to disappointment with the real universe, as compared with the glamorous one of fiction – and, especially, that presented by the visual media through such spectacular extravaganzas as *Star Wars* and its successors.

Science fiction and cinema might have been made for each other; indeed, cinema once was science fiction. The love affair between the two is now nearly a century old; it began in 1902 when the French pioneer of special effects, Georges Méliès, made his light-hearted *Le Voyage dans la Lune*. Of the hundreds of sf movies made during the first half of this century, few indeed had any artistic or intellectual value. Almost the only exceptions are Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926) and H. G. Wells's *Things to Come* (1936). It is now generally agreed that the first science fiction movie to receive widespread critical acclaim (even from those who didn't like it) was Stanley Kubrick's 2001: *A Space Odyssey* (1968). Its success was due not only to the genius of the producer/director, but to an accident of history that can never be repeated. 2001 received its premiere on the eve of Apollo; the first men to fly around the moon had already seen it before they left the Earth.

Since then, hardly a year has passed without some major, megadollar sf production. The 'Star Wars' trilogy, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *E.T.: The Extraterrestrial*, *Dune*, *Blade Runner* are the most notable examples, but world-wide more people have probably seen the tv series *Star Trek*. Strictly speaking, of course, almost all of these are pure fantasy, not science fiction. The cosmic speed limit set by the velocity of light means that Captain Kirk cannot possibly have a new adventure every week, in prime time... or can he? Perhaps Warp Speed, or its equivalent, may one day be an engineering reality. It seems very unlikely; but once again we should remember how often pure fantasy has become science fiction.

The stage, with its much more limited resources, cannot hope to compete with Hollywood's special effects experts – though recent rock musicals have shown what can be done, if you have enough money. It is not surprising, therefore, that few playwrights have been attracted to the genre; however, among them are two of the very greatest. Shaw's *Back to Methuselah: A Metabiological Pentateuch* (1921) is concerned with nothing less than human evolution, and ends with this typically science-fictional glimpse of the far future: "Of Life

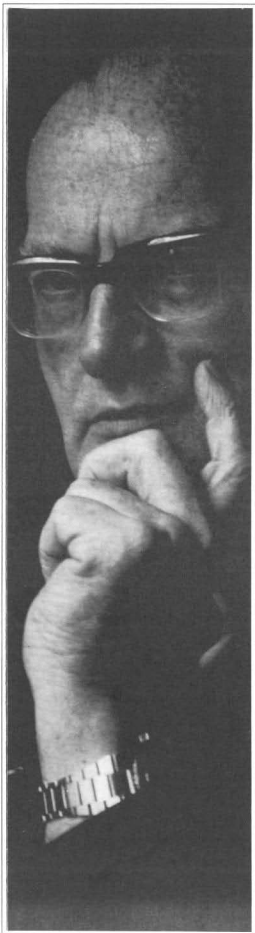


Photo by Charles Adams.

CE·FICTION

only there is no end, and though of its million starry mansions many are empty and many still unbuilt, and though its vast domain is as yet unbearably desert, my seed shall one day fill it and master its matter to its uttermost confines." A quarter of a century later, at the age of 91, GBS was still interested enough in the conquest of space to join the fledgling British Interplanetary Society. By a curious coincidence, Karel Capek's play *R.U.R.* appeared around the same time as Shaw's, but had a far greater impact on the world. Though Capek's 'robots' were not mechanical, but organic – today we would call them 'androids' – he added an essential word to all the languages of mankind.

A good case can be made for pure sound – radio or audio cassette – as the best medium for science fiction; by having to use his imagination, the listener is forced to become a participant. The most dramatic demonstration of this thesis took place in 1938 when Orson Welles spread panic through the eastern United States by shifting the locale of H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* from England to New Jersey.

Despite its technical limitations, the 1938 'Panic Broadcast' is still quite impressive. Just two years later, on his last US lecture tour, H.G. joined Orson on a radio talk-show. It was their only meeting; listening to the friendly encounter between the two great magicians is a science-fictional experience in itself – a journey back in time to a now-vanished world.

The impact of sf on music has been considerable, but largely on the popular level – movie scores and rock groups; a major 'Space Symphony' seems long overdue. (Gustav Holst's *The Planets*, of course, is orientated towards astrology, not astronautics; and Richard Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* was written seventy years before 2001 made it synonymous with outer space.)

The first – and perhaps still the best – major composition inspired by a science fiction movie was Sir Arthur Bliss's majestic *Things to Come* suite (1936), with its inspiring "Which shall it be?" finale, played by a full symphony orchestra. Twenty years later, the soundtrack of *Forbidden Planet* (1956) made a major breakthrough with Louis and Bebe Barron's 'electronic tonalities' – a name cleverly chosen by MGM's lawyers to avoid trouble with the Musician's Union, understandably concerned that just two people could not only compose but create an entire movie score. This small ripple heralded the wave of the future, and the advent of the now ubiquitous music synthesiser.

Pink Floyd was perhaps the best known of the innumerable groups inspired by sf themes; individual composers include Vangelis, Wendy Carlos, and Jean-Michel Jarre. Sting and David Bowie have not only written and performed sf-related songs, but have acted in important science fiction movies (*Dune*, *The*

Man Who Fell to Earth.)

The impact – both direct and indirect – of sf on the visual arts has also been considerable. The early pulp magazines fostered a whole generation of illustrators, of whom the best-known was Gernsback's long-time associate Frank Paul. Though often garish and clumsy by today's standards, Paul's covers for *Amazing* and *Wonder* succeeded admirably in their purpose, which was to catch the eye of a potential reader as he (very rarely she) hurried past the newsstand. Half a century later, they still have a certain naive charm, even though Paul was much better at drawing Marians than human beings.

Today's illustrators are not only technically far superior to their precursors, but have the advantage of being able to base their work on reality. Indeed, many have been commissioned by NASA and the aerospace industry to help visualise future projects (e.g. the space station, lunar bases) – and one now-professional painter (Apollo 12's Alan Bean) has actually walked on the Moon.

Although it has become something of a cliché, perhaps the most important attribute of good science fiction – and the one which uniquely distinguishes it from 'mainstream' fiction – is its ability to evoke the sense of wonder. Many years ago, a science fiction enthusiast who also happened to be a Nobel Prize winner sent me this quotation:

The real world is increasingly seen to be, not the tidy little garden of our race's childhood, but the extraordinary, extravagant universe described by the eye of science . . . If our art . . . does not explore the relations and contingencies implicit in the greater world into which we are forcing our way, and does not reflect the hopes and fears based on these appraisals, then that art is a dead pretence . . . But man will not live without art. In a scientific age he will therefore have science fiction.

— Hermann J. Muller,
"Science Fiction as an Escape"
The Humanist, 1957, No 6

By discussing the genetic effects of radiation, Dr Muller inadvertently inspired much science fiction, and made 'mutant' a modern bogey-word. In the same essay, he pointed out another valuable service that this type of literature has performed:

Recent science fiction must be accorded high credit for being one of the most active forces in support of equal opportunities, goodwill and co-operation among all human beings, regardless of their racial and national origins. Its writers have been practically unanimous in their adherence to the ideal of "one free world"

— Ibid

DESERT · ISLAND · CLARKE

On 23 July 1977 Arthur C. Clarke was the guest on the BBC Radio 4 programme *Desert Island Discs*. The eight records he chose were:

- Elgar *Violin Concerto in Bm* (Menuhin, LSO, Elgar) — Single disc choice
- Grieg *Piano Concerto in Am* (Solomon, Philharmonic Orch., Menges)
- Vaughan Williams *Sinfonia Antartica* (LPO, Boulton)
- Rachmaninov *Piano Concerto 3 in Dm* (Rachmaninov, Philadelphia Orch., Ormandy)
- Richard Strauss: *Also Sprach Zarathustra* [2001 theme] (Berlin Philharmonic, Böhm)
- Sibelius *Symphony 2 in D* (Philharmonia Orch., von Karajan)
- Beethoven *Symphony 9 in Dm* (Berlin Philharmonic, von Karajan)
- Bach arr Stokowski *Toccata and Fugue in Dm* (Czech Philharmonic, Stokowski)

• Clarke's luxury item was a **solar-powered short-wave radio**, and his book was *The Golden Treasury*, edited by Francis Palgrave.



Arthur C. Clarke outside the MGM studios at Culver City, California on 16 May 1968.

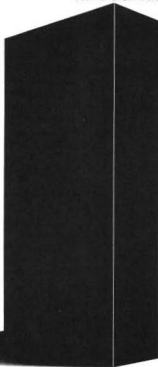
That, I think, is inevitable. Anyone who reads this form of literature must quickly realise the absurdity of mankind's present tribal divisions. Science fiction encourages the cosmic viewpoint; perhaps this is why it is not popular among those literary pundits who have never quite accepted the Copernican revolution, nor grown used to the idea that man may not be the highest form of life in the universe. The sooner such people complete their education, and re-orientate themselves to the astronomical realities, the better. And science fiction is one of the most effective tools for this urgent job.

For it is, pre-eminently, the literature of change – and change is the only thing of which we can be certain today, thanks to the continuing and accelerating scientific revolution. What science fiction writers call 'mainstream literature' usually paints a static picture of society, presenting, as it were, a snapshot of it, frozen at one moment in time. Science fiction, on the other hand, assumes that the future will be profoundly different from the past – though it does not, as already pointed out, attempt to predict the future in detail. Such a feat is impossible, and the occasional direct hits of Wells and other writers are the result of luck as much as judgement.

But by mapping out possible future, as well as a good many impossible ones, the science fiction writer can do a great service to the community. He encourages in his readers flexibility of mind, readiness to accept and even welcome change – in one word, adaptability. Perhaps no attribute is more important in this age. The dinosaurs disappeared because they could not adapt to their changing environment. We shall disappear if we cannot adapt to an environment which now contains spaceships, computers – and thermonuclear weapons.

Nothing could be more ridiculous, therefore, than the accusation sometimes made against science fiction that it is merely 'escapist'. That charge can indeed be made against much fantasy – but so what? There are times this century has provided a more than ample supply when some form of escape is essential, and any art form that supplies it is not to be despised. And as C. S. Lewis (creator of both superb science fiction and fantasy) once remarked to me: "Who are the people most opposed to escapism? Jailers!" Charles Snow ended his famous essay "Science and Government" by stressing the vital importance of "the gift of foresight". He pointed out that men often have wisdom without possessing foresight. Science fiction has done much to redress the balance. Even if its writers do not always possess wisdom, the best ones have certainly possessed foresight. And that is an even greater gift from the Gods.

— © Arthur C. Clarke 1991/1997



• This article was originally written in 1991 for the Japanese edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. This is its first appearance in an English-language publication.

• My thanks to: Arthur Clarke's niece **Angie Edwards** of Rocket Publishing; and to the Science & Society Picture Library at the Science Museum for the photographs.

• **FOOTER QUOTES** This time are, of course, all by Arthur C. Clarke. Many are taken from *William Rotler's* book of sf quotes, *Science Fictions* (Gibbs Smith, 1995); sadly, Rotler died recently, so we honour both him and Clarke. My thanks to **Roger Robinson** for bringing this book to my attention. [Chris]

• BRIAN • ALDISS •

I'm happy to send regards to Arthur via *Matrix*. Arthur is enjoying a long and successful career. I read his early stories and his *Exploration of Space* on publication, and have been reading him ever since. I suppose that only the great H. G. Wells himself has ever had such a successful career as an sf writer and become so well known – although one might not mention this in Arthur's presence in case it makes him egotistical. However, to achieve such widespread recognition today is more remarkable than in Wells's time: the world's population has more than tripled since the turn of the century, and reputations tend to towards the meteoric – they burn out and fall. Not so Arthur's.

Another much appreciated feature of the Arthurian personality is that he has achieved gurdum without renouncing science fiction.

Greetings, dear Arthur, and Many Happy Returns!

— Brian

• STEPHEN • BAXTER •

My birthday tribute to Arthur is a collaborative story we wrote together (by email) called "The Wire Continuum". This will appear in the January, 1988 *Playboy*, to appear in December 1997: the time of Arthur's 80th birthday, the 60th anniversary of the earliest Clarke story I read, called "Travel By Wire" (from which "The Wire Continuum" derives), and, of least importance, my own 40th birthday.

I've been reading and relishing Clarke all my adult life, and his influence on my work isn't hard to detect. Congratulations, Arthur, and here's to the century!

— Steve

• KEN • MACLEOD •

— But for all that, they may envy us, basking in the bright afterglow of Creation; for we knew the Universe when it was young.

When I was young, still blundering in the dim glow of Creationism, Arthur C. Clarke's was a voice from the sky. My closed mind was already being assailed by science and science fiction, but it was his voice – sceptical and humane, secular and humanist, scientific and prophetic – that finally broke through the jamming and the window and the white noise. A very British, very English voice, a voice of free thought and common sense which could rise, when the occasion demanded, to words – still, simple, unpretentious words, like you'd find in Blake and Bunyan and the Bible – which could send a shiver down your back.

It meant the city and the stars, and childhood's end.
Happy birthday, Arthur C. Clarke!

— Ken

• IAN • WATSON •

I can remember vividly a schoolfriend lending me a copy of *Childhood's End* when I was 15, and the impact it had on me. Jump forward to February 1997, and I'm sitting tapping away like a computer-woodpecker when I receive a phone call from Sri Lanka.

Arthur has just read my story "Nanunculus" in *Interzone* and wonders if I can provide chapter and verse for the assertion that Jesus was crucified on a simple pole, without cross-beam. Arthur is a bit bothered that stern words in 3001: *The Final Odyssey* about religion as a form of psychopathology at odds with real civilisation might cause the church to declare a fatwa on him. Deconstructing the Cross may help with the defence.

(Stern words, yes; even indignant ones – but not strident. He is too good-natured for that.)

How remarkable that he finds time and energy, amidst all else, to be reading stories in *Interzone*. How remarkable that a book written in his late seventies is such a page-turner, full of urgent heart-felt wisdom.

— Ian



LOOKING BACK

John Grant *on his and Ron Tiner's*

The Encyclopedia of Fantasy and Science Fiction Art Techniques

SOME LITTLE TIME AGO, during one of those rare oases of peace that occurred in the midst of my work on *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, I was phoned by an old friend of mine, a senior editor at Quarto, the packaging company. Would I be interested in writing an encyclopedia covering the techniques of fantasy art?

No, I said. I'm not competent to do this. However, my friend the illustrator Ron Tiner, who lives about a mile away, is a good writer and would be perfectly capable ... only I know that he's busy at the moment writing countless entries for *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*.

Yikes, said Kate. Anyone else you can think of?
Not offhand, I said. Let me give Ron a ring and I'll see if he can recommend someone.

So I rang Ron and sometime during the conversation we realised that, between us, we had the expertise to create the book, and that it was one we both very much wanted to create. Although our approaches to the subject are distinctly skewed from each other – he sees the field from an illustrator's viewpoint while I see it from a writer's and consumer's viewpoint – oddly enough we come to similar conclusions. Fantasy art, if done well, is generally a narrative form: within the genre, what might seem nothing more than a static image is in fact telling a story. True, that story may have a *before* and an *after* that the viewer has to fill in for herself/himself, but nonetheless the element of story is there. Moreover, we both agreed that the most important part of fantasy art is not, as one might expect, the technical niftiness of the artist but her/his ability to conceptualise the *ideas* of fantasy. In both respects, there is a surprisingly small gap between the fantasy artist and the fantasy writer; I doubt there is another genre of which the same could be said.

Fantasy and sf writers are stereotypically asked where they get their crazy ideas from. Fantasy and sf artists are often subjected to the same question.

Of course, this should have been thunderingly obvious to us from the start. Ron and I frequently talk about the work we're each doing, and the terminology

The author of this article, better known to friends as **Paul Barnett**, has recently become the Commissioning Editor of Paper Tiger. After serving as Technical Editor on *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* he co-edited, with John Clute, *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*. The new edition of his *Encyclopedia of Walt Disney's Animated Characters* has just been published, and shortly there will be a paperback re-release of **Ron Tiner's** *Figure Drawing Without a Model*; Ron, a Contributing Editor on *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, is to be Artist Guest of Honour at the 1999 Eastercon, Reconvene in Liverpool.

LOOKING BACK

Artwork by Ruby

Courtesy of Titan Books we have two copies of *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy and Science Fiction Art Techniques* to give away, worth £12.99 each. Write the surname of 'John Grant's' space-opera heroine on a postcard with your name and address and send it to Matrix, 9 Beechwood Court, Back Beechwood Grove, Leeds, West Yorks., LS4 2HS to arrive by 28 Jan 1998.



we use is identical. He tells me when my writing is visually naff or visually fine, and I return the compliment by telling him when (as is usual) a picture of his has the narrative drive that distinguishes it from the dull outpourings of too many other artists.

Take the argument a little further. A much-neglected aspect of fantasy art is animation. Here conceptualisation and imagination are the paramount considerations, and of course animation by its very nature has to be a narrative form.

Hang on a minute, I said to Ron: these ideas are slightly radical. Let me ring John Clute to see if we're madmen.

So I rang John. He immediately saw the point and insisted that Ron and I incorporate the overall notion into the various entries we were writing for *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*.

And so I rang Kate back saying, between the two of us Ron and I could make this a groundbreaking book.

Yippee, she said.

Things weren't not entirely smooth after that. Kate did not herself take on the rôle of editing the book, instead farming out the text to a copy-editor who clearly knew her art techniques but did not have a feel for what we were writing about. Luckily Kate allowed us to reinstate the things we thought were important. Our original designer, an expert in the field, left Quarto within about three weeks of our starting to write, and we found ourselves working with someone else who, while doubtless excellent in other spheres, again didn't truly understand fantasy art. Since Ron is a job designer when he's not illustrating and I can do the job on the rare occasions when I have to, there were obvious frictions.

Had we any sense we'd have insisted from the start that either Ron design the book or that we call in one of the various designers we both know: everything would have worked out easier had we been able to involve the designer from the word go – so that s/he was a third member of the team, as it were.

We got our way on most things. The book contains errors that were not of our making, and there are omissions that we would have gladly seen not omitted. (On one spread we were asked to cut 45 lines. When I protested that this was a design problem rather than an editorial one, Kate agreed. Our designer did his best. He revamped the two pages and told us that now we had to cut only 43 lines.)

The most time-consuming part of the book concerned the captions, which probably constitute about fifty per cent of the text. The main text involved Ron producing notes which I expanded, chucking in ideas of my own; we argued hardly at all. For the extended captions, however, we decided to work together, with me at the computer and Ron looking at the pictures. I cannot count the number of times Ron used four-letter words when trying to beat into the head of this dimwit writer what was important about a particular illustration. I cannot

count the number of times I used four-letter words while explaining to Ron that he was just a bloody artist and I was, you know, a *wordsmith*. Quite often he and I had to go and have a cup of tea together in order to calm ourselves down.

It was a friendship-straining experience.

When the book was finally published, we both had the usual ordeal you have as you frenziedly wrench apart the jiffy-bag containing the advance copies: the moment you start looking at one, you spot a mistake on the first page you open. Fortunately, there aren't all that many mistakes, and we're fairly proud of the final result. This attitude has been bolstered by the kindness of the book's reviewers. One day we'll do it all again and we'll do it better, but for the moment we're pleased that *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy and Science Fiction Art Techniques* serves as a respectable addendum to *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*.

— © John Grant 1997

CHILDHOOD'S END

reviewed by ellen cheshire

Childhood's End — Adapted in two parts by Tony Mulholland from the novel by Arthur C. Clarke. Directed by Brian Lighthill. Cast: Steven Pacey (Jan), Philip Voss (Storngren), Peter Jeffrey (Karellen). BBC Radio 4, 2x60mins, 2 & 9 November 1997. BBC Radio 4's 'Classic Serial' slot on Sunday afternoons is usually reserved for great 19th century classics. Therefore it was a pleasant and refreshing surprise to see Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End* scheduled in this slot, broadcast as part of Clarke's 80th birthday celebrations.

The first part, entitled 'Beginning', focused on the world at war and the arrival of the Overlords, and I found the fragmented storytelling technique somewhat disorienting and overly-confusing at first, with seem-

ingly unrelated scenes and characters being introduced. This opening episode required patience and perseverance, which was rewarded in the second episode, 'End', where the plots, characters and themes introduced in the first became cohesive and thought-provoking. Additionally, the scenes became longer as the play progressed. At first they were short, introducing a wealth of philosophical, sociological and religious themes – for example, women are no longer able to conceive, PSI powers are fully exploited and children's untapped powers are used to the full. Some themes are picked up again later, and some are abandoned. The overall theme of the play, the Overlords' power and control over the exceptional children whose rearing they will supervise, is made all the more powerful with this use of short scenes from various viewpoints, and sound-bites. A mother's confession that her children scare her was particularly effective.

Production values were high and there was a large

cast. Director Brian Lighthill (who also directed *Blake's Seven*, broadcast in January this year) generally did a good job of balancing the themes and performances. But character definition was lost in the play's style, which did affect my enjoyment. The sound effects were effective, and thankfully only used when required to add to the atmosphere, not just as clever stunts in themselves. Much of the atmosphere was created by Jeff Mearns' music, which was excellent: from the opening bars of the stirring and powerful introductory music, you knew that this was going to be special. The fully orchestrated score continued throughout and was often used to underpin and enhance a scene's moods to greater effect than is often the case on radio.

All in all then, a startlingly effective piece of broadcasting requiring more than one listening to fully appreciate. This in itself is unique, as many Radio 4 plays are ephemeral – once listened to they are often quickly and easily forgotten. — © Ellen Cheshire 1997

radio

DAVE · LANGFORD



Photo: Roger Robinson

twenty years of uproar

This closely resembles my Guest of Honour talk at *Interoction*, the 1997 UK Eastercon. There are differences, because (a) various last-minute scribbled changes vanished into the mists of history when – in keeping with the traditions of the venue (Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool) – my print-out was subsequently lost or stolen; (b) I've restored a few bits cut owing to worries about length and speakability; (c) a couple of egregious afterthoughts have crept in. . . .

One change has carefully not been made. Six months after this talk was delivered, George Hay died. I'd known and corresponded with him for over twenty years (and have written a memoir of him for issue 2 of *Odyssey* magazine). Besides being a visionary and eccentric, George had a considerable sense of fun: if I were so silly as to censor the talk's couple of mild digs at him, I just know his ghost would return to wag a mocking finger at me and my cowardice. So there they stay. — DRL

HELLO. . . . There are a few things about this convention that make me feel old. This morning, for example, I discovered that with hideous cruelty my hotel bathroom has been fitted with a mirror. It wasn't a pretty sight. Even more soul-searing is the realisation that *Intervention* marks the 21st anniversary of the Eastercon at which I handed out my first *sf* fanzine. You know how it is: you dabble for a little bit, thinking you can give it up any time you like, and then one Good Friday you wake up all grey-haired to find worried doctors telling you that your published fanzine count has reached the dangerous level of 285, which by an uncanny coincidence is the number of your remaining brain cells.

So I wanted to talk about the fanzines that made an impression on me back in the 70s and early 80s – a sort of 1066 and *All That* history of the bits which those 285 surviving brain cells can remember. After all, I doubt that even the great Harlan Ellison ever wrote a more memorable sentence than his famous fanzine example, which dispassionately sums up a 1953 fan feud:

The Mad Dogs have kneed us in the groin, they've rubbed dirt in our eyes and rabbit-punched their way to a first-round decision.

— *Psychotic* 15, 1953

You've probably guessed that I tend to forget all the historically important stuff in favour of what made me laugh . . . such as the writings of a now almost forgotten fan whose name used to be a household word: Leroy Kettle.

One problem with fanzine humour is that it tends to be highly topical. For example, there was once a time when the British SF Association was in a state of collapse and failing to send out any mailings – [speaks very rapidly] a situation which could not possibly happen under the present management – and Leroy Kettle's fanzine *True Rat* duly ran an ad for the BSFA, or Bromley Silent Farting Association. Motto: 'Join now, and we promise you won't hear anything from us.'

Nowadays, of course, the service offered by the BSFA is not to be sniffed at. On a similar level of good taste were the little space-filler quotations Leroy used to put in, like the wistful line 'where have all the bran-buds gone? (long time passing)'.

It was *True Rat* that inspired the news-mangling techniques which were later brought to a new low in my own newsletter *Ansible*. Here's the report of an aspiring young novelist's first triumph:

At last, yes, finally, Rob Holdstock has had an offer for his novel *So Many Readers It's Falling To Bits*. Robert Hale and Rob's agents Temper, Cent and Moore, have agreed on a sum of £100. Rob is still struggling to find the money.

— *True Rat* 5, 1975

True Rat's finest hour involved the only definition of *sf* which I've ever been able to remember, supposedly written by Peter Nicholls – the Australian *sf* pundit whose awesome intellect was overshadowed only by the vastness of his ego, his beard and his beer-gut. The piece began, 'You'll never appreciate *Sci Fi* until you read this unbelievable critic,' and then launched into the solidly academic definition:

Sci-fi can be succinctly defined as speculation, whether based on established scientific facts or on logical pseudo-facts consistent with the framework of the fiction in question, involving smelly green pimply aliens furiously raping or eating, or both, beautiful naked bare-breasted chicks, covering them in slime, red, oozing, living slime, dribbling from every horrific orifice, squeezing out between bulbous pulpy lips onto the sensuous velvety skin of the writhing sweating slave-girls, their bodies cut and bruised by knotted whips brandished by giant blond vast-bioped androids called Simon, and written in the Gothic mode.

— *True Rat* 7, 1976

But Peter Nicholls didn't usually write quite like that. I admired the way the irritating sod could be funny even when writing solid criticism for the SF Foundation's heavyweight *Foundation*, which back in 1972 was a lot more like a fanzine than it is now. Here's Peter reviewing Larry Niven's *Ringworld* with his famous smart-arse mode engaged:

Some of you may not be familiar with that famous work entitled *A Reference Book of Planetary and Galactic Civilizations for the Use of Science Fiction Writers*. It was a compendium John W. Campbell Jr worked up from Spengler, Toynbee, and *The Child's Wonder Book of World History*. Campbell had the only copy, and he used to lend it to his writers. Asimov and Heinlein used to swap it backwards and forwards all the time; Alfred Bester could only get hold of it twice. There's a nasty story that A. E. van Vogt had it xeroxed, but his secretary made a mistake and xeroxed a Superman comic in place of Chapter 6. Anyway it came out all right, because he never noticed. Poor old Jim Blish couldn't get hold of it when he needed it, so he had to read Spengler in the original, to the ultimate confusion of the fans.

The rumour is that Fred Pohl has the book now, but he is more cautious about who he lends it to. But he liked Larry Niven and lent it to him, and Larry took the *Ringworld* civilisations from the chapter called 'The Decline of Technocracy into Superstitious Tribalism'. He made a few mistakes, but Fritz Leiber and Walter Miller had scrawled so many annotations all over the margins and between the lines that he can hardly be blamed.

— *Foundation* 2, 1972

When I first read this in 1972 I was not as sensible as I am now, and fervently wished that I could get a look at John W. Campbell's legendary guidebook. But after a while, something dawned on me . . . What was annoying about Nicholls was that he not only wrote witty litcrit stuff – well, that was his job – but he also trespassed on the territory that I fancied, by doing fanzine convention reports. The bastard.

The time was 1975, the Eastern convention was Seacon (which was supposed to be in Brighton but had moved to that well-known seaside resort Coventry), and I was still covering on the sidelines of the action . . . afraid of being destroyed by a single crushing blow from famous people like James Blish, John Brunner, Harry Harrison or Leroy Kettle. This event took place in the poshest and most freshly decorated hotel any British con had known – at least until 1987 in Brighton, where they helpfully did the redecoration while the Worldcon was actually happening . . . Meanwhile, the Seacon '75 hotel renovations had Peter Nicholls cringing from all human contact, just like me, but for a different reason:

What must have looked like the standard fanish paranoia, most familiar of all sf syndromes, was rooted in the knowledge that I had a static charge of half a million volts inside me. So did everyone else. It was the nylon carpets and air conditioning. My first contact with an attractive woman at the con had resulted in a crackling blue spark when our hands touched. "Cor, I'm all right here," I thought, having read about that first electric contact many times in my favourite Woman's Magazine. I wasn't disenchanted until the same thing happened when I shook hands with Bob Shaw.

—The Great Seacon Freak-Out, *Wrinkled Shrew* 4, 1975

The main thing I learned from Peter was that when you're stealing other people's stuff – just as I'm doing today – you might as well steal the best. His summary of the Seacon '75 convention experience illustrated this by swiping bits from that classic of early fanwriting, *The Divine Comedy*:

I began to walk spiralling down the stairs. With every successive landing it was like entering a yet more inward circle of Dante's Hell. The circle of the drunkards was followed by a circle of limbo, where aimless neofans trudged in passive circles, seeking a way out to the great unreachable room party in the sky, which no one could locate. The next circle was the circle of the sleepers. Picking my way through them, I spiralled down through the circle of the failed gamblers, commiserating with one another about the difficulty of filling inside straight. Further down was the circle of the lost. They sat, unreachable in their desolation, crooning to themselves, "I need a woman." [...] I feared to descend to the lowest of all the circles, half-expecting to meet the horned one himself, haunches sunk in ice, endlessly chewing on the body of some long-damned fan, perhaps George Hay. —(Ibid)

Newcomers to the accused circles of British sf politics may need to be told that George Hay more or less created the Science Fiction Foundation – although he was very quickly dethroned by a palace coup involving someone called Nicholls. George saw the Foundation as a group of slant-like sf intellectuals which, when the aliens finally descend to make contact with Earthly civilisation, would provide them with like-minded people to chat to. Meanwhile, he also hoped to finance the Foundation's growth to world domination by taking out lucrative patents on the bright ideas developed by sf writers who were too unworried to exploit them commercially – ideas like time machines, antigravity and faster-than-light travel. Sceptical fans may mock, but the word is that George used Isaac Asimov's psychiatriy to predict that one day his Foundation would be taken over by academics who would fill its magazine with essays called 'Some Lesser Known Aspects of Eighteenth-Century Utopian Fabulation in Albania'. And so George set up a Second Foundation at the other end of fandom, which will one day reveal itself and astonish us all.

But I was talking about fanzines. Some people tend to denounce them as impenetrably esoteric and in-groupish, unless they're entirely full of sf reviews and amateur fiction. Myself, I was fascinated by the chatter about sf people – which didn't seem any more irrelevant than the gossip columns in newspapers or *Private Eye*, and was often a lot funnier.

Who, I asked myself, was this obscure librarian Malcolm Edwards who was described as having a baby-faced and owlish appearance that concealed ruthless, empire-building ambition? As the saying goes, all knowledge is in fanzines: Malcolm is now running Harbert Collins UK with a rod of iron, while I still can't remember whether it was Kettle or John Brosnan who christened him 'Le Petit Mal'. Speaking of Brosnan, you had to know that he once had a Morbid Growth on his nose to understand why his scurrilous fanzine was called *Big Shit*, or indeed why Malcolm suggested he should cut his nose off and enter the convention masquerade as Michael Moorcock's *A Cure for Cancer*. Again, was it true what the fanzines claimed about Rob Holdstock's immense sexual prowess? He will hit me if I say another word, or even mention that in one convention's 'Fannish Fortunes' poll the top scorers as 'Tallest Fan' included: 'Rob Holdstock lying down'. Meanwhile, who was this mysterious power behind the scenes, known to falling humanity only as 'Greg Pickersgill'? Friends rushed to advise me, for the sake of my health, not to ask.

Indeed, there are people who actively didn't want to know about fandom. There was a magical moment at the 1979 Worldcon in Brighton, when that man Nicholls

tried to lure famous critic John Clute into having desperate fun at a room party somewhere upstairs:

Clute bridled, but followed, only to jib completely at mounting the stairs. I grabbed his arm, but he backed away, his face a mask of panic. "What's wrong, John?" "I don't want to be a fan," he wailed, in absolutely stricken tones. God knows what dreadful initiation rites he was envisaging.

—"The Registry Buck Stops Here", *Drikkis* 5, 1980

But I myself fancied joining the club, and so I produced a first solo fanzine which was pretty terrible. Part of the problem was the title, carefully chosen to be impossible to pronounce: *Tuill-Ddu*, which is very bad Welsh and – to the disappointment of friends who'd been hoping for some hideous obscenity – merely means Black Hole. By the time of the second issue, I'd lived through the appalling 1976 Easterncon and begun to dabble with the dangerous technique of sarcasm:

I found the convention in Manchester very interesting but a little surprising. There were many interesting Science-Fiction events such as the BSFA Annual General Meeting, but few of the attendees seemed to take them seriously. In fact some people seemed to spend all their time in the bar, and I think it would be a good idea if this were closed during programme items at future conventions. To continue my complaints, the Guest of Honour [Robert Silverberg] did not speak about Science Fiction as I expected, but instead read some odd experimental literature [called *Dying Inside*] which was very disappointing. And Mr Robert Shaw's scientific talk was completely spoilt by antisocial people who laughed at all his proposals. —*Tuill-Ddu* 2, 1976

Ever since then, in hundreds of fanzine pieces, I've been continuing to struggle for cheap laughs. It's particularly satisfying when you can sneak a serious point past people's guard by, er, lubricating it with humour, so it goes deeper and sticks in the hapless reader's mind – like Randall Jarrell making a permanent point about critics by blandly defining the novel as: 'A prose work of some length that has something wrong with it.'

Speaking of critics, when I very nervously started typing my first fanzine I was lucky enough not to have read one piece of criticism that might have scared me off altogether. This was Greg Pickersgill's notorious (only I didn't know that) and much-quoted (but I didn't know that either) 1970 review of the one and only issue of *Viridiana*, a less than perfect fanzine by the now blessedly forgotten Dave Womack. The review ended:

Jesus Christ I'm reading this bloody thing now and I can't believe it. It's worthless. It gets Brit fandom a bad name it hardly deserves, bad as it is. Every copy ought to be bought out and burned, with Womack severely roped down in the middle. My fury knows no bounds. —*Fouler* 3, 1970

Eventually, of course, I did collect some reviews, not every one of them flattering. On the whole the critics agreed that up to about issue number 8, my magnum opus *Tuill-Ddu* was in need of improvement. Thereafter until the 20th and last issue, the general consensus seemed to be that it was past its best. Somewhere in between there must have been a peak moment, but I blinked and missed it. My favourite review was a mild denunciation by Don West, which condemned me and various others as belonging to an unspeakably sinister movement which he had detected and identified as . . . Middle Class Fandom. This concept quickly led to Chris Priest's inspirational *Middle Class Fandom Liberation Front* flyer, with its splendid rallying-cry:

Now is the time to sit down with a nice cup of tea and be counted.

—MCLFL, 1980

Of course one can understand why Don West should be hard on the smug middle-class bastard fans who could afford their own duplicators to produce fanzines, when he was reduced to building his own just like Robinson Crusoe. Here's the West recipe:

A rotary duplicator, mind you. Not any of your cheap flatbed shit. All you need is a one-gallon paint tin, four furniture springs, a mangle roller, two wardrobe fittings for hanging clothes rails on, a couple of plates for joining bunk-beds together, a mincing machine handle, some felt, a rubber bath mat, half a clothes horse (for the wood), various screws, nails, nuts and bolts, some sellotape, two pushchair wheels, a pram axle, some draught excluder, and half a baked bean tin. The design is original. [...]

You people who go out and buy these readymade duplicators make me sick. No enterprise. No initiative. You should be ashamed of yourselves, the lot of you.

I am going to show you how it really should be done.

—*Stop Breaking Down 2*, 1976

This reminds me that my own duplicator broke down in 1979 and was fixed with the aid of an unusual spare part. I'd been organising the Hugo trophies for that year's Worldcon in Brighton, and for years afterwards my fanzines came churning out of this great clanking machine that incorporated a piece of a Hugo. If you believe in sympathetic magic, it might explain a lot about my later career. ☺

One useful bit of critical advice for would-be funny fanwriters came from Bob Shaw, who advised that you should set down in merciless detail the most horrible and demoralising thing that had recently happened to you. The callous readers, he promised, would then collapse to the floor in tears of helpless laughter. I remember Bob demonstrating this technique in a convention bar, by reducing his listeners to jelly with a graphically agonising anecdote of how, before his guest of honour speech at Tynescon in 1974, the committee had treated him to a delicious meal involving real game birds that had been shot with a real shotgun. Of course Bob broke a tooth on one of the pieces of real lead shot, and had to rectify his funny talk through a haze of pain and anaesthetic whisky, with what felt like a tactical nuclear exchange going on at the back of his jaw. Having given his blow-by-blow account of this horror, Bob looked sadly at the listening fans who were falling around in hysterics, and added: 'You see what I mean? It isn't funny.' But it was the way he told them.

A favourite horror story for us would-be sf writers is Rob Holdstock's fanzine description of what it's like to produce 180 pages of back noddles of a lousy Peter Cushing movie called *The Satanists*, in just eight days, with only the dirty bits to cheer him up. Here he is, shattered but near the end:

TUESDAY: Two days left and sixty pages to go. I read from the script; Felicity is dressed in a simple white shift and kneeling in some sort of trance; the Duchess sensuously strokes the girl's creamy white neck. . . .

I perk up immediately. Strong possibilities here. Ditch the shift: stark naked, full breasts, rounded buttocks, a hungry look in her eyes like she wants head or something equally repulsive. The Duchess dressed like a belly-dancer. Touch of lesbianism. Rubbing magic oils into their bodies. By mid-morning my hands are shaking. Phone Pickersgill, who is into this sort of thing, and read him several steamy scenes. The heavy breathing from his end is taken as approval and I carry on. By midday I reach a crisis. Can't decide whether to have her raped or not. Decide not to. Story flags a bit as Black Mass proceeds, so flip to priest slumped in a corner and have Satanist come over and kick him a few times. 'Omni rots to his lips as the foot thudded into his groin, then smashed into his mouth.' This sounds familiar so I check back and find I've used exactly the same expression twice in the same chapter. How many times can one be kicked in the mouth and lose the same teeth? I am reminded [...] that last year in three consecutive sf stories I wrote 'The screams of the time travellers were terrible to behold.' Just for the hell of it I write 'Simon's screams were terrible to behold.'

[...] By five o'clock I've finished page 142, with lots of mistakes as energy and interest wanes, but I'm now close enough to finishing to remove the terror from the situation. With Wednesday's output I'll be up to page 172, and that means just about eight pages early Thursday morning to round off the book before delivery at noon. Is this what they call outbustness?

—'Eight Days a Week', *Stop Breaking Down* 4, 1977

Thank you, Rob Holdstock. One side-effect of hacking this stuff out at high speed is that you give minor characters the first name that comes to mind. My own universe-busting sf novel *The Space Exater* contains, for no apparent reason, a brutish Sergeant Pickersgill. Rob's *Legend of the Werewolf* novelisation features this indescribably filthy French sewerman who spends his days fishing cigarette-ends out from between the floating lumps of sewage, and drying them for later use. His name is Michel Rohan. Michael Scott Rohan, who is half French, was not amused.

Getting back to fanzines, I should also mention the Chris Priest principle, which is that not everything that happens to an sf fan is worth writing about. This emerges with hideous clarity in convention reports, which are one of the great classic forms of fanwriting. In Shakespearean times everyone was sooner or later expected to bash out a sonnet or a blank verse drama, and the fanzine equivalent is the con report. I forget how many I've read that tell you in great and circumstantial detail how the writer travelled to the con hotel, often – a cunning narrative surprise – using some form of transport. Further astonishing developments include eating unlikely meals, drinking, overspending in the dealers' room, drinking too much, having remarkably and unique bowel movements, drinking far too much, staying up far too late, and being taken completely aback by a colossal hangover next morning. It's a real challenge to write a con report that avoids all of this – or even any of it.

One of my own efforts began by dressing the thing up as a tv documentary probing the state of science fiction. . . .

ANNOUNCER: Viewers are warned that the following programme contains a certain amount of content, and also some dialogue, which may be offensive to some. Better to switch off quickly and read a good book –

But already we are into the standard sf opening montage. An Apollo rocket boosts into the night. . . . King Kong wobbles threateningly at it from the top of the Devil's Tower. . . . a radiant Erich von Däniken slowly rises above Stonehenge. . . . old Astounding covers show tentacular aliens ravishing Anne McCaffrey. . . . the Phantom of the Opera haws a few bars from *Also Sprach Die BBC Radiophonic Workshop*. . . . Patrick Moore's eyebrows signal across interstellar space and Darth Vader eats the USS Enterprise in a telephone box. . . .

— *Twif-Ddu* 14, 1978

I was able to date this particular article by its mention of a recently published book, with Joseph Nicholas saying 'Ah, you've got *Lord Foul's Bane*,' and the reply being (of course) 'No, just a hangover.' Another *Langford* convention essay pretended to be the report of an alien survey which decided this planet was unfit for colonisation owing to its drunken natives' habit of laughing heartily at charade games in which people mimed titles like D. G. Compton's sf epic *Hot Wireless Sets*, *Aspirin Tablets*, *The Sandpaper Sides of Used Matchboxes*, *And Something That Might Have Been Caster Oil*. In yet another convention piece I saved myself a lot of work by presenting it as a jigsaw puzzle which you had to assemble from a lot of apparently unrelated, out-of-order fragments. . . . which in fact were unrelated.

One fragment was about the panel called 'Science Fiction's Stupid Ideas'. I had no ideas, not even stupid ones. William Gibson was sitting next to me and had even fewer ideas, since he was busy gazing at the coruscating lights of infinity after borrowing an interesting cigarette from famous US editor Ted White, containing some exotic substance; possibly menthol. I tried to be controversial by complaining about Bill's descriptions of mind-destroying computer programs in *Count Zero*: if it takes a whole sixteen seconds for the dread 'black ice' to 'eat into your nervous system' and stop your heart, a simple dead-man switch on the computer should give plenty of protection. The master of cyberpunk controversially lashed back by saying: 'Uh. . . I never thought of that. . . don't know how I'd get round that. . .'. And then he sank into tortured silence for the panel's remaining forty minutes. Afterwards, I made a mental note that I wasn't really very good at panels, while Bill headed rapidly in the direction of Ted White's interesting cigarettes.

Of course, converting earth-shattering convention incidents and and passionate thoughts about sf into decent fanzine writing is hard work. I've already quoted cosmic advice from Bob Shaw and Chris Priest: here is the Word of Malcolm Edwards.

I'm opposed to the view that it's okay to print any old rubbish because, what the hell, it's just a fanzine. On the contrary, I think that fanwriting is one of the very few forms of writing which are pointless unless you are doing your very best. — Tappen 1, 1981

Me, I tend to scream aloud when I open a new fanzine and read a tough, hard-hitting editorial that begins roughly like this:

Well, folks, live long and prosper, and I suppose it's about time I produced another issue of *Boredom Express*. Sorry this is so late. I really don't know how I'm going to fill up the rest of this page. . . .

I don't have a formula for success in fanzines. At the moment my own approach is to produce an extremely thin sf newsletter, so that sheer lack of space forces me to edit out all the boring bits. As the great Walt Willis once said: if the letters that people send for publication in your fanzine aren't any good, you should rewrite them until they are. Not everyone is lucky enough to get letters like the one which Hazel and I have been happily quoting to each other for twenty years. This was sent by Ursula Le Guin to the British fanzine *Maya* in response to some comments attributed to one-time fan Henry P. Pijohn:

I wish people who say things like 'When I read a science fiction book I don't want to be educated and go to sleep. I want to enjoy myself and read a story,' were all named Henry P. Pijohn so that you could recognise them the instant they were introduced, and get away before they started quacking. People with watertight compartments in their heads are very boring. It never occurs to them that one can read a story, be educated, enjoy oneself, and then go to sleep, all at once except for the going to sleep part. Education of the sort is the trick word. Education is dull. Education is for like eggheads y'know man. Y'know like reading and writing and thinking and looking at pictures and driving so you don't kill all the pedestrians and making edible dinners and all kinds of like stupid intellectual stuff like that. I don't wanna be like educated man I wanna live in a cave and eat bats. And tell myself real good stories about the last bat I ate. Yeah. — *Maya* 11, 1976

So, in a purely educational way, I'll finish with a few last extracts which have somehow stuck in that tiny crevice known as my mind. Our first selection answers the complaint that fanzines don't contain enough about science fiction. This bit from Chris Priest's legendary fanzine *Deadlines* tells you more about what it's like behind the sf scenes than at least three writers would wish you to know. The setting is the 1976 Eastercon. . . .

Hearing familiar voices coming from the next bar, I went in and discovered BRIAN ALDISS, HARRY HARRISON and ROBERT SILVERBERG joking around. In the midst of it all, one of them made a passing, scathing reference to HEINLEIN's *Stranger in a Strange Land*. I said: 'You know, I've never actually read *Stranger* in a Strange Land. Is it really no good?' One by one, the other three solemnly admitted that they too had never actually sat down and read it all the way through. 'What about FRANK HERBERT's *Dune*?' HARRY HARRISON said. 'I've never read that lousy thing either.' The rest of us confessed the same. 'What about *Lord of the Rings*?' I said. Same result. We all agreed they were lousy books, but none of us had read them. Other titles were suggested, most of them 'classics' of science fiction. . . . with a few very exceptions, none of us had read them. At the end, HARRY

said: "Listen, you sods, don't let the fans know! We're supposed to be experts!"
— *Deadloss 1, 1978*
(Wherein filthy pros were distinguished by capitals, and Chris Priest the fan poked fun at the dignity of CHRISTOPHER PRIEST.)

Only in fanzines do you learn such secrets. Another which I cherish is the confession by *Interzone's* film critic Nick Lowe that he once had a toilet decorated with *Star Wars* wallpaper, and found it difficult to complete his bodily functions because Princess Leia looked so disapproving.

Next: one of my favourite ways of wrapping up criticism is a gentle sugar-coating of parody. Before I quote from Kevin Smith's piece "How to Write Like Joseph Nicholas" ... two disclaimers. First, you *don't* need to know Joseph Nicholas's writing. Second, Joseph himself protests that he no longer writes like this at all. Here we go:

The starting point in writing like Joseph Nicholas is a simple statement, e.g. -

"The cat sat on the mat."

Add adjectives and adverbs:

"The large cat sat crookedly on the coconut mat."

More adjectives, more adverbs:

"The large ginger cat sat crookedly, preening itself, on the hairy, coconut mat."

It may help if an adverb is somewhat unapt. Then insert similes:

"The large ginger cat sat as crookedly as a corkscrew, preening itself, on a coconut mat with more hair than Greg Pickersgill."

Get abusive and exaggerate:

"The fucking immense ginger cat sprawled as crookedly as a bloody corkscrew on a coconut mat with more hair than Greg Pickersgill, preening itself like a poned up version of David Wingrove in footer shorts."

The next two steps described by Kevin are 'Force in the current hobby horse' and 'Conjure up random value judgements', which bring us to the following uncanny echo of Joseph's haunting prose:

"The fucking immense, randy ginger tom cat (which would probably win a Hugo if it got published in *Analog* - and such a thing would not surprise me in the least) sprawled as crookedly as a bloody corkscrew on a coconut mat with more brains than Spider Robinson and more hair than Greg Pickersgill, preening itself like a poned up version of David Wingrove (who would not recognise good if it bit him in the leg) in footer shorts that would look better on Legs & Co.: not to mention the fact that Poul Anderson should have quit while he was ahead, in 1965."

This is nearly the full version, but it is still first draft. The genuine Joseph Nicholas would ordinarily produce only a first draft. However, the unpractised student cannot leave it at that. It still lacks that certain ambience that marks the true work of Joseph Nicholas. A rewrite is required. ... — *Dot 9, 1980*

But I'll spare you the rewrite since I think you get the idea, especially those of you who started screaming for mercy at about the second line.

[For the written record only, Kevin's final refinement of josephoid perfection went as follows:

"The Hugos are now so devalued that a randy ginger tom cat would probably win one if it were to be published in *Analog* (and such a

thing would not surprise me in the least, so fucking immensely awful has it become - Christ! even Spider Robinson, who has less brain than a coconut mat and is bent as a corkscrew to boot, does all right out of it); and Poul Anderson, who should have quit while he was ahead in 1965, still wins the things these days. Which only goes to prove that the credulous fan-in-the-worldcon wouldn't recognise good if it bit him in the leg."

— (ibid.)

Good parodies give you this ghostly vision of what the original must be like, even if you've never read the original. In one fanzine piece, I tried to sum up the subtle prose essence of a certain fantasy bestseller in just half a page, like this:

"Hellfire!" erupted Thomas Covenant, his raw, self-inflicted nostrils clenching in white-hot, stoical anguish while his gaunt, compulsory visage knotted with fey misery. His lungs were clogged with ruin. A hot, gelid, gaggling fulvous tide of self-accusation dinned in his ears: *leper bestseller outcast unclean*. ... To release the analytic refuge, the wild magic of the white gold ring he wore, could conceivably shatter the Arch of Time, utterly destroy the Land, and put a premature, pretense end to the plot!

Yet what other way was there? The argute notion pierced his mind like a jerd. Only thus could the unabridged malison of Lord Foul be anealed. Only thus. He clenched his clenching. Hellfire and damnation!

At that point he winced at a swift, sapid lubrication.

— as revised for *The Dragonhiker's Guide to Battlefield Covenant at Dune's Edge: Odyssey Two, 1988*

But I'd better cut this short before it runs into a second trilogy, and put an end to your suspense by telling you straight away that the butter did it. I'm sorry, I'll read that again. ... The hierodule did it - with the aegis - in the lucubrum.

Finally I'd like to quote that great rarity, a piece of fanzine verse that I've found genuinely unforgettable. Spot sneaking for the exits, back there: this is by the great David Masson, author of the spiffy (and criminally out-of-print) sf collection *The Calipers of Time*. It's called "The Eve of St Affidavit".

As I sip the bland cedilla
By my aspic-shaded villa,
Where the salmonella ripens in the sun,
Through the rennet-peopled pines
Wind the simmel-chanting lines
Of the banisters whose longitude is done;
Clad in pelmet, syncope, albumen and lather, they move as one;
For tonight is Calibration,
Time of terror and elation,
When the calipers commute and our Parenthesis is won.

— *Bar Trek 3, 1977*

Time to finish. I'm grateful not to have suffered the fate of a certain 1972 Eastercon guest who shall be nameless - oh all right, it was Larry Niven - whose abstruse lecture on physics threw the audience into a helpless stupor, until the Great Inspiration of Brian Aldiss. This consisted of pressing a handkerchief to his nose and sprinting for the doorway, tactfully screaming "The blood! The blood!" I wouldn't dream of suggesting that you all keep this in mind when Brian gives his Guest of Honour performance tomorrow.

Thank you all, very much.

— © David Langford 1997

— out of focus —

— Out of Focus —

... is 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.

— Forum —

This time round the forum is on *Gadgets, Widgets and MacGuffins*. Science fiction is full of gadgets, widgets and MacGuffins; indeed, some stories wouldn't work without them. Where would the cyberpunks be without their 'plug-ins', space-opera buffs without their ray guns, media types without McCoy's salt and pepper shaker medical tools? Focus invites you to write a short piece (600-800 words) on why you think gadgets, widgets and MacGuffins are an integral part of sf. The deadline is 31 January 1998.

— Competitions —

• **Kent and Sussex Poetry Society** - deadline 31 Jan 1998.
Details from:
Granary Studio, Aldon Lane, Otham, W. Malling, Kent, ME19 5PJ

— Market News —

• A new sf magazine *Odyssey* was launched recently. This is not to be confused with the small press magazine of the same name, whose editor is James Lecky. He is looking for science fiction, horror or fantasy up to 5,000 words. It's published quarterly and a sample copy is available for £2.
Odyssey, 3 Bentley Terrace, Waterside, Londonderry, N. Ireland
• For market information in the UK, *Zene* is the place to look. Edited by Andy Cox, a subscription costs £8 for four issues, and is well worth it.
Zene, TTA Press, 5 Martins Lane, Witcham, Ely, Cambs., CB6 2LB
• For American market information try *Scavenger's*. Contact Chris Reed at BBR for subscription details.
BBR, PO Box 625, Sheffield, S1 3GY

— Writers' Guidelines —

The first in a series of mini-essays that will appear in the next few issues of *Matrix*.
SAEs are Important
If you send any work to a magazine, or if you write in asking

about guidelines or querying submission details, it is only polite to enclose an SAE. Like many small magazines *Focus* (and the other BSFA publications) are often produced on a shoestring. An SAE enclosed with a letter of enquiry, or a short story submission, is more likely to get a reply than one without an SAE. During the recent short story competition in *Focus*, around 40% of the entries didn't include an SAE. Did that mean they didn't want their story returning? That they didn't want to know if they'd won? *Focus* as a rule tends to reply to these submissions, but other magazines might not be able to. As the BSFA's Orbiter co-ordinator, I also get a lot of queries asking about joining groups. Brilliant! But many of these don't include an SAE. It makes my life, and those of other editors, easier if there is one.

My advice is that whatever market you're submitting your manuscript to, from *Asimov's* to *Focus*, it is only polite to enclose a Stamped, Self-addressed envelope with the correct postage on it. It sending abroad, it's usually sufficient to include an International Reply Coupon (available at all Post Offices) with a note to say the manuscript is disposable - easier than ever, in these days of wordprocessors and photocopies.

Next time: *Covering Letters*

— Carol Ann Kerry-Green & Julie Venner

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 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 at about 7.00pm; if you get there early and the upstairs room is closed we'll be in the main bar and, if in doubt, ask the landlord. Meetings are open to all.

Paul Hood on 0181 333 6670 for further information.

NO Dec meeting: 28 Jan 98; 25 Feb 98; 25 Mar 98; 22 Apr 98.

London Circle Meetings

Also at the Jubilee Tavern (see above). 'London Circle' meetings are normally on the first Thursday of the month (but see below), and usually start about 5pm. No special events but very popular and crowded.

Just turn up!

8 Jan 98; 5 Feb 98; 5 Mar 98; 2 Apr 98.

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.

Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarks Lane, Witherhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX.

bsf@bortas.demon.co.uk

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

Cambridge Fantasy Group meets on the second Sunday of the month in the Zebra pub on Newmarket St., Cambridge.

John Oram, 3 Oatlands Ave., Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8EO.

Cardiff SF Group meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in Wellington's Café Bar, 42 The Hayes, Cardiff.

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

Des Lewis on 01255 812119

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

Tim Groome on 0116 279 2280

rbear@globalnet.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 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.

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

Portsmouth The South Hants SF Group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at The Magpie, Fratton Road, Portsmouth.

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

Surbiton Surrey SF Group meets in the Coronation Hall, Surbiton, a Wetherspoon's pub 100 yds from the station, on the second and fourth Thursdays in the month, from 8pm.

8 Jan 1998: London Meeting

Jubilee Tavern, Waterloo. Moved from 1 Jan as the pub shuts early and travel is difficult.

10 Jan 1998: Eos On-Line Convention

From about 4pm GMT. Virtual guests Greg Benford, Rudy Rucker, Raymond E. Feist, Ben Bova and others. See page 4 for further details.

http://www.Avonbooks.com/Eos

6-8 Feb 1998: Decadence

The tenth British Folk (folk music) convention at the Forte Posthouse Hotel, Gatwick. Reg. £28 att., £15 sup.

43 Millbrook Gardens, Cheltenham, GL50 3RQ

decadence@3992.demon.co.uk

http://www.3992.demon.co.uk/

28 Feb: Picocon 15

Chap'n's cheerful one dayer at Imperial College, London. Guest TBA.

ICSF, Imperial College Union, Prince Consort Road, London, SW7 2BB

28 Feb: SF Fair

Crafts, role playing, bookstalls and suchlike at the Drillhall in Colts, 10am-5pm. 50p entrance.

44 Staverton Crescent, Birchwood, Lincoln, LN6 0YW

01522 688271

28 Feb - 1 Mar 1998: Microcon 18

Venue is Devonshire House, Stoker Road, Exeter. Reg. £5, £2.50 students.

Microcon 18, 25 Victoria Street, Exeter, EX4 6JA

13-16 Mar 1998: Corflu

Ian Sorensen brings Corflu — the fanzine fans' convention — to the UK for the first time. Location is the Griffin Hotel in Leeds. Reg. £25 att., £5 sup., rooms £25 pppn double/twin, £40 pppn single.

Ian Sorensen, 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton, ML3 7HY

ians@scen.demon.co.uk

21-22 Mar 1998: SF-Days

German con in Dortmund. Guests Alan Dean Foster, Mark Brandis. Reg. 45DM to 15 Mar. 55DM at door.

Torsten M. Frantz, Ruhstrasse 8/28, D-44149 Dortmund, Germany

UlrichKrause@t-online.de

http://www.3992.cbq.de/sf-tage-nrw

27-29 Mar 1998: Deliverance

Blake's Seven con at the Stoke-on-Trent Moat House (changed venue). Reg. £50 att., £45 for 2 days, £30 for 1 day. Bookings close 12 Mar.

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

10-14 April 1998: Intuition

The 1998 Easterncon at the Piccadilly Jarvis Hotel in Manchester. Guests Connie Willis, Ian McDonald and Martin Tudor. Reg. £35 att.

Intuition, 1 Waverley Way, Carshalton Beches, Surrey. SMS 3LQ

intuition@sevier.co.uk

http://www.astr.cam.ac.uk/~acb/intuition/intu index_index.html

16-19 April 1998: Galaxiales 98

French national con in Nancy. Reg. 250FF.

Galaxiales 98, BP 3687, 54 097 Nancy Cedex, France

10 May 1998: Fantasy Fair 8

Peterborough SF Club's annual shindig at the Cresset Exhibition Centre, Bretton, Peterborough. Guests include Lone Wolf creator Joe Dever. No sales info yet (but usually cheap).

Fantasy Fair 8, 808 N. 5th St., Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 0RB

Bruce King on 01480 216372

22-25 May 1998: Lazlar Lyricon II

Hitch Hiker's Guide con run by the Z29 fan club celebrating the 25th anniversary of the series; venue Scotch Corner Hotel, Darlington. Reg. £30, guests Kevin Davis, Dirk Maggs.

67 South Park Gardens, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4

14Z

3-5 July 1998: Intercontact 98

University of Oslo, Norway. Guests Gwyneth Jones, Pat Cadigan, Johannes Berg. Reg. £15 att. to 31 May, £5 sup.

Intercontact 98, PO Box 121 Blindern, 0313 Oslo, Norway

elf@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 Nant, 12 Stuart Street, Treherbert, CF42 5PR

infinity@cfcc@hotmail.com

http://www.cf.ac.uk/ccin/main/ents/sffc/infinity.html

17-19 Jul 1998: Nexus 98

Media convention at Bristol's Hilton National Hotel. Guests TBA. Reg. £41 to 31 Jan, then £44, instalment scheme available. Supp. £15.

Nexus 98, 1 Lullington Rd., Knowle, Bristol, BS4 2LH

5-9 Aug 1998: Bucconeer

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

UK Agent:

John Dallman, c/o EDS Unigranics, Parker's House, 46 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1DB

01223 570179

jd@cx.compulink.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, London. Confirmed guests are J. Michael Straczynski, Harlan Ellison, John C. Bowen, John Ridgeway, Bryan Talbot, Adam Moja 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@bipin.co.uk

http://www.bipin.co.uk/TheWrapParty

3-6 Sep 1998: DragonCon 98

Premiere con of the Southern USA, at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta. Guests include Harlan Ellison, C. J. Cherryh, Larry Niven, Brian Lumley, James P. Hogan, Jerry Pournelle, Storm Constantine. Reg. \$35 to 31 Dec '97, then \$50.

DragonCon 98, PO Box 4796, Atlanta, GA 30362-0696, USA

http://www.dragoncon.org

4-7 Sep 1998: Cult TV

Media con focusing on kitsch tv. Venue Telford Moat House in Shropshire.

Cult TV, PO Box 1701, Peterborough, PE7 1ER

11-13 Sep 1998: Fantasycon 22

British Fantasy Society con. Venue Albany Hotel, Birmingham. Guests Freda Warrington, Jane Yolen, MC Ramsey Campbell. £45 (£35 BPS members) att. to 31 Dec '97, then £50 (£40). Sup. £25.

Fantasycon, 45 Oxford Road, Acocis Green, Birmingham, B27 6DT

http://www.djb.u-net.com

18-21 Sep 1998: Discworld Convention II

The second convention devoted to all things Pratchett takes place at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool, with guests including one-guess, Stephen Briggs and Dave Langford. Reg. £35, £25 unwaged.

PO Box 4100, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 2GZ

25-28 Sep 1998: Albacon 98

Central Hotel, Glasgow. Reg. £25 att., £15 sup (rising to £30 on 1 Jan). Guests Ray Harryhausen, Diana Wynne Jones, Kim Newman.

Albacon 98, Flr/2, 10 Atlas Road, Glasgow, G21 4TE

13-15 Nov 1998: **Novacon 28**

Venue TBA, guest **Paul J. McAuley**, Reg. £28 to Easter 98.
 or **Novacon 28**, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS

Spring / Summer 1999: **Eurocon**

Dortmund, Germany.
 or Science Fiction Tage e.V., Am Kattenbrück 28, D-44287 Dortmund, Germany
 or <http://www.cbj.de/sf/tage-nrw>

2-5 Apr 1999: **Reconvene**

The 50th UK National SF Convention and the last of the twentieth century; venue is the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool and the guests are Jeff Noon, Peter S. Beagle, John Clute, and Ron Tiner. It's themed around "Time was: Time is: Time shall be." Join before 1 Jan 98 for £25 (£12.50 spf + concessions); thereafter £30 (£15).

or 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ
 or sychele@firedrake.demon.co.uk

11 Aug 1999: **Total Eclipse of the Sun**

Totally passes through Cornwall, Northern France and bits of Italy.

2-6 Sep 1999: **Aussiecon 3**

The Worldcon goes down into Melbourne: Guests **Greg Benford**, **Bruce Gillespie**, the deceased **George Turner** will still be honoured. Reg. £90 (with complicated variations - ask 'em)
 or UK Agent: Martin Hoare, 45 Tlehurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT
 or martinhoare@icx.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.

or Millennium, c/o Malcolm Reid, 186 Casewick Rd., New Norwood, London, SE27 0SZ
 or vdputte@simplex.nl

31 Aug-4 Sep 2000: **Chicon 2000**

The 58th and millennial worldcon, guests **Ben Bova**, **Bob Eggleton**, **Jim Ban**, **Bob & Anne Passovoy**, and **Harry Turtledove** (hostmaster). Reg. \$125 (presponsors \$115), various discounts; rates rise 1 Mar 98.

UK Agent: Martin Hoare, 45 Tlehurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT
 or martinhoare@icx.co.uk
 or PO Box 642057, Chicago, Illinois 60665, USA
 or chicon2000@chicon.org
 or <http://www.chicon.org/>

29 Dec 1999-1 Jan 2001: **Hogmanaycon**

Central Hotel, Glasgow, Reg. £20.01 att., £2.01 sup. (har har).
 or 26 Avonbank Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2PA

BIDS BIDS BIDS BIDS BIDS

21-24 April 2000: **Eastcon**

Venue will be decided at the 98 Eastcon. Current bids are:

Radisson Edwardian, Heathrow: £2 presupping.
 or Pam Wells, Flat 5, 7 Bootham Terrace, York, YO3 7DH

Central Hotel, Glasgow: £2 presupping.

or 15 Kenilard Street, Glasgow, G12 8BW

2001: **Worldcon**

Boston Presupping \$8.
 or PO Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701-0205, USA
 or <http://world.std.com/~sbarsky/b2001.ht>
 nl

Philadelphia Presupping \$10.

or Suite 2001, 402 Huntington Pike, Rockledge, PA 19046
 or 2001@cyber.com

2003: **Worldcon**

Toronto Presupping £3.
 or UK Agent: Dave Langford, 44 London Road, Reading, RG1 5AU
 or ansible@icx.net
 or hannock@infocorp.net

RESULTS OF COMPETITION 128: "BLURBS R US"

The answers were:

1. Paul J. McAuley, Pasquale's Angel, VG5F 95
2. Jack McDevitt, Engines of God, Voyager 95
3. Terry Pratchett, Interesting Times, Corgi 95
4. Christopher Evans, Aztec Century, VG5F 93
5. John Whitcomb, To Build Jerusalem, VG5F 95
6. N. Lee Wood, Looking For the Mahd, Vista 96
7. Peter F. Hamilton, Monster Rising, Pan 93
8. Kim Newman, The Quorum, Pocket 94
9. Richard Calder, Dead Things, Voyager 96
10. Patricia Anthony, Happy Policeman, NEL 95
11. Jonathan Lethem, Gun, With Occasional Music, NEL 95
12. Robert J. Sawyer, The Terminal Experiment, NEL 95
13. Stephen Baxter, Rift, Voyager 92
14. Jonathan Carroll, From the Teeth of Angels, Voyager 95
15. Stom Constantine, Stalking Predator Fly, Ceed 95
16. Alexander Bester, Fin, Obit 95
17. Alison Sinclair, Legacies, Millennium 95
18. Difficult, but the title is included in the blurbs list.
19. Alasdair Gray, 1982, Janine, Penguin 85
20. Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle & Stephen Barnes, The Legacy of Heorot, Orbit 88
20. Michael Flynn, In the Country of the Blind, Bantam 90

A bit of a stinker. Close but no cigar if you put Geism & Sterling's *The Difference Engine* or Christopher Fowler's *Darkest Day*.

As your esteemed editor mentioned in the last *Matrix* I was slow in getting a competition to him, so he set this one himself. Although he - thank goodness! - supplied me with a copy of the answers, I was able to have a go myself first; just getting into practice for my 'retirement' after the next *Matrix*. I was flummoxed by lots of them, but had to bow to the greater knowledge of the winner *Steve Jeffery* who, although getting most of them correct, fell into the same trap as I did with the last one (well, it was obviously *The Difference Engine*, wasn't it?). In fact only *Theo Ross* got this one correct, and was a very good runner-up.

RESULTS OF COMPETITION 127: "TELLY ADICT?"

1. *Sapphire* (in *Sapphire and Steel*) 2. *Rimmer* (in *Red Dwarf*) 3. *Elliot* (A *For Andrew* - with Fred Hoyle) 4. *Gallantry* (Doctor's) 5. *Nicholls* (*Uhura in Star Trek*) 6. *Anderson* (Sylvia) 7. *Lotus* (McGoon's car at the start of *The Prisoner*) 8. *Crichton-Warner* (*Lady Penelope*)

The tie-break answer was MAJOR - 'cos the initial letters of each answer spell (backwards) CLANGERS, and as every rule no Major Clanger was the patron of the traffic safety knight.

The first out of the hat who spotted all this was regular contestant *Nigel Parsons*, so a book token will wing its way to Wales in the near future.

— Roger Robinson

Members' Noticeboard

Advertisements and announcements are FREE to BSFA members. Send your ad to the editorial address, or phone (0113) 217 1403.

WANTED

RADIO PLAYS WANTED: Radio Africa/and (and recent BSFA prize) Ellen Cheevers is desperate to get her ears on two of radio plays, both broadcast on Radio 4 a few years ago. They are: *An Alternative to Suicide* (90 mins.) and *The Silver Sky* (60 mins.) by Tanya Lee. If anyone has either of these and can copy them, Ellen will happily negotiate terms in kind from her own extensive radio collection. If you can help provide clips in this desperate search, contact either Ellen or Greg on 0181 550 6026.

WANTED: Copy in any condition of Norton Juster's children's fantasy *The Phantom Tollbooth* (chessboard appreciation) Chris Trent, 4 Beechwood Court, Bath View Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS4 2HS.

WANTED: A SF & B. Books. B. Popular Science Books. C. Books concerned with "Computer Applications in Natural Sciences and Engineering" including some older ones as far back as the 70s. Send SAE for wants lists, please say which. Send your own list with offers on item C. Contact: **Martred Diehl**, 62 Kaiser-Wilhelm St. D-67059 Ludwigshafen, Germany.

BOOKS NEEDED FOR A LOVING HOME: John Crowley *Egypt*, Gardner Dozois ed. *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. These are for reading, so cheapness is appreciated (condition is not a condition). Contact: **Syd Foster** on 01792 209729. Thanks! gmp

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

"WINNER CLASSICS" WANTED: - not for a prize, for a friend, honest. Most rate is around a quid, will pay up to £2 dependent on condition or if swifter for duplicates. Titled wanted include: *Asop's Fables*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Jour Stories*, *Machabell*, *Moll Flanders*, *Prince and the Pauper*, *Wine in the Wilderness*, *Wuthering Heights*.

Andy Butler, 33 Brook View Drive, Keyworth, Nottingham NG12 5AN. Tel: 0115 857 5548. Email: vector-buf@rocketmail.it

BOOKS REQUIRED: - Ace Doubls, Banks, Coney, Delany, Niven, Saberhagen, Stabford, Sterling, New Writings series, and many more.

Send SAE for wants list to **Ian Forshaw**, 12 Winston Way, Forest Cambs., PEB 301. Tel: 01733 241836

FOR SALE

REGISTER NOW! Books for the Reader and Collector from Brian Ameringer. Many of you already know me from 'convention dealers' news, auctions and BSFA articles. Early in 1998 I will be producing my first 'Science Fiction / Fantasy / Horror' catalogue which will have hundreds of interesting items for sale at modest prices. Let me have your name and address (postal or email) and I will make sure you receive a copy, or drop me your 'Wants List' now to get ahead of the game. *Willy End*, 37 Century Road, Third, Essex, IG1 4GR. Email: conspicuous@compuserve.com

THREE HERALDS OF THE STORM is a booklet collection of three short stories by *Stirling Constantine*, including one previously unpublished story. Produced 1997 by *Melissa Martin Publishing*, Inc. in the US, and available in the UK from *Inception*, c/o *Steve Jeffery & Viki Lee France*, 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 2XA (email: pev@icl.com). £4.50 inc. postage in the UK/EU. Enquire for details of other Inception limited editions, magazines and books by *Stirling Constantine*.

STOCK CLEARANCE: I have hundreds of paperback and hardback books, over 200 magazines ranging from pulp *Astounding* to *Sight New Worlds* and *Science Fantasy*. Thousands of comics (some even pre-war) and over 100 comic posters. Free list on request. I'm also in the hunt for pre-1965 comics, especially *Golden* and *Silver Age* *Flash*, *Thor*, *Spider-Man* and 1950s British reprints of US titles such as *Captain Marvel* Adventures, as well as books by *Fredric Brown* and *John D. MacDonald*, and many pulp such as *World Tales*, *Oriental Stories* and non-fiction like *Black Mask*, *Wu Fang*, *Doc Savage*, *G-F* and *The Shadow*. If you cash or will allow a generous exchange then let me! Contact: **Rob Bennett**, 36 Harlow Park, Harpenden, Herts, Yorkhams, HG2 6AW

MISC

NET NEWSIE: I was convinced at intervention that I should get on-line, that it was the only way to keep in touch. The only thing is, I don't know anyone else on-line. Can I have a computer pad please? My address is yvonne@isilfax.sofstat.co.uk

Ten Years Ago...

Matrix 73, Dec 87 / Jan 88 ... and the BSFA was in a crisis. Following a Committee Meeting held on 21 Nov 87, Administrator **Paul Kincail** reported that 'we have discovered, quite by chance, that the British Science Fiction Association Ltd has recently been dissolved. This came as something of a shock to us'. It happened because audited accounts had not been deposited at Companies House for the past three years - the reasons for this lapse included mail not being passed on by former officials, and mysteriously, 'a series of unfortunate incidents'. Things are different now, eh? In her editorial *Maureen Porter* (now Kincail, Speller) pleaded for more contributors to the magazines. **Alfred Bester** died. **Guy with Jones** had a baby boy, **Gabriel** (see photo in *Matrix* 122). **Michael Moorcock** produced a committee set up by the *Science Short MP* to help typography. **Tom Disch** wrote the claim for a computer game, *Amnesia*. **Roger Lancelyn Green**, academic and writer of children's fantasy, died. One of his last acts was to expose as a forgery the dustjacket of a first edition of *Conan Doyle's The Hound of the Baskervilles*, reckoned to be worth about £10,000 - casually derived it was only worth £200. The RSC staged, to less than ecstatic acclaim, a musical version of *Stephen King's Carrie*. The Church of Scientology lost its court battle to prevent publication of *Russell Miller's* biography of *L. Ron Hubbard*. *Barbarella* Messiah. Reports on the Brighton Worldcon were mostly positive, though *Christopher Evans's* *Conspiracy Theories* fanzine put the other side about the perceived take over by *New Era*, the publishing arm of Scientology. Based in West Germany, the *Chaos Computer Club* made headlines by hacking into NASA's computer network, including defense-related sites. An article on a BSFA survey about 'membership retention problems' was full of rummy phrases like: 'The significant issues with the problem situation at the time of analysis seem to be: (a) Lack of corporate identity'. This may have been an early attempt at humour. Happy New Year, y'all! □



Skull C

Roger Robinson's

COMPETITION 129: "CLARKE"

As you may have noticed this mailing is an 'Arthur C. Clarke Special', so this month's competition is just a quick run around the block for all you Clarke fans out there. Ten easy questions for you, so let's give the Post Office something to do in the lull after the Christmas rush by sending in lots of entries. And in addition to the normal prizes winners will receive, courtesy of Voyager, copies of 2010, 2061 and 3001.

1. Is Arthur C. Clarke, but what does the 'C' stand for?
2. Which other very famous sf author shares his birthday with ACC?
3. Who wrote *Odyssey: The Authorised Biography of Arthur C. Clarke*?
4. In what year was ACC awarded his CBE?
5. Why did the name 'HUSH' figure largely in ACC's upbringing?
6. In which magazine was ACC's story "The Sentinel From Eternity" first published?
7. Who played Dave Bowman in the film 2001: A Space Odyssey?
8. Who played Dave Bowman in the film 2010?
9. What is the title of ACC's non-sf novel about radar and aerodynamics?
10. At which London college did ACC get his 1st class honours degree in Physics and Mathematics?

AND NOW THE GOOD NEWS!

The competition page has a new supremo-in-waiting. John Ollis foolishly bravely offered to take over the job, and after an exhausting selection process was accepted (well - I got exhausted selecting which drink to buy next to wish him well!).

— Roger Robinson

Matrix Crossword 21

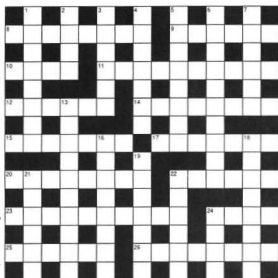
by John English

Across

8. Discoverer of balance points, jailed with scope for ... (8)
9. ... discovering such an asteroid, one from Ilium. (6)
11. Convention held in current month features worker describing Niven's moon. (10)
12. Magazine available from Andromeda, etc. (6)
14. Thin cooked ear. (8)
15. Nereid's primary planet (Dune) destroyed after lad is evacuated. (7)
17. Waxing thus, I cry 'All's lost!' (7)
20. Non-Einsteinian instrument tracking sailor, too. (8)
22. Weapon invented by President Ronald, we hear. (6)
23. Loitered to buy drinks. (5,5)
24. Type of fly found upon the deep. (4)
25. Thanks to Jules, not winding up in pub. (6)
26. Lake's servant on Gor. (8)

Down

1. As Aldes's tree does, I slave at causing chaos. (8)
2. Is Kirk there? This hiker is, anyway! (4)
3. Being mobile tree, it rides on back of lorry. (6)
4. Hot place? Give me sizzling curry! (7)
5. Lost animal with author taken aboard Anderson's undersea craft. (8)



6. Ivory hunter, perhaps, just captivated by new hot toy. (5,5)
7. Take a trip to the east, as Gully Foyle does. (6)
13. Fortune teller in star rôle? Go crazy! (10)
16. Little neutral one disturbed this tale-tell? (8)
18. Fish tanks with salmon's tail, one of interest to 13. (8)
19. Outcomes concerning last month aboard ship. (7)
21. Officer's attendant is a hero in DC. (6)
24. Author finally dries out due to extra contractual conditions. (6)
22. Launching frework upwards, sparks emerging, using this? (4)



Crossword 20 Solution & Results

First out of the hat was one of our regular contestants, Sue Jones, whose book token is on its way. Congratulations!

— Roger Robinson

COMPETITION RESULTS AND ANSWERS ON PAGE 23

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:

beconcedial.pipex.com

by

Wednesday 28 January 1998

Big Butt

od's on the news

• **IM PUTTY CREATION** Could reclusive **Greg Egan** be a member of that shadowy organisation 'the BSFA Committee'? *Permutation City*, page 69.

Paul and **Elizabeth**. **Elizabeth** and **Paul**. What happened between them was none of his business.

What dark secret does he know about our favourite Treasurer and Member Secretary?

• **HOT POT BOI** But was flooded with a letter in support of **John Jarrold's** fearless denunciation of the **Clarke Award** ~~deeds~~ judges. Money is to be raised for a rival award, for Best Novel With A Spaceship On The Cover. Following an early design, the trophy is to be called the **Edgar Allan Po**.

• **THE BONNY BONNY BANKS OF THE AM** Today Desert Island Discs, tomorrow ... the 7 November edition of *The Archers* had **Kate Aldridge** and **Roy Tucker** dividing the spoils after the breakdown of their relationship. **Kate**, cool cool-warrior (and spoiled brat), had no regrets about letting sensible business studies student **Roy** have the **Porthead** album ... but there was just no way she was going to give up the **lain Banks** novels.

• **SKIFFY WRITER** Predicts *THE FUTURE!* #2 From **George Orwell's** *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949):

The Lottery, with its weekly pay-out of enormous prizes, was the one public event to which the proles paid serious attention. It was probable that there were some millions of proles for whom the Lottery was the principal if not the only reason for remaining alive. It was their delight, their folly, their anodyne, their intellectual stimulant.

• **SPACE (FILLER)** *Idiotcy* Certain **Matrix** and **Victor** editors with nothing better to do have been scratching their heads about the best way to spell one of **Arthur C. Clarke's** novels. Is it 2001: A Space Odyssey, 2001: A Space Odyssey, 2001 - A Space Odyssey or plain old 2001: A Space Odyssey? Pursual of the notes to 2001 offers on p261 "2001", but "2010" and "2061", contradicted by "2001" and "2010" on p266 ... meanwhile, the *Fantasy Encyclopedia* is dashing "2001" - while the *SF Encyclopedia* goes for *colonic irrigation* (2001:1). If our two editors got out more, they might have found the answer from reading the trivia slides preceding films at Showcase Cinemas: "What was the filmic collaboration between **Stanley Kubrick** [sic] and **Arthur Clark** [as a parrot]?" And then again, perhaps not.

• **SECOND CHILDHOOD** Our mule at **Victor** 2001 *Exciting Things to Make And Do* passes on news that a bibliography put together for issue 197 omitted one of Clarke's most famous novels - despite the fact that the issue contains an article on *Childhood's End*. A spokesperson suggested I go and have children on my own and mentioned my end.

• **SFX CREW STYLISTICALLY CHALLENGED** - **OFFICIAL** SFX editor **Dave Golder** and **News** editor and staff writer **M. J. Simpson** have been trying to keep secret their appearance on BBC tv's *Style Challenge* programme on 7 October. Fat chance ... At least **Simo's** got a new T-shirt, though whether he wore it when he turned up on BBC Radio 5's *Drivetime* show talking about time travel isn't clear. Next: **Simo** guests on *Teletubbies* and nobody notices the difference.

• **KNICKERS TO FANTASY** An email from **Philip G. Williamson** reminded **Aleph** of one of the quotes of the decade, delivered by **Philip** in reply to a less-than-enthusiastic review of one of his books by **Dave Langford**: "I may well don the outer garments of generic fantasy, but my underwear is full of surprises".

• **THOUGHT FOR THE DAY** as you tuck into your T-bone steak: If we aren't meant to eat animals, how come they're made of meat? ☹

— N.K. <N.K.

Big BUTTERS: (Names withheld on legal and medical advice.)

• **Aleph** welcomes scandal, rumour, clippings, cuttings, droppings, small pieces of cheese, and bribes (no editorial address).



the greasestained matrix is improvised on an acorn as5000, hammed up atrociously by various bits of software (notably zap, which was just-marvellous-darling), made up by an hp laserjet 9l, subtly ill by pdc copyprint, prompted by bramley mailing services (oh no it wasn't!), ushered to its seat by the royal mail (oh yes it was!), and booted at from the stalls by you

—matrix 129—soundtracked by martin simpson, zoltan koddly, caravan, —im sorry i haven't a clue—, yes (ugh), john pearson, the world service, mood (thanks steve), saint etienne, amold bar, stercoral, various foote matches, sally barker, garbage, and the mp of the perverse

—"i hear it in the deep heart's core"