

# ·MATRIX·

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· MARCH / APRIL 1998 ·



JON · COURTENAY · GRIMWOOD  
— punk fiction —

# MATRIX

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

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# CONTENTS

ISSUE 130 • MARCH / APRIL 1998

- News • 2 • the happening world**  
– Clarke hounded by tabloids  
– Clarke, Dick Award shortlists
- BSFA Awards • 7 • 1998 shortlists!**
- Recent And Forthcoming Books • 8 • gotta totter?**
- Mailbox • 11 • is anybody out there?**
- Punk Fiction: • 12 • Jon Courtenay Grimwood** eats  
hard-boiled punk sf for breakfast  
... with soldiers
- Cyberculture and the  
Modern Hard-boiled SF**
- Starship Troopers • 14 • Andrew M. Butler** looks upon  
Verhoeven's work, and finds it
- Dracula's Year • 15 • Frederick Johns** selects some  
highlights from the Dracula  
centenary celebrations
- Contented Collecting • 16 • Brian Ameringer and  
Caroline Mullan** return
- The Borrowers • 17 • John Ashbrook** looks through  
his microscope at the film of  
Mary Norton's children's classic
- Two Views: • 18 • Gary Dalkin** disagrees with  
**Mitch Le Blanc** and **Colin  
Odell**
- Alien Resurrection**
- Magic Cottages in 2025 • 20 • Ellen Cheshire and Andrew  
M. Butler** on recent radio plays
- Out of Focus • 21 • Carol Ann Kerry Green &  
Julie Venner**
- Lexx • 21 • Ian Simpson** on the four-part tv  
series
- Events Diary • 22 • con current**
- Competition Extra • 23 • Results and another crossword**
- Members' Noticeboard • 23 • ad apt**
- Skull Crackers • 24 • Roger Robinson**
- Crossword • 24 • John English, logolept**
- Big Butt • 24 • Gary Dalkin** struggles not to mention  
you-know-who



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## news

# TABLOID ACCUSATIONS MAR CLARKE KNIGHTHOOD

THE NEW YEAR HONOURS LIST published on 1 January 1998 brought the news that Arthur C. Clarke had been awarded a knighthood. But a month later, on Sunday 1 February – three days before he was due to receive the honour – the *Sunday Mirror* published a front-page attack on Clarke, accusing him of having sex with children in his home for many years, Sri Lanka. Clarke immediately hotly denied the allegations, saying “I am outraged by the *Sunday Mirror*’s allegations, and I am seeking legal advice.” He believes that the story was an indirect attempt to smear Prince Charles, who was due to dub him on Wednesday 4 February during an official visit to the Indian subcontinent. Clarke withdrew from the ceremony, expressing a wish not to embarrass the royal visitor.

The newspaper’s front page ‘exclusive’ was headlined “CHILD SEX SHAME OF ARTHUR C. CLARKE”, and there was also a two-page internal spread and an editorial headlined “STRIP THIS PERVERT OF KNIGHTHOOD HE SHAMES”. Clarke was accused of paying “slum boys” a couple of rupees for sex, or giving them presents such as a watch. The story contained quotes which the paper claimed came from Clarke himself, such as:

• “I’m trying to think of the youngest boy I have ever had, because of course you can’t tell here. It is very difficult here... most of them had reached puberty.”

• “I think most of the damage is done by the fuss made by hysterical parents. If the kids enjoy it and don’t mind, it doesn’t do any harm. There is hysteria about the whole thing in the West.”

## POLICE TO INVESTIGATE

On Monday 2 February, the *Daily Mirror* followed up on its sister paper with a full-page report summarising the story and reporting reactions, including calls from children’s charities that the government should consider stripping Clarke of his honour, and a report from an unnamed source that Downing Street was “very concerned”.

The paper also quoted one Dayanade De Silva, described as a journalist at the Sri Lankan Broadcasting company and a “notorious gay”, who claimed that Clarke “had a lot of pornographic literature. He used to show me a book full of snaps of young boys and girls aged between thirteen and

seventeen. Some of the boys were Sri Lankan, others were white... he gets very excited in the presence of young boys.” But there have been reports elsewhere alleging that De Silva had previously been fired from a journalistic post for “making up stories”.

Clarke’s brother Fred was quoted as saying the claims were “idiotic”. He continued: “The poor bugger can’t even stand up – I can hardly see him cruising in his wheelchair for young boys. I can’t accept these allegations are correct.”

“Arthur is paralysed in one leg and one arm. I don’t believe he is physically capable of these things. He’s been surrounded by nurses and staff for years.”

But Fred also said, according to the *Daily Mirror*: “He may have had an interest in young boys years ago. I don’t know whether he ever indulged it or not.”

On the next day, the *Mirror* reported that the Sri Lankan police were going to question Clarke at his home. All homosexuality activity is illegal in Sri Lanka, and can be punished by imprisonment and/or flogging.

## COMBATIVE

But despite the allegations and his withdrawal from the official ceremony, Clarke was in a jovial and combative mood when he appeared at a formal dinner in honour of Prince Charles’s visit on Wednesday 4 February. He shook the Prince’s hand, and greeted the mob of reporters who swarmed around him with “I didn’t expect to see you bastards here.” He also issued an emailed circular, thanking friends and associates for their “unanimous support”. □

## CLARKE’S RESPONSE

The following statement was issued by Sir Arthur late on 1 February:

This was a political hatchet job – not aimed at me – but designed to embarrass Prince Charles who is planning to honour me with a knighthood on Wednesday.

I am very much against mucking about with small boys. I take a dim view of that.

On the one hand I am very angry to have been smeared. There is no truth whatsoever in the allegations being made against me and they are very hurtful.

On the other hand I like a good fight and, in a strange way, I am enjoying it.

I have not been sexually active for more than twenty years. I had a major prostate operation more than a decade ago which would have made anything like that quite impossible.

That was on top of post-polio paralysis. I’ve been confined to a wheelchair for well over a year, although I can hobble a few steps on sticks.

And yet the *Sunday Mirror* paints a lurid picture of an eighty-year-old paedophile playing table-tennis with twelve-year-old boys. Who do they think they’re kidding?

My conscience is completely clear.

I am convinced that this is nothing more than a cheap attempt to embarrass my friend Prince Charles. □

## 1998 Clarke Award Shortlist

STEPHEN BAXTER

*Titan*  
(Voyager)

ELIZABETH HAND

*Glimmering*  
(Voyager)

JAMES LOVEGROVE

*Days*  
(Phoenix)

JEFF NOON

*Nymphomaniac*  
(Doubleday)

MARY DORIA RUSSELL

*The Sparrow*  
(Black Swan: £6.99 tp)

SHERI S. TEPPER

*The Family Tree*  
(Voyager)

The shortlist for the 1998 Arthur C. Clarke Award was announced on 22 January by the Award

Administrator, Paul Kincaid. The Award, now in its twelfth year, is given for the best science fiction novel to receive its first British publication in 1997. The winner will receive an engraved bookend and a cheque for £1,000, to be presented at a ceremony later in the Spring.

This year’s judges are as follows

Representing the British Science Fiction Association

Tanya Brown

Dr Andrew M. Butler

Representing the Science Fiction Foundation

John Clute

Farah Mendelsohn

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

### January / February Mailing

It appears that a proportion of the membership did not receive the January / February mailing, containing *Vector* 197 and *Matrix* 129. It was sent out in mid-January.

As far as we’ve been able to ascertain – via receipts from our printers and mailing company – the correct number of copies of both magazines were printed, put into envelopes, franked and delivered to the Post Office. What happened after that is still somewhat mysterious: some copies of the mailing did arrive, but only for names early in the alphabet.

If you haven’t received the Jan/Feb mailing, please contact Paul Billinger either by post, telephone or email (addresses on page 2).

We are extremely sorry about this. Not to mention annoyed. We’re doing our very best to track down the missing copies – in the meantime, if you have net access keep an eye on the BSFA web site for further news.

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

**BSFA IN LONDON** The guest at the BSFA London Meeting on February 25 in the Jubilee pub at Waterloo is **M. John Harrison**. Admission is free, and all are welcome - see page 22 for more information.

**LEWIS CENTENARY** Belfast Library is planning to stage a C. S. Lewis Centenary exhibition in November this year, and the organisers have expressed interest in Lewis's connections with the sf world. If you can help, or wish further information, contact: **Linda Greenwood**, Irish and Local Studies Librarian, Belfast Central Library, Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1EA. Tel: 01232 243 233 ext. 239.

**PUBLISHING MERRY-GO-ROUND** Sf editor **Nick Austen** has left Hodder & Stoughton. **Jon Courtenay Grimwood** wishes him well and writes: "When I went into the business many years back, Nick was one of the greats, a man merely whispered about for his capacity both to party hard and spot good books. The guy is a walking compendium of solid sf info." **Malcolm Edwards** has moved from HarperCollins to become Managing Director of Orion.

**JOHN L. COCKER III** received the first Sam Moskowitz Fan Award, "given annually to encourage and recognise outstanding fan activity". Cocker is a long-time American fan historian and photographer.

**SAWYER SPEAKS** The SF Foundation's **Andy Sawyer** is giving a seminar on "Science Fiction in Science and Education" on Tuesday 10 March at 3pm, at the Adelphi Building, Fylde Road, University of Central Lancashire in Preston. All are welcome but the seating is limited so you'll need a ticket, obtainable from **Duncan Telfer**, Dept. of Computing, Vernon Building, University of Central Lancashire, PR1 2HE. Tel: 01772 893285.

**EUGENE SHOEMAKER**, US geologist and NASA advisor, had 7g of his ashes sent into orbit round the moon on board the Lunar Prospector satellite, which will be crashed into the surface when its mission ends in 18 months or so. As we went to press it was announced that its main mission, to detect water ice in polar craters, appears to have succeeded.

**IRISH SF ASSOCIATION EXPIRES** As we were going to press we heard that the **Irish Science Fiction Association** has ceased to exist due to "lack of interest". Efforts are underway to restart it, probably with the same initials: a meeting will be held on 2 March at the St George Hotel, Parnell Square, Dublin at 8.30pm, and any interested parties are encouraged to turn up.

**AMAZING STORIES**, the first sf magazine (launched by Hugo Gernsback in 1926), is to be relaunched in the summer by the gaming-card company Wizards of the Coast. Original fiction will predominate, though it appears that most of it will be film, game and tie-ins.

**STEPHEN BAXTER** was given US bookdealer **Barry Levin's** annual prize for the most collectible author. Copies of first editions of *The Time Ships* (HarperCollins 1996), for instance, now fetch \$200 - \$300. Or at least that's what the dealers are asking... So if you've got any of his books, take good care of them.

**SKIFFY TRACES** Sue Thomas, now teaching in the States for six months, is still actively involved in the Race Internet writing project and has set up a mailing list. Find out about it at <http://www.mailbase.ac.uk/lists/trace-online-writing-community/>

**TOGETHER AND APART** American writer **Nancy Kress** and UK expat **Charles Sheffield** were due to get married on 10 January. **Paul Barnett** (a.k.a. **John Grant**) is single again, as of 5 February. "Such a pity everybody's daughters are looking themselves up..." he told *Ansible*. Leads fan and anime supremo **Harry Payne** and partner **Omega** thought **Henry Stanley** into the world on 2 December. Harry and Omega lost no time in introducing the baby to the fanish lifestyle by bringing him down the pub for Sunday lunch with your editor and his esteemed predecessor on *Matrix*. **Steve Glover** just after Christmas.

**Lynda** and **Ted White** have separated amicably. **Benoit Girard**, long-time editor of the Canadian fanzine *The Frozen Frog*, will cease publishing and attend no more conventions following his divorce from *Deities Belanger*.

**DEATHS** **Owen Barfield**, Inklings member, cofounder of C. S. Lewis and author of the children's fantasy *The Silver Trumpet*, died on 14 December aged 99.

# LOTTERY MONEY FOR WYNDHAM

THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND has decided to put up £85,000 towards the £100,000 needed for the SF Foundation's bid to purchase the John Wyndham Archive (see *Matrix* 127, p3). An excited **Andy Sawyer** announced the news on 27 January, but emphasised that "This does NOT mean that we have 'got' the Wyndham papers. There is still a further element of the purchase price, associated costs, and the conditions of the grant to be looked at. We do not yet have all the financial information we need. However, things look considerably more cheerful than they did before the grant was awarded, and I'd particularly like to thank those people in fandom who donated money or material to help our appeal for funds."

Efforts so far have included £400 raised by a raffle at the World Fantasy Convention in October last year, and the Friends of Liverpool University have pledged £5,000. "We have also received donations and pledges from individuals in the sf world," says Andy, "and are hoping for more."

If you wish to contribute to this worthy cause please contact Andy at: University of Liverpool Library, PO Box 123, Liverpool, L69 3DA. Tel: 0151 794 2696/2733. Fax: 0151 794 2681. Email: [asawyer@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:asawyer@liverpool.ac.uk) Web: <http://www.liv.ac.uk/~asawyer/sffchom.html>

- The archive includes items such as:
- two unpublished sf novels, including an uncompleted sequel to *The Midwich Cuckoos*, and four unpublished mystery novels;
- hologram manuscripts of *The Day of the Triffids* and *The Kraken Wakes*;
- corrected typescripts and proofs of *The Chrysalids*, *The Midwich Cuckoos* and other novels;
- playscripts and radio / tv scripts;
- correspondence with publishers from 1931 onwards, taped communications with his brother, Vivian Beynon Harris, and over 350 letters from Wyndham to his wife written between 1939-1945. □

# NICHOLAS ROYLE GETS SEX AWARD



**Nicholas Royle**, here snapped by **Roger Robinson** at last October's World Fantasy Convention in London, won the *Literary Review's* annual 'Bad Sex' competition for a scene in his new novel *The Matter of the Heart*. The award - a statue "suggestive of bad sex" - was not presented by **Stephen Fry**, who forgot to turn up after dictating the day of the presentation. He was in Canada this time, not Belgium. □

# AWARDS MISCELLANY

- The **UPC SF Awards** are given each year by the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya in Spain. With a prize of a million pesetas (about £5,000) and judged on anonymous manuscripts in English, Spanish or Catalan, the prize is one of Europe's most rewarding for writers both amateur and professional. The 1997 major award was a tie between Canadian **Robert J. Sawyer** for "Psychospaces" (part of the forthcoming novel *Factoring Humanity*), and the American **James Stevens-Arce**, for "Soulsave". Special mentions went to Spain's **Daniel Mares** for "La maquina de Pymblot" and **Domingo Santos** for "Bienvenidos al bicentenario del fin del mundo", and Bulgaria's **Vassil Tsonev** for "Promenade fantastique".
- The **Mythopoeic Awards** for 1997 went to: ADULT FANTASY NOVEL: **Teri Windling** *The Wood Wife*. INKLINGS SCHOLARSHIP: **Charles A. Hutter** & **Peter Schakel** (eds.) *The Rhetoric of Vision: Essays on Charles Williams*. FANTASY SCHOLARSHIP: **Lois Rostow Kuznets** *When Toys Come Alive: Narratives of Animation, Metamorphosis and Development*.
- Space precluded listing the full shortlists for the **British Fantasy Awards** last issue: NOVEL: **Iain M. Banks** *Excession* (Orbit); **Clive Barker** *Sacrament* (HarperCollins); **Storm Constantine** *Scouting Hallowed Blood* (Signet); **Robin Hobb** *Assassin's Apprentice* (Orbit); **Graham Joyce** *The Tooth Fairy* (Signet); WINNER: **Terry Pratchett** *Hogfather* (Gollancz); **Michael Marshall Smith** *Spares*

- (HarperCollins); **Peter Straub** *The Hellfire Club* (HarperCollins). SHORT STORY: **Thomas Ligotti** "The Red Tower" (The Nightmare Factory, Raven); **Thomas Ligotti** "Teatro Grottesco" (The Nightmare Factory, Raven); **Kim Newman** & **Eugene Byrne** "Citizen Ed" (Interzone 113); **Justina Robson** "The Bull Leapers" (Visionary Tongue 4); **Martin Simpson** "Dancing About Architecture" (The Third Alternative 11); WINNER: **Michael Marshall Smith** "Foreign Bodies" (Lethal Kisses, ed. Ellen Datlow, Orion); **Michael Marshall Smith** "Hell Hath Enlarged Herself" (Dark Terrors 2, eds. Stephen Jones & David Sutton, Gollancz); **Jack Wainer** "Scars" (Grue 18, Anthology / COLLECTION: **Chaz Brenchley** *Blood Waters* (Flambard); **Neil Gaiman** & **Edward E. Kramer** (eds.) *The Sandman Book of Dreams* (HarperCollins); **Shirley Jackson** *The Masterpieces of Shirley Jackson* (Raven); **Stephen Jones** (ed.) *Best New Horror Vol. 7* (Raven); **Stephen Jones** & **David Sutton** (eds.) *Dark Terrors 2* (Gollancz); **Thomas Ligotti** *The Nightmare Factory* (Raven); WINNER: **Artist: Jim Burns** (WINNER); **Les Edwards**; **Madeline Finnegan** (for *Peeping Tom*); **Dave McKean**; **Jim Pitts**; **J. K. Potter**; **Ruby** (for *Visionary Tongue*). SMALL PRESS: **S. T. Joshi** *H. P. Lovecraft: A Life* (Newcomer Press); WINNER: **Nancy Springer** (ed.) *Broadsword*; **Richard T. Chizmar** (ed.) *Cemetery Dance*; **Rosemary Pardoe** (ed.) *Ghosts and Scholars*; **Stuart Hughes** (ed.) *Peeping Tom*; **Andy Cox** (ed.) *The Third Alternative 11*; **Elisio Coquil** (ed.) *Visionary Tongue Summer 96*. SPECIAL AWARD: **Jo Fletcher**. Special congratulations to **Ruby**, whose work you can see in recent issues of *Focus* and *Matrix*. □

# Scribble Scribble...

John Barnes's follow-up to *Kaleidoscope Century* is *Earth Made of Glass*, out in the summer from Orion. It's a sequel to his 1992 novel *A Million Open Doors*, and is a far-future tale of a nascent galactic empire and conflicts between the centre and the frontier over new worlds. The planet *Quide* is at the front line, and is home to a culture based on a Millennialist black American sect. *Graut* (from the earlier book) and a woman are posted there with the aim of preventing a minor squabble exploding into war.

Julie Tiptree, Jr, aka. Alice Sheldon, is the subject of a biography being written by Julie Phillips who is seeking information on the writer, especially letters written by her. If you can help, contact Julie at Rozenstraat 27, 1016 NM Amsterdam, Netherlands. Tiptree, who killed her husband and then shot herself ten years ago, led a shadowy life, but according to Ansible, Julie claims that "almost all speculations about her and the CIA are nonsense."

Robert Shea & Robert Anton Wilson's conspiracy-theory cult classic *Illuminati* Trilogy gets a welcome one-volume release from Raven in the summer, a work of "hilarious gaudy" according to the *SF Encyclopedia*.

Jon Courtenay Grimwood has just finished *Reck*, the third and final book in the "loosely knit" *neoAddix* sequence. "Keeping with my habit of only featuring fine, moral, outstanding people," he says, "the main character is Fixx, a burnt-out drug-addicted DJ who is banged up in a Parisian jail, facing statutory rape charges. The mother of the girl in question turns up wanting Fixx to find her daughter, who has since gone missing (on the moon)...."

Mary Doria Russell is working on a sequel to *The Sparrow*, winner of last year's Tiptree Award and hotly tipped for this year's Clarke and BSFA Awards.

Mickey Zucker Reichert's sixth *Renshai* fantasy *The Children of Wrath* should be out in the June from Orion.

People have been nagging me for ages to read *Martin Millar*, and out in May from Fourth Estate is *The Collected Martin Millar*, an omnibus containing his first three novels, *The Good Fairies of New York*, *Ruby and the Stone Age Diet* and *Lux* the Tort. "From the post-punk underworld of Britain to Manhattan under siege from toxics, an unforgettable comedy of sex, drugs, arcade games, a poet with a Star Wars toothbrush, an Aphrodite cactus that will not flower and Cynthia Werewolf." He's been described as a "post-punk Tom Sharpe," which far boggles.

Greg Egan's *Diaspora* is out in paperback from Orion in July.

An interesting anthology due in the summer from Orion is *Film Futures*, compiled by Forrest Ackerman and with a foreword by Ridley Scott. It contains the original stories which a number of successful films have been made, including Ray Bradbury's "Farwell to the Master" (filmed as *The Day the Earth Stood Still*), Clarke's *The Sentinel* (2001), Dick's "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" (Total Recall), George Langelaan's "The Fly", Zelazny's "Damsel in the Alley", Lovecraft's "Re-Animator" and many others.

James Lovegrove, whose *Days* is up for the Clarke Award, has *The Kilov* Continuum out in paperback from Orion in June.

Martin Amis's new collection *Heavy Water* is out in June from Cape and has a number of sf and fantasy stories, including "Straight Fiction", set in a world where everyone is gay apart from a beleaguered straight community: "Career Moves", in which screenplay writers submit their works to small-press zines while poets are flown first-class to LA; and "The Janitor on Mars", a Dickian-sounding tale in which a sardonic robot gives us some strange news about life in the solar system.

In May Orion publish *Future Revolutions* by David Mercer, a non-fiction account of the four main areas of change Mercer expects in the next century: technological growth, social change, economic globalism and the political establishment. His conclusions are optimistic.

Terry Pratchett was due to be confirmed as a Proper Writer when the British Council sounded out Dave Langford to write a critical monograph on him for their post 'Writers and Their Work' series. Publishers showed keen interest, but just as Dave's pen hovered over the contract news came that "there has been a policy change". Boo hiss.

A collection of critical essays on Jack Vance is being put together by the British Library.

Tad Williams has completed and delivered the second volume of his virtual-reality *Otherland* tetralogy, *Called River of Blue Fire*, it should be out in the autumn from Orbit.

Finally, long-time BSFA member Roy Gray has a short story in the retzine *Dark Planet*, called "Nick or Treat?", Roy says "It is a bit rude, but hopefully in the English tradition; i.e., funny with it." You can find it at <http://www.sfsite.com/darkplan> et/, which site also contains a myriad links to other netzines looking for contributors and readers. If you've placed a story, why not let us know? Write or email the editorial address.

## Back To Paradise

New series, new title, new cast writes Elen Cheshire. Listeners to the last series of *Colin Swash's* comic science fiction series *Paradise Lost* in Space heard the peaceful, idyllic planet of Oblivio being invaded by the 'evil' humans who brought with them their immoral pastimes, such as sex, and - most heinous of all - tennis. The new series, *Paradise Lost* in Cyberspace, will, I hope, pick up from where the last ended with Oblivio's slow decline to Earth's level. The new cast includes Stephen Marvin Moore, Patryna Byrne, Geoffrey McGiven and Lorelei King and the six-episode series will start on Tuesday 24 February at 6.30pm.

For those who may have missed the dramatisation of Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End*, the BBC have issued it on audotape in their Radio Collection, priced £8.99. (Elen Cheshire)

## Journey Into London

London Walks is a company offering a large number of themed guided walking tours around the more interesting bits of London. Many are of sf and fantasy interest (and not just the pub tours), such as *Ghosts of the Old City*, *Jack the Ripper Haunts*, *'Ancient' London: Knights, Nuns & Notoriety*, *'Haunted London'*, and *'Dracula: The Walk'* (complete with costume guide). But what really caught my eye is that none other than Charles Chilton, creator of the 50s skitfy radio series *Journey into Space* is one of its guides.

Walks cost £4.50 (£3.60 for students and OAPs), under 15s free. For further information contact London Walks, PO Box 1708, London, NW6 4LW. Tel: 0171 624 3978 / 0171 794 1764 / 0171 911 0285.

Email: [london.walks@nail.bogo.co.uk](mailto:london.walks@nail.bogo.co.uk)  
Web: <http://london.walks.com>

## Ballantine Wins Star Wars

US publisher Ballantine has acquired the book rights to the next series of *Star Wars* films, all set prior to the first film. The first new film has now completed principal photography and is expected to be released in May 1999.

Ballantine, owned by Random House (under whose Century and Arrow imprints the books will be issued in the UK), will publish novellisations of the three films, all non-fiction associated titles, and spin-off novels set in the periods of the both the old and the new movies. Non-fiction will include *Making Of* books, scripts and art books. Lucastilm VP in charge of licensing Howard Roffman said: "We're delighted to bring our complete *Star Wars* adult publishing programme under one roof. It will create an unprecedented opportunity for a co-ordinated programme that will take *Star Wars* publishing to its highest level and bring exciting new books to our fans the world over." And, one can be sure, make them pots of money.

St authors who have produced *Star Wars* spin-off material include Barbara Hamby, Roger MacBride Allen, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, and Michael P. Kube-McDowell.

## Trek Theme Park Opens

In early January the 'Star Trek Experience' opened at the Hilton Hotel in Las Vegas with a special preview for Trekkies. Fans got to experience 'beaming up', piloting a shuttlecraft, tangle with aliens and pretending to be thrown around the control room (presumably while onlookers moved their heads around). Jane Cooper, president and chief executive of Paramount Parks, said "Providing the fans first access to this highly anticipated, first-of-its-kind attraction is the perfect way to thank them for their continued loyalty." Their opportunity to be thanked cost them \$99.95 each.

## ≡ 1998 Dick Award Shortlist ≡

The Philip K. Dick Award is given annually for "distinguished science fiction published in paperback original form in the United States". The winner will be announced on 10 April at Norwescan 21 at the Doubletree Hotel in Seattle, Washington.

This year's judges are Paula E. Dowling (chair), Brooks Landon, Carter Scholz, Stephanie A. Smith and Robert Charles Wilson. The Award is administered by David G. Hartwell and Gordon Van Gelder and is sponsored by the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society; the award ceremony is sponsored by the NorthWest Science Fiction Society.

Last year's winner was Stephen Baxter for *The Time Ships*, with a special citation for Michael Bishop's *At the City Limits of Fate*. □

**WILLIAM BARTON**  
*Acts of Conscience*  
(Warner Aspect)

**STEPAN CHAPMAN**  
*The Troika*  
(Ministry of Whimsy Press)

**SUSAN R. MATTHEWS**  
*An Exchange of Hostages*  
(Avonova)

**RICHARD PAUL RUSSO**  
*Carlucci's Heart*  
(Ace)

**DENISE VITOLA**  
*Opalite Moon*  
(Ace)

**CATHERINE WELLS**  
*Mother Grimm*  
(Roc)

# 1998 BSFA AWARDS SHORTLISTS

Enclosed with this mailing you should have found the final ballot paper for the 1998 BSFA Awards. The full shortlists are also shown below.

## HOW TO VOTE

In the 'position' slots of the ballot form, fill in a number between 1 and 5, 1 for the nomination you think should win, 2 for the next best, and so on.

Return the form to me, Chris Hill, at the address in the box on the right.

Please also write your name and membership number (if known) on the bottom of the ballot, says he, just having realised that he has not put a slot for the name on the form! You can find your membership number on the address label of your mailing.

**Postal votes will be accepted until Thursday 9 April 1998.**

Forms can also be handed in at the BSFA desk in the dealers' room (or to me personally) at Intuition, this year's Eastercon in Manchester,

but should get to me **no later than 10pm on Saturday 11 April 1998.**

The BSFA Awards will be presented in a ceremony to be held on Sunday evening at Intuition. Happy reading!

Awards Administrator

**CHRIS HILL**

presents his first shortlists

Send completed ballots to

**Chris Hill**  
Rook's Cottage,  
3 Lynch Hill,  
Whitchurch,  
Hants.,  
RG28 7ND

## — Best Novel —

**JACK DEIGHTON**  
*A Son of the Rock*  
(Orbit: £5.99 pb)

**M. JOHN HARRISON**  
*Signs of Life*  
(Gollancz: £16.99 hb)

**TIM POWERS**  
*Earthquake Weather*  
(Legend: £17.99 hb)

**MARY DORIA RUSSELL**  
*The Sparrow*  
(Black Swan: £6.99 tp)

**MICHAEL SWANWICK**  
*Jack Faust*  
(Orion: £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp)

## — Best Short Fiction —

**STEPHEN BAXTER**  
"War Birds"  
(Interzone 126)

**EUGENE BYRNE**  
"Thigmoo"  
(Interzone 120)

**PAT CADIGAN**  
"The Emperor's New Reality"  
(New Worlds)

**RICHARD KADREY**  
"The First Man Not to Walk on the Moon"  
(Back Brain Recluse 23)

**PAUL KINCAID**  
"Last Day of the Carnival - 36 Exposures"  
(Back Brain Recluse 23)

## — Best Artwork —

**BRIAN FROUD**  
Cover of *The Wood Wife* by Terri Windling  
(Legend: £5.99 pb)

**DOMINIC HARMAN**  
Illustration for "Secrets" by Ian Watson  
(Interzone 124, p27)

**SMS**  
"The Black Blood of the Dead"  
(Interzone 116 cover)

**MICHAEL WHELAN**  
Cover of *The Golden Key* by Melanie Rawn, Jennifer Roberson & Kate Elliott  
(Pan: £7.99 pb)

**PAUL YOUNG**  
Cover of *Child of the River* by Paul J. McAuley (also cover of *Interzone* 123)  
(Gollancz: £16.99 hb)

## O'BRIEN WINS US TAFF

AMERICAN FAN **Ulrika O'Brien** won the 1997/98 US to Europe TAFF race, and will represent N. American fandom at the 1998 Eastercon in Manchester and at Corflu in Leeds. The full results are below (figures are totals for Europe and North America combined).

• This year's Europe-to-US TAFF race is between **Chris Bell**, **Bridget Hardcastle** and **Maureen Kincaid Speller**. Voting is encouraged, and all you need to do is donate £1 to the fund. Votes must be cast before 25 April 1998, and the winner will go to the Bucconerr Worldcon in Baltimore later this year. If you would like more details send an SAE to the TAFF Administrator **Martin Tudor** at 24 Ravensbourne Road, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX. □

	First Place Votes	Second Round	Final Round
Victor Gonzalez	55	60	77
Ulrika O'Brien	69	82	105
Vicki Rosenzweig	46	57	-
Tom Sadler	42	-	-
Hold Over Funds	3	-	-
No Preference	9	-	-
Total Ballots Cast	224		

## BULMER'S 1955 TAFF REPORT PUBLISHED

TWO SCORE AND SIX years ago, in 1952, a special fund was created to bring Northern Irish fan **Walt Willis** to America, which led to the creation of the Transatlantic Fan Fund in 1953. The first winner was **Vince Clarke** in 1954, but he was unable to make the trip; however, the following year **Ken Bulmer** won, journeyed to America in late July, returned in early November, and, forty-three years later, his trip report *TAFF Tales* has finally been published in its full form.

It's a fascinating picture of the fifties, both in the sf world and Real Life. There are cameos from Robert Silverberg, Arthur Clarke, Harlan Ellison, Randall Garrett, Ted White, Robert Bloch, Willy Ley, Anthony Boucher, Isaac Asimov and many others. Mentions of Don Bradman, Terry-Thomas and Tom Lehrer fix it in time (though Ken's mention of singing Lehrer songs in a car could have happened last year - he's as popular in fandom now as he was then at the start of his career), and as an entertaining collection of anecdotes it works splendidly. There are amusing stories of an Englishman Abroad, from a time when America and its culture were much less familiar (through tv and cultural Cocacolonisation) than it is now -

from a visit to an American football game to an encounter with a heavily-armed policeman (complete with "(a) a Tommy-gun down his leg, (b) a pistol at his belt, (c) a not gun in the back seat, (d) and probably an H-bomb in a SAC B-52b on call from his car radio"). "What're you doing, bub?" he said to our Ken.) It's somewhat episodic, though this is probably due more to the way parts of it first appeared, mostly in Ella Parker's fanzine *Orion* between 1959 and 1962. There's also artwork from the much-missed Atom.

As its traditional reward for the publication of a trip report - which all winners are expected to produce, though too few have - SCIFI in California has donated \$500 to the fund. □

• *TAFF Tales* is published by Ansible Information. It costs £5 post-free (all proceeds go to TAFF, of course), is in nicely-bound A4 format, and is available from:

**Dave Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU.

In North America copies cost \$10 post free, available from this year's US-Europe winner:

**Ulrika O'Brien**, 123 Melody Lane, Apt C, Costa Mesa, CA 92627, USA

# EARTHLIGHT SET FOR EASTER LAUNCH

SIMON & SCHUSTER's new science fiction and fantasy imprint, **Earthlight**, will be launched at this year's Eastercon in Manchester on Sunday 12 April. Enthusiastic editor **John Jarrold** has signed up a number of big-name authors and newer writers for the list, who include:

- **Guy Gavriel Kay**, with a new two-book series. The first is called *Sailing to Sarantium*, and will be out in hardback in the summer. Kay has written the bestselling fantasies *Tigana* and *The Fionavar Tapestry*, and worked with Christopher Tolkien on *The Silmarillion*. "I couldn't be more delighted," said Jarrold. "I originally made an offer for Guy in 1989, at Orbit. Every time I've spoken to his agent since I've mentioned that I really want to publish Guy - which has made me feel more than a little like Cato in the Senate, finishing each speech with a call for Carthage's destruction! ... Guy is one of those authors who anyone interested in good fiction should read - it's one of the stupidities of many reviewers and literary editors that the fantasy imprint under which these books are published precludes them from being given some of the review space they deserve. I suppose we'll just have to live with major sales," he concluded hopefully.

- Continuing the Roman theme, **Mark Anthony** is a new US writer of epic fantasy. His first novel *Beyond the Pale* will be out in the autumn; it's the first volume of the 'Last Rune' sequence, and Jarrold has also acquired three sequels. "Mark's fantasy world is exceptionally well-described and felt, but he also introduces characters from our

world, calling for comparisons with Stephen Donaldson's 'Thomas Covenant' novels," he said. "In fact, I'd say that *Beyond the Pale* was a mix of Donaldson and another Stephen - King ... this book has best-seller written all over it."

## EARTHLIGHT



- Other acquisitions include **John Whitbourn**, whose series of bleak and very English alternate-world fantasies have been much praised, and compared to Keith Roberts; **Lois McMaster Bujold**, one of the most popular of writers in the world, with two new novels *Memory* and *Ekaterin*; **Ray Bradbury**, whose *Quicker Than the Eye* is his first short story collection for ten years; **Peter Crowther** & **James Lovegrove's** *Escanday Gap*, a dark fantasy; and **Jane Welch**, whose *The Lament of Abalone* is the first volume in a new fantasy trilogy. □

# •MATRIX•

THE NEW MOVIE OF THE MONTH BY JONATHAN ROSS

WHAT A START to the year. *Matrix* went to the printers in early December, so we missed the news of Arthur Clarke's knighthood. Then it began to become apparent that a fair portion of the mailing had gone missing, so far as we can ascertain eaten by the Post Office - and if you didn't arrive please let **Paul Billinger** know (see the box on page 2 for further details). I haven't received mine either, so you're not alone.

And on 1 February came the tabloid accusations against Sir Arthur, on which - for obvious reasons - we must be circumspect in our comments.

But between sending off *Matrix* 129 and these events came Christmas, during which I took the opportunity to take a month off from all matters snail, BSFA! (I can never resist that one) and fanfash. With the odd exception or two, anyway: I went down to London for the Christmas Fun meeting and met a number of old friends (including most of the BSFA crew), played host to visits from Elizabeth and Paul Billinger and Andy Butler ... but by and large the last month has been an sf-free zone - I didn't even read any books, and a rare visit to the cinema took me to *The Full Monty*. And by God I needed the break.

What prompted this terrible lapse, of course, was the realisation that I'd been doing the magazine for three years without a holiday. It's been a steep learning curve for me, and I'm still climbing - but the survey we did last year helped considerably, and I hope that you feel I've been responsive to what you, the membership, wanted.

Now, a confession: this is all by way of leading into the customary whinge about letters. If you're a recent member, you may not be aware that all the BSFA's activities are undertaken by volunteers: from the Administrator to the Treasurer and right down to the lowly magazine editors, none of us get paid, and everything is done in our spare time. I know that because you've paid for something, you may not necessarily feel an obligation to contribute further; and that is a perfectly justifiable view to hold. (In fact, when I was an 'ordinary' member I contributed ... nothing.) But we do it because we're enthusiastic about science fiction, and I hope that - to some extent at least - you're a member for the same reason. You care about sf (however you wish to define it). So let us know what bothers you, what upsets you, what you love, hate, despise, admire, and cherish about it. We're volunteers - but we do appreciate the occasional bang in a plain brown envelope. And the internationally acceptable currency is feedback.

We're doing our bit to promote British Science Fiction - are you? — Chris Terran

## SHOTS

SCIENCE FICTION

**POSTMAN FAILS TO DELIVER** is such a tempting headline that bad-news stories are going to be written just so magazines can use it ... and Kevin Costner's mammoth movie version of David Brin's post-apocalyptic hymn to American values *The Postman* was indeed widely panned on its US release on 25 December, not helped by being humungously long, being given an 'R' rating (usually reserved for sex 'n' sleaze films), and featuring Costner in nearly every scene.

**LEGENDARY COSTS** The proposed third remake of *Richard Matheson's I Am Legend* has run into problems (previous versions were

*The Last Man On Earth* and *The Omega Man*). Directed by Ridley Scott and featuring Arnie Schwarzenegger, the project was costed at £108million but according to reports in *Variety* it won't get off the ground unless costs can be cut to around \$90million.

**THE SCI-FI CHANNEL** started broadcasting in France in a Friday night slot last November, with tv series being dubbed and feature films subtitled. Movies include *The Invisible Man* and *Darkest*, with regular series including *Battlestar Galactica* and *Earth 2* - lucky Frenchies.

**OUTPOST OMEGA** is a new tv series featuring **Mark Hamill** and *Babylon 5's* **Bill Mumy**. It's about a military family in space, and the two-hour pilot will be directed by **Martha Coolidge**.

**XENA FEVER** The cult success of *Xena: Warrior Princess (including great popularity in the American lesbian community, reportedly) has led to a video-only animated movie released in January, *Hercules and Xena: The Battle For Mount Olympus*. It features the voices of *Xena* and *Hercules* actors **Kevin Sorbo** and **Lucy Lawless**.*

## media news . . tv . . film

**MEN IN BLACK** passed *Independence Day's* record for video rental in December, topping \$20.9million in just two weeks. *Independence Day* managed a mere \$19.5million in a fortnight.

**FIRST WAVE** is a new sf series being made by the Canadian sf tv channel Space: The Imagination. It will air later this year, and is described as an snail version of *The Fugitive*, wherein only one man can save the Earth from aliens disguised as humans. You really do wonder if movie and tv producers ever have an original idea in their lives.

**UPCOMING MOVIES** in the next couple of years include *Planet Ice*, an animated feature from 20th Century Fox about a 19-year-old boy who follows a treasure map in order to save a doomed human race. Written by **Ben Edlund** and directed by **Art Vitello**, it features voice actors **Bill Pullman** (from *Independence Day*), **Drew Barrymore** and **Hank Azaria** (from the forthcoming *Gozdila*). TriStar has optioned the excitingly-titled *The Travel Agent*, with **Wolfgang Petersen** penciling in as director. In the near future a limited form of time travel is invented, allowing people to be sent six months ahead. When a group fails to return an investigator is dispatched, only to find that he is/was due to precipitate a revolution following his discovery of presidential crimes. • The classic computer game *Doom* is at last set to become a movie from TriStar, with production beginning in late 1998 for a 1999 release. **Ron Mita** and **Jim McLain** are signed to write the screenplay. • MGM optioned *The Man Who Turned Into Himself* by **David Ambrose**, with a plot sounding astonishingly similar to **Bob Shaw's** extremely fine 1968 novel *The Two-Timers*: a man enters a parallel universe, including a version of himself, following the death of his wife. • Young *Hercules* is a spin-off direct-to-video movie from the tv series *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*. It's also designed as the pilot for a proposed tv series. □

— Chris Terran

## Many thanks to

John Ashbrook, Elizabeth & Paul Billinger, Simon Bisson, Brum SF Group, Andrew M. Butler, Ellen Cheshire, Cardinal Cox, Gary Dalkin, Danny Flynn, Syd Foster, Steve Glover, Roy Gray, Colin Greenland, Jon Courtney Grimwood, Chris Hill, Paul Hood, John Jarrold, Steve Jeffery, Gwyneth Jones, Paul Kincaid, Dave Langford, Robert Morgan, North West Kent SF Group, John Ollis, Mark Plummer, Julie Rigby, Ruby, Andy Sawyer, Jai Sharda, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Duncan Teller, and Martin Tudor.

Want to see your name here?  
Send in some news!

# recent & forthcoming books

## Voyager

Including HarperCollins, Flamingo, Fontana



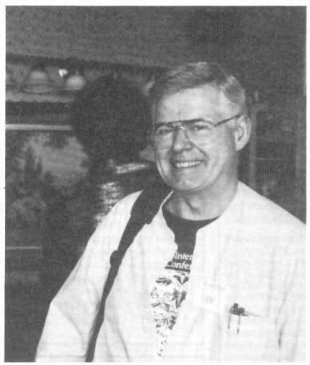
- ★ **Geoff Ryman** 253 (Flamingo) (1 Feb: £6.99 pb) — First book publication of Ryman's hypertext novel first seen on the Internet last year.
- ★ **Julian May Perseus Spur** (2 Feb: £16.99 hb, 310pp) — First volume of 'The Rampart Worlds', a new space-opera series. Humorously named Helmut Icolde is 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 submarine around the shores of Kedge Locks to piloting 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 McDewitt** *Eternity Road* (2 Feb: £5.99 pb, 338pp) — Some centuries after a catastrophic plague which killed off most of the world's population, civilisation is struggling to re-establish itself and a scholar class is starting to emerge. The ruins of the 21st century — roads, cities, technological marvels — provide a backdrop to an expedition which sets out to determine the truth behind the myth of an underground settlement established during the disaster to preserve knowledge. It's well written, absorbing and exciting — though one can quarrel with a collapse which leaves intact the technological knowledge and infrastructure necessary to make guns but loses the far simpler art of printing. McDewitt recognises this problem, though, and the idea is more to make a moral point than attempt a precise extrapolation. A great read, and recommended.
- ★ **Nick Nielsen** *ELV* (16 Feb: £5.99 pb, 281pp) — Humorous sf, which looks wacky, zany and other 50s-type words. It's a debut novel from a 'possibly fictitious' UK writer (any guesses?).
- ★ **Robert Silverberg** *Edge of Light* (16 Feb: £9.99 tp, 980pp) — 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** *Poigra 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: Weeds* (1 Mar: £5.99 pb)
- ★ **Roy Lewis** *The Shape-Shifter* (Collins) (1 Mar: £15.99 hb) — Crime novel set in an archaeological dig researching the Celtic cult of Mörigan, the shape-shifting goddess of war.
- ★ **Matthew Sturgis** *Audrey Beardsley: A Biography* (HarperCollins) (1 Mar: £19.99 hb, 384pp ill.) — An early and very influential fantasy artist, who died astonishingly young, aged 25. Delany from Dec.
- ★ **Janny 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
- ★ **Robin Hobbs** *Assassin's Quest* (16 Mar: £5.99 pb) — Finale to the 'Farsee' fantasy trilogy.
- ★ **Robin Hobbs** *Ship of Magic* (16 Mar: £16.99 hb) — First in a new fantasy series — 'The Livesth Traders' — set in the same world as Hobbs's (who is Megan Lindholm) 'Farsee' trilogy.
- ★ **Douglas Coupland** *Girlfriend in a Coma* (Flamingo) (1 Apr: £16.99 hb) — A woman gives birth to a daughter while in a coma in 1979; 18 years later she wakes, a modern Rip van Winkle. Association.
- ★ **George R. R. Martin** *A Clash of Kings* (1 Apr: £17.99 hb) — Book two of 'A Song of Ice and Fire'; the first volume was very well received.
- ★ **R. A. Salvatore** *The Sword of Bedwy* (1 Apr: £5.99 pb) — First volume in a new fantasy series, 'The Crimson Shadow'.
- ★ **Stephen Baxter** *Traces* (20 Apr: £16.99 hb) — This second coll. of Baxter's short stories offers 'visions of histories which differ from our own, either through small changes or through a fundamental difference in physical laws'. His first coll. was: **Stephen Baxter** *Vacuum Diagrams* (20 Apr: £5.99 pb) — ... which concentrated on his 'Xeelee' future history sequence, and also includes (or is padded out by) some sections of related novels.

## Raven



- ★ **David Hartwell** (ed.) *The Science Fiction Century* (Raven) (29 Jan: £14.99 tp, 1,005pp) — Huge anth. of sf 'that has shaped the last 100 years'. 'There'll be a lot of fuss about this book, so it's worth listing the contributors (in the order they appear): Tiptree, C. S. Lewis, Pangborn, Wells, Clement, Blish, E. M. Forster, Margaret St Clair, Michael Sharra, Harness, Frank Belknap Long, Adam Wisniewski-Snorg, Budrys, Dino Buzzati, Farmer, Kipling, Swanwick, Mildred Clingerman, Tenn, Lino Adair, Morrow, van Vogt, Wolfgang Jeschke, Willis, Anderson, Jack London, Cordwainer Smith, J. H. Rosny aîné, Eklund & Benford, George Turner, Alexander Kupin, Crowley, Silverberg, Herbert, Vance, Philip Latham, Wyndham, Eddy, Berlin, Zelazny, Starling, Kress, Gibson, Ellison, Chad Oliver, Richard A. Lupat.
- First of all, note the complete absence of modern British writers; is John Wyndham really the best Hartwell could find? He explains why in his (I suspect deliberately) inflammatory introduction: 'American science fiction and the American marketplace drive the sf world', he says proudly. He's not talking here about *Star Trek* and other skiffy nonsense, oh no — he means the literary stuff, the real McCoy. Or at least what he considers it to be. This bizarre idea begins to make a kind of screwball sense when he states that, following Gernsback, 'genre sf became, was founded to be, antimodernist'. Aha... this man holds true to what John Clute has called 'Agenda SF', the US-centric, anti-intellectual, Campbellian, white (and white-coated), male desire to — as I recently said elsewhere — 'luck the universe into submission with big-dick science'. This is a fundamentally adolescent view of the genre, and while it's a stage most of us go through one would have hoped that most of us grow out of it.
- So there's nothing from Bester, one of the first post-Agenda writers. Nothing from Aldiss, Ballard, Dick, Roberts, Sturgeon, and any number of others. Nothing from Wolfe. Hell, there's not even anything by Clarke — but Clarke is clearly in the Scientific Romance tradition, which Hartwell loftily dismisses as 'superseded'. Perhaps in Pleasantville, N.Y. it is, but it doesn't look quite like that from here. (In fact, you can make a good case that Scientific Romance is the dominant tradition of sf (speculative fiction, itself a strand in the larger field of fantastic literature), and Agenda SF — as defined above — is a mere commercial blip which has left very little of any consequence, save providing markets for a couple of writers to hone their skills.)
- So much for omissions. Included are such sf megastars as Mildred Clingerman, Eddy C. Berlin, Lino Adair, Wolfgang Jeschke and Adam Wisniewski-Snorg (gesundheit!), all of whom have apparently shaped the genre in the last century. Er...
- One can always quarrel with selections in anthologies, of course. But the problem here is that Hartwell has very deliberately set himself up as an arbiter of genre: the book is targeted at a non-genre audience, and he aims to give a representative view of the field to those unfamiliar with it. Thus he roves in London and Lewis and Forster to show it's Proper Literature. Which is fair enough, but there really seems no excuse for some of his omissions.
- But enough. There's lots more to argue with, both in the splendidly contentious Introduction and the selection itself, which I'll leave to my esteemed and far more insightful colleagues on Vector to mull over at leisure.



Editor and critic **David Hartwell** (see review at right) at the World Fantasy Convention last October, photographed by **Roger Robinson**.

## Key

pb = paperback; hb = hardback; tp = trade (large format) paperback; pp = extent ill. = illustrated; ed = edited; R (x) = reissue / reprint (first publication date)  
 > x = review in Vector #x; dte: GN = Graphic Novel; ab = AudioBook; YA = Young Adult coll. = story collection (same author); ant = anthology (different authors)  
 ★ = Highlight ☆ = Editor's choice ☆ = 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.sjckeb.demon.co.uk/topbsfa.htm> —



## Orbit



Including Little, Brown, Warner, Legend

**Paul M. Sammon** *The Making of Starship Troopers* (Little, Brown: £5 Jan; £9.99 tp, 152pp ill.) — From the author of the highly-praised *Future Noir*, about the making of *Blade Runner*. For this he was on-set throughout the filming, and worked on it as a stills photographer and actor.

**Simon Archer & Stan Nicholls** *Gerry Anderson: The Authorised Biography* (Legend: 15 Jan; £7.99 tp, 228pp ill., index) — Amiable biography of the creator of *Thunderbirds* etc. There are also touching afterwords about Simon Archer's tragic death in a car crash before the book was finished by Gerry, Stan (who completed it) and Simon's sister.

**Alan Dean Foster** *The Howling Stars* (5 Feb. £5.99 pb and 300p) — St, set in the 'Human: Commonwealth'. A paradisaic planet of thousands of island nation-states has vast untapped mineral wealth. Humans and their enemy the AAnn Empire contest for mining rights, and the stakes increase when the apparently simple natives are discovered to be using extremely advanced technology.

**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** *Divided Allegiance* (5 Feb. £9.99 pb, 522pp) — Heroic fantasy, book two of 'The Deed of Paksenarrder'. Moon uses her experience in the US Marines in the 60s to give her books 'a gritty realism that is all too rare in current fantasy'. First published in 1988, though I've been unable to discover if it's previously been available in the UK.

**David Brin** *The Postman* (Feb. 1985) (£5.99 pb) — Tie-in to the film. — Apr 86  
**L. E. Modesitt Jr** *The Sorcerer* (£5 Feb. £6.99 pb, 658pp) — Fantasy, first in the new series 'The Spellstone Cycle'. A music teacher at Iowa State University is drawn into the fantasyland Erde, and finds her singing has magical powers. Look: there's a map!

**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 left to wander the Earth accompanied by his rabbi, who has taken the form of a cat. A debut novel which 'weaves magical occurrences with vivid real events.'

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

**Paul Barnett** *Strider's Universe* (1 Mar. £5.99 pb, c352pp) — Tasty space opera, second

volume of the 'Strider Chronicles'. Retitled from *Kaantalech* and rescheduled from Nov 97.  
**Richard Rudgley** *The Encyclopedia of Psychoactive Substances* (1 Mar. £18.99 hb, c320pp ill.) — Encyclopedic survey of historical and contemporary drugs, with legal notes and chemical information.

**J. Allan Hobson** *The Chemistry of Conscious States* (1 Mar. £9.99 tp, 300pp) — Do states of mind have an electrochemical basis?

**★ Richard Calder** *Cythera* (1 Mar. £5.99 pb, c288pp) — Reality-bending sf from the author of 'The Dead...'. Cythera, who has recently moved back to the UK from Thailand. A man and his media-created ghost companion wander Antarctica and Bangkok, chased by the authorities and in search of the mythic island Cythera. 'Bizarre, perverse and brilliant. Cythera will confirm Calder's place at the cutting edge of sf.'

**K. C. Cole** *The Universe and the Teacup* (1 Mar. £12.99 tp, c224pp) — Non-fiction, subtitled 'The Mathematics of Truth and Beauty'; aims to reveal how mathematics 'gets us to the fundamental truths of the universe'. Cole, a woman, is a science editor on the *Los Angeles Times*.

**Chris Bunch** *The Demon King* (1 Mar. £9.99 tp, c528pp) — Fantasy, sequel to *The Seer King*.

**Kathy Blake** *Handmade Books* (1 Mar. £16.99 tp, c128pp ill.) — Craft book about, um, crafting your own books.

**★ Tad Williams** *Otherland* (5 Mar. £5.99 pb, 943pp) — First volume of a four-part of meganovel using virtual reality to explore universes ranging from World War 1 to Wonderland, ancient Egypt to near-future Africa. 'A rich and complex adventure story' says the PR, and it's true: while it's not award-winning material it's a great page-turning read, and is recommended.

**Margaret Weis & Tracy Hickman** *The Mantle of Kenda-Dai* (1 Apr. £5.99 pb, c432pp) — Science fantasy set in the new *Starwars* universe.

**David Thomson** *Beneath Mulholland* (1 Apr. £20.00 hb, c288pp) — Subtitled 'Thoughts on Hollywood and its Ghosts', this is a coll. of essays about the way Hollywood actors and characters become part of our shared reality and gain a kind of ghostly existence. Also takes in alternative history when Thomson imagines the career James Dean might have followed and what Travolta's character in *Saturday Night Fever* would have become in real life. Other films examined include the fabulous *Chinatown* and *Vertigo*.

**★ Tom Holt** *Wish You Were Here* (1 Apr. £15.99 hb, 320pp) — Comic fantasy. Like *Chico* in America has a legend: immerse yourself in its waters and the ghost of *Okeana* will give you your heart's desire. A group of tourists pay a visit, and young Wesley Higgins from Birmingham decides to try it out....

## Orion



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

**John & Anne Spencer** *True Life Encounters: Alien Contact* (1 Dec 97; 313pp indexed)

**Alan Baker** *True Life Encounters: UFO Sightings* (1 Dec 97; 291pp indexed)

**Keith Tuft** *True Life Encounters: Unexplained Natural Phenomena* (1 Dec 97; 309pp indexed) — So-Fi Channel tie-in books on 'true-life tales of the unexplained'. I opened the last of these and looked for something interesting — ah, the 'Face on Mars'. Here's the very first sentence I read: 'In 1976 two Viking probes entered orbit around Mars at an altitude of 1,000 feet.' Pardon? A very short-lived orbit, one imagines... look, if these kind of books are to have any credibility at all they really do have to get simple facts right. Reserve the rubbish for the Big Lie, eh?

**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* (1 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* (1 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: £1 Feb; £9.99 pb, 64pp) — Essays on the impact of Darwinism on today's society. Titles are *John Maynard Smith Evolution and the Embryo*, *Robert Foley & Marta 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*.

**★ Mickey Zucker Reichert** *Prince of Demons* (2 Feb; £9.99 pb, 622pp) — Fantasy, the fifth 'Renshal' novel. The first four are also being reissued.

**Leslie Forbes** *Bombay Fire* (Phoenix: £1 Mar. £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 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. 'Riot fires his best weapon is not a gun but her knowledge of science.'

**James Bibby** *Ronan's Revenge* (1 Mar. £16.99 hb, 256pp) — Humorous sf, allegedly.

**John Gribbin** *O's For Quantum* (Weidenfeld: 1 Mar. £20.00 hb, 512pp) — A Z guide to particle physics from the fine science populariser.

**★ Rick Alexander** (ed.) *The Unexplained* (1 Mar. £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 416pp) — Follow-up to Alexander's well-received reprint anth. *Cyber Killers*. It's themed on the paranormal, but the list of contributors shows that it's a long way from its 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.

**Chris Salewicz** *George Lucas* (1 Mar. £9.99 tp, 144pp ill.) — Anecdotal biography of the creator of *Star Wars*, concentrating on his approach to movie-making. Also includes all the *Variety* reviews of his films.

**Gillian Rubinstein** *Foxspell* (1 Mar. £9.99 hb, £3.99 pb, 172pp) — YA contemporary fantasy from the author of the 'Space Demons' trilogy, about a boy who escapes his desperate problems by observing a fox so closely he almost becomes one. *Children's Book of the Year* in Australia.

**★ Lucius Shepard** *Barnacle Bill the Spacer* (Mar. £5.99 pb) — Paperback coll. of Shepard's recent shorts.

**★ Lucius Shepard** *Green Eyes* (Mar. 1984) (£5.99 pb) — Reissue of Shepard's superbly imagined novel about a scientific way of creating zombies, darkly set in the Deep South. Highly recommended.

**★ Lucius Shepard** *Life During Wartime* (Mar. 1987) (£5.99 pb) — Reissue of a rather choked (but beautifully written, as always) future war novel. — Aug 88

**David Gelernter** *The Aesthetics of Computing* (Weidenfeld: 1 Mar. £12.99 hb, 160pp) — This promotes 'the importance of a criterion of beauty in valuing the best of computers and software, and deplores the effects of a two-cultures approach that sees beauty and computing as incompatible concepts... a manifesto for computer users, programmers, designers and manufacturers'.

**★ Sarah Ash** *The Lost Child* (1 Mar. £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 320pp) — Dark fantasy from the thoughtful author of *Moths To a Flame* and *Songspingers*. A child is murdered in an exile and reviled community, and in the subsequent chaos members of the community start questioning their place in the world. 'Rich with the imagery of ritual and magic.'

**★ Richard White** (ed.) *King Arthur in Legend and History* (Dent: Apr. £14.99 tp, 400pp) — Anth. of Arthurian writings.

**★ Tricia Sullivan** *Dreaming In Smoke* (1 Apr. £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp) — St, follow-up (both chronologically and thematically) to her splendid *Someone to Watch Over Me*. Induced dreaming is an integral part of life in First, the AI-controlled protective environment where human colonists live and work. When a dreamer goes berserk the AI staff starts to go haywire and suspicions arise that a virus has entered the machine via a dreaming port. But is it inorganic or an alien lifeform?

**★ Tricia Sullivan** *Someone to Watch Over Me* (Apr. £5.99 pb) — St.

**★ Robert Brier** *The Murder of Tutankhamen* (Weidenfeld: 1 Apr. £20.00 hb, 356pp) — Non-fiction. Brier claims to discovered forensic and documentary evidence that the Boy King was murdered.

**★ Poppy Z. Brite** *Courtney Love* (Apr. £5.99 pb) — Associational biography of the rock singer and actress, sadly (and surprisingly, given the subject and the writer) lacking in sleazy sex and violence.

**Alan Baker** *True Life Encounters: Ghosts and Spirits* (1 Apr. £27.99 tp, 320pp) — Fourth So-Fi Channel tie-in book on 'true-life tales of the unexplained'.

**Adam Nichols** *The Paladin* (Apr. £5.99 pb) — Fantasy.

**Linda Javlin** *Roll in 'Roll Bares From Outer Space* (Orion: 1 Apr. £5.99 pb, 304pp) — Javlin enters Space Gem Territory with this 'hilarious erotic romp'. These spunky alien babes are trapped on the most boring planet in the entire 'yove', whatever that is; they 'steal a spaceship and arrive at Sydney, Earth, in search of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll'. The blurb gloats: 'The big bang was never so much fun.'

**lan Wilson** *The Blood and the Shroud* (Weidenfeld: 1 Apr. £20.00 hb, 256pp ill.) — Non-fiction. Presents the arguments for and against the authenticity of the Turin Shroud.

# The Rest



**S. V. D'ate Final Orbit** (Avon: 5 Nov 97, \$5.99 pb, 342pp) — S. V. D'ate looks like something stamped on a bounced cheque, but Shriv's V. D'ate is a reporter on an Orlando newspaper who covered NASA for some years. This, his first novel, is a technothriller involving a death on the Shuttle and the subsequent investigation by a veteran astronaut sent into space to investigate (timely, given that John Glenn is due to be shot into orbit soon). He discovers the usual cover-ups and conspiracies. D'ate wrote the book in the year he spent sailing back and forth across the Atlantic on his boat, which beats moonlighting from MacDonald's.

**Michael Moorcock Fabulous Harbours** (Avon: 5 Nov, \$12.00 pb, 228pp) — Second volume in the trilogy begun with *Blood* and completed in *The War Amongst the Angels*. This is a series of eleven interlinked club stories, written between 1993 and 96.

★ (ed.) **Herzogen (Crocus Books)**: 6 Jan, £3.00 pb) — Anth. of "sixteen original flights of fantasy and thrilling sci-fi stories from women who... make us think again, and look with new eyes at fantasy traditions which have until recently been dominated by men." No info yet on the editor or contributors, though Lisa Tuttle appears to be involved. Available from Commonword, Chetworth House, 21 Newton Street, Manchester, M1 1FZ. Tel: 0161 238 2773.

**Michael Moorcock D'ate's Dreams** (Hawker: 6 Jan 98, £5.50 pb) — Coll. of much of Moorcock's poetry and song lyrics. Available post-free (cheques/POs payable to 'B. Tawn') from 27 Burdett Road, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE13 2PR.

**Peter Anghelides Doctor Who: Karsaal** (BBC: 6 Jan 98, £4.99 pb, 282pp) — The Doctor doesn't take a day trip to Southend, but visits a theme-park pleasure world with trusty companion Sam. Eco-terrorists want to halt the development to protect archeological sites of an alien race thought extinct, but the Doctor knows better.

**David A. McIntee Doctor Who: The Face of the Enemy** (BBC: 6 Jan 98, £4.99 pb, 281pp) — Actually a Brigadier-only adventure with the Master poking his nose into contemporary Britain and apparently involved in the escalating gang warfare that's plaguing the country even though he's locked up. Meanwhile, UNIT investigates a plane that's crashed with mysterious damage that appears to have Earth origins, and the Brigadier is reluctantly forced to call the Master in to help. Also features Ian and Barbara, who if memory serves were the Doctor's very first companions back in 1963. This actually looks rather interesting, give it a try.

★ **Keith Roberts Lemay: Episodes of a Writer's Life** (Borgo Press: 6 Jan, £7, ISBNs 0-8095-3101-1 (pb), 0-8095-2101-6 (hbk)) — Keith Roberts, author of the classic *Pavane* and many other wonderful novels, has been seriously ill for some time, and this will possibly be his last book. It's a blend of fiction and autobiography, described by Phil Stephenson-Payne as "possibly Keith's best work to date... giving a fascinating insight into the English publishing scene which he moved... Keith himself is obviously too ill to promote the book to any degree, but I do know that he is very proud of it [as he should be]. You should be able to get it from import and specialist dealers or order it from larger bookshops. Recommended unless. **Chris Firth** (Maastricht) (Springboard: 6 Jan, £7) — Few details about this, but it appears to be dark horror / humour. Springboard is a new publisher which "exists to publish first title novels by new writers". Available from: Clare Clon, Springboard Fiction, Yorkshire Arts Circus, School Lane, Glasshouse, Catterick, WF10 4QH. Tel: 01977 550401. Web: [www.articircus.demon.co.uk](http://www.articircus.demon.co.uk)

**Warren Ellis, Gordon Rennie, Paolo Pareto, Davide Fabri et al Starship Troopers** (Titan: 6 Jan, £9.99 pb, unpaginated) — Tie-in GN to the film, "inspired by" the Heinlein novel. This managed to put me right off seeing the film (though after hearing reports from friends and reading the reviews in this *Matrix* I'm reconsidering). It's appallingly violent and crudely drawn, without ever having the courage of its convictions: the nude shower scene, for instance, is horribly coy. Why is it OK to show the insides of horribly mutilated bodies to children but pornographic to show them the outside of perfectly healthy ones? I really get quite angry about this kind of thing.

**Justin Richards Doctor Who: Option Lock** (BBC: 6 Feb, £4.99 pb, 281pp) — A contemporary take with the Doctor and Sam. Secret societies, mysterious paintings, threats of nuclear war, a US space station that even the President doesn't know about, terrible conspiracies... Richards was the co-author of the entertaining *Doctor Who Book of Lists*. **Steve Snyder Laying Siege To Tomorrow** (Hilltop Press: 6 Feb, £2.70 pb, 112p, ISBN 0-905262-16-6) — Poetry in UK of fanzines from the 1930s to the 1950s — includes full bibliography of poems, extracts which include early work by John Christopher, Ben Bulmer and Ted Tubb, and subjects from sf and fantasy to the reality of war and the Blitz. Illustrated with contemporary covers. Price includes P&P: cheques/POs payable to 'Steve Snyder', available from Hilltop Press, 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HDS 8PB.

★ **Mervyn Peake Tisbe** (Vintage: Feb (R 1946), £5.99 pb, 512pp)

★ **Mervyn Peake Gormenghast** (Vintage: Feb (R 1950), £5.99 pb, 512pp)

★ **Mervyn Peake Tisbe Alone** (Vintage: Feb (R 1959, rev. by Langdon Jones 1970), £5.99 pb, 272pp) — Reprint of one of the best fantasies ever written. If you haven't read the "Tisbe" sequence, I really do urge you to do so — it is superb. "Something of a masterpiece," says John Clute in *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, "and certainly sui generis." One of a kind it certainly is. Peake was a war artist who entered Belsen, and though this terrible experience isn't directly reflected in his work his eye for grim detail and arrow-sharp perception permeates his writing. I first read this when I was about 18, and though a number of re-reads has only gained in power (unlike *Lord of the Rings*, with which it's sometimes compared to the latter's considerable detriment).

**Jim Mortimore Doctor Who: Eye of Heaven** (BBC: 6 Feb, £4.99 pb, 277pp) — The Doctor and Leela answer a newspaper ad in 1872 placed by an archaeologist who wants to revisit Easter Island, where thirty years before he had stolen a sacred stone tablet, left his companions to die and claimed to have seen the famous statues walk.

**Raffi Zabor The Bear Comes Home** (Cape: 6 Feb, £9.99 pb, 480pp) — Fantasy about a sax-playing, Shakespeare-quoting bear who finds fame in New York jazz clubs.

**Dennis Danvers Circuit of Heaven** (Avon: Feb, \$14.00 hb, 373pp) — A century hence, most of humanity exists in the 'Bin', a virtual reality environment.

**Ann Patchett The Magician's Assistant** (Fourth Estate: 6 Feb 98, £14.99 hb, c256pp) — In Los Angeles, Sabine was apprenticed to 20 years to the gay magician Parsifal. Now he and his lover have gone, and Sabine journey to snow-bound Nebraska to discover his mysterious past.

**Jenny Randless Truly Weird: Real-life Cases of the Paranormal** (Collins & Brown: 6 Feb 98, £14.99 hb, 160pp il.) — Twenty weird events and the evidence for them.

★ **Carmel Morris Paper Planes** (Collins & Brown: 6 Feb, £14.99 pb, 128pp il.) — "Over 30 designs plus 24 colour, ready-to-fold planes." And just in time for Easter! (You don't think con-gers actually read all those publicity flyers, do you?)

**Ron Miller & Pamela Sargent Firebrands** (Paper Tiger: 6 Feb, £7 pb, 112pp il.) — Portraits of the heroes of science fiction, with text by Sargent.

**Russell Hoban Mr Rinyo-Clacton's Offer** (Cape: 6 Mar, £15.99 hb, 192pp) — Associational new novel from the author of *Ridley Walker*, a lovely story set in London.

**Gary Krist Bad Chemistry** (Fourth Estate: 6 Mar, £9.99 pb, 368pp) — Literary technothriller about smart drugs and Internet-assisted crime.

**Sheridan Le Fanu Camilla** (Saro Press: Mar, £13.00 hb, 83pp, ISBN 1-902309-00-6) — First publication from a new small press imprint dedicated to high quality limited editions of classic and modern supernatural stories. Camilla, first published in 1871/2 in *The Dark Blue*, is a vampire story that was an acknowledged inclusion on Stoker's Dracula. Limited edition of 300 copies, available post free (payable to 'Saro Press') from Saro Press, 'Byrdenway', 41 Forest View, Mountain Ash, Mid Glamorgan, CF45 3DU. Tel: 01443 472322.

**Mark Myriss Pym** (Fourth Estate: 6 Mar, £10.99 pb, 368pp) — Contemporary literary fantasy, a tale of a male stripper who also happens to be the grandson of a goddess, son of Achilles and fighter at the siege of Troy.

★ **Elizabeth A. Lynn Dragon's Winter** (Macmillan: 6 Mar, £16.99 hb, 358pp) — Fantasy. Lynn's first novel for over 15 years. She wrote the sf novel *A Different Light* in 1976, and in the early 80s her 'Chronicles of Terror' fantasy trilogy won much praise, with its first volume, *Watchtower* winning the World Fantasy Award; she's been largely silent since then, apart from a coll. in 1990 and some light children's fiction. This is the story of twin brothers who could not be more opposed in nature — one a dragon changeling who inherits the kingdom, the other a jealous and bitter man who becomes a sorcerer in order to win his brother's inheritance. But the changeling fights back...

★ **Charles de Lint Somewhere To Be Flying** (Macmillan: 6 Mar, £16.99 hb, 465pp) — Contemporary urban fantasy from the prolific Canadian musician, artist and writer. This is a mixture of old European and Native American mythology, in which 'animal people' are found to exist in the city of Newford: Raven, Coyote, crows and others. Old forces stir, and the city becomes a war zone.

**Peter Ackroyd The Life of Thomas More** (Chatto & Windus: 6 Apr, £20.00 hb, 512pp il.) — Associational biography of Thomas More, who gave us the idea of Utopia.

**John Seabrook Deeper** (Faber: Mar, £6.99 pb, 288pp) — Non-fiction account of the early years of the Net, from a user's viewpoint. 'Invaluable' says Brian Eno, and he should know.

★ **John Marc Delatelle & Jon J. Muth The Complete Moonshadow** (Titan: 20 Mar, £24.99 pb, 468pp) — Complete edition of the acclaimed adult GN, which comes laden with praise from Ray Bradbury and Michael Moorcock. Also includes the illustrated prose sequel *Farwell Moonshadow* and material previously unpublished. Beautifully illustrated in watercolour by Muth, it's an adult fairy tale of a young man's coming of age; Moonshadow, the misbegotten son of the hippy girl Sunflower and a grinning alien lightglobe, was raised in an intergalactic zoo on the byrons of Byron and Shelley. At 14 he's kicked out into the universe, accompanied by the lecherous and grumpy Ira and his mum's cat Frodo. This sounds rather twee in summary, but it all works splendidly. And though expensive, you get a hell of a lot for your money. Recommended.

★ **Bo Fowler Scepticism Inc.** (Cape: 6 Apr, £9.99 pb, 288pp) — Fowler is a new writer and graduate of Malcolm Bradbury's Creative Writing course at East Anglia University. This satirical debut novel (spot the Dick reference) is narrated by a God-obsessed supermarket trolley born in 2022. It — or he — meets Edgar Mallow, who takes bets on metaphysical propositions and never loses.

**Jim Shepard Nosferatu: A Novel** (Faber: 6 Apr, £9.99 pb, 160pp) — Fictional retelling of the life of F. W. Murnau, maker of the silent vampire film classic *Nosferatu*.

★ **Mike Ashley (ed.) The Mammoth Book of Comic Fantasy** (Raven: Apr, £5.99 pb, 512pp) — Anth. containing material from Pratchett, Adams, Milligan, Holt and many others, including 'rare gems from comic fantasy's roots down the ages'.

**Anne Rice Pandora** (Chatto & Windus: 6 Apr, £12.99 pb, 224pp) — First in a new series of short vampire novels, the story of the eponymous vampire last seen in *Queen of the Damned*.

**Thomas Pynchon Mason & Dixon** (Vintage: Apr, £5.99 pb, 784pp)

**Mario Vargas Llosa The Notebooks Of Don Rigoberto** (Faber: 6 Apr, £16.99 hb, 385pp) — New novel weaving fantasy and reality from the author of the wonderful *Aunt Julia* and the *Scorpion*.

**Grant Morrison, Phil Jimenez & John Stokes The Invisibles: Bloody Hell In America** (Titan: 6 Apr, £9.99 pb, 104pp) — Adult GN. 'Every paranoid fantasy, every conspiracy theory, every alleged cover-up and government deception, every crank story you've ever heard... it's all true.' A motley crew of shamans, occultists and terminally hip dropouts descend themselves following the Apocalypse in 2012. Interesting, funny, full-mouthed and well drawn, you can also amuse yourself notching up the popcult hype-points by spotting the references: Kula Shaker, nanotech, Disney, Doom, and Uncle Postmodern and all...

**Colin Bruce The Strange Case of Mrs Hudson's Cat** (Vintage: 6 Apr, £7.99 pb, 320pp) — Holmes and Watson use the basic laws of science — mechanics, thermodynamics, relativity and quantum mechanics — to solve a dozen 'baffling cases of science gone mad and nature gone murderous'.

# mailbox

## LETTERS TO MATRIX

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

Send letters to *Matrix*

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

Or email ..... [bsfa@enterprise.net](mailto: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

David Curl

19 Hilldrop Crescent, Holloway, London,  
N7 0UF

Yes Arthur C. Clarke is right ("Aspects of Science Fiction", *Matrix* 129) to note the vast influence that science fiction has had within popular music. He name-checks David Bowie, whose music, especially from the early to mid-seventies, is certainly saturated in science-fiction imagery, and Sting. (As far as Sting's concerned, I'll take Clarke's word for it.)

But there's also Kraftwerk, whose

electronic soundscapes "The Robots", "Metropolis", "Autobahn", "Computerlove" and so on suggest the future that some of the science fiction of the 1930s was looking towards. To me, Kraftwerk are less portentous and more 'sorted' than, say, Vangelis or Jean-Michel Jarre, while also conveying more yearningly some sort of real eternally unfulfilled desire for a cleaner, more technological world in which people are peaceable, sane, intelligent and alike. Kraftwerk's method of self-presentation, notably the sending of futuristic-looking, smartly dressed manne-

quins along to photoshoots in lieu of the composers themselves thus allowing more time for the actual work of music-making, also ended to follow this admirable Fabian dream. And there's also Stereolab, influenced alike by Marxist doctrine, fifties and sixties science-fiction-for-children imagery, and the easy-listening movement; for the Stereolab beginner, I would highly recommend the albums *Transient Random Noise Bursts With Announcements*, *Mars Audiac Quintet* and *Emperor Tomato Ketchup*, and/or catching them live sometime. ☺

Ernest Rayer James

31 Castle Street, Sipton, N. Yorks,  
BD23 2DH

I AM ALWAYS astounded by the excellence of the BSFA publications, produced not for profit but for love of the genre. Vector 197 and *Matrix* 129 are well up to standard for production and interest and have been read and enjoyed, even though I fear I am not active help either to them or fandom in general. Messrs Kincaid, Baxter, Stableford are all to be praised, as well as other luminaries.

But I particularly liked Arthur C. Clarke's own exposition. Reading, for enjoyment, is such an individual and transient pastime that I have to admit that, although I am a contemporary of Sir Arthur and even spent most of my youth in Somerset, I have never greatly enjoyed his fiction. Its obvious merit left me personally unimpressed, and I still feel that this is his loss.

Not so with his achievements. I did manage to light a sort of dim candle, but he as an individual has been a genuine supernova of unique power, and has gained a well-deserved status in the world. My admiration for this has no bounds.

With these two reactions to him in mind, I read his "Aspects of Science Fiction", and found it so full of what I believe to be truths that I felt I had to compliment him on producing it, and you on printing it. Thanks to you both. ☺

• And that's it this time, perhaps unsurprisingly given the Royal Mail's treatment of the last mailing, the @!\$%\$\$. Please try to write, or people will think I'm talking to myself. .... Chris

## points arising

• *By the way*, notes Dave Langford, responding to my comments on Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* in *Matrix* 129, the protagonist... is Filipino (the clue being that his family speaks Tagalog in private), which is a bit of a step from black. I think it's Eucine in *I Will Fear No Evil* who is unobviously black; apathy deters me from rereading this one, but I dimly remember a hint being dropped in connection with the colours of all-over body make up designs?

• Paul Bennett writes: "In *Matrix* 128 you give contact details for the Libertarian Alliance, which featured in Ken MacLeod's article in the previous issue. I wonder if you could also include this information about another organisation which was mentioned in the same article.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain can be contacted at 52 Clapham High Street, London, SW4 7UN. Phone: 0171 622 3811. Email: [wor1dan@compuserve.com](mailto:wor1dan@compuserve.com)

• **Corrections Dept:** Mark Plummer did not win the *Fanwerth Nova* in 1996, as claimed on page 6 of *Matrix* 129—that honour went to Alison Freebairn. • Also on page 6, it's Bridget Hardcastle, not Bridget Wilkinson, who is standing for TAFF this year. My apologies to everybody. • Joe Haldeman's sequel to *The Forever War* is called *The Forever Peace*, not *Forever Free* as reported in *Matrix* 128.

• **Free Book!** As a number of people haven't seen the last mailing, we've decided to extend the competition to win a copy of John Grant & Ron Tiner's wonderful *Encyclopedia of Fantasy and Science Fiction Art Techniques* (worth £12.99, and courtesy of Titan Books). We still have a copy left, so if you'd like it answer this question: What is the name of John Grant's space-opera heroine? (Hint: think *Lord of the Rings*.) Send your answer on a postcard to the editorial address to arrive before 1 April.

### • BSFA Best British SF Novel Poll

We've got into a terrible mess over this! My apologies to Andy Butler for the confusion over the eligibility period, which is definitely the last FIFTY years, not forty as I thought. See Andy's piece elsewhere for further details, but it's worth repeating here: we're looking for your FIVE nominations for the best novel by a British-born author published between 1948 and 1998, ranked if possible. Annotations are welcome, and the deadline for nominations is 30 June 1998 so you've got plenty of time to write. Send entries and queries to Andy Butler, 33 Brook View Drive, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5JN. Email: [vector-bsafgrockets@a11.com](mailto:vector-bsafgrockets@a11.com) with the subject line 'Poll'.

You may find Paul Kincaid's history of UK SF at *A Very British Genre* extremely useful for inspiration. It lists nearly every significant work of British SF. It is FREE to all BSFA members, so if you haven't got a copy write to Maureen Kincaid Speller, 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ.

Oxford



OXFORD

Including OUP, World's Classics

Gerrit L. Verschuur *Impact! The Threat of Comets and Asteroids* (OUP: Feb; £9.99 pb, 256pp) — "A detailed and alarming account of the meteors and comets that have struck the Earth."

Padmal de Silva & Jack Rachman *Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: The Facts* (OUP: 2nd ed. Feb; £9.99 pb, 128pp) — "If you've read Dick's *Clans of the Alphane Moon* (and sundry other novels) you may find this of some interest. And if you've read Greg Bear's recent *Slant* you might want to take a look at:

Mary Robertson & Simon Baron-Cohen *Tourette's Syndrome: The Facts* (OUP: Feb; £12.99 pb, 112pp) (S)

★ Michio Kaku *Visions: How Science Will Revolutionize the 21st Century and Beyond* (OUP: Mar; £18.99 hb) — Kaku is Professor of Theoretical Physics at the University of New York, and in this intriguing book — which looks similar to Clarke's classic *Profiles of the Future* — he uses cutting-edge science to extrapolate a picture of developments to 2100 and beyond. Around 2050, for instance, he thinks that "robots will attain consciousness... beginnings of rockets which can reach near-by stars... plans to form the first colonies in space... will duplicate the neural patterns of the brain onto a computer".

William R. Clark *The New Healers: The Promise and Problems of Molecular Medicine in the 21st Century* (OUP: Mar; £16.00 hb, 240pp) — Genetic therapy and its implications from a Professor of Immunology at UCLA.

Jules Verne *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (World's Classic: Mar; £5.99 pb, 320pp) — New translation by William Butcher.

Simon Conway Morris *The Crucible of Creation: The Burgess Shale and the Rise of Animals* (OUP: Mar; £18.99 hb, 320pp) — Challenges the views of Dawkins and Stephen Gould on the unique and controversial Canadian fossil find.

★ John D. Barrow *Impossibility: The Limits of Science and the Science of Limits* (OUP: Apr; £18.99 hb, 256pp) — "How much further can science go?" asks physicist Barrow, in this fabulous-looking book of speculative science. He looks at time, the limits of computers, paradoxes and paradigms, free will and consciousness. A book for admirers of Greg Egan (which certainly includes me).

Thomas Malory *Le Morte Darthur* (World's Classics: Mar; £7.99 pb, 824pp) — Annotated and abridged by Helen Cooper.

James MacKillop (ed.) *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (OUP: Apr; £30.00 hb, 432pp) — 4,000 entries form the definitive reference guide to Celtic mythology, including extended essays on story cycles such as the *Mabinogion*.

John Emsley *Molecules At An Exhibition: Portraits of Intriguing Materials in Everyday Life* (OUP: Apr; £18.99 hb, 256pp) — Answers in popular form such posers as: what in chocolate makes us feel good? What is Nature's sleeping pill? What radioactive lifesaver should be in every home? And many others.

Edgar Allan Poe *Selected Tales* (World's Classics: Apr; £2.50 pb, 352pp) — Cheap new selection of classic stories, with most of the famous ones.

Brian L. Silver *The Ascent of Science* (OUP: Apr; £25.00 hb, 480pp) — "A sweeping and dynamic history of the whole of Western science, from the Renaissance to the present." **Charles Issawi** *Cross-Cultural Encounters and Conflicts* (OUP: Apr; £20.00 hb, 208pp) — Much of it concerned with cultural conflict — human/animal war, first-contact stories — and this coil of essays could provide useful background reading.

A. S. Byatt *The Oxford Book of English Short Stories* (OUP: Apr; £19.99 hb, 550pp) — Of some interest as Byatt has included a number of sf, fantasy and horror stories, including work from J. G. Ballard and Angela Carter.

# Matrix A-Z of writing classic hard-boiled fiction

- 1 Read Gibson, Cadigan, Noon and early Sterling (essential)
- 2 Take a lot of street drugs (illegal)
- 3 If you don't like smart drugs (legal, but untested)
- 4 Invest in a black leather jacket pre-scoured (optional)
- 5 Make sure your web <meta keywords> include sex, violence and redemption (recommended)
- 6 Then use and develop at least ten of the following entries . . .

# JON • COURT punk fiction

Jon Courtenay Grimwood's loosely-connected trilogy of cyberpunk sf novels began with *neoAddix* last year, and the second, *Lucifer's Dragon*, is just out from Hodder at £5.99. He's just finished the third, *reMix*. Here he links crime fiction with cyberpunk, and presents an A-Z how-to guide for hard-boiled writers . . .

## AI

Artificial Intelligence. Also known as the Turing factor. Als were meant to solve the world's problems, but ended up in toasters arguing about how brown you wanted your bread.

## Ballerina

A female assassin. At least you die elegantly.

## Cortex Fucker

Explosive device implanted in the skull. Replaced contracts as means of employee control at most publishing houses.

## DDR

An expert in Difficult Data Retrieval, which is a nice way of saying a hacker. Most people who say they are, aren't. Most people who are, want to get out (preferably alive).

## Edge, The

Where the mean streets are located. When it's not an actual wrong side of the tracks location it's a state of mind, usually amphetamine fuelled.

## Fixer

Any go-between or deal-maker. Where you go when everything fails (take money).

## Giri

Japanese word for a debt of honour or an unavoidable obligation. These are usually dangerous and often fatal (unless you happen to be the hero). Alternatively, try Gomi, the Japanese word for garbage.

## High Rider

A dweller in space. Usually lives in a ring colony or an O'Neill. Sounds fun but the downside is brittle bones and wasted muscles. Also watch out for explosive decompression (obligatory, especially in 'Aliens' movies).

FIRST OFF, does cyberculture still exist? Or has it gone the way of techno, house and rock 'n' roll: chewed up by modern culture and spat back as just one design element of many, to be used in fashion spreads, ad campaigns and kids' tv? (And if you don't like the music references, you can replace them with Bill Burroughs cut-ups, beat poetry and Soviet Realism, the result's the same). Come to that, did mainstream cyberculture ever exist as a separate entity outside a small enclave of teen hackers, US college courses and *Wired* magazine . . . ? I don't think so – it was an academic construct fed off the techno facet of early rave culture, a counterbalance to all that late 80s / early 90s New Age mysticism.

Cyberculture didn't create cyberpunk, it came out of cyberpunk, just as surely as the hard, object-fetish edges of CP came out of early 80s materialism. And what ended up as CP – but got called everything from the outlaw technologists to the neuroromantics – was just a transitory step in the long-term development of hard-boiled fiction. We might talk about the influence of Harlan Ellison or the streetwise debt CP owes to Norman Spinrad and Michael Moorcock. Or its debt to K. W. Jeter's *Red Adair* or the influence of Brunner's *The Shockwave Rider*. Not to mention the even greater spiritual debt owed to J. G. Ballard. But – in public perception at least – cybernoir went mainstream not through books but through the cinematic imagination of one man, Ridley Scott.

Almost by accident, the mean streets got relocated. Not to Moscow as Martin Cruz Smith did with *Gorky Park* or into history as Philip Kerr later did with his 'Berlin Noir' series, back in the days before he got all clever. Nor to any other of the places writers went looking for new exotic locations, but into the future as a counterblast to the down-home freshness of *Star Wars* and the science-can-save-you naivety of *Star Trek*. The Force wasn't out there, the Prime Directive was a pile of

Prime Shit: only the mean streets existed and they weren't just mean anymore, they were mean plus.

*Blade Runner's* strength was in its wholesale stylistic pilaging of 1940s film noir. It was a style statement first, second. We all know the school of thought that says if you can't extrapolate your technology from whatever's appearing in the current pages of *New Scientist* then it's not real sf, because anything based on science that doesn't yet exist has to be fantasy. Just as we all know the popular prejudice that says if a story's set in the future then it has to be sf, unless it's written by a Booker-contender and then it's art. But I believe that the fiction currently marketed as cult – and in the past variously marketed as cyberpunk, CP and cybernoir – stands not just between sf and fantasy, but between sf and crime fiction in general. As a genre it pillages other genres mercilessly, borrowing without apology. The action is hard but the science is soft. Steve Baxter mentioned recently that the big problem he had with Michael Marshall Smith's *Spares* was the idea of giant flying shopping malls, they just didn't stack up as science. Which is true – they don't. Nor can we walk through gaps in reality into a retreat version of *Apocalypse Now*. But equally, as a punk-fiction enthusiast I found myself asking, does it matter? No one I know really believes in the possibility of a paranoid android called Marvin or a Mancunian-based drug dealer that can flip you into another reality, but everyone instantly knew exactly what Douglas Adams and Jeff Noon were talking about . . .

Leaving aside the argument that all fiction is fantasy since it isn't reality, I think that most hard-boiled sf is actually fantasy. More or less by definition, it follows tight rules of the kind that usually define the dreamed F-world; and they're not rules of science but rules of spirit. (I'm waiting eagerly for Diana Wynne Jones's *Tough Guide to Tough Fiction*). It's been an axiom of hard-boiled fiction from Chandler onwards that the drugs of choice,

## Icebreaker

Archaic term for any piece of software designed to penetrate a firewall. Widely available in real life, fictional versions sound much sexier.

## Jack In

Enter cyberspace / the matrix / virtual reality (choose your cliché).

## Khorosho

Russian for OK, fine. What you aren't when dealing with the Russian mafia. Don't be fooled, they're as ugly as they look.

## TENAY • GRIMWOOD

n cyberculture and  
the modern  
hard-boiled sf

**Punk** – of or being a movement among young people of the 1970s and 1980s in Britain characterised by a violent rejection of established society.

**Kubernetes** – helmsman. Ancient Greek word used by Homer in the *Iliad*.

**Fiction** – invented by the imagination; specif. an invented story.

(Both Penguin English Dictionary.)

the mean streets themselves and the clothes might change, but human nature doesn't. If noir was a racehorse it would be by Cynicism out of Injured Innocence. Punk Fiction believes in the cut-price nobility of the flawed, the right of street rats to scabble a living in Chiba, Moss Side or some flying version of Bloomingdale. That you're allowed to get beaten up, have careless sex and drink yourself to death goes almost without saying. The central perspective, the self-destructive irony and flawed sense of honour have become as much conventions as heroism, unrequited love and courtly love ever were to Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* and its horde of imitators. It may be that Damon Runyon really did live in a world inhabited by overdressed gangsters, down-at-heel private eyes and untrustworthy peroxide blondes, but I doubt if the rest of that early mean-streets brigade did.

But as said, none of the hard-boiled fiction now being written is in flawless descent from the pulp fiction of the 1920s and 1930s anyway. If it's hard to imagine sex before Freud, it's harder to remember noir before *Blade Runner* gave us Raymond Chandler's America refracted through a 21st century lens of pollution and rain. It's like that old joke about the Velvet Underground's first album – only a thousand people bought it but every one of them went out and formed a band. So, Ridley Scott's film flopped badly, but everyone who watched it went out and wrote a novel, directed their own film or just lifted motifs for their own ad campaigns.... Initially people got confused by it and the film got trashed, said Ridley Scott, pointing out that *Blade Runner* was so visually heavy it overpowered what was a very straightforward storyline. But eventually it found a certain measure of recognition....

Within the smaller, more limited world of written sf, the Gibsons and Jeff Noons create similar interest, because they explode imagination. To the new readers coming in, they're the Velvet Underground albums of our time. (Hell, Gibson didn't even own a computer until he'd finished his second novel, *Count Zero*. The man whose 1984 debut novel *Neuromancer* finally made CP famous, wrote it on a manual typewriter – not even an electric. Think about it: the man who created cyberspace pulled all that stuff about hacking and virtual reality out of his head. There was no unifying theory, still less an intricate knowledge of computers and writing code. It was sheer imagination.)

There was a time – maybe ten to fifteen years ago – when hard-boiled sf and cyberpunk were interchangeable terms: when the mean streets were slick with polymer and all the skies were the colour of television tuned to a dead channel. Which of course was really convenient for fans of CP, because not only was there a lot of our favourite fiction about but it was the dominant genre. But the day I saw *Mona Lisa Overdrive* respectfully reviewed in the *Daily Telegraph* I knew it was over. Cyberpunk could survive anything, except going mainstream. Within months, Bruce Sterling was turned into a media pundit and William Gibson was regarded by himself and most of the book-buying public as a serious novelist (thankfully, Gibson seems to have got over it). Radical Hard SF went out of fashion. Almost simultaneously – and not coincidentally – computers became commonplace as small children learned to surf the web, and what had been hip cutting-edge suddenly became kindergarten. The technology got subsumed into everyday life, and the same race that once thought digital watches a pretty neat idea and then got over it, started to grow out of their fascination with everything silicon. As Gibson pointed out, "It's been a bit like the 1890s with the working electric motor. Congregations of people used to gather to watch it operate. Today most of us have several dozen electric motors at any given time – in our wrist watches, in our cars, in the fridge, they're all over the place and I think that's the direction we're going in with computers."

The new punk fiction is wetware-driven, because today's new ground-breakers are no longer software start-ups in Silicon Valley but tiny three-person biotech companies, busy trying to patent scraps of the human genome. Cyberpunk itself has just mutated. Swallowed into the belly of hard-boiled fiction, like Chandler and Hammett before it. Whatever the next century looks like, the mean streets will still be there: not slick with silicon but sloppy with spilled DNA.

On the whole writers don't fret about how their work is going to get labelled; they leave that to the editors. Though if writers are really pragmatic they might worry about whether the book fits the genre (as defined by some poor 22-year old at W. H. Smiths in Swindon who's hoping to get off sf and be promoted to Buyer – Birthday Cards just as soon as humanly possible). But mostly they're just glad to meet their publisher's deadline and get another contract....

— © Jon Courtenay Grimwood 1998

## Zero

To destroy a piece of valuable software. Also obligatory as a sideways reference to Gibson.

## Yono

Anyone you don't like. From the Korean 'yonomoseki'.

## War, The

There was a war  
a jungle war  
lots of people didn't go  
you did  
it was unpleasant.

There was a war  
a jungle war  
lots of people didn't go  
you did...

(loop and rerun as necessary).

## Valkyrie

Any assault helicopter in attack mode. Think *Apocalypse Now* (everyone else has).

## Throwback

Disparaging description for any bodyguard, ballerina, street samurai with visible augmentation. We're all meant to have grown out of that shark cartilage stuff.

## Sweedack

French Canadian slang for 'I agree', from *je suis d'accord*.

## Sphincter Factor

Just how afraid you are. Usually running on a scale of 1 to 10, though tradition demands at least one incident where the level goes off the scale.

## Slap Patch

Any drug, legal or otherwise, taken through the skin. Think of it as a turbo-boosted Nicorette.

## Recycling

Famously described as the environmentally-friendly act of slaughtering someone and then taking their corpse to a body bank.

## Realism

There are three kinds, Magic-R, Hyper-R and stoned immaculate. Use all three.

## Paranoid

Someone who has all the facts. (Anyone dealing with the above.)

## Organitskaya

Russian for the Mafia. See also Mileetsya and Khorosho.

## Nine

Any pistol, from 'nine millimetre'. Make sure it's floating breach.

Like kicking dead  
whales down the  
beach

US slacker slang for any slow and repulsive job, from sex with the wrong person to a family reunion.

## Mileetsya

Russian (supposedly) for Mafia. They won't be able to help you, either, because 1) they're powerless in the face of the Mafia; 2) they are the Mafia.

## Mushi

Japanese for a computer glitch. These happen at inconvenient and usually life-threatening points. Remember to have had a misspent childhood exploring the coding black arts.



It's behind you! - Johnny Rico (Casper Van Dien) warns his colleagues of an approaching 'Tanker Bug'

# STARSHIP TROOPERS

reviewed by andrew m butler

THE MOST apt and telling review would be to stick with an overheard comment by a member of the preview audience: "Was that a spoof or what?" Or what, indeed. Heinlein's novel is, in my personal pantheon of offensive novels, about as offensive as John Norman's 'Gor' sequence, Robert Adams's buggery-obsessed 'Horseclans' books, or - let's face it - late-period Heinlein's treatment of the incest theme with a maturity that would make Beavis and Butt-head proud. This is a novel which insists that only war veterans should vote, that democracy solves fewer problems than violence can, and pushes hatred of Marxism and communism to racist proportions.

Offer this package to the director who flattened out Dick's metaphysical playfulness ("We Can Remember It For You Wholesale") into Schwarzenegger-Vision (*Total Recall*) and you'd be forgiven for steering a very wide course around this film. That would be a shame, since you'd miss the sf movie of the year.

On the surface, this is Heinlein's novel and philosophy writ large. Our beautiful blue-eyed blond boy Johnny Rico (Van Dien) is being taught the ethics of war by a grizzled one-armed veteran (Ironside) who explains that violence is the only way to solve the universe's problems, and that democracy and sociology have only added to these problems. War is brewing - Bugs from the planet Klendathu are tossing asteroids our way - and we're gonna whup their alien asses, er, abdomens. Former schoolfriends Johnny, Dizzy (Meyer), Carmen (Richards) and Carl (Harris) join up, train and go their separate ways as infantry, pilot and military scientist just as their home town Buenos Aires is obliterated by

an asteroid and war breaks out. Rico transforms from boyfriend who'd joined up to impress in a uniform to a hardened leader of men who will willingly take command until he is killed or someone better comes along.

Appearances can be deceptive. R. J. Ellis has argued (at conferences - *Strange Attractors* in 1994 - and in *Foundation* - #65, "Are You a Fucking Mutant: *Total Recall*'s Fantastic Hesitations") that *Total Recall* ends in a dream sequence, in a metafictional parallel course to Dick's style. And in *Starship Troopers* the gung-ho ideology and aestheticism is undercut by the very extremity of the vision.

In the novel the main character was not an Aryan - it's one of the novel's only redeeming radical elements - and the film's depiction of so many blondes living in Buenos Aires alerts us to the fact that the Nazi Youth symbolism must not be taken too uncritically. When Harris reappears at the climax, in regulation knee-length Nazi leather coat, it would only take a round of salutes ("Heil!") to hammer home the point: by the end of the film you'd be hard pressed to decide whether the species of seeming automata trained to sacrifice themselves for the cause and unquestioningly obey authority (because it is authority) is humanity or the Bugs. That the school at the start would fit alongside those at *Melrose Place* or *Beverly Hills 90210* suggests a critique of American values as much as communist ones.

The interspersed newsreels and advertisements - which economically sketch in the background - certainly show that the only Good Bug is a Dead Bug, but when this extends to kids stamping on Blatta orientalis, the aim is clearly satiric.

The cinematography is fantastic, and the CGI Bugs are convincing in their various guises, and there is little room for sentiment or cuteness. That being said, other standard sf movie annoyances aren't avoided: space has a clear up and down, explosions are audible in vacuum and troops emerge from landing boats (*à la* Normandy) without so much as an airlock or an aqualung. No indication is given of how society got that way, curiously for such a quasi-fascist world order, society is interracial, although anyone we care about is white.

This should not be taken to override Verhoeven's achievement in what is unquestionably the best sf film I've seen so far this year. But then, as it ended barely twenty and a half hours into 1998, this is hardly a radical claim.

— © Andrew M. Butler 1998

**Starship Troopers** - Tristar / Touchstone. Director Paul Verhoeven. Producers Alan Marshall, Jon Davison. Screenplay Ed Neumeier, based on the novel by Robert A. Heinlein. Director of Photography Jost Vacano. Editors Mark Goldblatt, Caroline Ross. Production Design Allan Cameron. Music Basil Poledouris. Creature Visual FX Supervision Phil Tippett. SpaceShip Visual FX Supervision Scott E. Anderson. Cast: Casper Van Dien, Dina Meyer, Denise Richards, Neil Patrick Harris, Michael Ironside. 129 mins. Cert. 15.

# DRACULA'S TEAR

## Frederick Johns

looks back at various  
celebrations surrounding  
the centenary of Dracula

Artwork by  
Ruby

ON 18 November last year, Radio 2 broadcast *Dracula - A Birthday Tribute*. The blurb in *Radio Times* said: "In this, the year marking the centenary of the publication of Bram Stoker's horror story, Ann Mann travelled to Whitby, an area featured significantly in the book to interview members of the Whitby Dracula Society. With contributions from Stoker's great-nephew Daniel Farson and the actor Christopher Lee." Not very reassuring for anyone really interested in (or for anyone who thought they might want to find out something about) one of the great figures of literature.

However, Ann Mann, who produced her own compilation of interviews and readings, made a fairly good job of supplying as full a picture of both the book and the author as was possible in an hour-long broadcast. Christopher Lee was on top form, reading the opening paragraphs of the book very compellingly; what a pity he was not asked to carry on with the whole thing as a *Book at Bedtime*. Now that would have been a treat. Ingrid Pitt's contribution was (shall we politely say?) a trifle OTT, while the interviews with members of the Whitby Dracula Society added little of much significance - except to emphasise that they viewed their activities as fun, centred around a fictional character - a point that apparently needed making in Whitby as the local Bishop has accused them of being worshippers of 'The Prince of Darkness'.

Daniel Farson appeared briefly towards the beginning of the programme, in what may have been his last interview before his death, outlining Stoker the man; while virtually all the comments on the significance and influence of the book were provided crisply by an unidentified veterinary surgeon. Ann Mann's own contributions were a touch pompous, but thankfully not in the typically arch manner usually so beloved of the Beeb on such occasions - perhaps because it was an independently-made Green Man production.

Annie Lennox's "Tribute to a Vampire" was used as the end music, but would have meant little to anyone who had not heard it before, as her striking delivery always requires more than one hearing to bring out the full meaning of the lyrics.



BRAM STOKER and *Dracula* are, of course, becoming very popular subjects for literary study. What wonderful opportunities the author's life and all his fiction (but especially the most famous) offer for textual, sexual, psychological, social and political analysis! David Glover's *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction* (Duke University Press, 1996) is typical of such studies. A bit 'Eng Lit' at times, but some useful insights, and although the book is US-published the author lectures in England, and so he does not make the many mistakes about English society and London geography which unfortunately detract from the apparent authority of **Barbara Belford's** *Bram Stoker: A Biography of the Author of Dracula* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson). This New York-domiciled Professor of Journalism at Columbia University otherwise does a reasonable job at marshalling 'new' information found in various archives - especially that at the Shakespeare Centre in Stratford-upon-Avon. But this information is not quite as 'new' as she seems to believe: the archives were described and used by **Raymond McNally & Radu Florescu** in *The Essential Dracula* (New York: Mayflower Books, 1979).

The Shakespeare Centre put on a first-rate exhibition of choice items from its Bram Stoker Collection in the autumn, but as it had little publicity and no catalogue it has disappeared completely. **Peter Haining & Peter Tremayne's** centenary biography was sound enough, but presumably for marketing purposes it was given the misleadingly sensationalist title of *The Unlaid: The Legend of Bram Stoker and Dracula* (Constable, 1997), which seemed to suggest that their account was somehow not strictly true.

In 1996 Barnes and Noble, the New York booksellers, published a fine new edition of the novel itself. In this they matched the text of the Oxford University Press's edition of *Dracula* with Edward Gorey's illustrations for

*Dracula, A Toy Theatre* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1979 and still available from specialist suppliers), based on the sets and costumes of the 1977 Boradway production featuring Frank Langella - and also added the text of "Dracula's Guest", an excellent introduction, very good notes, an intriguing essay on "The Paradox of a Private Public Man" and an extensive annotated bibliography of Stoker's principal writings, all by Martin Kaye. They then got Charles J. Ziga to do a beautiful job with the typography and layout and an unfortunately anonymous printer to print and bind it to the usual high American standard.

"Dracula's Guest" also appears in *The Bumper Book of Vampire Stories*, while Christopher Frayling performs a typically brilliant balancing act with insightful essays on *Frankenstein*, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles* as well as *Dracula in Nightmare: The Birth of Horror* - the book of the tv series.

Finally, unlike the British Post Office, whose series of 'Fantasy' stamps (including *Dracula*) were so feeble they had to be withdrawn from circulation, the Irish Post Office came up trumps with their set entirely devoted to *Dracula* - in full blood as you might say. Incidentally, the rejected designs for the British set are perhaps even better, and may be obtained from Stanley Gibbons.

— © Frederick Johns 1997

## COLLECTING BY CONTENT

As we were saying when we were so rudely interrupted (please forgive us for missing the last two issues: we were moving 17,000 books across London [Brian & Caroline heretofore got this piece to me in time for the last issue, but there wasn't enough space; my apologies to them and to you. — Ed.]), there are many ways to collect books. Last time we talked about collecting by packaging, which is what you do when you worry about publishers, editions or dust jackets. This time we'll talk about collecting by content, which is what you do when you care about the words or illustrations.

Collecting by author is probably the single commonest approach. It follows naturally from the earlier stages of a book-buyer's career: during the accumulation stage you may have acquired most of a favourite author's works, and the better-liked books and authors are more likely to have survived the rationalisation. You already have a good grounding, or you think you do, so now you start to 'fill in the gaps' and look for the author's scarier or more obscure books. At this point you start to discover many interesting aspects to collecting authors.

## Contented collecting

Brian Amersingen and Caroline Mullan

Firstly, the identity of the author is not always obvious. Some authors have multiple pen-names, often for marketing reasons: Rob Holdstock writes sf and fantasy, Robert Faulcon horror; Stephen R(eed) Donaldson writes sf and fantasy, Reed Stephens detective novels; Megan Lindholm has recently been relaunched as Robin Hobb. Some work is published under pseudonyms or publishers' house names: while Keith Roberts was editor of *Science Fantasy* magazine he published some of his own stories under the name Alastair Bevan; but Lionel Fanthorpe is probably the most famously pseudonymous sf author, being also known as Karl Ziegfried, John E. Muller, and twenty-plus others.

Authors may write books under other people's names or put their own names on books they haven't written: the 'TekWar' books by William Shatner are said to have been written by Ron Goulart; Leslie Charteris's *Vendetta for the Saint* is actually by Harry Harrison. Names can be confused: Daniel Moran, author of *The Flame Key* is not the same person as Daniel Keyes Moran, author of *The Ring* and others; George O. Smith and George H. Smith are not the

same person; Charles Williams, the Inking, is not Charles Williams the thriller writer; and there are two David Lindsay!

Collaboration is not always acknowledged: stories by Henry Kuttner and Catherine L. Moore were routinely published under Kuttner's name alone. And sometimes the author has no say as to their collaborators: the publisher of the Galaxy Books edition of *Virgin Planet* by Paul Anderson added an extra chapter to spice the book up, and they added extra scenes to *The House That Stood Still* (v.t. *The Undercover Aliens*) to make *The Mating Cry* by A. E. Van Vogt (the authors of the additional material are not known).

Even when the name remains the same – and publishers and authors can and do mix and match any combination of these complications – matters are not always straightforward. Authors may have published much of their work in magazines and chapbooks: R. A. Lafferty is probably the best-known example, but it is a problem for collecting many of the Golden Age authors of sf. An author may have written occasionally or extensively in other genres or media: Diana Wynne Jones's first novel, *Changeover*, is a colonial comedy; Ursula Le Guin is a poet, essayist and critic; Tanith Lee has written for television (*Blake's Seven*) and radio (*The Silver Sky*). The same book may have been published several times under different titles, particularly if published in different countries: D. G. Compton's *Hot Wireless Sets*, *Aspirin Tablets*, the *Sand-paper Sides of Usled Matchboxes* and *Something That Might Have Been Castor Oil* is also known as *Chronocules* (itself possibly a misprint for *Chronicles* — Ed.). An author may have written one famous book or story that everyone knows and a dozen or hundred that no one has heard of: Tom Godwin wrote the award-winning story 'The Cold Equations', and at least three novels: *The Spac Barbarians*, *Beyond Another Star* and *Space Prison* (v.t. *The Survivors*) – but have you heard of any of them?

Even when you know a work exists and neither the author's identity nor that of the work itself are in doubt, there are still problems. Many sf novels of the Golden Age were first published as serials in magazines such as *Astounding*; these were usually revised for publication in book form. This happens still: *Analog* published Lois McMaster Bujold's *Memory* as a serial, and 'fix-ups' combining separately-published short stories into full-length books are still published. Sometimes editors in different countries make different decisions: the stories that make up Keith Roberts's *Pavane* were originally published in *Science Fantasy* magazine; the US (first) edition of *Pavane* includes 'The White Boat', which did not appear in any UK edition for a long time.

Sometimes authors rewrite and revise books between editions: James Branch Cabell, John Brunner and T. H. White were all notorious for this: check out the scene in *The Sword in the Stone* where the Wart meets Morgan le Fay in her castle – on her couch of lard, or on her chaise longue, or not at all, depending on edition. Sometimes errors need correcting: in the first edition of Niven's *Ringworld* the world spins in the wrong direction; later editions corrected the error. Sometimes later editions acquire additional material: in 1959 Michael Joseph published the first edition of *The Outward Urge*, by John Wyndham in collaboration with his own pseudonym Lucas Parkes, which collected four 'Troon' short stories together. The UK Science Fiction Book Club edition published in 1961 is notable as the first to include the fifth 'Troon' story. These variations are all deliberate, but sometimes publishers just make mistakes: the Pocket Books edition of Cherry Wilder's *The Luck of Brin's Five* is missing half the final chapter. In short, a single title does not guarantee a single text, and owning a book with the right title is no guarantee that you own the right text!

### Ways Of Collecting By Content

(so far)

#### By Author

Bearing in mind: use of pseudonyms, false attribution, working across genre and category, collaboration, retitling and recombination of work, variant texts)

#### By Association

Bearing in mind: collaborators, editors, critics and writers' groups; social circles; material about the collected subject)

#### By Cover Artist or Illustrator

Bearing in mind: false attribution, working across genre and category, reworking and reuse of images, plagiarism and homage)





Given all these problems, and more besides, you will need some help to guide you through the maze. You may well find yourself acquiring bibliographies, biographies and critical works about the author as well (we'll discuss some of these and their problems in more detail in a later article). And once you've started to take an interest in a writer it is not uncommon to extend that interest to other associated writers and artists: for example, you may move on from J. R. R. Tolkien to his Inklings associates C. S. Lewis and Charles Williams; or from Robert Heinlein to John W. Campbell, the editor of *Astounding*, and from there to Henry Kuttner, Poul Anderson, and other Golden Age sf writers; or more recently, from Emma Bull and Will Shetterly to Charles de Lint and Steven Brust and other authors of the Minneapolis writers' group.

Many of the same principles and problems appear when collecting by illustrator or cover artist, a subject too vast for more than a brief summary here. Collecting cover art is fairly common in sf circles, thanks in part to the tradition of art shows at conventions. The work of artists such as David Hardy, Boris Vallejo and many others on the covers of books and magazines has shaped our thinking about sf. Some artists and authors are closely associated, and people collect all the related books: Anne McCaffrey and Michael Whelan; Colin Greenland and Jim Burns; Terry Pratchett and Josh Kirby. Some books are collected for cover art alone: the Tandem paperback editions of the *Andre Norton's Witch World* books are collected for Philip Castle's striking covers. There are graphic novels based on the previously published works of Ray Bradbury, Tanith Lee, Roger Zelazny, Harlan Ellison and many others, while Ian McDonald and Kim Newman have published original fiction in this form. In the 1970s, the art in the Steven Caldwell books was 'researched' from many sources, and the words were written later. Hannes Bok, Virgil Finlay, Ed Carter and many others have published portfolios without words. And in all these cases some people collect the original artwork too, though that (needless to say) is far more expensive and even more difficult.

Collection of illustrators' work is rarer, but there is still much to collect. The sf magazines commonly commission internal illustrations, as do the publishers of many small press and collectors' editions. Ace, DAW and other publishers, particularly in the US, have produced illustrated and hardback editions of works by writers such as Zelazny and McCaffrey. Some writers, including Keith Roberts and Tanith Lee, have illustrated their own work.

If anything, collecting by artist is even more difficult than collecting by author. Publishers often fail to credit artist or illustrator; and when bibliographies and catalogues are produced for readers, the information provided is rarely indexed and can be difficult to use. This is an area where computers help a lot, and future collectors may be able to obtain more help in these areas. For example, the SF Foundation index of its holdings now identifies cover artist and/or interior illustrator wherever possible.

Of course, you can ignore all these complications and keep it simple, if you choose. We know someone who collects books with the word 'chance' in the title, and someone who collects books where the title rhymes with the author's name. Well hey, it's all collecting, and remember you don't have to read them all... just put them on the shelf.

— © Caroline Maillan & Brian Ameringer 1998

## JOHN ASHBROOK

# reviews THE BORROWERS



**Y**OU MAY HAVE NOTICED in recent Hollywood films that the aphorism 'There are no new ideas under the sun' has been taken as tacit permission to go mad and steal from every halfway-successful film, book and tv show ever made. Or maybe they're not stealing; maybe they're just borrowing.

That was a tenuous link, folks.

Enter the big-screen debut (after two small-screen adaptations) of Mary Norton's seemingly timeless tale *The Borrowers*. This is an interesting little hotch-potch of magical moments and mournful mistakes.

Firstly, and let's be quite clear about this: the film bears as much relation to Norton's original works as a MaxPax does to coffee. The ingredients are all there, but they've been put together in such a way that they don't taste the same.

John Goodman (*Roseanne*, *Matinee*) plays the gargantuan Ockius P. Potter, a landlord who has recently conspired to inherit a very nice town house – which he intends to tear down to make way for Pottermore... or some such. Problem is, Mr Potter has a family of sitting tenants – very small sitting tenants, who live behind the floorboards and under the grandfather clock.

Jim Broadbent (*Life Is Sweet* and tv's *The Prince*) plays Pod Clock, the father of the Borrower clan. Indeed, he plays Pod with all the breadth and subtlety of a pantomime dame. But then, the whole family sport hair-dos Janet Jackson would be proud of, and wear clothes which make Jean-Paul Gaultier's look subtle; so broad, clownish performances were obviously deemed to be the order of the day.

Arriety Clock (played by a thirteen-year-old with the seemingly made-up name of 'Flora Newbiggin') is, from the perspective of the film, the head of the family, since it is her adventures, accompanied by her little brother Peagreen (Tom Felton) which we follow. When the Clock Clan leave the condemned house – the children are accidentally left behind. Hmm, sounds a bit like *Home Alone*... but more of that in a moment. Meanwhile, the method the munchkins use to rejoin their parents – and Potter's attempts to stop them – form the backbone of what, for want of a better term, we shall call 'the plot'.

The Clocks' haberdashery notwithstanding, the look of the film is its joy: the designers have made imaginative use of knick-knacks as everything from furniture to footwear. Keep your eyes peeled for a brief cameo from Little Bear, the titular hero of *The Indian In The Cupboard*!

The look of the movie also provides the first hint that the setting is some notional fantasy world,

where the 1950s, the 70s and the 90s can exist side by side, and American clutter (such as an American 1-800 phone card the Clocks use as a door) can be found alongside streets that half-timbered Morris Travellers drive down – and electrically-powered Morris Minors at that!

Hugh Laurie (of *Fry and ...* fame) and Mark Williams (from *The Fast Show*) are re-teamed after their successful pairing in last Christmas's *101 Dalmatians*; the former as a jackbooted stormtrooper with a heart of gold, the latter as Exterminator Jeff, kitted out with splurge gun and wickedly incompetent canine sidekick.

As Potter and Exterminator Jeff stomp around the house, tearing out floorboards and pounding holes through walls in a vain attempt to get at their miniature visitors, the film turns into a lame *Home Alone* clone (not that anything associated with *Home Alone* can be other than lame). This middle part of the movie – with Goodman being persistently but accidentally tortured by the squat squatters – does not make for good viewing for an old-before-his-time sourpuss like me. *Born* proved that any film, no matter how lame and unfunny, given the requisite number of fart and crack jokes, will keep any self-respecting eight-year-old in stitches. If this is your 'taste' in humour, then you will enjoy Jeff's puppy partner's aromatic interjections.

Meanwhile, back at the subplot, I find it interesting that the majority of the full-size humans (called, ironically enough, 'beans') are played by Americans, for it is they who, exemplified by the bloated Goodman, overconsume and waste precious resources. The Borrowers, played exclusively by English actors, are the scavengers who survive on the beans' cast-offs. There must be a thesis on postwar Transatlantic economic imperialism in there somewhere.

Or maybe it's a film about midgets and a farting dog.

*The Borrowers* actually comes within sight of being a wonderful little yarn, but because it slavishly reproduces the Hollywood Kiddy-Kitsch of the last however many Christmases, it spoils its chance of greatness. The recent BBC adaptation with Ian Holm as Pod was great, so if you want art, buy the video of that.

Still, there is plenty to enjoy here: the cheeky design, the witty use of state-of-the-cliche special effects, and some great walk-on performances, particularly (as unlikely as it seems) from Ruby Wax as the Civil Servant From Hell. But best of all, the end theme is sung by the Osmonds' evil twins: Hanson. Mmm – blech.

— © John Ashbrook 1998

film

# TWO VIEWS

colin odell  
and  
mitch le blanc

## ALIEN RESURRECTION

*Alien Resurrection* — 20th Century Fox, 1997.

Director Jean-Pierre Jeunet. Producers Bill Badalato, Gordon Carroll, David Giler, Walter Hill. Screenplay Joss Whedon. Special Effects ADI, Dubai, Blue Sky Studios. Music John Frizzell. Cinematography Darius Khondji. Cast: Sigourney Weaver, Winona Ryder, Brad Dourif, Ron Perlman, Michael Wincott, Dan Hedaya, Dominique Pinon, Je Freeman, Raymond Cruz. 105 mins. Cert. 18. UK release 28 November 1997. CinemaScope 1.2.35.

gary dalkin

THE CONCEPT of making another 'Alien' film seems initially to be a very bad idea — we know the setting, the character Ripley and the gruesome life-cycle of the alien itself — so the very notion of repeating the same old formula stinks of blatant commercialism. This one features every kind of alien seen before plus a few marketable new ones, the age-old spot-the-android game, the just-when-is-that-chest-going-to-burst? routine, and the consistently useless cargo bay door, a technical problem that 250 years of progress has failed to solve. This is not to say that the end result is a disaster, far from it. Like its predecessors, at the helm of this film is a distinctive director (Jean Pierre Jeunet) as opposed to the all too familiar 'sequel by numbers' hack, and herein lies the problem: the film has to constantly struggle to balance the baggage of the previous films with the vision of its director.

Ripley is back, but she's not herself today. Scientists have decided to clone her in order to breed subservient xenomorphs with the result that she is also the mother of the alien, and alien herself. She is an unlikely heroine, in that we do not know if she is a heroine, and view her with the same suspicion as all the other characters. Once again we are on board a spaceship with a crew of scientists, soldiers and a bunch of misfit traders, all of whose motives are questionable, and who are the alien's fodder. Characterisation is generally lacking, less so with the misfits with whom we identify, but to an extent even they are caricatures so the film relies upon the plot and dialogue to produce tension, and motivation is driven by the need for ambiguity and distrust within the narrative.

The whole feel of the film is testament to Jeunet's directorial and design skills. Visually it harks back to *The City of Lost Children* in its gothic / industrial architecture and quasi-Victorian anachronisms. The *mise en scène* is very grimy, and the lighting brown, giving a sepia-tinted quality that highlights the blend of future and ancient. Grotty spaceships seem to be in mode at the moment (see also *Space Truckers* and *Event Horizon*) and about time too — who wants a spaceship that looks like a hospital? There are some lovely gadgets, notably whiskey cubes and doors that open on the basis of breath identification. (Do they still work if one has been drinking that whiskey?) This attention to detail is characteristic of Jeunet's previous films and it works as a tool that entices the audience into the diegesis smoothly and quickly.

The film's success lies in the retention of Jeunet's long-time French collaborators: the majority of the special effects (CGI and otherwise) were produced by the same companies that produced *The City of Lost Children* and indeed the film is better and more refreshing as a result. It's hard to imagine ILM producing quite so much saliva. The final dénouement, in a scene originally excised from *Alien*, is at once repulsive and impressive.

Far better than it should have been, but not as good as it could have been.

— © Colin Odell & Mitch Le Blanc 1998

TWO HUNDRED YEARS after the events of *Alien* a fully-formed adult clone is made from a sample of blood taken from Ellen Ripley during the events depicted in that film, and from the clone an infant 'alien' queen is surgically removed. This is a secret military experiment on the space station Auriga, located spatially and morally beyond any official jurisdiction. The Betty, a smuggler's ship, arrives to deliver a human cargo, the crew of a ship the smugglers have hijacked, as bodies in which the scientists can incubate more aliens. Call (Winona Ryder), nominally one of the smugglers, gains access to Ripley's cell with the intention of killing her, and then the aliens escape....

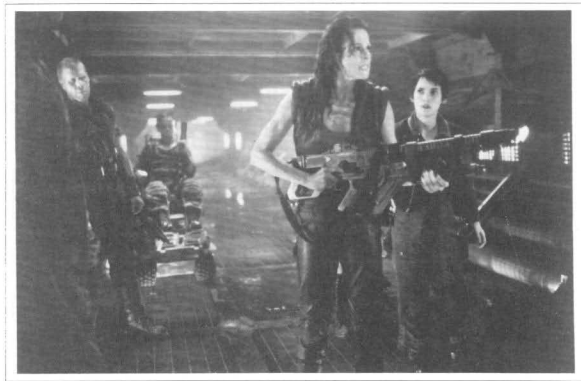
What drew me to the part was the idea of Ripley suddenly existing with a clean slate, only to discover that she's not what we expect. In *Alien Resurrection*, Ripley doesn't have to do the right thing and stand up for the good and the right — all the things she's done in the past.

— Sigourney Weaver

There are many things wrong with *Alien Resurrection*, but the foremost among them is cited above by Weaver as a virtue. So muddled is Joss Whedon's screenplay that we never gain any real understanding of the character of the 'new' Ripley, and therefore the film lacks any emotional or intellectual core. More troublesome still, whatever the new Ripley is, she is not good, and so the film offers no heroine to care about. Good may be unfashionable, but it remains necessary if we are to care what happens in an action/horror thriller. Here the new Ripley is a cold enigma left largely unexplored. The result is a detached, confused film which can generate no terror, no excitement.

If there were supporting characters one could care for matters might be different. There is one, Call, but all the interesting things about her are discarded after one dialogue scene which raises far more questions than it provides satisfactory answers for. Everyone else is an accessory to a biomedical experiment so corrupt and evil that it places them as moral companions to the German concentration camp doctors who performed analogous experiments during the Second World War. It is simply impossible to care whether such people live or die. Add to this the fact that they all remain almost completely uncharacterised, beyond black-comic-book crass insensitivity, and any plausibility or possibility for suspension of disbelief evaporates.

Moments of absurdity — a ricocheting bullet which fatally hits its target — or painfully out of context one-liners — one character noting "It must be a chick thing," after Ripley has found and destroyed previous failed clones of herself, the one scene of outstanding power in the film — shatter any sense of reality. Thus the tone is that of the distanced, quirky (even to giving the newly cloned Ripley purple / Goth nail varnish without the slightest explanation) collaborations of director Jean-Pierre Jeunet with Marco Caro. *Delicatessen* and



Shoot 'em up: Sigourney Weaver (as Ripley) waves her zap gun, followed by Winona Ryder as Call, Ron Perlman as Johnner and Dominique Pinon as Vriess.

*The City of Lost Children*. Although as bloody and gore-filled as the previous three 'Alien' films combined, the tone is much lighter, lacking in any intensity, dread or foreboding. The almost unbearable tension which has been the hallmark of the series is entirely absent.

Jeunet clearly has no idea how or why the previous 'Alien' films worked. He offers no atmosphere, no brooding visuals. John Frizzell's music fails to evoke any of the icy grandeur which Goldsmith, Horner and Goldenthal brought to earlier movies. Darius Khondji's cinematography lacks the lustrous elegance and carefully composed images of preceding films. The screen is not used, a consequence of paying far too much attention to how the film will look when panned and scanned for video and tv, rather than how it will play on a large CinemaScope screen. The images we do see are largely replays of what has gone before.

Not even attempting suspense, Jeunet also demonstrates that he cannot construct an alien set-piece. In one sequence Ripley is underwater, swimming towards the surface when she is suddenly grabbed from below by an alien and pulled back down. Jeunet then cuts elsewhere, and when we next see Ripley she is back on the surface, crisis not resolved but ignored. Moments later she falls victim to a 'face-hugger'; again, the next time we see her the face-hugger has been removed, we know not how, and no reference is ever made to the incident.

Both contributing to and compounding all these problems is the screenplay. Among Joss Whedon's previous screenwriting credits are *Waterworld* and *Twister*. The latter only made some sort of sense because there was so little content it could hardly be nonsensical. *Waterworld* contained several good ideas, but resolutely refused to develop any of them, and instead built itself on false premises and logic-free extrapolations. That *Alien Resurrection* has exactly the same flaws indicates that Whedon is a man of some imagination, but with absolutely no understanding of the structuring and story-logic needed to develop a believable sf world.

From the beginning his story fails to convince. Even given that we accept that hosting an alien 'chestbuster' would result in DNA resequencing, any clone created from that DNA could not also contain a clone of the original infecting alien. This however is Whedon's opening premise. He compounds this by expecting us to believe that the resulting alien queen would be sufficiently mutated that she would reproduce not by laying eggs, but by mammalian gestation, ultimately giving birth to an alien/human hybrid. This misunderstanding of basic biology contradicts everything shown in previous

'Alien' movies, for the aliens have always incubated in mammalian hosts – usually human, but canine in *Alien³* – and never adopted mammalian methods of reproduction. For the rest of his 'story', Whedon mainly stitches together variations on scenes from the three preceding movies, but does so with a fatal lack of logic. He even attempts to copy the countdown to destruction from *Aliens* by having the space-station return from beyond the edge of patrolled space to Earth, and thus threaten to infect the home planet with xenomorphs; but makes a nonsense of the idea by having the journey last a mere three hours. Meanwhile the alien queen goes through a gestation which – in an animal of such size – would realistically take months, in a matter of hours.

As an attempt to breathe life into a classic film sequence, *Alien Resurrection* is a total failure, and the most disappointing film I have ever seen. The advance word was excellent: that this was to be the most intense, terrifying and exciting of all the 'Alien' films, combining the relentless tension of the original with the blistering action of the first sequel. American pre-release previews were so positive that Fox took the remarkable step of 'green-lighting' a further instalment in the series before *Alien Resurrection* was even in the cinemas, so confident were they of a major box-office success. After seeing the film one can only conclude that American preview audiences left their critical faculties at home. Worse is the news that Joss Whedon has already been asked to write the follow-up.

The sad thing is that there was so much potential. If explored intelligently the idea of the cloned, part-human part-alien Ripley could have added an entire, and genuinely science-fictional, new dimension to the series. If treated in a convincing and realistic style the military station and its scientific experimenters could have been a vision of sf hell, and provided a true moral and ethical conflict for the drama. As it is, this theoretically chilling dimension is quickly dispensed with, and the aliens that the scientists create actually gain more sympathy than almost all the humans: they are victims of circumstance, only doing what they, as intelligent but predatory animals, do to survive. What could have been a Boschian allegorical nightmare, continuing and developing the apocalyptic Christian themes of *Alien²*, something which is clearly promised by the title, is reduced to momentary shot of Call's electronic Bible.

American audiences may love *Alien Resurrection*, but, as Bill Paxton's terrified Marine shouted two films ago, one can only conclude that for this franchise it's "Game over, man, game over."

—© Gary Dalkin 1998

**2025** — Written by Mike Walker. Directed by Sally Avens.  
Cast: Alphonsia Emmanuel (Irena), Mona Hammond (Olivia),  
Daniela Nardini (Dr Beth David), David Yip (Henry / Mr LJ).  
BBC Radio 4, 2x60 minutes, 5 and 12 January 1998.

AGAINST the background of genetic engineering and a futuristic, post-"Blairgate 2002" London, is the growing relationship between Irena and her grandmother Olivia. Their love and understanding grows as they search London's underworld for a cure for their life-threatening and debilitating illness. It is their relationship which is at the heart of 2025, not the

science, not the artificial intelligence, not the voice-activated technology, not the genetic engineering or the futuristic landscape.

However, all these familiar science-fictional stereotypes are present, but just serve as part of everyday life in 2025, where sf has become reality. Another ever-present sfal convention is a large conglomerate with interests in people's lives, and which keeps an eye on all those who dare question it. 2025's sinister company is Fortunate Fragrance — "Saving the world, the world over" — and it is their network of spies and informers that keeps an eye on Irena's and Olivia's search for help.

Although the sf elements have been done before, the interaction of the two female leads — played by Alphonsia Emmanuel and Mona Hammond — was a pleasant reworking of this tired landscape. Sally Avens's direction of Mike Walker's script was good, and kept the interest up over two one-hour episodes, although the opening was a little fragmented and the characters took a while to develop. This could have turned off a number of listeners, but for those who persevered 2025 was a little gem.

— © Ellen Cheshire 1998

## FINDING FELLOWS

reviewed by andrew m butler

**Finding Fellows** — Written by Mick Fisher. Directed by Peter Kavanagh.  
Cast: Nicholas Woodeson, Sarah Rice, David Brooks, Christopher Wright.  
BBC Radio 4, 30mins, 2.00pm 11 December 1997.

THE DEMISE of Children's Radio 4 — surely the first time a network has decided not to try to attract a younger audience — has removed a slot where you could more or less guarantee drama of genre interest. But sf does occur in other parts of the schedule: for example, *Finding Fellows*, broadcast in the Thursday Afternoon Play slot. This half-hour drama was recommended in a number of newspapers, with the caveat that it was chock-full of technical terms.

Richard Fellows (Woodeson) is a rather dull

lecturer in Media Studies, who leads a double life on one of the *Star Trek* Usenet groups on the Internet. A student, Sal (Rice) wishes to use him as a guinea pig in an experiment to download a personality on to a computer. But the computer crashes as she has failed to take his genotype into account, and Fellows's submerged personalities emerge: the tough guy, the transvestite and so on. The positive result is that Fellows immediately transforms into a cool lecturer; the negative that he becomes involved in football violence and goes on an ill-advised date with Sal's boyfriend and his student Geoff (Brooks).

The set-up is rather loopy, the personalities rather clichéd (or, more accurately, archetypal) and there was indeed a whole wedge of technospeak thrown in to establish a pretty shaky authenticity. It seems unlikely that a university would teach Media Studies

by means of the one-to-one tutorial (which only survives in Oxbridge to my knowledge, and this was clearly set in London), and the nature of personality needed further elaboration to excuse the transfer between brain and microchip.

But what held the play together was a very credible and credible performance by Woodeson, an actor who seems to specialise in ineffectual authority figures as well as the occasional unexpected villain. For at least half of the play he is interacting only with himself, and he manages to create distinct personalities which nevertheless are clearly the same person.

From confused source material, Woodeson just about salvages something: a case of an actor being much better than a script.

— © Andrew M. Butler 1998

## THE MAGIC COTTAGE

reviewed by ellen cheshire

**James Herbert's *The Magic Cottage*** — Dramatised by Gregory Evans from the novel by James Herbert. Directed by David Blount. Music by Neil Brand.  
Cast: Kim Wall (Mike), Katherine Schlesinger (Midge), Kerry Shale (Mycroft), John Sarian (Hub).  
BBC Radio 4, 90 minutes, 17 January 1998.

"A TALE of terror from Britain's top horror writer. Flora Chaidan's 'roundhouse' is the idyllic home that Mike and Midge have longed for. But who is the figure lurking in the woods? And how did Flora die?"

Thus went the *Radio Times* blurb. I can't and won't argue with the first two sentences, but the last two questions are not those that would immediately spring to mind after listening to the play. Yes, there

was a figure lurking in the woods, and yes, Flora did die in mysterious circumstances. But I would have fantasised the listener with questions surrounding the mysterious religious cult in a neighbouring house and how the idyllic home had powers of its own.

James Herbert's *The Magic Cottage* (as it was fully titled) is a very faithful adaptation of a huge novel — no mean feat to condense 351 pages to 90 minutes, but Gregory Evans has done an excellent job. He wisely kept Mike's point-of-view narration which added to the mystery of the cottage and Midge's change in personality. It also disoriented the listener (in a good way) when this familiar technique was blown sky high (literally) when the seemingly passive observer took on an active rôle in the play's climax.

The only fault I could possibly find — and I am really struggling here, as both the performances by the four leads and David Blount's direction were excellent, and perfectly underscored by Neil Brand's music — would be the 'climactic ending'. It came and went so quickly that it seemed almost an anti-climax after the suspense built up over the previous 85 minutes. It was only Mike's narration that really put into words the cacophany of sound effects and cries that had gone previously.

But don't let this small — and it is really small — niggling criticism put you off buying the cassette (if one is issued) or listening (when it is repeated). It really is a good adaptation of a popular novel.

— © Ellen Cheshire 1998

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

Sometimes you just have brainstormers and sometimes corrections begat corrections. It's a long time since I did sums, and 1958 and 1948 kept on getting confused as the start date for our poll. 1958 makes sense as the BSFA's birthdate, but 1948 lets in *Childhood's End* and some classic Wyndham and makes even more sense. I had a phone conversation with Chris Terran where I either thought about correcting a mistake or letting a misprint lie, and — well, I obviously confused the poor thing. *Mea culpa*.

For the record:

Eligibility: novel by a British-born author published between 1948 (the year before *Nineteen Eighty-four*) and 1998.

Number of books: Five please, ranked if possible. Annotations welcome.

Deadline: 30 June 1998.

Destination: Send your votes by post to me, **Andrew M. Butler**, 33 Brook View Drive, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5JN.

Or email: [vector-bsfa@rocketmail.com](mailto:vector-bsfa@rocketmail.com) (subject line 'Poll').

Inspiration: **Paul Kincaid's** *A Very British Genre* has a bibliography of British sf (including an Alfred Bester novel, which isn't eligible).

— Andrew M. Butler

## out of focus

Out Of

Focus

Carol Ann Kerry Green

— and —

Julie Venner

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## — Out of Focus —

... appears in *Matrix* in the mailings when *Focus* is absent. *Focus* – the next issue is scheduled to appear in the spring – is the BSFA's writers' magazine. It publishes stories, articles and poetry from members and non-members. If you wish to contribute, fiction should be of good quality and up to 5,000 words; poetry to a maximum of 50 lines. We seek articles on all aspects of writing and publishing, especially those relating to sf and fantasy, up to 4,000 words. We also seek cover art, illustrations and fillers.

## — Letters to Focus —

If you would like to respond to a previous issue or wish to start a discussion on any aspect of writing please write or email! All letters are welcome.

## — Market News —

## • Commonwealth Publications

'New writers welcome – Commonwealth Publications, a Canadian publisher, is now accepting submissions in all fiction and non-fiction genres for publication in mass-market and trade paperback format. Contracts are negotiable. Please send query with outline / synopsis to:'

Commonwealth Publications Inc., 9764 - 45th Avenue, Edmonton, AB, Canada T6E 5C5  
Fax: (403) 432-9409

Email: lions@commonwealthpub.com

[I was wary of this when it first arrived, and wondered if it was a vanity publisher. I found the following comment in *Scavengers' Scrapbook*: "... at least part of their operation is subsidy publication, i.e. the writer must pay to be published." I would be interested to hear from anyone who has tried Commonwealth.]

## • The Edge

Change of address for editor Graham Evans: 111 Guinness Buildings, Fulham Palace Road, London, W6 8BQ. Looking for new staff: payment £10 per 1,000 words, but pay First World Rights only. They welcome unsolicited stories.

## • Event Horizon

320 Woodmere Drive, Vinton, VA 24179. Accept poetry submissions with no line limit for fiction. Pays \$3 plus 10 cents/line. Send submissions to Daniel D. Adams.

• Remember more market news can be found in *Zene* (TTA Press, 5 Martins Lane, Witchem, Ely, Cambs., CB6 2LB; subscription £8.00. Also try *Scavenger's Newsletter*, Janet Fox, 519 Ellinwood, Osage City, KS 66523-1329 – or from Chris Reed at BBR, PO Box 625, Sheffield, S1 3SY.

## — Writers' Workshops —

**Writers' Summer Schools** – contact Brenda Courtie, Secretary, The Writers' Summer School, The New Vicarage, Parsons Street, Woodford Halse, Daventry, NN11 3RE – send SAE for details of this year's courses.

**Clarion West** – further details: "Applications should be postmarked on or before 1 April 1998. A complete application includes: • a cover letter discussing where you've been, what you're doing, your writing history, and why you want to attend the workshop; • 20-30 pages of typed, double-spaced original manuscript which usually consists of 1 or 2 short stories or a novel excerpt with outline (send three copies of each story); • a non-refundable \$25 application fee payable to Clarion West. Tuition fee is \$1,300 but it is worth checking to see if your local Arts Board etc. have any available grants. Clarion West will be held in Seattle from 21 June to 31 July 1998, with instructors **Paul Park, George R.R. Martin, Connie Willis, Lucy Sussex, Gardner Dozois and Carol Emshwiller**. It lasts six weeks. Contact: Clarion West, 340, 15th Avenue E. Suite 350, Seattle, WA 98112, USA. Email: 74634.2056@compuserve.com

## — Writers' Guidelines —

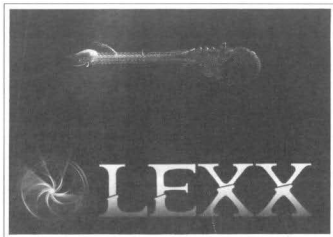
## Covering Letters

When submitting stories to magazine editors, it is polite to include a covering letter (unless that particular magazine's guidelines state otherwise). But what to include? A simple letter states who you are, the title of your submission, its length and what rights you are offering. You may wish to include details of previous publications, but be warned: editors don't want to read endless lists of articles in obscure parish magazines. Include only those you think will be relevant to the market you are submitting to. So if you've had work published in *Asimov's* or *The Third Alternative* or *Peeping Tom* and you're submitting to *The Edge*, mention them. But remember: keep it simple, keep it short.

Next time: Researching Your Market

— © Carol Ann Kerry Green & Julie Venner 1998

## tv



reviewed by ian simpson

**L**EXX promised much, but delivered little of its potential. It looked cool and exhibited a daring originality, but in order to hold one's attention for four two-hour features, decent plots are required. Lexx itself is an organic spaceship, the most powerful force in the galaxy, created by the immortal His Shadow in order to conquer said galaxy. In the first instalment, it is stolen by a band of misfits who have a series of adventures in the Dark Zone, an alternate 'evil' dimension our heroes escape to at the end of the opener.

It all sounded like a typical mixed bag of sf clichés, and it is. The 'Shadow' is not an individual as such, but a collection of living brains with the current Shadow in a host body. The crew is not composed of your typical misfits, but misfits they are. The setting is reminiscent of David Lynch's *Dune* set in a *Brazil*-style society. But cliché and regurgitated themes can still make for good sf, if the ingredients are right.

It started off well with the obligatory 'origins' episode. Paul Donovan in his first major project is the creative force behind Lexx, and credit due, he shows flair and imagination. Unfortunately the story is fairly standard. Stanley Tweedle (Brian Downey) is the picked-on dweeb, searching for hero status so he can be adored by women. The glamorous Zev (Eva Habermann), once an obese and unhappy housewife, gets a chance at being every man's dream with a lovekick robot head in tow; and Kai (Michael McManus) is the 'last member of a dead race' superhero with a twist: he's dead. Which is a problem, as it's his destiny to complete the circle of time and destroy His Shadow and the Precursors. Tweedle has secrets which are known to the rebel Thodin (Barry Bostwick) and together they steal the Lexx.

The next two episodes are damp squibs. In 'Supernova' Tim Curry messes around playing Tim Curry, and the plot is shoe-horned around Kai's home planet as the crew try to find a way of restoring him to life. Zev is captured and it's up to Tweedle to save the day, which is his destiny according to a High Priestess. By making bungling errors he does, but you feel it is inevitable that Kai will be the true saviour. Which he is.

"Eating Habits" has only one saving grace: Rutger Hauer camping it up the way you always wanted him to. Other than that, little is memorable – Tweedle tries to save Zev, who is again captured. Perhaps she should have been a Dr Who companion ....

By the time the final episode arrived I'd lost interest. Risking capture from the current Shadow, the crew return to the Light Zone, again to find a way to keep Kai animated. The driving force behind this is Zev's lust, much to Tweedle's frustration. Kai eventually completes his destiny, but in doing so releases the GigaShadow which leads to a return to the Insect Wars.

The cast is competent and there are some fair visuals and weird surprises – a song and dance routine with the Brains, for example.

I was really looking forward to *Lexx*. It looked great and the press I'd read previous to the showings were very promising. Sadly, it didn't work. Great idea, shame about the execution. Four more stories are lined up 1998; I hope they find a decent scriptwriter ....

— © Ian Simpson 1998

**Lexx** – Salter Street Films: a Canadian / German co-production, 1997.

Directors Paul Donovan, Ron Oliver, Rainer Matsutani, Robert Sigi. Computer Graphics C.O.R.E. (Toronto), Babelberg.

Cast: Eva Habermann, Barry Bostwick, Tim Curry, Rutger Hauer, Malcolm McDowell, Brian Downey, Michael McManus.  
4x120 minute tv movies.

# 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. 25 Feb 98; 25 Mar 98; 22 Apr 98; 27 May 98; 24 Jun 98.

### London Circle Meetings

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

Just turn up!

5 Mar 98; 2 Apr 98; 7 May 98; 4 Jun 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, Witleham, West Midlands, WV13 1HX. \*bsf@brum.sff.net, co.uk

**Cambridge** SF Group meets on the second Monday of the month in the Wrestlers. 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 Outlands Ave., Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8EQ.

**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 Groom** on 0116 279 2280

\*rbe@globalnet.co.uk

**Manchester** — FONT meets in Waterspoon'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, Dogthorpe, and on the third Wednesday of the month in the bar of the Great Northern Hotel, opposite the BR station.

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

**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; for a trial period they have moved to the Hope Tap, Fair Street, Reading.

**Surliton** Surrey SF Group meets in the Coronation Hall, Surliton, a Waterspoons pub 100 yds from the station, on the second and fourth Thursdays in the month, from 8pm.

**27 Feb - 1 Mar 1998: Starbury**

Babylon 5 on at the Holiday Inn, Leicester.  
Starbury, 148a Queensway, Bayswater, London, W2 6LY

**28 Feb: Picocon 15**

Cheap 'n' cheerful one dayer at Imperial College, London. Guest TBA.  
ICSCF, Imperial College Union, Prince Consort Road, London, SW7 2BB

**28 Feb: SF Fair**

This event (at the Drillhall in Lincoln) has been CANCELLED.  
44 Staverton Crescent, Birchwood, Lincoln, LN6 0YW  
01522 689271

**28 Feb - 1 Mar 1998: Microcon 18**

Venue is Devonshire House, Stocker Road, Exeter. Reg. £5, £250 students. Guest **Brian Stobble**.  
Microcon 18, 16 Fairlea Close, Dawlish, EX7 0NN  
01626 888797

**8 Mar 1998: Peterborough SF Mart**

Comics, zines, trading cards, models, games, posters and probably even a few books. Venue Great Northern Hotel, next to Peterborough BR Station; starts at midday. Future dates: 21 Jun; 20 Sep; 23 Nov.

**10 Mar 1998: SF in Science and Education Seminar**

The SF Foundation's **Andy Sawyer** is giving a seminar on "Science Fiction in Science and Education" at 3pm in the Adelphi Building, Fyole Road, University of Central Lancashire in Preston. All are welcome but the seating is limited so you'll need a ticket.

**Duncan Teller**, Dept. of Computing, Vernon Building, University of Central Lancashire, PR1 2HE.  
Duncan Teller on 01772 893285.

**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

\*iansoren@demcon.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**, Rulhstrasse 8/28, D-44149 Dortmund, Germany

\*UlrichKrause@t-online.de

\*http://www.zfn92.cbg.de/sf-tage-mrw

**27-29 Mar 1998: Deliverance**

Blake's Seven con at the Stoke-on-Trent Motor 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 Eastercon 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, SM5 3LQ

\*intuition@sevier.co.uk

\*http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/~acb/intuition/intu\_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, 10.30-4.00pm. Guests include **Lone Wolf** creator **Joe Dever**. No rates into yet (but usually cheap).

**Fantasy Fair 8**, c/o 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 0RB

**Bruce King** on 01480 216372

**22-25 May 1998: Lazlar Lyrricon II**

Hitch Hiker's Guide con run by the Z23 fan club celebrating the 20th anniversary of the series; venue **Scotty Corner**, Darlington. Reg. £30, guests **Kevin Davis**, **Dirk Maggs**.  
67 South Park Gardens, Berkhamsed, Hertfordshire, HP4 1HZ

**3-5 June 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@oriso.no

**10-12 July 1998: Infinity**

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

**Infinity**, Swyn Nant, 12 Stuart Street, Treherbert, CF42 5PR

\*infinityspecific@hotmail.com

\*http://www.cf.ac.uk/ccin/main/ents/sf/cf/infinity.html

**17-19 July 1998: Nexus 98**

Media convention at Bristol's Hilton National Hotel. Guests **TBA**. Reg. £41 to 31 Jan, then £44, instalment scheme available. Sup. £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**, **Elton A. Rothman**, **Stanley Schmidt**, **Michael Whelan**. Reg. £80 att. (plus various complications if you voted or pre-scheduled).

**UK Agent:**

**John Dalman**, c/o EDS Unigrafics, Parker's House, 46 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1DB

01223 570179

\*jgd@cix.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**, **Jack Cohen**, **John Ridgeway**, **Bryan Talbot**, **Adam Mojo**, **Leibowitz**, **John Matthews**. Reg. £65 (instalment scheme available), under 17s half price, under 12s free. Rates rise to £75 after Eastercon, £80 at door. Room rates: £40ppn triple, £42ppn double or twin, £47ppn single.

**The Wrap Party**, PO Box 505, Reading, RG1 7QZ

\*TheWrapParty@bblipin.co.uk

\*http://www.bblipin.co.uk/TheWrapParty

**3-6 Sep 1998: Dragon\*Con 98**

Premiere con of the Southern USA, at the Hyatt Regency 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.  
Dragon\*Con 98, PO Box 47369, Atlanta, GA 30362-0696, USA

\*http://www.dragoncon.org

**4-6 Sep 1998: Festival of Fantastic Films**

At Sacha's Hotel in Manchester. Guest **Gerry Anderson** and others. £45 att. to 1 Apr, £55 thereafter.

**Soc. of Fantastic Films**, c/o 95 Meadowgate Road, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN

**4-7 Sep 1998: Cult TV**

Media con focusing on kitsch tv. Venue Telford Motor House in Shropshire. Reg. £44 to 1 Jun, £49 thereafter; children 9-15 half price, under 9s free.

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

\*culttvuk@ccities.org

\*http://culttv.ccities.org

**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 (£20).

**Fantasycon**, 46 Oxford Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham,

## 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. £100, £25 unwaged.  
 ☐ PO Box 4100, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 2G2

## 25-28 Sep 1998: *Albacon '98*

Central Hotel, Glasgow. £25 att., £15 sup (rising to £30 on 1 Jan). Guests Art Harryhausen, Diana Wynne Jones, Kim Newman.  
 ☐ Albacon '98, F12, 10 Atlas Road, Glasgow, G21 4TE

## ? Nov 1998: *Armadacon X*

Date unknown, but the venue is the Cophorne Hotel in Plymouth. £25 att., £19 unwaged.

☐ Armadacon X, PO Box 38, Plymouth

☐ 01752 26787/3812698

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

Venue TBA, guest Paul J. McAuley. Reg. £28 to Easter 98.

☐ Novacon 28, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS

## 26-28 Feb 1999: *Redemption*

Babylon 5 and Blake's Seven con at the International Hotel in Ashford, Kent. £35 att. to 1 Sep 98, thereafter £40.  
 ☐ Redemption, 28 Diprose Road, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 3QY

## Spring 1999: *Eurocon*

Dortmund, Germany.  
 ☐ Science Fiction Tage e.V., Am Katzenbrunn 28, D-44287 Dortmund, Germany  
 ☐ http://www.cbg.de/sf-tage-nrw

## 2-5 Apr 1999: *Reconvene*

The 50th UK National SF Convention and the first of the twentieth century; venue is the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool and the guests are

Jeff Noveck, 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 supp. & concessions); thereafter £30 (£15).  
 ☐ 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6S2

☐ mychell@firedrake.demon.co.uk

## Jul 1999: *Barocon*

The annual UK role-playing con, in Cambridge. Guest Mary Gentle.  
 ☐ 8 Saddler's Close, Baldock, Herts., SG7 6EF

## 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 under to Melbourne. Guests Greg Benford, Bruce Gillespie, the deceased George Turner will still be honoured. Reg. £30 (with compulsory variations - ask 'em).  
 ☐ UK Agent: Martin Hoare, 45 Tliehurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT  
 ☐ 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. £400 per year, to be deducted from the eventual membership cost.

☐ Millennium, c/o Malcolm Reid, 186 Casewick Rd., West Norwood, London, SE27 0SZ  
 ☐ vdputte@sinplex.nl

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

The 58th and millennial worldcon, guests Ben Bova, Bob Eggleton, Jim Baen, Bob & Anne Passovoy, and Harry Turtledove (toastmaster). Reg. \$125 (presupporers \$115), various discounts; rates rise 1 Mar 98.  
 UK Agent: Martin Hoare, 45 Tliehurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT  
 ☐ martinhoare@icx.co.uk  
 ☐ PO Box 642057, Chicago, Illinois 60665, USA  
 ☐ chi2000@chicon.org  
 ☐ http://www.chicon.org/

## 29 Dec 2000-1 Jan 2001: *Hogmanaycon*

Central Hotel, Glasgow. Reg. £20.01 att., £20.01 sup. (har har)

## Matrix Crossword 21

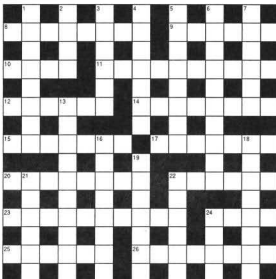
by John English

### Across

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

### Down

1. As Aldiss's tree does, I slave at causing chaos. (8)
2. Is Kirk here? 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 tell-tale? (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)
22. Author finally dies out due to extra contractual conditions. (6)
24. Launching firework upwards, sparks emerging, using this? (4)

## Members' Noticeboard

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

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**REGISTER NOW!** Books for the Reader and Collector from Brian Ameringer. Many of you already know me from convention dealers' rooms, auctions and BSFA affairs. Early in 1998 I will be producing my first ever 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. **Wits End**, 37 Coventry Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 4QR. Email: cja@compuserve.com

### WANTED

**RADIO PLAYS WANTED** Radio aficionados (and recent BSFA joiners) Ellen Cheshire is desperate to get her ears on two 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 Tarrin Lee. If anyone has either of these and can copy them, Ellen will happily

regulate terms in kind from her own extensive radio collection. If you can help provide clues in this desperate search, contact either Ellen or Greg on 0181 550 6026.

**WANTED** A) SF & F Videos. 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: Manfred Diehl, 62 Kaiser-Wilhelm Str. D-67059 Ludwigshafen, Germany.

**BOOKS KNOWN FOR A LOVING HOME** John Crowley *Eyeless Gander* Doves ed. The Year's Best SF. Eighth Annual Collection in the US edition, also known as *Best New SF Five* in Britain, either way it will do. These are for reading, so cheapness is appreciated (condition not a condition). Contact: Syd Foster on 01792 206729. Thanks gang!

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

## RESULTS OF COMPETITION 128: "BLURBS R US"

The answers were:

1. Paul J. McAuley, Pasquale's Angel, VG5F 95
2. Jack McDewitt, Engines of God, Voyager 96
3. Terry Pratchett, interesting Times, Corgi 95
4. Christopher Evans, Aztec Century, VG5F 93
5. John Whitbourn, To Build Jerusalem, VG5F 95
6. N. Law Wood, Looking for the Mith, Vista 96
7. Peter F. Hamilton, Mender Ring, Pan 93
8. Kim Newman, The Oozym, Pocket 94
9. Richard Calder, Dead Things, Voyager 96
10. Patricia Anthony, Gully Policeman, NEL 95
11. Jonathan Lethem, Gun, With Occasional Music, NEL 95
12. Robert J. Sawyer, The Terminal Experiment, NEL 95
13. Stephen Barter, Ratt, Voyager 92
14. Jonathan Carroll, From the Teeth of Angels, Voyager 95
15. Storm Constantine, Stargazing Tender Prey, Cress 95
16. Alexander Beshar, Iron, Orbis 95
17. Alison Sinclair, Legacies, Millennium 95
18. Difficult, but the title is included in the blurb text.
19. Alasdair Gray, 1982, Janine, Penguin 85
20. Blurb written by Gray himself.
21. Larry Niven, Jeanne Proulx & Stephen Barnes, The Legacy of Hevor, Octel 88
22. Michael Flynn, In the Country of the Blind, Bantam 90

A bit of a stinker. Close but no cigar if you put Gibson & Sterling's *The Difference Engine* or Christopher Fowler's *Darkest Day*. As your esteemed editor mentioned in *MS* 128 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 *The Ross* got this one correct, and was a very good runner-up.

## RESULTS OF COMPETITION 127: "TELLY ADDICT?"

1. Sapphire (in *Sapphire and Steel*) 2. Rimmer (in *Red Dwarf*)
  3. Elliot (A For Andromeda - with Fred Hoyle) 4. Gallifrey (Doctor's Who) 5. Nicholls (Uhura in *Star Trek*) 6. Anderson (Sylvia) 7. Lotus (McGooban's car at the start of *The Prisoner*) 8. Creighton-Ward (Lady Penelope)
- The tie-break answer was MAJOR - 'cos the initial letters of each answer spell (backwards) CLANGERS, and as every luv me Major Clanger was the patriarch of the traffic shifty knutner.

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

• The winner of the crossword in issue 128 was regular entrant Sue Jones. Congratulations! — Roger Robinson



# Skull C Roger Robinson's Crackers

## COMPETITION 130: "CLARKE REPRISED"

Since, thanks to the Post Office, many of you didn't receive the last issue, we're re-running the competition. But as partial recompense we have two of John English's splendid crosswords to test your wits – a repeat of last issue's (see page 23, where you can also find issue 128's solutions and winners) and a perimeteric toughie. Remember that there's a prize for the crossword too!

Entries for the competition and both crosswords should be sent as normal to Roger Robinson at the address on the right.

The last mailing was an 'Arthur C. Clarke Special', so the competition is just a quick run around the block for all you Clarke fans out there. Ten easy questions for you, so let's have lots of entries. And in addition to the normal prizes winners will receive, courtesy of Voyager, copies of 2010, 2061 and 3001.

1. It is Arthur C. Clarke, but what does the 'C' stand for?
2. Which other very famous sci 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 'HUISH' 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 aeronautics?
10. At which London college did ACC get his 1st class honours degree in Physics and Mathematics?

## AND NOW THE GOOD NEWS!

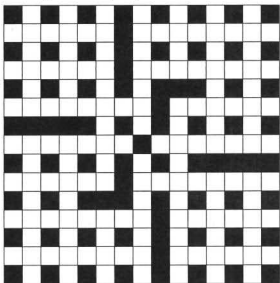
The competition page has a new supremo-in-waiting. John Ollis foolishly bravely offered to take over the job, and after an exhausting selection process was accepted (well – I got exhausted selecting which drink to buy next to wish him well!).

— Roger Robinson

## Matrix Crossword 22 — "Against Stupidity", a Perimeteric Jigsaw

by John English

**Method:** Solve the clues and insert the solutions jigsaw-fashion into the diagram. The 28 letters around the border of the completed diagram when read clockwise starting from the top left corner will spell out the name of a novel (3,4,10) by a well-known author (5,6). The clues below are arranged in alphabetical order of their solutions, and their numbering is irrelevant.



1. Puzzle makes one nearly irate, with twitch. (8)
2. Not many turning south – north and south, perhaps? (8)
3. Junk mail can't be sent to one on the dole. (8)
4. Qualification at start of term for such as Laumer's Relief? (8)
5. I laid pop out, seeing double. (8)
6. For example, spots returning to trap... (6)
- 7... limitless Visions and Sagan book, 'Meeting of Visions'. (3,7)
8. You or I see most broken – illusion? (7)
9. Fighter plane flown backwards by Farren – attention-grabbing trick! (7)
10. Shatter beam endlessly, grinding pulses. (10)
11. Small surrounding prophet in Barsom's major city... (6)
- 12... kind of smell with a direction? (6)
13. Devil allowed to remain unspoken. (8)
14. Concerning part of eye. I banish McDonald. (7)
15. Involved in travel, gamely returning by frictionless means of transport. (6)

16. Memorable, like Johnny? (8)
17. Tom Holt (nearly) in disarray caused by sentinel in 2001. (8)
18. Christian creed has church embroidered in 9. (6)
19. Frank or Orson, initially – a writer. (4)
20. Pertaining to sexual revel, making part of corgi ache? (6)
21. Broken tail – cure using second stomachs in cows. (8)
22. Dinner groups take their seats, with Eliot embracing Dean. (8)
23. Cease to use chair when holding summit. (4,2)
24. Make it with a cure start! (3,4)
25. Part of paté Asimov had with afternoon meals. (4)
26. Earthling has to make mistake in trigonometrical function. (6)
27. Finnish meeting place with publisher's imprint in the sky, according to Heinlein? (6)
28. One (not zero) in extremely hot pursuit of sexual gratification. (6)

# Big Butt ALPHABET flushes back the news

- **THE ILLUSTRATED MAN** After John Jarrod's – we can't leave that man alone – thoughtful critique of last year's Clarke Awards for ignoring good old traditional st, it's nice to see that the Earthlight boss is putting his money where his mouth is by signing up such hard-st lunaries as Guy Gavriel Kay, John Whitbourn, Ray Bradbury and Jane Yule. Will he put speeches on their covers?
- **KING RAY LAD?** Further proof of the non-existence of Gary Dalvin came in issue 197 of *Victor: Or, An Ambiguous Critique* where Mr Dalvin's editorial was attributed to Dr Butler on the contents page. Meanwhile, said contents list paid homage to the heyday of the dear old Gridman in a virtuosic display of typos. A spokesperson retorted: 'Foku Fok' (Not to be outdone, the editor of *The Best Matrix In The World* – Ever! Vol. 129) proved that he doesn't read his own magazine 'Well, nobody else does', he mewed piously by claiming that **Mark Plummer** won the 1996 Best Fanfiction Nova (it was **Allison Freebairn**) and covered all bets by saying that both **Bridget Wilkinson** and **Bridget Hardcastle** were standing for TAFF (it's the former).
- **WORRA S'EMIT** Every so often people complain that a mainstream writer has ripped off 'proper' sf – Amis fls being hailed as an original by having time given backwards in *WORRA S'EMIT*. 'But drallaB and KoD and ssidA did that already' they all cry. Of course, it time really goes backward, nitralM got there first.
- **EDDIE STOBART WATCH OUT!** Is Mr Terran plotting to take over the world? Spotted recently somewhere in the Midlands: a van emblazoned with the word 'Matrix' in large friendly letters. Closer inspection revealed the small print: 'Global Management Distribution'. Howla laughter was heard from the I! Can't Believe It's Not Victor! [That's cruel. — Ed] editorial suite. Or is it sobbing?
- **EMPIRE OF THE DAUGHTER** As G. Ballard's daughter is producing BBC1's finest chat show, we think she should get her Dad to go on. Parky won't mind – Jim isn't an emu, and he may even answer questions like (1) If Crash is an extreme metaphor, what kind of simile would it be? (2) How many downhill races have you seen? (3) Why on earth do you want to fuck Ronald Reagan?
- **DRAMA ON CRISIS?** The news that someone has managed to convince an insurance company that he's been abducted by aliens (with appropriate unearthly body parts as evidence) and is set to receive a £1million payout had Aleph gibbering in disbelief. What would the premium be for – let's say – *The Sparrow* winning all the awards going? Or – whisper it softly – a BSFA mailing being delivered on time and to every member?
- **EDITORS BEHAVING BADLY** Can it be mere chance that 50% of the editorial team of *Victor: Or the Modern Prometheus* share the names of 50% of the characters from BBC1's most popular current sitcom? When will Messrs Kincaid and Butler be renamed Debs and Dorothy? A spokesperson retorted: 'I don't think we're in Kansas anymore, Toto.'
- **SPEAKING OF WHOM...** There's been a recent threat in *Anisble* concerning less-than-flattering mentions of critics in certain authors' works. Aleph has always wondered about a line in **Terry Pratchett's** *Lords and Ladies* (Gollancz 1992). On page 59, Granny Weatherwax has just entered the house of the naughty young with Perdita to teach her a lesson:  
"Blessings be upon this house," said Granny Weatherwax.  
In much the same tone of voice have people said, 'Eat hot lead, Kincaid'  
Aleph is sure this is some literary or film reference that's gone right over his head... but perhaps our Paul once gave Terry a bad review?
- **PHEW...** made it, and the column hasn't once mentioned *Childhood's End*... damn damn damn... — N.C. <? < N.C.

**BIG BUTTERS:** (Names withheld on legal and medical advice.)  
• Aleph welcomes scandal, rumour, clippings, cuttings, droppings, small pieces of cheese, and bribes (c/o editorial address).

the greasepainted matrix is improvised on an accom s5000, hammed up atrociously by various bits of software (notably zap, which was just – marvellous – darling), made up by an hp laserjet st, subtly lit by pdc copyright, 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 130—soundtracked by the penguin celt orchestra (—concert programme— &—broadcasting from home— ipm sillon jillem), alanis morissette (thanks lady), the shire horses, garbage, —the full monty—, duke ellington, —roméo & julei—, stereolab, —france europe express—, the shortest test match ever, phoenix 96, and no television at all.