

# ·MATRIX·

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· JULY / AUGUST 1998 ·



MARY · DORIA · RUSSELL

*The Sparrow*

BSFA Award • Arthur C. Clarke Award • Tiptree Award

## To the members of the BSFA

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the members of the BSFA who were kind enough to vote for *The Sparrow* this year. I was thrilled speechless to receive the Best Novel award, although I managed to get my voice back for the Clarke prize! Thank you so very much for this recognition. All too often in the past two years, I have heard people say, "I hate science fiction, but I loved your book," and then they insist, "*The Sparrow* isn't really science fiction." Now I can say, "Oh yes it is! And I can prove it!"

Sincerely

Mary Doria Russell, 15 June 1998

# MATRIX.

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

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 From left: Edward James; Parah Mendelsohn; John Clute, behind Mary; Andrew M. Butler; unknown; Caroline Mullan; Chris Hill.  
 Photograph by **Chris Terran**.

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## news

## SPARROW WINS CLARKE

FOLLOWING its Tiptree and BSFA Awards, Mary Doria Russell's *The Sparrow* (Black Swan) was announced as the winner of this year's Arthur C. Clarke Award at a ceremony in London's Science Museum on 27 May. Russell, who had flown over from America for the occasion, first collected her BSFA Award from Chris Hill, and thanked the membership of the BSFA (see cover).

Clarke Award administrator Paul Kincaid then called on Angie Edwards, Sir Arthur's niece, to open the envelope and announce the winner; the result was enthusiastically welcomed by the large audience. In a warm and emotional acceptance speech, Russell made a particular point of thanking her editor Simon Taylor; British booksellers Rog Peyton and Dick Jude were also thanked for their efforts in promoting the book in this country.

Four of the six nominees were present: Russell, Elizabeth Hand (*The Glimmering*), James Lovegrove (*Dags*) and Jeff Noon (*Nymphomaniac*); Stephen Baxter (*Titan*) and Sheri S. Tepper (*The Family Tree*) were unable to attend. Judges this year were Andrew M. Butler and Tanya Brown (for the BSFA),

and John Clute and Farah Mendelsohn for the SF Foundation, chaired by Paul Kincaid. Many other writers, editors and SF personalities were present, including Scott Bradfield, Molly Brown, Pat Cadigan, David Garnett, Mary Gentle, Colin Greenland, Jon Courtenay Grimwood, Peter Hamilton, Paul McAuley, John Meaney, Kim Newman, Chris Priest, David Pringle, Geoff Ryman, Andy Sawyer, Michael Marshall Smith, Maureen Kincaid Speller, and Brian Stableford. □

• Mary Doria Russell is interviewed in *Vector* 200.

• More photos on pp12-13.

• Claire Briaire will take over from Andrew M. Butler as one of the BSFA judges next year; Tanya Brown is now on her second year.

## PRATCHETT GETS OBE

AFTER the knighthood awarded to Sir Arthur Clarke in the New Year's Honours list, Terry Pratchett becomes the second SF writer this year to be honoured. He was given the OBE (Order of the British Empire) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List on 13 June, "for services to literature".

He told *Anisble*: "I suspect the 'services to literature' consisted of refraining from trying to write any. Still, I can't help feeling mightily chuffed about it." □

## SPEDDING HELD ON DRUGS ALLEGATION

FANTASY writer and anthropologist Alison Spedding is being held in a Bolivian prison on suspicion of drug dealing, according to *The Guardian* of 20 June. She has reportedly been held for some months without being charged and with no prospect of a trial, and the 'drug dealing' amounted to possession of one joint for personal use. She has apparently contracted typhoid and malaria whilst in jail, due to the poor conditions.

Spedding's fantasy retellings of the life of Alexander the Great are currently being reissued by Voyager, under her full name (they were previously issued as by 'Spedding' alone). She has long been a resident of Bolivia, and Nicholas Pollotta of the Science Fiction Writers of America suggests that letters of protest could usefully be sent to the Bolivian Embassy. "Please write a polite, but firm, letter to the Bolivian ambassador informing him of your moral outrage and asking for her immediate release. This will only take ten minutes of your time and a stamp."

Address: Bolivian Embassy, 106 Eaton Square, London, SW1W 9AD □



Mary Doria Russell and her £1,000 cheque, with John Clute (left) and Andromeda bookseller Rog Peyton.

Photo: Chris Tarrant

## 1998 Nebula Awards

Women dominated this year's Nebula Awards, presented on 2 May at a ceremony in Santa Fe. Nebulas are voted on by the members of Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America.

## BEST NOVEL

VONDA N. MCINTYRE  
*The Moon and the Sun*

## BEST NOVELLA

JERRY OLTON  
"Abandon In Place"  
(*F&SF* Dec 96)

BEST NOVELETTE  
NANCY KRESS

"The Flowers of Aulit Prison"  
(*Asimov's* Oct/Nov 96)

## BEST SHORT STORY

JANE YOLEN  
"Sister Emily's Lightship"  
(*Starlight* 1)

GRAND MASTER  
AWARD  
POUL ANDERSON

SERVICE TO THE SFWA  
ROBIN WAYNE BAILEY

## 1998 Bram Stoker Awards

The Bram Stoker Awards, given for horror and dark fantasy, were presented this year in New York on 6 June.

## BEST NOVEL

JANET BERLINER & GEORGE  
GUTHRIDGE  
*Children of the Dusk*

## BEST FIRST NOVEL

KIRSTEN BAKIS  
*Lives of the Monster Dogs*

## BEST NOVELETTE

JOE R. LANSDALE  
"The Big Blow"

## BEST SHORT STORY

EDO VAN BELKOM & DAVID  
NICKLE  
"Rat Food"

## BEST COLLECTION

KARL EDWARD WAGNER  
*Exorcisms and Ecstasies*

## BEST NON-FICTION

STANLEY WATIER  
*Dark Thoughts: On Writing*

LIFE ACHIEVEMENT  
WILLIAM PETER BLATTY  
JACK WILLIAMSON

# shippings...news...gleanings...rumours...cuttings...

**CULT FICTION** M. J. 'Simo' Simpson has left *SFX*, after joining the successful magazine on its founding in 1995 and eventually rising to Deputy Editor. *SFX*'s sister magazine *Cult TV* has folded after eleven issues, despite venturing into Loaded territory with nude pictures of Dr Who actress **Katy Manning** (she played Jo Grant in the 1970s, alongside Jon Pertwee).

**DRACULA THE UNDEAD** is a touring production of the outdoor theatre company Midsomer, 'a tale of love, jealousy and superstition around some impressive and atmospheric landscapes', loosely based on Stoker's novel and various legends. Bring something to sit on, warm clothing and sensible footwear, and a torch and waterproof if it looks like rain (sounds more like an expedition than a show). Venues are: 29 Jul-1 Aug Halesley Castle, North Yorks.; 4-8 Aug Rowney Park, Wirral; 11-15 Aug Oldbury, Manchester; 18-23 Aug Tordy Park, Burnley, Lancs.; 2-5 Sep Newstead Abbey, Notts.; 8-12 Sep Peel Castle, Isle of Man; 16-20 Sep New Mills Festival, Derbyshire. Contact Tanglewood, 1 Hampton Fields, Oswestry, Salop. SY11 1TL. Tel: 01691 655002 (11am-1pm, 4-7pm).

**ONLINE HOBBITS** Summer 1999 should see the launch of a massive multi-player online game based on Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. The role-playing game, currently being developed by Sierra On-Line, will be able to support thousands of simultaneous users and will be set some decades after the events in *Lord of the Rings*.

**GET WELL SOON!** **Vine Clarke**, Grand Old Fan and Guest of Honour at the 1995 Worldcon in Glasgow, remains in hospital. 'I'm making a little progress', he told *Anisble*, 'but treatable' is not 'curable'. I've been 'in by mouth' for about a month now, and dream occasionally of fish & chips washed down with coffee. I can walk behind a Zimmer frame, but still need to be helped to my feet. Still, there is progress.' Vine is now in rehabilitation and expects to be home soon, and welcomes letters and reading matter from fans; send to A. V. Clarke, Gillies Ward, St Mary's Hospital, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6LT.

**Ken Bulmer** also welcomes letters and 'fantasy novels'. Halliwell Nursing Home, Kingswood Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 4UN.  
**Ilan Gunn**, Australian cartoonist, is still under treatment for cancer. After a not too successful stem cell transplant, he and partner Karen are optimistic about a new and different course of chemotherapy.  
**Diana Wynne Jones** has more back problems, after suffering collapsing vertebrae. She is due another ten-hour operation, and has sadly had to pull out of her Guest of Honour appearance at Alabacon this year.

**AMAZING YORIES** The contents of the relaunched *Amazing Stories* - published in July by gaming-card company Wizards of the Coast - show a distinctly old-fashioned and, some would say, right-wing or libertarian agenda. There are contributions from **Ben Bova**, **James Alan Gardner** and **Neal Barrett Jr**, an excerpt from **Orson Scott Card's** forthcoming novel *Heartfire*, and a comment column from **Bruce Sterling**. Reflecting the media side of the magazine the cover will be a *Star Trek*. TNG painting by **Bob Eggleton** and there are ST stories by **A. C. Crispin** and **John Betancourt**.

**DEATHS** **Jerome Bixby**, American writer, died on 28 April from complications after a quadruple heart bypass operation. Born in 1923, he is best remembered for the much-anthologised sf short story 'It's a Good Life' (1953), about a mutant child who terrorises a small town; it was dramatised for *The Twilight Zone* and was one of the stories used in the 1983 movie based on the series. He wrote many Westerns, and also scripted the 1958 movie *It! The Terror From Beyond Space*, the first version (later rewritten) of *Fantastic Voyage* (1965), and several *Star Trek* episodes. As an editor he worked on *Planet Stories*, and was also involved with *Galaxy*, *Thrilling Wonder Stories* and *Startling Stories* in the 1950s.

**Alex Schomburg**, illustrator and artist, died aged 92 on 7 April in Oregon. He worked for most of the major sf magazines, including *Amazing Stories*, *Analogue* and *Asimov's*, did many book covers, and helped develop comics including *Captain America* and *Submariner*; he also drew the cover for the first issue of *Marvel Comics*.

**Leo Elias**, comics artist, died in early April. He drew the 1950s *Beyond Mars* newspaper strip, scripted by Jack Williams and the stories *Seetee Ship* and *Seetee Shock*.

**SNIPETS** **Alfred Bester's** 1953 story 'Time is the Traitor' has been bought for \$500,000 by Warner Bros. for filming. The forthcoming *Noesis* sf magazine has a web site, which includes submission guidelines: <http://www.ndirect.co.uk/~wadding/noesis>  
**Douglas Adams** should be delivering his *Hitch Hiker's* story to Disney in August. *Weird Tales* is now edited by **George Scithers**.

# SPELLER WINS TAFF

**Maureen Kincaid Speller** has won this year's UK to US TAFF race, and will represent British fandom at the Worldcon in Baltimore in August, and around the States on her travels. Full results were:

	1st Place	N. America	Europe	Other
Chris Bell	53	12	41	
Bridget Hardcastle	41	14	27	
Maureen Kincaid Speller	121	42	76	3
No preference	8	7	1	
Total ballots	223	75	145	3

## SF (OF COURSE)

Courses on science fiction happen around the country, ranging from the full-time academic (Reading's MA in SF Studies) to part-time evening classes. What can you expect from the latter?

Starting in Leeds this autumn the Workers' Education Association offers such an sf course. Taught by **Rob Hayler**, it runs for ten weeks from 24 September, 7-9pm on Thursday evenings at the Swarthmore Centre. It costs £35, or £25 for the unwaged. Rob - a philosopher studying language at Leeds University - is well-versed in literary sf and has structured the course to cover:

- How to read sf - What is it? How should we approach it?
- Major themes - Hard / soft sf, science, morality, politics, what is real / human.
- History of sf - Swift, de Bergerac, *Frankenstein*, Wells, Heinlein, the New Wave, Dick, Ellison, Gibson, virtual reality, computers, biotech, nanotech, the return to hard sf, Mars as the fashionable planet.
- Specific authors in detail - Bradbury, Ballard, Egan.

• Sociology of sf - prediction or social criticism? Technology and 'progress'. *Nineteen Eighty-four*. Feminist sf. Fandom, conventions, fanzines, the net.

• Media sf - visual sf from the 50s to *Trek* and 2001. *Silent Running*, *Soylent Green* and, crucially, *Alien*. Dystopia, cynicism and profit from *Blade Runner* to *The X-Files*. Irony and post-modernism.

"SF is one of the most popular and yet most critically misunderstood art forms of his century," says Rob. "As such it is the perfect subject for a course of the type I propose: an enthusiastic overview taught by an sf buff with an academic background."

**Contacts:** For the course - WEA, 24 Newlay Grove, Horsforth, LEEDS, LS18 4LH. Tel: 0113 259 0055

**Rob Hayler** (who welcomes feedback on the proposed content of his course) - Flat 1, 4 Regent Park Terrace, LEEDS, LS6 2AX. Tel: 0113 2748200 (h), 0113 2332660 (w). Email: [phlrh@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:phlrh@leeds.ac.uk)

Rob also maintains the 'Bogart's Exchange' web site, a Philip Dick resource and trading area: <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Corridor/2997/>

## Awards Miscellany

• British writers often do well in the *Sidekick Awards*, given for alternative history tales. Nominees this year are: Long Form: **Peter DeLauro** *Time on My Hands* (Gollancz, Delac); **Michael Swanwick** *Jack Frost* (Millennium, Avon); **Harry Tuttle** *How Few Remain* (Hodder & Stoughton, Del Rey). Short Form: **Lee Allred** *'For the Strength of the Hills'* (Writers of the Future XII); **Eugene Byrne & Kim Newman** *'Teddy Bear's Picnic'* (Interzone 12/21/23; Back in the USSR, Zeising); **Roland J. Green** *'The King of Poland's Foot Cavalry'* (Tyrants, Tor); **William Sanders** *'The Undiscovered'* (Asimov's Mar 97). Special Achievement: **Robert Sobel** *For Want of a Nail* (MacMillan 1973; Greenhill 1997).

The awards, founded in 1995 and named after Murray Leinster's short story 'Sideways in Time', will be announced and presented at this year's Worldcon in Baltimore; previous winners include **Stephen Baxter** and **Paul J. McAuley**.

• The shortlists for this year's *Mythopoeic Awards* are: Adult Literature: **Peter S. Beagle** *Giant Bones*; **A. S. Byatt** *The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye*; **Charles de Lint** *Trader*; **Neil Gaiman** *Neverwhere*; **Patrick O'Leary** *The Gift*. Children's Literature: **Susan Cooper** *The Bogart and the Monster*; **Dahlia Ipcar** *A Dark Horn Blowing*; **Robin McKinley** *Rose Daughter*; **Jane Yolen** *Young Merlin*. Young Adult Literature: **Verlyn Flieger** *A Question of Time*; **J. R. R. Tolkien's Road to Faerie; **Jeanne Goff** *Car*; **C. Lewis** *Index: Rumours From the Sculptor's Shop*; **Walter Hooper** *C. S. Lewis: A Companion and Guide*; **Brian Horne** [ed] *Charles Williams: A Celebration*; **Kathryn Lindskoog** *Finding the Landlord: A Guidebook to C. S. Lewis's The Pilgrim's Regress*. Scholarship (General): **Glen Cavaliero****

*The Supernatural and English Fiction*; **John Clute & John Grant** (eds) *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*; **S. T. Joshi** *Lord Dunsany, Master of the Anglo-Irish Imagination*; **Richard Mathews** *Fantasy: The Liberation of Imagination*.

• The 1997 *Asimov's Reader Awards* went to: **Novella: Allen Steele** 'Where Angels Fear to Tread' (Oct/Nov); **Novellette: Bill Johnson** 'We Will Drink a Fish Together...'; (May); **Short Story: Mike Resnick** *'The 43rd Antarean Dynasties'* (Dec); **Poem: Laurel Winter** 'why goldfish shouldn't use power tools' (Dec); **Cover Artist: Chris Moore**; **Interior Artist: Darryl Elliott**.

• The 1997 *Analogue Reader Awards* (An'Lab) went to: **Novella: Timothy Zahn** 'Starson' (Jul/Aug); **Novellette: Grey Rollins** 'Tribal by Ordeal' (Nov); **Short Story: Brian Plante** 'Already in Heaven' (Jul/Aug); **Factual Article: Richard Melsner** 'Cosmological Darwinism' (Nov); **Cover: Hubble Space Telescope photo** (Jan).

• Finalists for *Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award* for the best short fiction of 1997 are: **Alan Brenner** 'Echoes' (F&SF May); **Michael J. Flynn** 'House of Dreams' (Asimov's Oct/Nov); **James Patrick Kelly** 'Itsy Bitsy Spider' (Asimov's May); **May Soon Lee** 'Universal Grammar' (F&SF Apr); **Paul Levinson** 'Loose Ends' (Analogue May); **Paul Park** 'Get a Grip' (F&SF Dec); **Mike Resnick** 'The 43rd Antarean Dynasties' (Asimov's Dec); **William Sanders** 'The Undiscovered' (Asimov's Mar); **James Sarafin** & **Mary Rosenblum** 'One Good Juro' (Asimov's Feb); **Brian Stableford** 'Coming to Gips with the Great Plague' (Omni Online Mar); **Allen Steele** '... Where Angels Fear to Tread' (Asimov's Oct/Nov); **Walter Jon Williams** 'Letha' (Asimov's Sep).

# Scribble Scribble Scribble...

Harry Turtledove has joined to Earthlight, and his Into the Darkness, the first volume of a new fantasy trilogy, will be out in 1999. Editor John Jarmol says: "There's almost a sense of the First World War about Into the Darkness – a feeling that both technology (both scientific and magical) and society are on the cusp of a major change, and that an all-encompassing war will be the catalyst."

Kim Stanley Robinson's companion volume to the 'Mars' trilogy, *The Martians*, is out in September from Voyager (along with the pb of *Antarctica*). It includes new novellas and short stories, character histories, works on Martian mythology, and various non-fiction articles.

Robert Jordan's eighth 'Wheel of Time' fantasy is *The Path of Darkness*, and is now with Orbit for publication in November.

Greg Egan has put together his second collection of short stories. Called *Luminous*, it's out in hardback and trade paperback from Millennium in September.

Kristen Britain has her debut novel *The Green Rider* out from Earthlight in spring 1999. Britain is a National Park Ranger in Maine, and she's written an epic fantasy with a teeny teenage girl heroine who, says editor John Jarmol, "reads as truly as Nick Hombly or Bridget Jones".

Michael Scott Rohan has finished *The Castle of the Winds*, a new fantasy in the 'Winter of the World' series. Orbit plan to release it in November, along with rejacketed re-issues of the first three books in the series.

John Clute's *The Book of End Times* is out from HarperCollins in October (at the rather high price of £17.99 for a trade paperback).

"Containing wondrous selections from the literature and art of the apocalypse – its violence and its redemption – and drawing on the tv series *Millennium*, JC muses upon the deep cultural maelstrom that the millennium will bring."

J. R. Dunn's follow-up to the terrific *Days of Cain* is *Full Tide of Night*, due for summer publication by Avon. It's the story of a colony planet around Epsilon Ind. Als, altered humans, and high-tech gadgetry mixed with low-tech colonial life and politics. A main character is called Amall, so guess who Dunn's been reading...

Stephen Donaldson returns to fantasy in October with *Reave the Just*, from Voyager. It's a collection of eight brand-new fantasy stories.

Stan Nicholls has delivered

*Bodyguard of Lightning*, the first volume of the 'Orcs' series, to Millennium for September publication. The series "tells the story of fantasy's traditional enemy for the first time. For Stryke and his fellow Orcs the arrival of man has seen the end of their world. But now it is time for Stryke and his warband to take control of their destiny and fight for a future for them and all Orcs."

Julian Cope, eccentric and talented musician (you may have heard him on Mark Radcliffe's much-missed evening show on Radio 1), has *The Modern Antiquarian* out from Thorsons in October. It's "a field guide to over 300 prehistoric sites around Britain", and JC (another one! See *Matrix* 122) has visited them all.

Maggie Furey has her second young-adult book in the 'Web' virtual-reality series out in November from Orion, called *Spindrift*.

Steve Aylett, author of *The Crime Studio* and *Bigot Hall*, has *Slaughteromatic* out in October from Phoenix. It's satirical sf, set in a future "where to kill a man is less a murder than a mannerism. Where integrity is no more than a fierce dream. Where crime is the new and only artform. It's a world in which the only culture is gun culture and where Dante Cubit and the Entropy Kid will risk everything for a Eddie game beauty: the last book by a dying Garmek."

David Farland, author of the recent fantasy *The Sum of All Men* (Earthlight), is reportedly a pseudonym of the American sf writer Dave Wolverton.

More on pseudonyms: after reading the plot summaries of the 'Adam Lee' fantasies *The Dark Shore* and *The Shadow Eater* in last issue's Avon column, Steve Jeffery thought they sounded familiar. They are in fact by A. A. Attanasio. The books were issued by Hodder in the UK under his real name, but for some reason Avon is publishing them under the 'Lee' moniker, none of the publicity mentions this.

Katherine Kerr's sequel to *The Red Wyem* is *The Black Raven*, and is out next January from Voyager.

Alison Sinclair's alien-contact sf novel *Cavalcade* has been put back by Millennium until October.

Remember *Masquerade*? In September we'll be swamped with publicity for *The Merlin Mystery* by Jonathan Gunson & Marten Coombe, a fantasy published simultaneously round the world and which contains a puzzle: solve it and you'll win a solid gold wand and a considerable sum of money (they've hedged their bets here – the amount depends on sales, with 20p from

each purchase adding to the pot).

John Whitbourn continues his welcome re-emergence with *The Downs-Lord Trilogy*, a new fantasy trilogy from Earthlight with the first volume due in summer 1999. Like his other novels it's a historical fantasy, but departs from them in being more radical. The books feature a 17th century curate who finds himself in a very different Earth, geographically and geologically the same but differing in such minor details as the dominant species and the efficacy of sorcery. Whitbourn says the series also takes in "wild erotic shenanigans, tragedy, philosophy and low jokes".

Richard Calder's next sf novel is *Frenzetta*, due in December from Orbit.

Clive Barker's dystanic fantasy *Scarlet Gospels* has been retitled *Galilee* and put back by HarperCollins to November.

Matthew Thomas is another new comic fantasist whose *Before & After* about exploding sheep, Nostradamus and the end of the world. It's out in September from Voyager. A 27-year-old Briton, Thomas is described as "Terry Pratchett with funnier jokes".

Jack McDevitt joins in the comet/meteor disaster fun with *Moontail*, due from HarperCollins in October. A comet is going to hit the Moon, and wipe out the fledgling US Moonbase. Not only that, there's a good chance the Moon itself will be destroyed (by a comet?) and send most of the debris crashing down on the Earth.

Andrew Harman has his new comic fantasy *It Came From On High* out from Orbit in September, along with re-issues of *101 Damned*, *The Frogs of War*, *The Sorcerer's Appendix* and *The Tome Tunnel*.

October sees the centenary of C. S. Lewis, with much associated publishing activity. HarperCollins are reissuing the complete 'Narnia' books in various editions (at various prices), and a number of his religious books will be available again.

Sheri S. Tepper's next novel is *Six Moon Dance*, out in summer from Avon in the US, and in November from Voyager here. It's a story of sexually-ambiguous aliens in conflict with humanity.

Spike Milligan has given the word *Frankenstein* according to Spike Milligan, a comic reinterpretation in which the monster is "a vulgar chain-smoker in need of copious supplies of sausage, mash and sex." It's out in pb from Virgin in September, along with his version of *Robin Hood* in hb.

Harry Harrison has sold *The Stainless Steel Rat Goes to the Circus* to Millennium for hardback publication in November.

David Wingrove's *Imagine a Man* is with his agent. It's his first book since he completed the eight-volume 'Chung Kuo' sequence.

## Heinlein Famous: Official!

Robert A. Heinlein will be "inducted" into the SF and Fantasy Hall of Fame in Kansas on 10 July, at the Campbell Conference. Founded in 1996 by the Kansas City SF and Fantasy Society and Kansas University's J. Wayne and Elsie M. Gunn Center for the Study of SF, the Hall of Fame will also be swollen by this year by Hal Clement, C. L. Moore and Frederik Pohl. Those so honoured are chosen by the Hall's directors, who include James Gunn and Joe Haldeman.

Winners of this year's John W. Campbell and Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Awards will also be announced at the conference.

## STAR WARS ETC

Terry Brooks has been commissioned to write the official novelisation of the new Star Wars film. Del Rey will publish it, and Brooks – author of heroic fantasies such as *The Sword of Shannara* – has been working closely with George Lucas on the book. Lucas says: "I am excited to have an author of Terry's calibre writing the novelisation of Episode 1. The novel will go into many areas that could not be included in the film, and I am confident that Terry will do a great job in translating my vision for the film in its fullest sense into the literary medium."

Problems beset production of the film (but see below), due for release next year. Costs of the mostly-digital production have risen from \$70million to \$110million, and Lucas is said to be bored with the project, despite being credited as director there are rumours that only one or two scenes have actually been shot by him. Meanwhile... but here's the John Ashbrook to take up the story. Apparently Lucastill is having sets constructed in Tunisia, with the intention of executing some extensive reshoots this summer. This is not for the usual Hollywood reason – the producers got cold feet and want everything changing at the last minute – but because a huge quantity of the footage shot last summer is OUT OF FOCUS!

These are trained professionals, kids; don't try this at home.

The most anticipated film of all time, the fifteen-years-in-preparation prequel to the most successful film series ever, is stranded in dry land because no one thought to hire a focus puller.

Sounds to me like a good old-fashioned case of "No such thing as bad publicity". Case in point: last year there were reports, very early in the filming of *Titanic*, that the entire cast and crew had gone down with food poisoning. Then the Mexican crew went on strike. Then there was scandal about some stuntmen getting hurt. Then the moneyman started sweating as the film's budget shot past \$200million. Then, finally, it missed its summer release date and was put back to Christmas. Practical upshot: when the film came out there had been news stories about it at regular intervals for over a year, all of them bad, but all serving to put the word 'Titanic' in the ticket-buying punter's mind. Net result: \$1.5 BILLION in the bank, and more to come from video.

When it comes to releasing a movie, no news is bad news. [JA]

## Memory Hole Annex

The Memory Hole was founded to preserve a readership for fanzines, and it has now developed an annex devoted to convention memorabilia – programme books, badges, T-shirts, flyers, PRs and so on. Donations are welcome, which will be "care for, kept for fanzine historians, distributed to fanzine collectors and interested individuals [or] auctioned to raise funds for Memory Hole and our fanzine charities." They will pay postage or collect if possible.

Contact: Pat McMurray, 28 Plaiestow Grove, Brouley, Kent BR1 3PB. Tel: 0181 464 8326. Email: pat@cooky.demon.co.uk  
Web site: <http://www.cooky.demon.co.uk>

# SUMMER POPCORN

John Ashbrook  
on summer movies

AS THOSE of you who searched in vain for a film to watch during the all-pervasive World Cup coverage will have realised, the film distributors capitulated entirely and released buggers all during the first half of the summer. But what about after the city centres have ceased burning and the beer-bos have crawled back into their pits? When the World Cup is nothing more than a bad smell and a worse memory...

## Starting with 1 July

A little thing called *Godzilla* will be striding into town. This is in no way an Americanised version of a Japanese franchise from the 60s. Remember, folks: plot does matter!

Also, if you are afflicted with munchkins, they will doubtless be bullying you to take them to see *The Little Mermaid*, the film which brought Disney back from the brink of bankruptcy. This is in no way a re-issue, and has certainly not had a bit of a wash and brush-up with newer (and more expensive) singers rerecording all its songs.

## 31 July

*Lost in Space*, which is, of course, in no way a spin-off from a 60s tv show which was not, in turn, even remotely 'inspired by' an idea which Gene Roddenberry couldn't sell until he retitled it *Star Trek*.

*Dr Doolittle*, with Eddie Murphy as the token homo sapiens, is a film which is in no way inspired by the failed Rex Harrison musical of 1966.

## 14 August

*The Avengers*, which is, one hardly needs to mention, in no way based on a 60s tv show; and will, of course, base its advertising campaign on Ralph Fiennes dashing good looks and not at all on Uma Thurman's chesty bits.

## 21 August

The truth is, *The X-Files: The Movie* (or *X* or *Blackwax* or *Fight the Future* or whatever the hell they decide to call it [*Fight the Future* — Ed.] will be out there. It is, needless to hype, in no way based on the most watched tv show of the 90s and will, of course, base its advertising campaign on David Duchovny's dashing good looks and not at all on Gillian Anderson's chesty bits.

## 4 September

*Species 2*, which is, of course, in no way a sequel to one of the most preposterous wastes of celluloid ever perpetrated on a science-fiction viewing public in the guise of profit-at-all-costs. It will, one hardly needs to point out, base its advertising campaign on the quality of H. R. Giger's designs and not on Natasha Hestridge's chesty bits.

## 18 September

*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, which, to be frank, actually is based on the book (and lifestyle) of Hunter S. Thompson, is directed by Terry Gilliam, and does feature Johnny Depp, who does spend the whole movie tripping his chesty bits off.

## 2 October

Ah, this is more like it: *Armageddon*, which is not at all about an asteroid/meteor/comet (they can never seem to decide these things) which isn't really heading for Earth and can't only be stopped by Bruce Willis. In no way does this film bear even the remotest passing resemblance to *Deep Impact* from earlier this year and, of course, one hardly needs to mention, that it is very far from a remake of the 1979 Sean Connery disaster movie *Meteor*.

## 9 October

*Small Soldiers* is in no way a tale of computer generated toy soldiers waving war against each other and, as such, owes nothing to Disney's CGI 1996 movie *Toy Story* or, for that matter, Stephen King's short story 'Battleground' from the *Night Shift* collection.

## 16 October

*Mulan* is Disney's latest full-length animation. Not concerning a young Chinese woman who assumes the mantle of a great warrior, this is in no way the reason that Disney has held up the release of Hayao Miyazaki's bustling Japanese anime *Princess Mononoke* which is, likewise, not about a young woman who becomes a great warrior.

*Perfect Murder*, whilst being outside the purview of this magazine, is worth mentioning only insofar as it is, on no way, a faithful remake of Hitchcock's 1953 movie *Dial M For Murder*.

## 23 October

*The Truman Show*. Actually directed by Oscar winner Peter Weir. Really featuring Jim Carrey in his first straight role. Genuinely written by the genius responsible for *Gattaca*. This is a parable about a man whose every move is watched by millions of tv viewers. His whole world is an incredibly elaborate movie set. Every member of his family, everyone he works with, every other human being he has ever met is an actor. Only he doesn't know any of this. [Of course it's in no way based on Philip Dick's *Time Out of Joint* — Ed.] A moment of perceptual breakthrough is, I feel, long overdue. Sounds utterly wonderful. This film is the one and only hope we have left this year for a truly inspiring movie-watching experience. It's true, man!

— © John Ashbrook 1998

# WATERSTONE'S CHARTS

Sales are for the two months up to 16 June 1998, and are kindly supplied by Waterstone's branches at:  
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6. Martin Day *Dr Who: The Hollow Men* (BBC: £4.99 pb)
9. Mike Friedman *Star Trek: Captain's Table #2* (S&S: £4.99 pb)
10. Steven Barnes *Star Trek DS9: Far Beyond* (S&S: £4.99 pb)

# SFE CD-ROM

John Clute & Peter Nicholls (eds) *Science Fiction™: The Multimedial Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (Focus Multimedia ESS119: £39.99 CD-ROM) — The Greater CD-ROM of *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (1995): they have really trademarked 'Science Fiction'? Bloody hell. Requirements: Windows 3.2 or Windows 95, 486DX-33 or higher, 10Mb hard disc space, 16Mb memory. Andrew M. Butler writes: The full (well, more or less) text of Clute and Nicholls's essential reference work, transferred into a format where cross-references can be followed to the cited article. Unfortunately the search engine is rather blunderbuss-like, the results window too small and unresizeable, and headings are cunningly camouflaged into the graphical background. (The cross-references in the introductory matter — itself hidden away under a menu — are faithfully capitalised but aren't

clickable). In addition to the EoSf materials, a seemingly random number of book covers and disc rotations, and short videodisc speech by a dozen or so writers. The result falls between two stools: not sophisticated enough for the serious researcher, nor exciting enough for the so-fa buff.

Chris Terran writes: The problems with the user interface are reportedly largely solved by new software written by Dave Langford, who says: 'The software is Windows 95/NT only — sorry — and makes [the CD-ROM] heaps more usable, with your own choice of display fonts and window sizes, slow-loading compulsory graphics screens eliminated, better background facilities, known connections added at the end of the relevant entries (including with John Clute's permission, the big chunks of articles like *LATIN AMERICA* and *PATRICK MOORE* which Grollier omitted altogether'. Price £11.75 inc p&p, or £23.50 including the CD-ROM. Available from Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU (cheques / POs payable to Dave Langford).

## SHOTS

SCREEN

**DICK JOINS ALIEN LOVE TRIANGLE** The Philip K. Dick short story "Impositer" is the second segment of the forthcoming anthology movie *Alien Love Triangle*, it will feature Madeleine Stowe (*Twelve Monkeys*), Kenneth Branagh acted and *Transpositer's* Danny Boyle directed the first part of the movie, shot earlier this year in the UK. [CT]

**GAIMAN SCRIPTS MONOMOKE** Neil Gaiman is writing the English script of *Princess Mononoke*, Hayao Miyazaki's animated film which is a huge success in Japan and is set to launch anime to a mass-market audience in the US and Europe next year. Gaiman, writer of the *Sandman* series of graphic novels and the UK tv series *Neverwhere*, says he "plans to remain faithful to the story while creating a translation that a non-Japanese audience can follow". [CT]

**I, ROBIN** Robin Williams will play the lead role in a movie of Isaac Asimov's 1976 story "Bicentennial Man", about a robot which desires to become human. Filming will begin in the autumn, with Chris Columbus directing; he previously worked with Williams on *Mrs Doubtfire*. Reportedly, if Williams had declined the role it would have been offered to Tom Hanks. [CT]

**SATURN AWARDS** for media sf were presented on 10 June in Century City, California. Recipients of the 24th set of Saturns included: Best SF Film *Men in Black*; Best Fantasy Film *Austin Powers*; Best Horror Film *The Devil's Advocate*; Best Actor *Pierce Brosnan* (*Tomorrow Never Dies*); Best Actress *Jodie Foster* (*Contact*); Best Director *John Woo* (*Face/Off*); Best Writer *Danny Webb & Michael Colfer* (*Face/Off*); Best Music *Danny Elfman* (*Men in Black*); Best Special Effects *Starship Troopers*; Best Make Up *Mimie*; Best Network Series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; Best Cable TV *Syndicated Series*; *The Outer Limits*; Best Genre TV Presentation *The Shining*; George Pal Memorial Award Dean Devlin; President's Award James Cameron; Life Career Awards James Karen, Michael Crichton. [CT]

**COMING ON FILM** ... Will Smith (*Independence Day*, *Men in Black*) has signed on to appear in Universal's movie of Gene Brewer's 1995 of novel *K-Pax*. [CT] • Busy man: Smith is also to appear in *The Mark*, a superhero movie which is getting special effects help from Roland Emmerich and Sean Devlin, who gave us *Independence Day*. [CT] • Dimension Films (who brought back the stalk 'n' slash genre with *Scream* ... thanks, guys) are developing a movie version of Robert Silverberg's *Needle in a Timestack*. Don't hold your breath, though: it's still only at the script stage now, which means the chances of it making it to the big screen are about the same as the chances of finding a needle in a ... [JA] • Arnold Schwarzenegger is reported to be "in talks" about *Total Recall 2*, a sequel to the Philip Dick-based 1990 movie, with screenwriters Ron Shusett and Gary Goldstein and director Jonathan Frakes. [CT] • Don't believe the era of the Anne / Stallone action movie has ended. While Stallone is still haggling over money on *Rambo 4*, Arnie is in talks to appear in *True Lies 2* as well as the long-delayed *Crusade* (that's the one where director Paul Verhoeven decided to wait until some film company was prepared to give him enough money to build a full-size set of medieval Jerusalem ... about \$200million? That'll do nicely). Then there's the even longer in development *Sgt Rock*, in which Arnie is proposing to play the archetypal US Marine, battling WWII Germans! Hmm. Oh, and he also has plans for *Predator 3*, which from *Duck Till Dawn's* Robert Rodriguez is set to write, and possibly direct. Can't wait for someone to suggest a Stallone / Schwarzenegger tie-in. *Rambo vs Terminator* anyone? [JA] • The ninth *Star Trek* movie has a name: *Star Trek: Insurrection*. Directed by Jonathan Frakes, it's set for US release in the autumn. [CT] • After the universal panning of *Batman* and Robin, George Clooney is not being invited to reclaim the cape – instead the franchise is being dangled in front of Kurt Russell, with John Travolta mentioned to play

## media news . . tv . . film

john ashbrook &amp; chris terran

the evil *Scarcrow*. This might stick in the craw of his *Face/Off* buddy Nicolas Cage, who was scheduled to pull on the red Y-fronts for the utterly unnecessary *Superman Lives*. After a year of to-ing and fro-ing, this has now been dumped and Cage along with it. But in Hollywood, once you sign on the dotted line you've got it made, even if the film isn't. Cage will apparently get his \$17million fee anyway. (Is anyone making a film they don't want to be in?) [JA] • Dennis Dugan will direct *Clockstoppers*, an sf comedy from Paramount about a scientist who creates a device enabling people to move 25 times faster than normal. Nothing new: see Wells's "The New Accelerator". [CT] • Just when you thought Hollywood had run out of things to remake, *Gus Van Sant* (*To Die For* and *Good Will Hunting*) is proposing to execute a shot-for-shot remake of *Psycho*, in sets that are being carefully constructed to be identical to the originals. Credible actors like Julianne Moore (*The Big Lebowski*, *Boogie Nights*) and William H. Macy (*Fargo*, and ... em ... *Boogie Nights*) have signed on to forensically reconstruct rituals which work as perfectly now as they did 38 years ago. I dunno, nostalgia just ain't what it used to be. [JA] • F. Paul Wilson & Matthew Costello's biotech novel *Masque* has been optioned by Polygram for Tom Cruise's production company Cruise Wagner. [CT] • In the "why/why/why/why?" file is the pre-production news on *Mission: Impossible 2*. Yes, after his year in Kubrick hell shooting (and reshooting and reshooting) *Eyes Wide Shut*, Tom Cruise is to return to the franchise which he, coincidentally, owns outright and therefore will make far more money from. One glimmer of light at the end of the Eurotunnel, apparently. Hong Kong chaos poet John Woo (most recently of *Face/Off* fame) has signed on to direct, from a script by *Star Trek* writers Moore and Braga, that the "cruiser" will grow himself a pencil tache and clomp on the red and gold armour to play Marvel Comics' Iron Man. Funny thing is, where DC have had nothing but financial success with their movie adaptations (*Superman* and *Batman* being the obvious examples), Marvel have always had a rough ride. Anyone remember *The Incredible Hulk*? My point exactly. [JA]

**COMING ON TV** ... *Earth Scum*, from ABC, features *Fut* Monty actor Mark Addy in the lead role and is an sf comedy about an alien / human couple on another planet, it's from the team that brought you *3rd Rock From the Sun*. [CT] • And speaking of which, actor Phil Hartman was allegedly killed by his wife on 28 May, in an apparent murder/suicide. This led to the refilming of the final episode of the current series of *3rd Rock*, a two-parter which was to be concluded in the next series; the original part 1 was broadcast, but NBC decided to redo the whole thing rather than work around the loss of Hartman. [CT] • Vic Reeves & Bob Mortimer are to drive their Renault Clio into their first acting roles as they gallantly fill a much-needed gap in our tv schedules. They will play the titular roles in the resurrected version of *Randall and Hopkirk: Deceased*. Eranu! [JA] • *Mercy Point* is from Paramount – described as "E.R. in space", it's set on a spacegoing hospital and portrays the lives of an elite team of medics (called – oh dear – "medtechs") "dedicated to serving human and alien species". Wonder if James White has anything to say about it? [CT] • Steven Spielberg's animated miniseries *Invasion America* started US transmission in early June on the Warner Bros Network. It's about a part-alien 17-year-old boy who is (yawn) the only one who can save America (as usual one is tempted to ask, "Why?"). Voice actors include Leonard Nimoy. [CT] • A fourth season of *Star Trek: Voyager* has been approved by Paramount. [CT] • ABC has commissioned R. L. Stine – best known for the "Goosebumps" YA horror phenomenon – to create an adult horror series called *R. L. Stine's Night Terrors*, set in a medical centre. [CT] • *Seven Days* is "an intense time-travel drama" from Paramount in which a CIA agent is chosen to travel back in time to prevent the assassination of the president and vice-president of the US; he has seven days in which to do it. [CT]

## .MATRIX.

WHEN A HOBBY turns into a job – even if unpaid – there's a danger of losing the enthusiasm that got you interested in the first place. I used to read books purely for pleasure; now it's a duty, and the mountainous quantity of crap that's published starts to affect even the most fervent reader. I used to be able to ignore it (I certainly didn't buy it), but now I can't.

How did something as badly written as John Cramer's *Einstein's Bridge* get past Avon's editors? (We're into "As you know, Professor ..." territory here.) How did something as execrable as Harry Turtledove's *A World of Difference* get published? In this alternative history, which reads like a ghastly nostalgic lament for the Cold War and is written with all the social awareness and sensitivity of the bastard child of Ronald Reagan and David Starkey, Mars is replaced by the Earthlike planet Minerva. Twin USSR / US missions are sent to contact the aliens, and before you can say "Bay of Pigs" those pesky Russkies are selling Kalashnikovs to the natives and starting a war (but not before one of them gets into a fix and is selflessly rescued by the upstanding, God-fearing and terminally heroic Yanks).

There are women in this book, but you might not recognise them if you've ever met the real thing. Their contributions to the novel are mostly sexual encounters. They're sassy, they simper, their only motivation appears to be hormones. One tries to bugger up the mission by seducing male members, one – the doctor, the clichéd life-nurturing role – gets all motherly towards the aliens.

And the aliens ... the females die before they get old, in childbirth; in fact they're children themselves (and are portrayed exactly as such) whose only function is to breed the next generation. This is extremely nasty. Not to mention brutish, though unfortunately not short.

Perhaps it's a satire. But it doesn't read like one. You end up hoping you never get trapped in a lift with Turtledove; it would probably be better than being stuck with Jerry Pournelle, but not by much.

Books like this make me want to give up on sf. Almost. But then along come novels like John Kessel's *Corrupting Dr Nix*, Michael Swanwick's *Jack Faust* and Greg Egan's *Distress* – to pick three recent, and very different, examples of speculative fiction at its best – and I remember: there are authors writing adult books, for adult audiences.

And it's not just a matter of taste. One can properly expect a writer to show some awareness of irony, of the cultural zeitgeist. And before you start writing about aliens, try understanding people.

— Chris Terran

## Many thanks to

John Ashbrook, John Bark, Stephen Barter, Elizabeth & Paul Billinger, Scott Bradfield, Molly Brown, Andrew M. Butler, Pat Cadogan, John Clute, Cardinal Cox, Jo Fletcher, Mary Gentle, Rory Gray, Colin Greenland, Jon Courtenay Grimwood, Peter Hamilton, James A. Hartley, Chris Hill, John Jarrold, Steve Jeffery, Paul Kincaid, Dave Langford, James Lovegrove, Paul McAuliffe, John Meany, Lesley Milner, Lee Montgomerie, Kim Newman, Jeff Noon, John Ollis, Mark Plummer, Chris Reed, Julie Ripley, Roger Robinson, Michael Rowley, Mary Doria Russell, Geoff Ryman, Andy Sawyer, Cathy Schofield, SF Weekly, Michael Marshall Smith, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Brian Stablesford, Tony Sutton, Bryan Talbot, and Martin Tudor.

# recent & forthcoming books

## Gollancz



**Simon R. Green** *Deathstalker Honour* (Vista: 18 Jun; £5.99 pb, 621pp) — Science fantasy space opera, fourth and penultimate part of the life and times of Owen Deathstalker and written with cheekily cheerful awfulness. Good fun.

**John Kessel** *Computing Dr. Nice* (Gollancz: 16 Jul; £16.99 hb, 286pp) — I was telling a friend about *Dark City*: "Think *forties* films," I said, "dark mean streets, hamburgers, crisp and wistful, femmes fatales, plots to die for. *Dark City* has none of them. Well, apart from the hamburgers. And the rain." All style and no substance, the film reminded me of nothing so much as a routine *Dr. Who* story, with its daff allusions, dial dialogue, plot holes you could drive the Nostromo through, and absolute refusal to follow up on the existential terror of its premise of reality-altering technology (see Le Guin's *The Lathe of Heaven* or any number of Dick books for infinitely better treatments). It was just an excuse for second-rate special FX.

But that's why I don't review films: I see so few that I suspect I've lost the ability to 'read' them correctly, to 'parse the text' of a work. See Dave Roberts's review elsewhere this issue for a more reliable opinion.

Shortly after the above conversation, I read John Kessel's novel. It too owes much to *forties* films, though romantic comedies rather than film noir. It has none of the omissions of *Dark City*, and it's the most exuberant, entertaining and enjoyable book I've read this year.

## Orion



Including Millennium, Phoenix, Weidenfeld, Dent, Eyreman, Dolphin

**John Barnes** *Orbital Resonance* (O: 4 May (R 1991); £5.99 pb, 214pp) — First UK publication of Barnes's third novel, a young adult's adoration about the coming of age of a young girl on a space station orbiting a devastated Earth. JB hadn't quite found his voice in 1991, and it's too similar to various Heinlein works, Halldeman's 'Worlds' trilogy and numerous other menarchal sci-fi novels — but is still well worth reading.

**John Barnes** *Kaledoscent Century* (4 May; £5.99 pb, 252pp) — Homonymy st. Barnes's best novel (which is saying something), and highly recommended. — Sep 95  
**'Ric Alexander'** (ed.) *Cyber-Killers* (4 May; £5.99 pb, 540pp) — First-rate sf anth. 'Ric Alexander' is a pseudonym of prolific anthologist Peter Haining. — Sep 97

**Thomas Richards** *Star Treks in Myth and Legend* (4 May; £5.99 pb, 180pp) — Reveals the origins of *Trek* storylines in ancient epics, traditional romances and folk tales, from which Gene Roddenberry nicked his ideas. Duty done, I can say: Would you buy a used opinion from this author? Try our FREE SAMPLES and see for yourself!

"In the *Star Trek* [sic] movies Luke Skywalker is driven to act out his destiny as a Jedi knight. In Azimov's [sic] *Foundation Trilogy* the predictions of a single man dictate the fate of the galaxy." (The book is littered with this kind of thing.)

"The Hesseberg Uncertainty Principle states that observers always interfere with the things that they are observing." (No it doesn't. Now, hold on to your eyeballs.)  
"Like any great work of art or literature the *Star Trek* universe has an integrity and resonance all its own untrammelled by any other kind of science fiction, whether movie, television show or novel."

*Star Trek* 'utterly supersedes, both in depth and breadth, the science fictions which have come before it.'

This from a Harvard academic teaching English and American literature.

**Richard Preston** *The Cobra Event* (O: 4 May; £16.99 hb, c416pp) — Biotechnothriller.

**Ann Halam** *Crying in the Dark* (O: 4 May; £5.99 pb, £3.99 pb, c160pp) — New children's ghost story from Halam (who is Gwyneth Jones). A bullied and abused girl retreats into the past of her 17th century home, and gets trapped.

**Nathan Archer** *Predator: Cold War* (O: 8 Jun; £4.99 pb, 265pp)

**Michael Swanwick** *Jack Faust* (15 Jun; £5.99 pb, 325pp) — One of the best sci-fi novels published last year, a retelling of the Faust legend in snarl mode. "There is no God," says Mephistopheles to Faust, offering from his alternative universe fastness the scientific wisdom of the ages to the disillusioned 16th century scholar. With echoes of Hitler and the Holocaust, Charles Foster Kane and Aleister Crowley, Faust foretells the Industrial Revolution in his own lifetime. . . . This is the lame road paved with good intentions, truth and the certainty that all men are good. Good Angel Margaret and her alter ego BadAss Gretchen are the spur, and Faust and Gretchen's descent into a moral abyss is chronicled mercilessly, and poetically — Swanwick's writing is excruciatingly good, and though couched in sf language the story, like all of his tales, inhabits a fruitful intergenre hinterland. The Iron Dragon's daughter offered many lovers of genre fantasy with its glorious disregard of convention, and this may do likewise to sf

## Key

pb = paperback; hb = hardback; tp = trade (large format) paperback; pp = extent  
il = illustrated; ed = edited; R = (re)issue / reprint (first publication date)  
➤ = reviewed in *Vector*; #date: GN = Graphic Novel; AB = AudioBook; YA = Young Adult  
x = 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 Tarrant.  
Quoted comments are from publishers' material — caveat emptor.  
— Thanks to Michael J. Cross for his index: <http://www.ajceth.decon.co.uk/topsfis.htm>—

In 2063 time travel (more accurately, inter-universal travel) is routine. In Jerusalem at the time of Jesus Christ, a pair of likeable swindlers, August Faison and his daughter Genevieve (and there's the first nod, to our own Hollywood-obsessive Kim Newman), decide to con bumbling Dr Owen Vannice, super-rich young scion, scientist, manqué and owner of pet a dinosaur he's smuggling to the present day. Owen falls for Gen, and Gen, despite her best (or worst) intentions, falls for him. Stuck in Jerusalem with the dinosaur (called Wilma, natch), the group get involved in a terrorist operation against the futurist capitalist exploiters; Jesus is hosting a chat show in 2063, and his disillusioned disciple Simon is now one of the terrorists. Then it starts getting complicated.

Superbly funny (and I mean falling-off-the-chair funny), with witty, crackling dialogue and a plot that grabs you through the throat and won't let go, there's also a distinctly vicious anti-American satirical thread which comes from an insider (and only gains from its understatement); like all True Comedy, there's a serious and dark edge which never overwhelms, only underlines. The book is dedicated to various movie directors (Sturges, Capra, Hawks and Wilder, among others) and cries out to be filmed: Jimmy Stewart as clumsy but endearing Owen, Bacall as dangerous and beautiful Genevieve, Niven as elegant con-man August. . . . But before they film it, read the book — it's the editor's choice this issue, and is very highly recommended.

**Greg Bear** *Eon* (Vista: 23 Jul (R 1985); £5.99 pb, 503pp) — Hard sf, first book in the 'Stone' series (others are *Therapy* and *Legacy*). A hollow asteroid enters Earth orbit, and the last chamber is discovered to go on forever. . . . Feb 87

readers who like The Same As Before. But if you're happy with sf-speculative fiction, read this honest, lush, comparatively readable moral tragedy. Very highly recommended. — 197  
**Mickey Zucker Reichert** *The Children of Wrath* (O: 19 Jun; £11.99 tp, 497pp + 18pp appendices) — Fantasy, the sixth 'Renishal' book.

**Terry Goodkind** *Temple of the Winds* (19 Jun; £11.99 tp, 528pp) — Fantasy, fourth in the 'Sword of Truth' sequence. — 199

**Jostein Gaarder** *Through a Glass, Darkly* (Phoenix: 4 Jun; £16.99 hb, c250pp) — Philosophical fantasy. A girl is dying from cancer, and an angel comes through her window.

**★ J. M. H. Lovegrove** *The Krilov Continuum* (O: 6 Jul; £5.99 pb, 342pp) — New sf novel from the master of the Clarke-nominated *Days*; see the Clarke photo spread for more info.

**★ Greg Egan** *Dispario* (4 Jul; £5.99 pb, 361pp + 14pp glossary, references) — Superb mind-bending sf, and with Jack Faust (see above) one of last year's best books. From the enthralling beginning — in which a person is 'born' inside a supercomputer that plays host to one section of mankind — to the organic humans clinging to their humanity on Earth, to the robot-embodied 'gleisners', to the weird alien lifeform encountered on a distant planet (adapted from 'Wang's Carpets', in the *New Legends* anth.), the possibilities for intelligent life are dizzyingly explored. A fine cover (designer uncredited) graces this fine book, which is highly recommended. — 197

**★ Tricia Sullivan** *Dreaming in Smoke* (6 Jul; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, 290pp) — SF, follow-up to the splendid *Someone to Watch Over Me*, delayed from April. Indulging dream 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 itself 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?

**Elizabeth Pewsey** *The Walled City* (O: 4 Jul; £4.50 pb, c192pp) — YA fantasy, sequel to *The Talking Head* and *The Dewstone Quest*.

**★ Forrest J. Ackerman** (ed.) *Film Futures* (O: 4 Jul; £14.99 tp, c600pp il.) — Anth. of sf stories turned into movies; foreword by Ridley Scott. Contents include Bradbury's 'Farewell 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 'Damnation Alley', Lovecraft's 'Re-Animator' and many others.

**John & Anne Spencer** *True Life Encounters: Alien Contact* (Aug; £5.99 pb)

**Alan Baker** *True Life Encounters: UFO Sightings* (Aug; £5.99 pb)

**John & Anne Spencer** *True Life Encounters: Powers of the Mind* (O: Aug; £5.99 tp, c320pp)

**John & Anne Spencer** *True Life Encounters: Mysteries and Magic* (O: Aug; £5.99 tp, c320pp) — More So-Fi Channel 1e-in books on 'True-life tales of the unexplained'.

**George Perry** *Steven Spielberg: Close Up* (O: Aug; £9.99 tp, c144pp il.) — Anecdotal biography, with all the Variety reviews of his films.

**Alison Sinclair** *Legacies* (Aug; £5.99 pb) — Jul 95, Aug 96

**Alison Sinclair** *Blueheart* (Aug; £5.99 pb) — Reissues of two fine and thoughtful sf novels. — Mar 97

**H. G. Wells** *The Complete Short Stories* (Dent: Aug; £25.00 hb, c704pp) — Edited by John Hammonds.

**★ Stephen Baxter** *Webrash* (O: Aug; £3.50 pb, c112pp) — First of the second series of 'Web' YA sf books, based on a worldwide virtual reality network, and SB's second; it continues the adventures of *Metaphor* from *Gulliverzone*.

**★ Ken MacLeod** *Cydonia* (O: Aug; £3.50 pb, c112pp) — MacLeod's first contribution to the 'Web' YA sf series. 'Links and Weaver are game zone rivals, but when the police start showing an interest in the Cydonia conspiracy site' — that's the 'Face on Mars' thing. I think — 'They have to join forces. Realworld conspiracies are no fun.'

**Tom Standage** *The Victorian Internet* (Weidenfeld: Aug; £12.99 hb, c160pp) — Non-fiction. The story of the telegraph and the 19th century's online pioneers.

**John Gribbin** *Almost Everyone's Guide to Science* (Weidenfeld: Aug; £10.99 hb, c320pp) — Contains 'everything we need to know about science in one accessible volume'. Apparently: oh yeah?

**Ellette Abecassis** *The Qumran Mystery* (O: Sep; £16.99 hb, £9.99 tp, c288pp) — Much delayed thriller about the death of Christ and the disappearance of a Dead Sea scroll.



## Orbit

Including Little, Brown, Warner, Legend



- L. E. Modeitt Jr. *The Paralyth War* (J. Jun; \$5.99 pb, c432pp)** — SF novel from the author of the 'Reductio' fantasy series, a space opera that "examines the nature of the secular and sacred against a background of hard sf."
- Hilary Bailey *After the Cabinet* (J. Jun; \$15.99 hb, c320pp)** — Associational (HB edited New Words for a while) continuation of the life of Sally Bowles, as told in Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin* and, perhaps more famously, in the superb film *Cabaret*.
- \*K. J. Parker *Colours in the Steel* (J. Jun; \$9.99 tp, c320pp)** — Debut fantasy from a new British writer who lives in the West Country, vol. 1 of the 'Fencer' trilogy. In *Perimadeia*, they settle court cases differently, lawyers dispute with swords not words, and earn their money by their own blood. "This is the story of one fencer-at-law, who becomes the focus of a misplaced curse and the magical attentions of a rich foreign merchant."
- \*Debbie Benstead & Storm Constantine *The Inward Revolution* (J. Jun; \$7.99 pb, c256pp)** — Subtitled 'Summoning the Sacred Powers Within', this "shows in practical and accessible terms how we can unlock the raw potential of our inner energies." Benstead is "an esoteric psychologist", and Storm is... Storm.
- Kate Elliott *Prince of Dogs* (J. Jun; \$16.99 hb, 574pp+6pp appendices)** — Fantasy, second volume of 'Crown of Stars' and sequel to *King's Dragon*. Elliott lives in Pennsylvania with her husband, three children and two neotoms.
- \*Greg Bear *Slant* (J. Jun; \$9.99, 553pp)** — Or / as the writer formerly known as Bear refers to it. "Tell all the truth / but tell it slant" is the Emily Dickinson epigram for this near-future sf novel, a sequel to *Queen of Angels*. Most people are Theraped, trained to ensure mental stability (and conformity), but their problems seem to be returning. In a cinematic plot, police-woman Mary Chou, the AI Jill, a sex artist and a mysterious mercenary get melodramatically involved with an implausible secret conspiracy based in libertarian freehold Green Idaho. There's much nanotech and talky discussion of sexual roles, to a fairly conservative conclu-

sion. I was reminded of John Brunner, in particular *Stand on Zanzibar* and *The Jagged Orbit*—there's a much-quoted sociologist, happening-world-style inserts, a similar mix of action and social / economic theorising, a pleasure in neologisms. It doesn't match the excellent *QoA* as a novel but is nonetheless recommended. Bear says: "I would have been almost incomprehensible in the 1940s; it acknowledges the immense influence science fiction has had on our culture [and] warns that a world shaped by sf and our dearest dreams and fantasies can still go badly wrong." Serious gripe: the cover artist—I suspect it's Jim Burns—is uncredited. > 195

- \*David Feinich *The Still* (J. Jul; \$5.99 pb, c460pp)** — Fantasy novel from the author of an old series, the 'Seaford Saga'. An exiled prince tries to reclaim his throne; he needs allies, and to rule he must command 'the Saint, the ancient Power of Caladon'. Having a still was ever a good way to win friends.
- L. E. Modeitt Jr. *The Chaos Balance* (J. Jul; \$5.99 pb)** — Another 'Reductio' fantasy novel. Terry Brooks *Running With the Demon* (J. Jul; \$5.99 pb) — First in a new fantasy series.
- \*Tad Williams *Othertand: River of Blue Fire* (J. Aug; \$2.99 hb, 634pp)** — Volume two of the 'Othertand' virtual-reality sf series.
- Gregory Benford *Foundation's Fear* (J. Jul; \$6.99 pb)** — First of the spin-offs from Asimov's 'Foundation' series. The second is:
- \*Greg Bear *Foundation and Chaos* (J. Jul; \$16.99 hb)**
- \*Terry Brooks *A Knight of the Word* (J. Aug; \$16.99 hb)** — Second in his new fantasy series.
- David Brin *Infirmary's Shore* (Aug; \$6.99 pb)** — Second volume of the second 'Uplift' trilogy. The final part is:
- \*David Brin *Heaven's Reach* (J. Aug; \$17.99 hb)** — Concluding volume in the second 'Uplift' trilogy.
- David Brin *Glory Season* (Aug; \$6.99 pb)** > Oct 93
- David Brin *Otherness* (Aug; \$6.99 pb)** — Re-issues in new covers.
- \*Brian Stableford *Chimera's Cradle* (Aug; \$5.99 pb)** — The third and final 'Book of Genesys', sf disguised as fantasy. Recommended. > 195
- Haydn Middleton *The Knight's Vengeance* (Aug; \$5.99 pb)** — Concluding part of the dark and erotic retelling of the Arthurian story.
- Oliver Johnson *Nations of the Night* (J. Aug; \$6.99 pb)** — Second volume in the 'Light-bringer' fantasy trilogy.

## Avon



**Chelsea Quinn Yarbro *The Angry Angel* (11 Mar; \$23.00 hb, 359pp)** — Dark fantasy, first book of the 'Sisters of the Night' trilogy, telling the story of the beautiful mad brides of Dracula.

**Eric S. Nyland *Sigil to Noise* (8 Apr; \$23.00 hb, 311pp)** — First of a novel from the author of the fantasies *Day Water*, *A Game of Unseen* and *Pawn's Dream*. Billed as "a hyperpunk novel", it claims to go one step further than cyberpunk. "ESN posits that technology at its best makes people more human, and in the next level of human / machine communication the 'cyberization' of mankind facilitates communication for commerce and ideas" — note the order there — "at a deeper and more symbolic level unobtainable in the tangible world". Pshaw. Set in 2070, academic research is conducted over a VR network; Jack Potter is a mathematician and cryptographer who thinks he's detected alien signals buried in cosmic background noise, which point the way to FTL communication. But this gets buried in the hectic action of the novel, as Jack becomes embroiled in academic conspiracies and government plots. It's fast-paced and has some interesting ideas, but you can't help feeling that ESN is trying too hard. Sheri S. Tepper *The Family Tree* (8 Apr; \$6.99 pb, 480pp+11p trailer) — Tepper's Clarke-nominated sf novel. The trailer is an extract from her forthcoming *Six Moon Dance*. > 198

**John Cramer *Einstein's Bridge* (8 Apr; \$3.99 pb, 310pp)** — Hard sf from the author of *Twister* (1989). It's 2004, and experiments at a particle accelerator searching for the Higgs boson alert aliens, denizens of parallel universes, to our existence — one is an absurdly malign hive-mind bent on the destruction of all other life-forms, the other is benevolent. Will Earth be saved, can the friendly aliens be contacted in time, will JC learn how to write before the end of the novel? Well, it's cheap. (Incidentally, a note at the end says that it "was not possible" to include an extensive afterword in the pb edition, which explained all the acronyms used and went into some detail on the scientific background to the novel. But you can see it on the Web at [http://www.AvonBooks.com/Eos/Einstein's\\_Bridge](http://www.AvonBooks.com/Eos/Einstein's_Bridge).) > 196

## Corgi



Including Bantam, Doubleday

- K. W. Jeter *Star Wars: The Bounty Hunter Wars Book 1: The Mandalorian Armor* (Bantam; 11 Jun; \$5.99 pb, 387pp + trailers)** — How are the mighty fallen? You can't blame Jeter — we all have to make a living — but the spin-off world's gain is our loss.
- \*Robert Rankin *The Dance of the Voodoo Handbag* (Doubleday; 11 Jun; \$16.99 hb)** — Henry Duns (nudge nudge) is the world's richest man, and runs a neurotic (wink wink — some subtle satire here, folks) which is not only sells software, but in return for your soul will give you immortality in the Necronet. Billy Barnes has a voodoo handbag which he leads with his gravity. Lazio Woodbine is a private eye, and Barry is a sprout who lives in his head. There's probably a story which involves this lot, but you'll have to read the book to find out what the hell it is...
- Robert Rankin *The Brentford Chainsaw Massacre* (11 Jun; \$5.99 pb)** — SF comedy, in which Jesus is cloned from blood on the Turn Shroud. Six times, so each major religion can have one. Meanwhile in Brentford, they're holding the millennial celebrations two years early to avoid the rush.

- Sharon Green *Challenges* (8 Apr; \$5.99 pb, 378pp)** — Fantasy, book three of *The Blending* series. SG writes S&M, a la John Norman, wherein women are whipped so they know who's boss — if that's your bag, you know where to go.
- Ian Douglas *Semper Mars* (8 Apr; \$5.99 pb, 376pp)** — Military adventure sf, first volume of 'The Heritage Trilogy'. In 2040 the ruins of a Martian city disclose evidence of "an alternate history that threatens to split humanity into opposing factions and plunge the Earth into chaos and war." Enter the US Marines, dispatched to Mars "to protect, with lethal force if necessary, American civilians and interests."
- Sarah B. Franklin *Daughter of Troy* (8 Apr; \$13.00 tp, 397pp+20pp notes, glossary)** — Historical fantasy retelling *The Iliad* through the eyes of a woman, Briseis queen of Lymnessos, whose family was slaughtered by Achilles.
- \*Paul J. McAuley *Child of the River* (6 May; \$14.00 hb, 306pp)** — SF disguised as fantasy. 'The First Book of Confluence'. This is an extremely elegant and well-produced edition, a small hardback with a beautiful cover (by Nadine Badalaty and Liz Kenyon) at a very low price. Recommended. > 197
- Stephen R. Lawhead *Gaia* (6 May; \$6.99 pb, 385pp)** — Arthurian fantasy, book 5 of the 'Pendragon Cycle'.
- \*J. R. Dunn *Days of Cain* (6 May; \$3.99 pb, 359pp)** — Pb of this powerful time-travel sf novel, set in Auschwitz. Highly recommended; you won't spend a better \$2.99 this year. > 195
- \*Colin Greenland *Mother of Plenty* (6 May; \$5.99 pb, 470pp)** — SF, final volume of the 'Tabitha Jule' trilogy. See also *Voyager*, but collectors note: this is the first edition.
- Scott Ciencin *Night of Glory* (6 May; \$5.99 pb, 246pp)** — Vol. 3 of the 'Elven Ways' trilogy.
- Jane Routley *Fire Angels* (5 Jun; \$13.00 tp, 436pp)** — Romantic fantasy, sequel to *Love Heart*, from a new Australian writer who divides her time between Oz and Denmark. It continues the adventures of the young female mage Dion in a fantasyland reminiscent of Renaissance Europe: "after the tumultuous events of *Love Heart*, she leaves Galatia to return home to Moria, where she hopes to settle down as a healer. But she meets the family she never knew, begins a love affair, is thrust into political intrigue, and once again has to battle demons."

- Douglas Preston *Reliquary* (Bantam; 11 Jun; \$5.99 pb, 509pp)** — Technothriller / dark fantasy, sequel to *Relic*. Two mutilated skeletons are discovered off Manhattan Island, and there's something horribly disturbing about them.
- \*Anne McCaffrey *Freedom's Challenge* (Bantam; 11 Jun; \$15.99 hb)** — 1998 is the 30th anniversary of McCaffrey's first book, and this is the third 'Catteni' sf novel.
- Anne McCaffrey *The Master Harper of Pern* (Bantam; 11 Jun; \$9.99 tp)** — Romantic sf, the story of Pern's greatest harper.
- \*Frank Parkin *Krippendorff's Tribe* (Bantam; 9 Jul; \$6.99 pb)** — Black comedy sf, a debut novel. Life in Bantam is decaying (huh!), and anthropologist Krippendorff's imaginary tales of an Amazon tribe start coming true.
- Aaron Allston *Star Wars X-Wing 6: Iron Fist* (Bantam; 9 Jul; \$5.99 pb)**
- \*Terry Pratchett *Wyrd Sisters: The Illustrated Screenplay* (13 Aug; \$9.99 tp, 128 pp ill.)** — Pithily illustrated with colour stills, the text of last year's *Conspire* Hall tv adaptation, which does include some new jokes not in the books so there is something new for your money. Adaptation by Martin Jones (but copyrighted to TP). Delayed from December.
- John Saul *The Presence* (Bantam; 13 Aug; \$5.99 pb)** — Horror.
- \*David Gemmell *Sword in the Storm* (Bantam; 10 Sep; \$15.99 hb)** — New epic fantasy.
- David Gemmell *Echoes of the Great Song* (10 Sep; \$5.99 pb)** — Epic fantasy.
- Dave Duncan *Future Indefinite* (10 Sep; \$5.99 pb)** — Fantasy. > 199
- Timothy Zahn *Star Wars: Specter of the Past* (Bantam; 10 Sep; \$5.99 pb)**

# Voyager

Including HarperCollins, Flamingo, Fontana



**Andy Meisler** *I Want to Believe: The Official Guide to The X-Files* (1 May (?), £10.99 pb, 302pp ill.) — Guide to the fourth series (and two episodes from the fifth).

**Philip K. Dick** *The Dark Thing* (5 May; £7.99 pb) — Third volume of Dick's collected short stories. > Apr 90

**Alison Spedding** *Cloud Over Water* (18 May (R 1988); £5.99 pb, 348pp) — Second volume in the Bolivian-resident fantasist's 'A Walk in the Dark' trilogy, retelling the story of Alexander the Great in fantastic mode.

**Mercedes Lackey** *Four and Twenty Blackbirds* (18 May; £5.99 pb, 423pp) — Mystery / fantasy, sequel to *The Eagle and the Nightingales*. ML lives near Tulsa (four and twenty hours away?) and from the *Writers' Guide* to *Interesting Jobs* has chosen waitress, security guard, telephone surveyor, artist's model and computer programmer. She and husband Larry Dixon are both supporters of various birdlife foundations and spend much of their time rehabilitating birds to live in the wild.

**Christie Dickson** *Quicksilver* (HarperCollins: 1 Jun; £16.99 hb) — Werewolf fantasy set in 17th century Holland.

**Elizabeth Massie** *Millennium #4: The Wild and the Innocent* (HarperCollins: 1 Jun; £5.99 pb) — Isn't that one of those dreadful US soaps?

**Raymond E. Feist** *Rage of a Demon King* (1 Jun; £6.99 pb, 642pp) — Epic fantasy, third in the *Serpentwar Saga*. > 185 The fourth and final volume is:

**Raymond E. Feist** *Shards of a Broken Crown* (1 Jun; £16.99 pb)

**Kevin J. Anderson** *Restoration Inc.* (15 Jun; £5.99 pb) — The tie-in specialist turns to real life with this technothriller about a company which finds a way to raise the dead and use them as mindless slaves. Trouble starts when they start taking human jobs: 'roids, Satanic cults and threats of political meltdown reach fever pitch in this first-rate science thriller.

**Wayne G. Hammond & Christina Scull** *J. R. R. Tolkien: Artist and Illustrator* (HarperCollins: 15 Jun; £16.99 pb, 208pp ill., indexed, bibliography) — 200 illustrations from JRR's sketchbooks, including book covers, calligraphy, maps, and many Middle Earth landscapes with a distinctly Japanese feel. There is also a selection of hand-made Christmas cards sent to his children, including the envelope of one to John Francis Reuel in 1924... which reveals he was then living just up the road from where I write, in Leeds. The book is well-produced and exhaustively annotated and sourced. A book of postcards is also available, at £5.99.

**David Zindell** *Neverness* (15 Jun (R 1988); £6.99 pb) — Zindell's first novel, a metaphysical space opera kicking off the 'Requiem for Homo Sapiens' series. > Jun 89 The final volume is:

**David Zindell** *War in Heaven* (15 Jun; £11.99 pb, 618pp) — ... which follows the story of Mallory Ringess's son as he tries to prevent an apocalyptic war.

**Michael Marshall Smith** *One of Us* (HarperCollins: 1 Jul; £14.99 hb, c368pp) — New sf novel, delayed from May, from the author of *Only Forward and Spares*. It's being marketed as his 'breakout novel' and is described as 'a sassy, near-future satirical take on a corporate America out of control and loving it'. Map Thompson has a night-job: dreaming other people's dreams. But he can make more money caretaking memories, and one such job, after the client's disappearance, leads him to something which threatens to rewrite not just his life, but all of history....

**Michael Marshall Smith** *Only Forward* (HarperCollins: Jul; £6.99 pb, c320pp) — Reissue of MMS's debut novel.

**J. R. R. Tolkien** *The Silmarillion* (Jul; £8.99 ab, 2xMC) — Part 3 of the unabridged reading by Martin Shaw.

**Elizabeth Hand** *The X-Files* (1 Jul (?); £16.99 hb, c256pp) — 'Adult' novelisation of the spinoff movie.

**Chris Carter** *The X-Files* (1 Jul (?); £5.99 pb, c274pp) — YA novelisation of the movie.

**Chris Carter** *The X-Files Movie Scrapbook* (1 Jul (?); £3.99 pb, c32pp) — The story of the movie in pictures, for the hard of thinking.

**Jody Duncan** *The Making of The X-Files Movie* (1 Jul (?); £9.99 hb, c160pp) — I'm getting bored already.

**Jody Duncan** *The Making of The X-Files Movie* (1 Jul (?); £3.99 pb, c112pp) — The YA version of - yawn - the movie guidebook.

**Malcolm MacPherson** (ed.) *The Black Box* (HarperCollins: 1 Jul; £8.99 pb, c204pp) — Tasteless but fascinating, this a collection of transcriptions from cockpit voice-recorder tapes of air accidents. In my bathroom (here's what editors read in the loo) there's a tape of identical title, by the same author, but published by Granada in 1984 - HC's claim that it's a 'paperback original' seems a little suspect.

**Quentin Thomas Aserson** (1 Jun; £12.99 hb; £8.99 ab, 2xMC) — X-Files tie-in. The ab is read by Gillian Anderson.

**Doris Lessing** *Walking in the Shade* (HarperCollins: Jul; £8.99 pb, c400pp) — Second volume of her autobiography.

**Fay Weldon** *A Hard Time to be a Father* (HarperCollins: 1 Jul; £12.99 hb, c264pp) — Story coll., with some of st interest.

**Rob DeSalle & David Lindley** *The Science of Jurassic Park and The Lost World* (HarperCollins: Jul; £8.99 pb, c256pp) — Subtitled 'How to Build a Dinosaur'.

**Richard West** *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Daniel Defoe* (HarperCollins: Jul; £8.99 pb, c448pp, ill.) — Biography.

**Eric Lustbader** *Dragons on the Sea of Night* (6 Jul; £5.99 pb) — Epic oriental fantasy.

**Colin Greenland** *Mother of Plenty* (6 Jul; £5.99 pb, 451pp) — Third and final 'Talitha Jude' novel, not getting a hardback edition, boo hiss. Note the Avon edition is the world first.

**David & Leigh Eddings** *The Rivan Codex* (6 Jul; £19.99 hb, ill.) — Sourcebook for *The Belgariad* and sequels (and written before), this is 'definitely the final book in the series' and contains 100 illustrations by Geoff Taylor, 16 maps, and 'the seminal texts on which [D&E] built their worldwide bestselling masterpiece'.

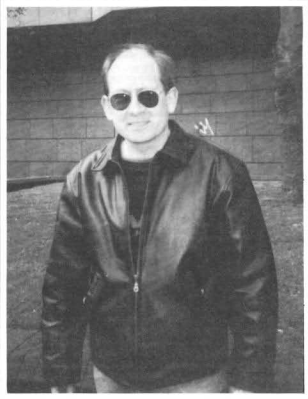
**David & Leigh Eddings** *Polgara the Sorceress* (6 Jul; £7.99 pb, 807pp) — The 'companion novel' to *Belgarath the Sorcerer*. > 199

**Mike Jefferies** *The Siege of Candiebar Hall* (1 Jun; £5.99 pb, 325pp) — Fantasy in the 'Loremasters of Elundum' series. MJ lives in Norfolk, and in 1980 rode for Britain in the Belgian Three Day event - how about that?

**Katherine Kerr** *The Red Wyvern* (20 Jul; £5.99 pb, 393pp + 9pp appendices) — Fantasy. Book One of 'The Dragon Mage' and set in her fantasyland of Deverry.

**Dale Brown** *Fatal Terrain* (HarperCollins: Aug; £6.99 pb, c624pp) — Near-future technothriller, in which Taiwan declares its independence from China and war threatens in the Pacific.

**Alex Kershaw** *Jack London: A Life* (HarperCollins: Jul; £8.99 pb, c368pp) — Biography.



Stephen Baxter in Liverpool at this year's Eastercon. Photo Chris Terran.

**Stephen Baxter** *Moonseed* (1 Aug; £16.99 hb, 536pp) — Near-future sf. In our world Apollo 18 never got to the moon (the programme was abandoned prematurely with Apollo 17, in 1972), but in a gentle change to history Baxter posits it did, and brought back some strange moonrock which languished in storage. Thirty years later an embittered American researcher brings it to Edinburgh, and a few years end up on the top of Arthur's Seat (the extinct volcano just outside the city). Meanwhile the international space station limps along, the world is ready for millennial changes, and Venus has exploded.

It's a book of two halves. The first is a disaster novel in which Edinburgh is (spectacularly and effectively) destroyed, and the destruction begins to spread inexorably through the world. The second is another retired Apollo job, as an emergency lunar mission is mounted, though for slightly pitiful reasons. And after the problematic ending of *Titan*, this unfortunately has something wrong at the other end: a prologue deflatingly reveals that it all turns out OK in the end.

'Moonseed' is the source of the bane, a vaguely-drawn mix of string theory and nanotech which 'feeds' on certain types of mineral (more details may be revealed in any sequel - the question of a possible artificial origin isn't really answered, though it seems inevitable). The destruction of Venus seems superfluous to the plot, an unconvincing coincidence; and I wasn't quite persuaded by the explanation of why Moonseed hasn't destroyed everything in the solar system long ago. But the disaster-novel part of the book works splendidly, partly because SB never loses sight of small-scale sufferings, and his compassion for the 'little people' of the world - and his respect for their everyday and unthanked heroism - never fails. Recommended.

**Poppo Z. Britte** *The Lazarus Heart* (1 Aug; £5.99 pb) — Tie-in to the comic, film and forthcoming tv series.

**Philip K. Dick** *Ubik* (3 Aug (R 1969); £5.99 pb) — Reissue of one of his finest (and funniest - look at the chapter headings) reality-bending novels. Shamefully, never reviewed by *Victor* but nevertheless very highly recommended.

**Everett Owens** *Howlers* (17 Aug; £3.99 pb) — X-Files tie-in.

**Samuel R. Delany** *They Fly at Orion* (17 Aug; £5.99 pb) — First UK publication for SRD's fantasy.

**Barbara Hambly** *Dragonsbane* (17 Aug (R 1986); £5.99 pb) — A 'NEWSWIST FANTASY,' says the *Fantasy Encyclopedia*, a reissue of 'at once her funniest book and her saddest'. And also neglected by *Victor*.

**J. R. R. Tolkien** *The Silmarillion* (Aug; £8.99 ab, 2xMC) — Part 4 of the unabridged reading by Martin Shaw.

**Julian May** *Perseus Spur* (Aug; £9.99 pb, c320pp) — St, book one of 'The Rampart Worlds'. > 199

## The Rest



Jonathan Cape  
Paper Tiger  
Bantam  
Vintage

**Ben Bova Moonwar** (NEL: 28 Apr. £5.99 pb, 531pp) — Near future adventure sf. Book Two of the Moonbase Saga and sequel to *Moonrise*.

**Sheridan Le Fanu Carmilla** (Saro Press: 8 May; £13.00 hb, 83pp, ISBN 1-902039-00-6) — First publication from a new small press imprint dedicated to high quality editions of classic and modern supernatural stories. *Carmilla*, first published in 1871/2 in *The Dark Blue* is a vampire story that was a acknowledged influence on *Stoker's Dracula*. Limited edition of 300 copies, available post free (payable to "Saro Press") from Sarob Press, "Bynderwen", 41 Forest View, Mountain Ash, Mid Glamorgan, CF45 3DU. Tel: 01443 472222.

**Reader's Digest Mysteries of the Unexplained** (Reader's Digest: May; £34.99, 3 videos, 58 mins each) — Three X-Files / New Age cash-in videos, entitled *Powers of the Paranormal*, *Sacred Places and Mystic Spirits*, *Strange Beings and UFOs*. Slickly produced and presented, but vacuous.

**Peter Carey Jack Maggs** (Faber: Jun; £5.99 pb, c336pp)

**Jane Welch The Lament of Abalone** (Earthlight: Jun; £5.99 pb, 44pp) — Fantasy, volume one of *The Book of Ond*, set in the same world as her previous *The Runeset Trilogy*. **James Curtis James Whale** (Faber: Aug; £12.99 pb, c384pp) — No, not the ghostly DJ, but a biography of the director of *Frankenstein*.

**Charles Chilton Journey Into Space: Operation Luna** (BBC: 1 Jun; £12.99 ab, 5h 25m)

**Charles Chilton Journey Into Space: The Red Planet** (BBC: 1 Jun; £12.99 ab, 5h 25m)

**Charles Chilton Journey Into Space: The World In Peril** (BBC: 1 Jun; £12.99 ab, 8h)

Digitally remastered reissues of the complete original transmissions of the 1950s radio serial, marking the 40th anniversary of the final broadcast. Limited editions (though limited in this context usually means tens of thousands). Also available as a box set for £35.

**David A. McIntee Dr Who: Mission Impractical** (BBC: Jun; £4.99 pb, 280pp) — The sixth Doctor and the shapeshifting Frobiisher (from an 80s DW comic strip) meet up with a pair of rogues who've been recruited by a covert government agency on *Vandor Prime*. They have to pull off the crime of the century, or interstellar war will result.

**Jonathan Blum & Kate Orman Dr Who: Seeing I** (BBC: Jun; £4.99 pb, 279pp) — Previously faithful companion Sam has run away from the eighth Doctor, and he doesn't know why. She's now homeless and destitute on a colony world, trying to come to terms with what apparently happened between them. While searching for her, the Doctor gets involved with aliens trying to infiltrate a mega-company making eye-implants, and gets imprisoned in a hell of his own making. These DW books are, slowly but surely, turning into something approaching adult fiction.

**[Unknown] Dining on Babylon 5** (Bostree: Jun; £14.99 pb, 111p) — Yes, it's a *Babylon 5* cookbook, with dishes like *Tulpa Pod Salad* and *Tweebles*. Trees die for this, you know. **Simon Messingham Dr Who: Zeta Major** (BBC: 6 Jul; £4.99 pb, 282pp) — In the tv story *Planet of Evil*, the Doctor got involved with the mad scientist Sorenson (I know how they tell) who attempted to steal anti-matter crystals and build a world-spanning energy tower on the planet Moresta; disaster was averted but Moresta was sent up a technological cu-de-sac. This sequel sees the fifth Doctor, Nyssa and Tegan return to the planet 2,000 years later; it's now a theocracy and the church is trying the same tricks as Sorenson. His first BBC novel, Messingham has previously written for Virgin's range of Doctor Who books.

**Gary Russell Dr Who: Placido Effect** (BBC: 6 Jul; £4.99 pb, 279pp) — The eighth Doctor and Sam visit Mcawber's World in 3999, site of the Intergalactic Olympic Games, and get embroiled in a murder mystery, a performance-enhancing drugs scandal, and the parasitical Wirm. Russell, a former editor of *Marvel's Doctor Who* magazine, wrote the novellisation of the 1996 Who film.

**J. R. R. Tolkien The Hobbit** (BBC: 6 Jul; £16.99 ab, 5hrs) — The 1968 radio dramatisation, re-released on its 20th anniversary and featuring Paul Daneman as Bilbo Baggins. Also includes an account from the producer and a map of Middle Earth.

**Stephen J. Sansweet The Star Wars Encyclopedia** (Virgin: 16 Jul; £30.00 hb, c400pp) — "The most up-to-date, authoritative reference" on the *Star Wars* films, adult (ahem) and juvenile spin-offs, tv specials, cartoons, and on and on and on.

**Peter Beresford-Ellis Celtic Myths and Legends** (Robinson: Jun; £15.99 hb, c512pp) — The first new translation for decades of myths and legends from all six Celtic cultures (Irish, Scots, Welsh, Cornish, Manx and Breton).

**Harry Turtledove How Few Remain** (NEL: 16 Jul; £6.99 pb, 471pp + 2pp notes) — Alternative history about the Second American Civil War. "1862 – The Confederacy – after costly learning of the Yankee battle plans – crush the nascent United States in the American Civil War. 1861 – After a generation of uneasy peace, the US again declares war against her southern compatriots. If the Rebels had actually won in 1862, what would have happened? The answer: *World War ...* It's even longer than it appears; the print is tiny."

**Harry Turtledove A World of Difference** (Hodder & Stoughton: 16 Jul; £16.99 hb, c308pp) — Sl\* alternative history in which Mars (... is boring. Turns out it's too damn small.") is replaced by the Earthlike planet Minerva: other differences are minor (Aldrin was first on the moon, some superpower squabbles in Blerf). When the first Viking landing in 1976 is destroyed after sending back a photo of an enigmatic alien, manned missions are launched by the US and the USSR in an uneasy alliance. "But nothing has prepared the exploration teams for alien war – especially when the Americans and Soviets find themselves on opposite sides." It's full of that recent American phenomena, a weird nostalgia for the Cold War, which from here seems more alien than the aliens (who are very Niven-like: meaning they are completely comprehensible to humans – and in human terms – and hence not alien at all). I won't dwell on the extremely dubious treatment of gender issues here, both human and alien, but if Heinlein's attitude to women is too advanced and liberal for you, you'll be right at home. Extremely old-fashioned (in all senses) sf. (See the editorial on page 7 for a more robust view of this book.)

**★ Diane Duane On Her Majesty's Wizardry Service** (Hodder & Stoughton: 16 Jul; £17.99 hb, 306pp) — The third alternative history from H&S in July is a teline fantasy from the US-born, Ireland-resident writer, who's married to Peter Morwood. It's a sequel to *The Book of Night With*, and the magical cats find themselves in Victorian London battling the forces of darkness. "Only the cats can save our world, by saving Queen Victoria from an Assassin". Good fun, lousy title.

**★ Jeanette Winterson The 24-Hour Dog and Other Stories** (Cape: Jun; £14.99 hb, c192pp) — Her first col. There's a world where sleep is illegal, a diamond island where the jewellery is made of coal, and other strangenesses.

**Marie Darrieussecq Pig Tales** (Faber: Jul; £5.99 pb, c144pp) — French darkly comic fantasy in which a young woman is slowly transformed into a sow.

**Sylvia Nasar A Beautiful Mind** (Faber: Jun; £17.99 hb, c448pp) — Biography of the mathematician John Nash, co-founder of Game Theory.

**Hugh Brogan (ed) Signalling From Mars: The Letters of Arthur Ransome** (Pimlico: Jul; £12.50 pb, c346pp) — Correspondence of the author of *Swallows and Amazons*.

**★ Angela Carter Shaking a Leg** (Vintage: Jul; £7.99 pb, c512pp) — Carter's collected journalism and essays. Recommended, of course.

**Mike Ashley (ed) The Mammoth Book of Arthurian Legends** (Raven: Jun; £5.99 pb, c512pp) — "A comprehensive collection of stories."

**★ Ian Christie (ed) Gilliam on Gilliam** (Faber: Jun; £7.99 hb, c208pp) — Notes on the films, storyboards, autobiographical tales and drawings from the ex-Python and movie-maker.

**Joseph McBride Steven Spielberg** (Faber: Jul; £12.99 pb, c258pp) — The life and work of the film-maker.

**Volker Engel & Rachel Aberly The Making of Godzilla** (Titan: 17 Jul; £9.99 pb, c128pp) — Tie-in to the remake of the godzilla Japanese monster movie, set for release on the same day as this. Engel is the Oscar-winning visual effects supervisor on *Independence Day*.

**Richard Wolfric Galland The World of Warhammer** (Carlton: 25 Jul; £14.99 pb, c192pp) — "The official Games Workshop encyclopedia." Kim Newman, Ian Watson and Brian Stableford have all written novels set in the Warhammer universe.

**★ Christopher Priest The Exiles** (Simon & Schuster: 3 Aug; £16.99 hb) — His first novel since *The Prestige* (see also the Clarke Award photo spread). "An FBI agent widowed by an out-of-control gunman, in an apparently random spree killing ... another massacre, with haunting similarities on the same hot, June day, but thousands of miles away in England ... the virtual reality world of Extreme Experience, developed as a way of learning how to handle violent situations but now packaged as entertainment ... The Exiles are a mesmerizing and extraordinarily powerful novel about the human capacity for violence."

**Martin Day & Ben Beech Another Girl, Another Planet** (Virgin: 20 Aug; £5.99 pb, c272pp) — First of the "reluctant, ... more menacing" "New Adventures" about *Berice Summerfield*, spun off from *Dr Who*.

**Mike Ashley (ed) Shakespearean Detectives** (Robinson: Aug; £6.99 pb, c432pp) — "Murders and mysteries based on Shakespeare's plays", with crimes solved by Falstaff, Hamlet, King Lear and the playwright himself.

**★ Orhan Pamuk The New Life** (Faber: Aug; £6.99 pb, c304pp) — Literary fantasy, "a head-on collision between *Crash* and *Siddhartha*", says the *Literary Review*.

**Gus Van Sant Pink Flamingo** (Faber: Aug; £6.99 pb, c272pp) — Fantasy from the film-maker.

**Vincent Griffin The Footnote: A Curious History** (Faber: Aug; £7.99 pb, c256pp)

**★ Anthony LoBrutto Stanley Kubrick** (Faber: Aug; £14.99 pb, c608pp) — A comprehensive biography of the reclusive film-maker.

**Patrick McGilligan Fritz Lang: The Nature of the Beast** (Faber: Aug; £14.99 pb, c560pp) — "The truth behind the monster with the monocle" (and maker of *Metropolis*).

**Julie Kawert The Avengers** (Titan: Aug; £4.99 pb, c240pp) — Movie novelisation. Plus: **David Rogers The Avengers: The Making of the Movie** (Titan: Aug; £9.99 pb, c96pp) —

**Don Macpherson The Avengers: The Screenplay** (Titan: Aug; £10.99 pb, c176pp) —

**★ Paul M. Sammon The Complete Aliens: A Cinematic Journey** (Titan: Aug; £14.99 pb, c320pp)

— An encyclopedic overview of all the 'Alien' films from the author of the highly praised *Future Noir*. The *Making of Blade Runner* (> 194).

**David McKean Outcrops: The Collected Sandman** covers 1989-1996 (Titan: Aug; £29.99 hb, £16.99 pb, c200pp) —

**C. E. Ward Vengeful Ghosts** (Saro Press: Aug; £7.99 hb, £18.00 hb, ISBN 1-902039-01-4) — The second limited edition from Sarob (see the *Le Fanu* title above) is a coll. of M. R. Jamesian ghost stories from Staffordshire writer Ward. Five from Rosemary Pardee's *Ghosts and Scholars*, one from *All Hallow's* (the journal of the Ghost Story Society) and two previously unpublished. With an introduction by the author, and jacket and illustrations from Paul Lowe. Limited edition of 350 copies; add £2 P&P. other ordering details for the *Le Fanu* title.

**Tom Clancy Rainbow Six** (Michael Joseph: Aug; £16.99 hb, c496pp) — Technothriller.

**Simon Armitage All Points North** (Viking: Aug; £14.99 hb, c288pp) — Humorous Yorkshire ("where England tucks its shirt into its underpants") memoir from the splendid poet.

Nothing whatsoever to do with sf, but who cares?

**Michael Baigent Ancient Traces** (Viking: Aug; £15.99 hb, c352pp) — Not-fiction from the co-author of *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* about "oddities and unanswered questions in ancient and early history".

**Mary Shelley Maurice, or The Fisher's Cot** (Viking: 1 Sep; £10.00 pb, c160pp) — First publication of MS's recently discovered children's story. Introduction by Claire Tomalin.

**Peter Preston 51st State** (Viking: 1 Sep; £15.99 hb, c288pp) — Near-future (thirty years on) political satire from the former *Guardian* editor. "How did England (not to mention Scotland, Ireland, Wales and Ulster) become a United States of America?"

# 1998 • ARTHUR • C • CLARKE • A



**James Lovegrove**, nominated for his novel *Days Just out from Millennium* is his new of novel *The Klov Continuum*, the first volume in a projected six-book series called 'The Guardians'. "Like *Escapade Gap*" – his collaboration with **Peter Crowther** – "my intention is that the 'Guardians' books should be 'entertainments' and remain distinct from my 'serious' fiction," he says; "the tone I'm hoping to strike is that of a cross between *The Avengers* and *The X-Files*." In October Dolphin publish *Computopia*, his contribution to the second series of 'Web' young-adult sf books (**Eric Brown** wrote about the series in *Matrix 127*). His next 'serious' work is called *The Foreigners* which he'll start after *Berserker*, the second 'Guardians' novel. And in 2000 there'll be a short-story collection and a reprint of his first novel, *The Hope* – "a kind of director's-cut version," he says, "with several alterations and a brand-new chapter added." There's more: "I've also got plans for a children's fantasy trilogy but that's so far down the line that I don't even want to think about it yet. One book at a time, Lord, one book at a time."



**Kim Newman** looking typically raffish. Due for US publication in autumn is the third in the 'Anno Dracula' sequence, provisionally titled *Dracula Cha Cha Cha: Anno Dracula 1959*, and next spring sees *Life's Lottery* in the UK. He's currently working with **Eugene Byrne** on the first novel in a projected six-book Nazi-Won-the-War cycle to be called 'The Matter of Britain'; and in between writing can be found on various radio and tv programmes, "especially since the 'dumbing down' of Radio 4", he says.



Peter F. Hamilton



Mary Gentle.



**Colin Greenland**, immensely pleased with the *Interzone* cover story taken from his new novel *Mother of Plenty*.



Pat Cadigan, double winner for *Synergy* in 199



Paul Kincaid, award administrator.

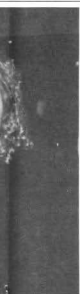
# AWARD A

CHILLY evening in May saw the density of sf writers in South Kensington increase drastically, as the annual Arthur C. Clarke Award ceremony got under way in the Science Museum. Your reporter regrettably passed over the copious quantities of plonk and stuck to orange juice, and as a result most of his holiday snaps came out unblurred and unshaken. Here's a selection . . .

Photography and text: **Chris Terran** (with thanks to the victims)



John Meaney, whose first novel *To Hold Infinity* was launched at Eastercon.



1982 and Fools in 95.



Jeff Noon, winner for *Vurt* in 1994.



Molly Brown and Mark Plummer.



**John Clute and Christopher Priest.** Chris's new novel is *The Extremes*, out in August from Simon & Schuster. "Like most of my recent novels," he told *Matrix*, "The Extremes is not really sf, nor is it not-sf. It's just my next book; when I'm writing I don't think in labels. I've always been a bit woolly on definitions." Asked if there was any connection to his previous Clarke Award-nominated novel *The Prestige*, he said "It's not in any sense a sequel . . . I feel restless after I've finished a book and want to try something new. I get bored going over familiar ground, even if the old ground was enjoyable to explore when new. So *The Extremes* strikes out differently. I find it impossible to describe what it's about, although there's sex and violence this time."

He's also signed to Earthlight, S&S's new sf imprint, who will be reissuing some of his finest novels. But their major acquisition is *The Dream Archipelago*, a collection of stories thematically related to *The Affirmation* and other tales; it's due in spring 1999. "I've long wanted to see *The Dream Archipelago* published as one book," he said. "In English, anyway. (There have been foreign compilations, as well as use of that title on unrelated books. E.g., the Dutch edition of *The Affirmation* is called *De Droomarchipel*. This sort of thing is a headache to bibliographers, but it's not my fault!) I'm reworking the stories into a coherent sequence, with a fair amount of new material."

Also out next spring will be a pair of omnibus volumes reissuing Chris's best-known sf novels from the 1970s: his Wells pastiche *The Space Machine*, the "Dream Archipelago"-related *A Dream of Wessex*, the remarkable *Inverted World* and *Fugue for a Darkening Island*, his first novel.

*Inverted World*, in addition to being one of the great sf novels of the last thirty years, has one of the finest opening lines in the genre: "I had reached the age of six hundred and fifty miles". The book is hugely admired in France, and Chris has said the opening kept him in dinners there for years.



Colin Odell and Mitch Le Blanc, designers and makers of the BSFA Award trophies.

# LETTERS TO MATRIX

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

## Send letters to Matrix

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Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS4 2HS, UK

Or email ..... bsf@enterprise.net

Or fax ..... 01327 316161

(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

• **Birney:** You've done it now. All that whining about no letters, and look what you've gone and done. Still, I asked for a... my apologies for the necessary reduction in print size!

My warmest thanks to all of you who wrote; it is very much appreciated. We start off with a T-shirt-winning and wonderfully wide-ranging letter from **Terry Hunt**, who starts by commenting on the Waterstone's 50th promotion event and the list of titles they recommended:

**Terry Hunt**

269 Desborough Road, Eastleigh, Hants., SC50 5HG

IN MY VIEW, there's enough breadth of quality in the 50th anniversary to yield several such selections with no overlap, and I've no huge disagreement with our eminent experts' choices. I'd be inclined to substitute three of them, though...

Like many genre works, Asimov's admittedly seminal *I, Robot* features a prose style stiff by modern standards, and a badly outdated vision of the future (which I agree isn't necessarily its whole point). All prose should of course be read in its historical context, but while this is sufficiently evident in other cases on the list, I fear it isn't in *I, Robot*. I suspect I'm saying that, in some ways, *I, Robot* hasn't dated enough!

Opinions on Donaldson's *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant* have diverged sharply since their publication. Though it was a brave attempt for its time to break the Tolkien mould, I personally don't think it succeeded, and too many readers get bogged down in the prose style. Tad Williams, for one, has done this sort of thing rather better.

I have no quarrel at all with Terry Pratchett's *Mort* as a book (coincidentally, I attended a performance of the stage adaptation of *Guards! Guards!* only yesterday, but I wonder if Terry really needs any further promotion at all. Perhaps he's included to give the list more lustre, rather than vice versa.

It might be interesting to compare this sf promotion and that by the Book Marketing Council in 1983. Unfortunately I've mislaid all the material I used and produced for the bookshop. I then worked for (and no, I didn't win the Chris Foss original for best window display), but I managed to turn up a list in the BSFA mailing for September of that year. The 1983 roster (possibly incomplete) was:

Brian Aldiss *Hellionia* Spring  
Isaac Asimov *The Foundation Trilogy* J G Ballard *The Drowned World*  
Gregory Benford *Timescape*  
Michael Bishop *No Enemy But Time*  
C. J. Cherryh *Downlow Station*  
Arthur C. Clarke 2001 and 2010  
Stephen R. Donaldson *White Gold Wielder*  
Harry Harrison *The Stainless Steel Rat* For President  
Frank Herbert *Dune*  
Aldous Huxley *Brave New World*  
Anne McCaffrey *Crystal Singer*

Michael Moorcock *The Dancers At The End Of Time*

Time  
Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle *The Mote in God's Eye*

George Orwell *Nineteen Eighty-four*  
Robert Silverberg *Magjor-Chronicles*

Gene Wolfe *The Citadel of the Autarch*  
John Wyndham *The Day After the Day*

*Nineteen (or 20) Authors and 22 books*, as opposed to 1983's 24/28, with an overlap of ten authors and three actual titles. One must bear in mind that both lists were constrained by what would actually be available in paperback in the UK at the time, in a genre beset by short print runs and, certainly in 1983, few knowledgeable editors. ☐

**Claire Brolley**

26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7HA

INTERESTING to see the Waterstone's 'expert recommendations', and clever of them to package the list as being representative of the genres rather than the best / most influential the classic etc. etc. I would make my usual Where Are The Women comment (4 out of 24 this time, on which I think we can all do the maths) except that I am initially more stunned by the absence of Stephen Baxter. Your comments on the sf readership in respect of male / female language and literacy ratios don't take account of author preferences, of course; even if small boys are somehow coaxed into learning difficulties by having female teachers (really?) I wonder what happens when girls start to realise that if they want to read science fiction their choices are still dominated by books by men and books for boys. Don't get me wrong, I think the distinctions are considerably less obvious now than they have been in the past, and I like a very wide range of science fiction myself. I was pleased (and pleasantly unsurprised, in fact) to see that *The Left Hand of Darkness* made the Waterstone's experts' list. But no Joanna Russ, no Pat Murphy, no Lisa Tuttle, no Sheri Tepper (even though back to the Clarke Award, however controversial: no Margie Piercy, no Margaret Atwood). If romantic fantasy can make the list in the shape of Marion Zimmer Bradley and Anne McCaffrey, why no Connie Willis, who can do it with humour as well? I'd be particularly interested to see the list in order of popularity as well as the experts' individual choices, if you have either of these. And I do agree wholeheartedly with your comments on the Waterstone's Guide to SF. Fantasy and Horror: a really nice little book and one that I've found pretty useful myself.

I was delighted to have an opportunity to read the Gary Kluwert article as I missed the talk itself (I was at the BSFA meeting or at least that some of the BSFA were with me). I also enjoyed the film reviews, which I thought were a good counterpart to Paul Haines's analysis of the recent sf film scene. ☐

• The book sales charts caused some comment:

**Terry Hunt (ibid)**

A USEFUL inclusion, particularly as it's based on sales to readers. It may not be widely realised that many such charts (have the past, that in *The Bookseller* magazine) for example, are based on sales by publishers to bookshops, and therefore represented hope and hype as much as actual popularity. This is one reason why books sometimes charted before publication date. It would be even more interesting to have actual sales figures as well as positions, but I'd understand if for commercial reasons these were not forthcoming. ☐

**John Oram**

3 Otlands Avenue, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8EQ

I WAS quite fascinated by the Waterstone's chart. Out of 36 books, only one was a hardback - *Ship of Fools* by Robin Hood. The rest were paperbacks. Is this because of the list timing of March / April, or does it mean that very few people buy hardback books? It would be interesting to see a new list to compare. ☐

• Starship Troopers still presses buttons:

**Andrew M. Butler**

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

THE LETTER page of *Matrix* 131 was as amusing as always. Hell, if it takes to win a T-shirt is to "dig at Andy Butler" then I must be owed half a dozen. You took the right decision to print my full address when everyone else gave a postal town; it makes the destination for hate-mail from Heinlein lovers clearer.

There Ross has me bang to rights, as non-combatants can vote as well as war veterans. So strike "war" from the sentence "only war veterans should vote". I probably ought to add that I have nothing against war veterans - although I've no desire to be one - and I certainly support a silence on 11 November over any Diana Day. But to limit the vote to enlisted men (even if this includes slave labourers and medical guinea-pigs) and exclude carers, educators and farmers seems top-side to say the most. (In another of his novels he explains how officers are superior to civilians.)

Of course, I could be accused of confusing the attitudes expressed in a book with the author's personal beliefs, but Heinlein almost always loads the bases so that the attitudes are proven right. And putting notions of irony to one side, it seems to be a consistent attitude throughout the oeuvre. But alas, I feel no desire to re-read *Starship Troopers* to list the attitudes which are endorsed by the book and which I find offensive, so game, set and match by default to Theo. ☐

**Dave M. Roberts**

97 Sharp Street, Newark Avenue, HUL, E. Yorks. HU5 2AE

I FIND myself leaping to the defence of Andrew M. Butler. Being accused of not having read *Starship Troopers* because he had the impression from it that only war veterans are able to vote is a bit strong. My memories of the novel from when I read it about ten years ago left me with much the same impression. I don't think that either of the quotes Theo Ross uses really support his case that Andy was ignorant of the book's contents. Personally, I thought it was far too ludicrous to be really offensive. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it, and then felt guilty about it afterwards. The idea that some people believe that some things are worth defending with your life is not offensive, the idea that a government can pick and choose who is allowed to vote most definitely is. ☐

**Terry Hunt (ibid)**

THE FUTURE over the two *Starship Troopers* - provocative 1959 novel and wiles 1998 film - will doubtless run and run. Having recently reread the one the day after watching the other, I'll just throw a few opinions into the ongoing maelstrom.

It's dangerous and simplistic to judge a writer's politics or philosophy from a single book - does *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* prove Heinlein was a communist (of American independence variety), or *Double Star* show him to have been a constitutional monarchist? It's also dubious practice to critique an artistic work on the basis of its creator's assumed politics, and definitions based on the seating arrangements of a short-lived 18th century French parliament may perhaps be less than adequate to discuss a mid-20th century American, or indeed a mid-20th century anything.

A book or film, however derived, should be able to stand on its own artistic merits. Heinlein's book was thought good enough in 1960 to win a Hugo, and for me still works fairly well as a novel. Verhoeven's film, in my view, is bad on several counts: poor dialogue, inconsistent tonal elements, huge and totally unnecessary scientific absurdities, a scenario of implausibly military stupidity, illogical and pointless plot details. The only novel on which it works is as a particularly gory special-effects spectacle.

Judged as an adaptation of the book, which it claims to be, the film is a travesty. It warps the nature and motivation of the more action-oriented passages, totally drops the central technology, distorts the underlying philosophies, and yet retains many trivial details which could easily have been omitted and which confuse and mar the film by their retention. Since Verhoeven has boasted of never reading the book itself, this is not entirely surprising.

I'm aware that most of the above is unsupported assertion. A fully documented argument demands far more space than a letter column can afford, and I hope to be making it elsewhere in due course. ☐

• On to Gattaca...

**Andrew M. Butler (ibid)**

DAVE M. Roberts almost hits the nail on the head as to what *Uma Thurman* is doing in *Gattaca*: "[What was] almost ignored, was the somewhat bizarre relationship between Vincent and Jerome." I think it was Leslie Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel* which first drew attention to it, but American fiction has a preponderance of male-male relationships, frequently interracial, at the centre of its plots - think *Star Trek*, *Leslie Fiedler*, *Allen Ginsberg*, in fact almost any mismatched couple you care to mention. The relationships seem to risk slipping from being read as homosexual to heterosexual. (There's been a series of adverts for an Irish leach featuring a couple of lads in a New York bar exchanging lingering looks. In the latest version they're all suddenly taking off girlfriends. 'We're straight, straight-up, guv.')

Thurman as love interest in an attempt to prevent that slippage occurring in the perception of Ethan Hawke and Jude Law's relationship (*Law* plays Stephen Fry's love interest in *Willie & Frank* stopped by celibate after making the film). Of course she can also expose the plot, gives Ethan someone to talk to, and demonstrates genetic perfection. But she doesn't actually do anything on her own behalf. Personally, I suspect it was the murderer.

Gattaca was a flawed film but I reckon it deserves as much attention as *Blade Runner* has received. And that took a while to garner attention. Go see! Go see! ☐

• Gary Dakin likes *Gattaca* too, and has curiously smuggled in his own review.

**Gary Dakin**

5 Lyford Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 8SN

INHS review in *Matrix* 131 I think Dave M. Roberts under-rates *Gattaca*. It may be that we have come to expect only the broadest of strokes from Hollywood, so overlook intelligence and thematic sophistication when it is offered to us. Not that I would argue that *Gattaca* is a great film, but it is a very good one. Its low-key, underplayed styling is much more akin to European cinema than that of the American blockbuster, evoking, if any past of movie at all, the cool detachment of Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451*. Perhaps this is why the film opened to moderate reviews and routine business here, yet is a sell-out hit in France.

*Gattaca* is a remarkable film, perhaps most so in the way it pays great attention to the tiny details of truly science-fictional world-building, and in the way it depicts a world of science to portray the central theme of the film, which is – and I use the term deliberately – the preponderance of 'perfect blood Anys' within the *Gattaca* Corporation – *The Triumph of the Will*.

The name *Gattaca* has been contaminated from the initial letters of the four bases in DNA: guanine, adenine, thiamine, cytosine. These letters are picked out where they appear in the words of the credits, yet not consistently, suggesting that people are not entirely defined by genetics. A *Gat* is also a gate or channel, a point of entry. Given that the *Gattaca* Corporation is Vincent's only means of entering into his chosen career, the life becomes doubly ingenious.

The floors of the house Vincent and Jerome share are linked by a spiral staircase. Not only is this emblematic of the DNA helix, but this being Jerome's house, is also symbolic of how Vincent becomes Jerome. The staircase supports the house, is virtually the spine of the house, and Jerome, with his broken back, cannot climb the stairs of his own house.

One tiny incident at a classical piano concert not only serves to show how different this future is from our present, but illustrates the difference in perceptions and assumptions of Vincent and Irene. The pianist has an extra finger on each hand. Vincent assumes this proves that it is still possible to succeed despite having a natural deformity. Then Irene tells him that the piece is impossible to play without twelve fingers. The scene is that economical. But we, along with Jerome, realise that the pianist is so because his parents chose his genes, including perhaps those favourable towards the disposition, as well as those for the extra fingers, needed to play 'impossible' music.

The performances are not wooden, but those of good actors playing detached, self-conscious, paranoid people. The love story is well enough developed – though an explanation scene appears to have been cut from the fight outside the club and the bedroom scene – to reinforce the theme of the film: Vincent is prepared to sacrifice everything, family, love, legal status, to be truly free to be able to do what he wants to do in a society which has no place for him. It is his will, not the conformity of the 'perfect' humans who reject him, which will triumph.

Dave M. Roberts does note the excellent design and art direction. But what is particularly striking is how this is the perhaps the first of movie since *Blade Runner* to truly create its own world. Just as *Blade Runner* transmuted 1940s film noir into the future, *Gattaca*, shot in a glacial

blue laced with bronze, takes the CinemaScope Technicolor melodramas of the 1950s and makes them retro-futuristic. *Gattaca* – and clear homage is paid in the breaking waves of the sex scene – is most like the *film* Hitchcock might have made if he hadn't made *Vertigo* instead. In *Uma Thurman* there is even the coolly erotic blonde who is other than she seems.

This is a retro-future 1950s, present in everything from photographs to V-neck sweaters to the IBM conformity of the *Gattaca* Corporation itself to the distant lonely rocketships, forever taking off in the background like an image from a 1950s copy of *Galaxy*. The minimalism is perfectly complemented by Michael Nyman's elegant score for string orchestra. However, this is not style for its own sake. 1950s America is recalled as a decade of stifling conformity, for the emergence of faceless mutations, the Cold War and the McCarthy inquisition. At the core of *Gattaca* is the refusal of one individual to bow to corporate neo-fascist capitalism. *Gattaca* has its flaws, but it also has its secrets and will repay second, and third, viewings. I suspect it will gain a cult following, and in a few years be 'rediscovered' and probably re-released. Then it will be hailed as a 'so-far classic' which was dismissed on release for being years ahead of its time. Just like *Blade Runner* all over again. In the meantime watch out for whatever writer-director Andrew Nichols does next. For a first film *Gattaca* is an astonishing achievement. His second may well be a masterpiece. ☐

• Paul Haine's 'Brainless in Hollywood' got some response:

**Dave M. Roberts** (ibid)

I'M NOT SURE I agree with Paul Haine that screen sf is dumbing down literary sf. We are getting a lot more novelisations and tie-ins these days, but these seem to have largely replaced the public appetite for hefty fantasy trifles. These things come and go and I think that sooner or later people will get bored with *Star Trek* novels, and something else will come along we can all get irritated about. ☐

• See Vector 200 for more musings on bookiesbooks.

**Norman Finlay**

30 Sloan Street, Edinburgh, EH6 8PQ  
I HAVE to respond to Paul Haine's 'Brainless in Hollywood'. Is he being unfair? Possibly. I used to correspond with Bill Warren (a.k.a. The Beast of Beechwood). Through Bill I got a fair idea of the incredible amount of work which is put into a movie. Even those which Mr Haine might call 'brainless'.

There is no chance that the 'dumbing down' of sf movies will affect literary sf. More and more small press publishers are taking up those titles which the big publishers are not interested in. There is more choice now than ever before. You just have to look for it in different places. In other words, don't count on your favourite publisher to give you more of what you want. ☐

• Book prices always cause annoyance:

**Steve Jeffery**

44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 2XA  
ON Philip Muldoon's letter: discount price was look attractive for all of five minutes, until you realise it makes a fiver off Terry Pratchett (at best), Terry Brooks and Piers Anthony, while the vanishing midlist advances and interest drive those authors into media tie-ins and spinoff rather than what we (and they) would prefer them to be doing, which is writing their own novels. The erosion of the midlist is already an established fact. It's been happening for a while, while at the other end, five and six figure

advances and options are inflating for a relative few, especially those who write with one eye on the screen prospects. If it goes on, there will be a readership for the 'new sf', but it will be that of SF, not the BSFA's.

I suppose a situation where there are only a bare dozen original (in all senses of the word) and worthwhile sf novels a year will solve the collection/accumulation problem. While sf readers of the 1940s and 50s might look back to a time when it was just possible to read almost all of the genre published in any year, having the situation endured after two decades where most of us have had to be ruthlessly selective will be uncomfortably tinged by all those novels and new authors who might have been there were they not forced into submission before the media merchandise industry. ☐

**Norman Finlay** (ibid)

RE Philip Muldoon's discussion on British book prices. I rarely buy a British paperback. I get my paperbacks from Amazon.co.uk. I enjoy the 'Wilderness' series by David Thompson. I can get them for \$3.09 plus a dollar ninety-five postage. It's great. They get sent surface mail and I stagger my orders so that I have a box of books arriving every six weeks or so. If anyone enjoys adventure or Western fiction that is really difficult to find in the UK then Amazon is the place to go to. I'll be glad when they get to the UK. They will shake things up a bit. And not before time. ☐

• Odds and sods ....

**Steve Jeffery** (ibid)

REGARDING various letters on the Great Lost Mailing, I would especially like to thank Valerie Harvey and Bramley Mailing Services for doing all they can to help us report part of that missing batch, and taking up cudgels and invoices on our behalf against Royal Mail Customer Services for a claim for compensation (ongoing – the wheels of the complaints procedure grind as slow as the delivery). ☐

**John Drom** (ibid)

IN Dealer Update, Bertram Rota is referred to as a dealer for collectors who specialises in sf and fantasy. This is not true. The firm might put out occasional specialist catalogues, but they mainly deal in limited editions of modern authors which they publish themselves, and are renowned in the trade for selling books in fine condition. Bertram Rota is not an sf/fantasy specialist.

Lastly, I seem to remember writing to you some time ago querying any possibility of weekend meetings for those of us who cannot come to London during the week. It was tried once, was a big success, and since – nothing, I also queried what was happening to celebrate 40 years of the BSFA, in the same letter. Doesn't anybody feel that it is worth celebrating? Does no one care? Or is there just going to be a desolating silence? ☐

**Roger Robinson**

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

I SEE from page 15 of the current *Matrix* that I have to buy myself 16 prints! You swine!! ☐

• Finally, **Joseph Nicholas** sent this provocative letter. We look forward to your responses.

**Joseph Nicholas**

15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4JL

THE LATEST BSFA package, containing *Matrix* 131, *Vector* 199 and *Focus* 33, arrived a few days ago. I have read *Matrix*, I have read *Vector*, I have trust *Focus* into the stack unopened, unread, and never likely to be read.

Not just because I have little interest in writing fiction – I did once, but that was long ago and far away – but because I don't think that it's the sort of magazine the BSFA should be publishing. There are, I'm sure, several similar publications in which aspiring writers can workshop their stories and discuss the technicalities of construction; but why should the BSFA publish one as well?

One possible reply is that encouraging aspiring writers is one of the things the BSFA should do. But if one runs an eye over its Memorandum & Articles of Association, the legal document which establishes and gives purpose to an organisation registered at Companies House, one finds all sorts of things that the BSFA could conceivably do, from encouraging new writers to hosting seminars to publishing books and even to making movies. But the fact that an activity is specifically listed or alluded to in the Memorandum & Articles of Association doesn't mean that it's something the organisation has to do; the activities are listed simply in order to give the Registrar the legal permission to pursue them if in future it wishes to do so, and the Memorandum & Articles of Association are drawn as broadly as possible for that very reason. (A point lost on former *Vector* editor Geoff Rippington, who thought that the BSFA had to do everything listed and initiated a lengthy discussion on the virtues of publishing members' novels. Ultimately, he departed, and the idea went straight into the dustbin.)

It should also be borne in mind that the Memorandum & Articles of Association were drawn up around forty years ago, at a time when it was considerably less well regarded, and certainly less popular, than it is now. There were few books published every year, hardly any films, an occasional radio serial – now, sf has so interpenetrated contemporary culture that sf imagery pops up absolutely everywhere. In consequence, I suggest, so no longer needs the idea of support system the envisaged in the BSFA's Memorandum & Articles of Association. The BSFA need not therefore worry about publishing books, organising seminars, or providing workshops for aspiring writers, because there are plenty of other people ready, willing and able to do so. Already doing so, even.

This is of course to sidestep completely the question of what the BSFA should do – that is, what its core activities ought to be. But I do not think that publishing a bi-annual magazine for aspiring writers is an appropriate use of the BSFA's resources, both of people's energy and members' fees.

And now I'm going to overturn my opening remark that *Focus* 33 is never likely to be read by saying that I've just passed through it to check that my prejudices are correct, and have noted in its letter column a comment by one James Lecky denouncing a respondent to the BSFA questionnaire who queried why the organisation was publishing people's 'first tumblers'. Well, James, that remark was mine – and while I agree with you that it is worthwhile to encourage aspiring writers, you promptly point out where they are to be found. In the small press magazines. So why doesn't the BSFA leave them to it?

Yours in anticipation of innumerable squeals of rage. ☐

• We Also Heard From: Stephen Baxter, Mike Brain, Russell Chambers, Jon Courtenay Grimwood, and Terry Hunt, the rest of whose letter had to be held over to next issue – apologies. See you then!

## —fanzines—

## free for all

yvonne rowse  
examines fanzines

I'VE BEEN AWARE of the existence of fanzines ever since I joined the BSFA ten years ago. They were occasionally mentioned as being available for 'the usual'. The usual, if you don't know, includes letters of comment, artwork, fanzines in trade, a self-addressed stamped envelope and in the case of Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer (*Banana Wings*)

amusing animals, bottles of Laphroaig (the cask strength variety is particularly welcome) and information about who Billy Deacon is.

Ian Gunn (*Mind Wallaby*) includes

Cereal Toys and Small Gods

in his 'usual'.

I never sent my SAE. Why? I suppose because I didn't know if I'd really want to read a fanzine, because I didn't know what size envelope and how many stamps to put on it (pathetic, I know) and because inertia is a huge factor in my life. Well, all that's changed now. I've bought my envelopes, I've bought my stamps, I'm readying my letters of comment. What's changed? Chris Teran sent me nineteen fanzines to review (deadline in two weeks) and now I'm hooked.

The wonderful thing about fanzines is that they are about anything the authors like – so there is politics and permaculture in *International Revolutionary Gardener*, personal history in *Standing in the Shadows*, Cuban holidays in *Gottterdammerung II*. There's even a bit of skiffy in some of them.

I remember reading somewhere that fanzines were originally a way of staying in touch with fanish friends between widely-spaced conventions. Why do people still produce fanzines in the era of email and the cheap phone call? I don't know. Perhaps the fanzine writers will tell us.

For want of a better technique I will look at the fanzines alphabetically.

#### **Banana Wings 9 – Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer; A4, 2x£F\***

*Banana Wings* (BW) won the 1997 Nova Award for best fanzine and Mark won as best fanwriter. BW 9 is a 60-page A4 booklet (A4 envelope – BW won't bend – and extra stamps). This is a fanzine with bits to interest everyone. I particularly like Mark's article "Canary Yellow Trousers..." about the reaction of fandom to Tim Stannard's disco trousers, although I thought they were more banana yellow and really think some mention should have been made of the paisley banana yellow, orange orange, lime green and maybe also hot pink shirt he wore with them. Yes, I was at Novacon but even if you weren't it's a good article.

I guess Paul Kincaid writes regular fanzine reviews for BW. I dutifully read his piece about *Attitude*. I also read Maureen Kincaid Speller's article about Alfred Bester's *Tiger! Tiger!*, I also of my favourite books, and the novel which inspired it, Dumas' *The Count of Monte Christo*, which I have ordered from the bookshop on the strength of this review. I think the difference between my reactions to these two pieces was that I knew what Maureen was writing about but I have not read *Attitude*, and in order to review twelve issues of a fanzine and a convention you have to assume some knowledge in your readers.

(In fact, that was my main problem with the fanzines generally. When I knew what people were writing about I usually enjoyed it, when I had no idea it was only the very well-written articles that interested me. In consequence, letter pages were my least favourite parts of the fanzines though I could see how they could be interesting.)

BW 9 included a Wallace and Gromit conspiracy theory by Ian Gunn where he shows

what can be knocked together from a few well-chosen facts, a couple of wild theories and a warped mind.

Personally I think he might have something in his theory that the EEC has been dumping cheese on the moon to keep prices artificially inflated, and I think something should be done on behalf of us innocent consumers. No really. It was a good article anyway.

"Down in Brighton" was a chapter of the 1987 GUFF trip report by Irwin Hirsch. I have occasionally wondered if it would be possible to send people on

\* EF – Evening Fanzine. Set aside an evening to read this. The bath will get cold if you try to read it there. Your burn will become bruised if you try to read it all on the toilet.

2x£F – Set aside two evenings to read this.

JP – Stick it in your jacket pocket. The articles are short and / or light enough to be read while waiting for the bus, or while waiting for your cat to be vaccinated. No, probably you'll need to take an EF to the vet. Could be kept in the bathroom.

TAFF, GUFF etc. trips and stipulate that they *shouldn't* produce a trip report but just get the essential fans to initial a list to prove the person has been. Irwin's report was interesting, especially the bit where Greg Pickersgill neglected to show the soft marshmallow of his soul to the panellists, but as a general rule trip reports are not my favourite reading.

Then there was KIM Campbell trying to persuade the UK that another Worldcon here would be fun (I particularly liked the idea of mini-cons in the run-up), Claire with the Greater Croydon Food Guide and Mark on the dangers of transporting a cardboard David Mellor around town.

#### **BOB 13 & 14 – Ian Sorensen; A4, EF**

What can I say about BOB? How does Ian Sorensen persuade D. West and Jim Barker to provide him with such wonderful artwork? I was very taken by the 'extra large super strength inflatable sex dragon'.

Unlike BW, BOB is a single-author fanzine. Ian writes it all, even the "Secret Diary of D. West". I'm not quite sure why I liked BOB so much. Probably it's the gossip. Not the scurrilous sort, just what comes across as idle chit-chat about the people he knows. Don't think this is damning with faint praise – idle chit-chat is an artform of which I am particularly fond. Ian's "Lifestyles of the Rich and Fanish" meanders through his views on housekeeping, the houses and characters of some well-known fans (they must be well known; even I have heard of them), attitudes to DIY, relationships, spoilt brats, untidiness, charity shop clothes, reduced ready-made meals, what he was doing when Charles and Diana got married, and whether to change lifestyle to attract new relationships. I found this ramble through his thoughts strangely pleasing, but most of all I liked "David Where's Your Novas?", the secret diary of D. West. Is he really like this? I quote:

This new fangled stuff makes a mockery of the efforts us trufans made to build up fanzines as an artform rich in literary value and artistic merit. Modern fandom is obsessed with inconsequential details and technobabble. They must be told how wrong they all are. I will write 10,000 words on how fandom should properly conduct itself and get Langford to broadcast it on his shortwave ham internet setup.

I intend, once I've published my first two fanzines, to form a junior branch of D. West's FoFF, Fogeys of Fanzine Fandom, probably to be known as YOFOFFs, Young Old Fogeys of Fanzine Fandom. To join you must be over 38, have an obsessive interest in at least one 'golden age' writer and be prepared to tell the world how things have changed for the worse.

#### **Charmed Lives – Meredith McArdle; A4, EF**

This is a fanzine in celebration of the author Diana Wynne Jones and is well worth the 31p A4 SAE, particularly if you are a DWJ fan. It includes an interview with the writer by Maureen Kincaid Speller where Diana reveals her bizarre childhood in fascinating detail, talks about worms in custard, launching a catamaran which got stuck and had to have take-aways ferried to it in a coracle... and discusses some of her books. Chris Hill looks at Diana's disapproval of parents, Maureen reviews *Fire and Hemlock*, Arwyn Finnie (aged 10) reviews *The Ogre Downstairs* and Penny Hill looks at other authors you might enjoy if you like DWJ. She forgot to mention Margaret Mahy, a serious omission. Altogether this is a wonderful fanzine which has already caused me to pledge several tens of pounds to Bewley Books because I've ordered half the bibliography. [As we went to press issue 2 of *Charmed Lives* arrived. – Ed.]

#### **Dramatic Obscurity – Andrew M. Butler; A4, EF**

No pictures here, but two poems and a criticism of Nottingham's ugly erection, a piece of marble... a vertical tube with water shooting out of the top of it and an amusing piece of paranoia about answering machines that I can identify with. Andrew is

certain now that the machine has started chatting to my friends, and has started meeting them for lunch, when I'm out at work or my back is turned. Exhausted by this hectic social whirl, it has begun to get forgetful, and doesn't pass on the message, or scribbles on a Post-it note and sticks it on the fridge.

Yep, me too.

Incidentally, it afforded me a little amusement to find a complainer about grammar and spelling make two mistakes in the same article. If you're going to moan you should be especially vigilant about proofreading!



### Götterdämmerung II – Mark McCann & Tommy Ferguson, A5, EF

My enjoyment of this fanzine would have been enhanced by the inclusion of pages 5, 6, 19 and 20. I'd have liked to know the 'T' was in the article that probably began on page 6, and I would really have liked to have finished 'Geek Gravy' by Lesley Reece. This is probably a fanzine for the more experienced – or maybe the inclusion of the aforementioned pages would have made it all clearer to me. *Götter 11.1*, Corflu UK, was an amazing review of drunkenness and hangovers fitted in around a can. Although I've now got to the age when I say never again and *actually* mean it, I've got shadowy and confused memories of this approach to life, and I sympathised vastly.

### the last hurrah 2 – Leicester SF Group, A4, EF/JP

This was a fairly straightforward group fanzine and I enjoyed it mildly. I think the reason it was only mildly was the lack of an obsession or the strong opinions commonly found in fanzines. Regarded as an SF group newsletter it is very good indeed. 'Fourth Rock From the Sun' gave me all the information about Mars I've been missing since forgetting to renew my subscription to the *Guardian Weekly*. Tim Groomer ended about Egypt. Edward Crabtree about Sean Young in *Blade Runner*, and Rose Kirby was hopelessly optimistic about the possibility of achieving utopia by 2040, though I liked the idea of our email addresses becoming our names.

### Mind Wallaby 1 & 2 – Ian Gunn, A5, JP (and incidentally Australian)

The title is from a Lionel Fanthorpe book: 'He was a mental grasshopper, an intellectual kangaroo, a mind wallaby.' These are relatively small fanzines, A5 and 12 to 16 pages long, just perfect for putting in your jacket pocket to read in a boring moment. I liked them, even though I only managed to get Skipper and Kanga and Roo in the marsupial quiz. I liked the 'Video Reviews' by spacial guest reviewer Brad Butter (aged 10). I liked 'All Knowledge is Contained in Fanzines'. Did you know that:

In Pennsylvania, no man may purchase alcohol without the written permission of his wife.

Or:

Armadillos are the only creatures – apart from humans – that can catch leprosy. (How do they know? Why did they test them?) I really liked 'Codewords', the personal family language of Ian and Karen. For example:

**Intense:** Polite word used to describe a total raving lunatic. When someone has spent the last twenty minutes talking to you about UFOs while staring at a point three inches above your left shoulder, drooling and tonding an axe, you might say 'He was a little intense, wasn't he?'

### Pinkette 16b & 16c – Karen Pender-Gunn, A5, JP (another Australian production)

This is

The Pink you have while you're not having a Pink

and is another A5 fanzine. Like Ian Gunn (her partner) Karen indulges in a lot of tangerine (jumping off at a tangent). There are lots of small pieces, lots of letters of comment, a nice piece of obsession (with the horror of the new crystal palace) and a piece about Ian's cancer which was very moving. Another jacket pocket zine rather than a settle down for the evening zine.

### International Revolutionary Gardener 1 – Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, A4, EF

(Incorporating *Socialist Allotment Worker*) I liked this a lot, perhaps because I'm interested in permaculture and part of a LETS scheme, and much of the political stuff made perfect sense to me (a rare experience). IRG is a fairly serious fanzine containing three long articles and a quite fascinating letters section, called 'Lettuce' (wince). Joseph Nicholas's review of Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel* induced me to order this book as well, and then went on to fascinating speculations along alternative history lines.

### Snufkin's Bum 3 – Maureen Kincaid Speller, A4, EF

If IRG wins a prize for best title, *Snufkin's Bum* gets last place. But that's all right because I loved it. As I said earlier I'm a fan of idle chit-chat type gossip, which is how the zine starts, with a stroll from the Novas to sleepless nights to some lovely neighbourhood gossip. In 'A Possession Forever' Maureen writes about our parents' need to keep things for best. There's something very sad about trawling through your dead parents' treasured possessions and finding their choices inexplicable or, even worse, tacky and pathetic. This piece left me deeply moved.

Her article on Alan Garner intrigued me. I've just finished reading *A Bag of Moonshine* and *The Windstone of Brimingham* to my children. I hear echoes of my Staffordshire grandparents in Garner's Cheshire characters and perhaps for this reason love the books passionately. So, now I've got to go out and buy *Strandlifer*. This is getting very expensive.

There is a play review, though I'm not clear of which play, presented in the form of a discussion between two of the characters from the play while it was being performed in the background. It sounds rather confused but is an amusing

and well-executed conceit. Finally there is a bit about voyeuristic cats. Of all the fanzine this is the one I would recommend as a starter for people – like me – who are not 'in the know' about fandom.

### Squiggly Hov 1 & 2 – Bridget Hardcastle, A5, JP/EF

This sticks in my mind chiefly for increasing my confusion about whether Pat McMurray of con-running fame is a Patricia or a Patrick. It's a very nice light mix of personal stuff, jokes (6,000 calories? That's not too many) and two guest articles, one by Bridget's father about the house he lives in, and one by Pat about Evolution, the 1996 Eastercon, which included the wonderful lines:

Sometimes we really did achieve what we wanted to achieve. For example I think most of our publications were pretty average – humorous, poorly printed, over-edited and overly professional for a fanzine audience.

This is out of context (of course). What they actually wanted to achieve was 'Evolution@Intersection'.

I particularly liked 'The So You Think There's Not Enough Sex In Fanzines Corner', where Anon gives her version of the champagne blow-job from Iain Banks's *Expelair Street*: not 'Ka-pow' but 'Ow! It goes in the end and stings!'

### Standing in the Shadows – Simon Ounsley, A4, EF

This fanzine had great cartoons on the covers (D. West again) entitled 'Corflu UK – The Struggle With National Stereotypes'. It would be worth getting just for these but the contents are even better.

This is an account of Simon's struggle with ME / CFS since summer 1995. You may think that if you don't know Simon it would be of no interest but you would be wrong. I was moved and horrified by Simon's condition. Imagine being unable to read, watch television or use the computer. Imagine only being able to listen to music or taped books for half an hour before the pain forced you to stop. Imagine being an invalid without the usual recompenses. This is what Simon describes. It sounds a desperately depressing fanzine but it isn't. It's witty, interspersed with gossip, opinion and speculation. I liked this very much. If you want to contact Simon use large type so that he has a chance of being able to read your letter. Alternatively, record your message on a cassette.

### The Time Traveller's Journal 2 – Julie Faith Rigby, A4, JP/EF

This is quite a slim zine of fairly lightweight articles which ranged from 'Do Vampires Dream of False Teeth?', a report on Philcon (an American sci convention) through various travel stories to a review of the Squirrel Nut Zippers, a 1920s-style jazz band. Sadly I think it unlikely that Kidderminster Our Price would stock their albums. Oh well.

So that's the fanzines. Now I'm going to have to settle down to write letters of comment to lots of people, and then write my own fanzine. The right title appears to be very important. Perhaps *Barmid* or *Fanzize* or maybe *Fanzized Barmid*. Jack and Sally's Mum is just too mundane. *Revolutionary Fluffnuffkins*? Maybe not.

Why do I want to write a fanzine? Do you ever have conversations with yourself because there's no one around who will understand? Do you speculate about something then realise that if you confided your theories to anyone else they'd consider having you committed? Do you lie awake at night with words whirling round your head and no one to communicate them to?

No, me neither. I just want to win a Nova.

— © Yvonne Rouse 1998

Yvonne is a mother of two, and welcomes fanzines, feedback and idle chit-chat. Contact her at Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimley, Wrocs, DY12 1NP  
Or email yvonne@hallfarm.softnet.co.uk

All the fanzines can be obtained for the usual from the following addresses:

**Banana Wings** – Claire Brialley, 26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7HA or Mark Plummer, 14 Northway Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 6JE

**BOB** – Ian Sorenson, 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton, Scotland, ML3 7HY

**Charmed Lives** – Meredith MacArdle, 121 Dalry Road, London, SW9 9UU

**Dramatic Obscurity** – Andrew M. Butler, 33 Brook View Drive, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5JN

**Götterdämmerung** – 40 Deramore Avenue, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT7 3ER

**International Revolutionary Gardener** – Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London, N15 4JU

**The Last Hurrah** – Tim Groomer, 25 Springfield Lane, Smeeton Wetherby, Leicester, LE8 0OW

**Mind Wallaby and Pinkette** (and presumably *Pink*) – Ian Gunn & Karen Pender-Gunn, PO Box 567, Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia

**Snufkin's Bum** – Maureen Kincaid Speller, 60 Bourneouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ

**Squiggly Hov** – Bridget Hardcastle, 19 Wedgewood Road, Hitchin, Herts. SG4 0EX

**Standing in the Shadows** – Simon Ounsley, 25 Park Villa Court, Leeds, LS8 1EB

**The Time Traveller's Journal** – Julie Faith Rigby, c/o 9 Beechcroft Court, Back Beechwood Grove, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS4 2HS

# opinion

## Father Ted's Bogus Journey

Not everybody thinks *The Sparrow* should have flown away with all the recent awards. Lee Montgomerie is one of them . . .

I'M DELIGHTED to learn that *The Sparrow* has already spawned both a film and a sequel. It is always sad when a favourite tv series ends, especially with this inspired postmodern remix in which Father Ted, Father Jack, Dougal and friends convert Pogmo Island into an interstellar spacecraft and blast off to Alpha Centauri with Mrs Doyle cooking furiously all the way is a wonderful continuation of the canon of anarchically surreal ecclesiastical shenanigans.

Naturally, in the modern spirit, the ethnocentricity of the original has been challenged, so that the silver-haired, angst-ridden central character is restyled as Father Sandoz, the eccentric old geezer with the "long broken nose almost as badly askew as his cast eye, loose-lipped grin displaying teeth just as dishevelled" becomes Father Yarborough, the bungling fresh-faced innocent is Father Robichaux and the hyperactive elderly woman with the cooking fetish is now called Anne Edwardes. Still, even with political correctness depriving them of their booze, fags, rollerblades and ingratitude towards the never-ending labours of women, we know who they are. *The Sparrow* can only be Father Ted. *The Next Generation*.

For confirmation consider the development of the plot. For a third of the book there is no action, no alien contact even; just scene after scene of Mrs Doyle cooking for larger and larger groups of people intercut with flashforwards in which a tongue-tied Ted fails to explain to the Vatican how by sheer bad luck and a series of ridiculous misunderstandings he has managed to get the whole party killed off and been caught in an alien brothel with his pants down and the blood of a murdered child on his hands. Then, in one of those wacky changes of tack that characterise the series, they've all piled into a potato-shaped chunk of rock and shot off into outer space at a sizeable fraction of the speed of light. Relativity is invoked so that time dilation can enable the crew to arrive alive seventeen years

later, even though most of them qualify for bus passes, and then ignored for every other confounding factor. Even when they reach the planet Rakhat, life goes on much as in the Craggy Island Parochial House with Mrs Doyle constantly pressing the priests to try her latest examples of alien cuisine, warning them all the while to watch out for "vomiting . . . intestinal pain . . . bloody diarrhoea . . . bleeding in the brain . . . damage to the intestines and liver and kidneys . . .". Oh, go on, Father; you will, you will!

There's a hilarious scene in which Father Jack duly succumbs to an arse-blistering, trouser-bursting attack of Rakhat's revenge and Mrs Doyle (who's the doctor as well as everything else) suddenly realises that, although she's remembered to pack cloves, vanilla, yeast, sage, thyme and cumin for humanity's first interstellar expedition, she's left all the medicines behind on the mothership. Dougal is sent back to fetch them and manages to use up their entire supply of fuel, leaving them stranded for all eternity (or so they think) with only one woman of childbearing age and all but one of the men either celibate or past it.

That non-dilemma and the eternal question: if God exists why does He let such awful things happen to me? is all that remains of *Father Ted's* trenchant deconstruction of the Catholic church, but there is plenty of intentional comedy in *The Sparrow*, most of it in the form of facile dinner-table banter in which a bunch of people of different ages, origins and cultures living in the mid-21st century manage to amuse each other by constantly quoting tags from mid-20th century American light entertainment. Unfortunately *The Sparrow* is also 500 pages long, deadly serious, tediously expository, terminally squeamish, and reads less like cutting-edge cult comedy than interminable comfort-blanket soap opera. Still, if they ever get the bugs ironed out, I'll look forward to watching it on Channel 4.

—© Lee Montgomerie 1998

## Lee Montgomerie

### A Stephen R. Lawhead Bibliography Compiled by Andrew M. Butler

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#### NOTES

Primary sources were Library of Congress and National Library of Scotland catalogues. No attempt has been made to specify whether particular titles are published as by Stephen, Stephen R. or Steve Lawhead (with the exception of the Gwynn Lewis title) as these appear to have changed on different editions. In a number of cases it has not been possible to check whether the British base of Lion was Oxford or Tring.

—© Andrew M. Butler 1998

# LOST IN SPACE

reviewed by john ashbrook

I HAD a bad feeling about *Lost in Space*. Ignoring the fact that a big-screen version of one of the most embarrassing TV shows America ever produced didn't really fill my drawers with eager anticipation, the news that it would contain the most computer-generated special effects yet produced for one film (750 in total) didn't bode well. You see, I've noticed that the more time and effort they spend on effects these days, the less time and effort goes into incidentals like... the script.

I then found the film wouldn't be a comedy – it was, in fact, going to be played with perfectly straight faces. This news sent through me a cold chill, the kind of cold chill I usually experience on hearing phrases like "Puff Daddy sings Bing", "Trust me, I'm with New Labour" or "John, it's your round".

Well, the end product doesn't disappoint. It has beautiful production, exquisite special effects and nary a brain cell to its credit. Even the fact that you know Gary Oldman is whoring himself for a LOT of money doesn't stop you feeling sorry for him as he has to tell The Robot, with absolute conviction, "Farewell, my platinum-plated pal, give my regards to oblivion."

So what's it all about? It's about one hour and fifty minutes hahahahaha... ha. Suit yourself. It's set in 2058 (that's an easy-to-remember sixty years away, folks), when the warning nations of Earth have seen the error of their ways, noticed that the planet is knackered and joined in one big luvvy-huggy endeavour to save it. This, apparently, means finding another Earth-type planet pronto so we can flock over there and screw that one up too.

Leading this noble endeavour is the Robinson family. They are to set off to Alpha Prime – the only other Earth-type planet in the 2% of the galaxy thus far charted – and build a teleport-riny-jumpgate-type-of-thing to aid the exodus. So, does the galaxy welcome careful drivers? Do moon and her apple-pie pioneers get there without incident? Does that other 98% remain uncharted? The clue is in the film's title.

Matt Le Blanc goes from being nice-but-dim Joey in *Friends* right to the Clint Chinley superhero rôle. That's light-years away, man. There he is, facing insurmountable odds, protecting the children, nuclear blast-o-matic in hand; and there was I thinking about the redning chair battles he used to have with Chandler.

Oscar-winning William Hurt plays the distant and emotionless patriarch John Robinson. This doubtless proved a real stretch for an actor who specialises in cold and emotionless characters.

## MIMIC

reviewed by andrew m butler

SOMETIMES the publicists make it too easy for the reviewer. 'A Bold Experiment. A Deadly Mistake! Tempting to apply it to the film. After all, (uncredited) script doctoring by John Sayles and Steven Sonderbergh doesn't really inspire confidence.

Not so much an experiment though, since we're deep in *Aliens* territory, only this time our heroine is searching for a fertile male (something she should find ironic, given her and her husband's inability to conceive, but I'm getting ahead of myself).

Three years earlier, some Child-Killing-Disease-of-the-Week was being spread by cockroaches. Scientists, who clearly haven't seen *Jurassic Park*, manipulate the genes of a couple of insects and set them off to wipe out Manhattan's cockroach population. Obviously these insects have been altered to be sterile, but equally clearly this isn't going to hold up in the wild, or the movie would be rather short. Now there's something nasty in the subway, and the same scientists end up tracking them down.

Bug specialist Susan Tyler (Miro Sorvino, best known for Woody Allen's *Mighty Aphrodite*) before a left turn into a number of action flicks) has been brought an unusual specimen by two kids, and she discovers it has the same pH (really?) as only two species – something from the Amazon and something they'd

Mrs Maureen Robinson is brought forth by Mimi Rogers, an actress who, having committed the cardinal sin of living beyond her thirtieth birthday, is now reduced to playing glamorous mom rôles. Here we are supposed to accept that she is the mother of, among others, Judy – played by Heather Graham, who is herself 28 years old. Which means, of course, by the time the inevitable sequel grunts and groans on to our screens, she'll be old enough to play her own mom.

And speaking of time-loop paradoxes: wouldn't it be nice if this hoary old plot contrivance were used properly once in a while? The Robinsons manage to fall through a hole in space-time, meet themselves coming back the other way, stumble across the wrecked hulk of the rescue ship which was sent out after them (a bit of luck really, given that 98% thing) and manage to die at least twice. Oh, and Gary Oldman, bored of being reduced to talking to the robot and the precocious snotty-nosed junior Robinson, turns into a rather impressive giant cartoon spider. You wouldn't think he had it in him.

Inevitably, a film written by Akiva Goldman can't be expected to make sense. He is, after all, the chap responsible for *Batman Forever* and *Batman and Robin*.

The opening dogfight, involving transparent orbital fighters, is a thing of beauty, worth the price of admission alone. Indeed, throughout its vastly overlong running time, the special effects which clutter every frame are glorious (apart from the 'cute' alien monkey), well designed, well executed, well animated and well photographed.

Of course, beauty is only skin deep. Consequently, as usual, all the fluff and nonsense on display is maniacally trying to cover up the fact that no one really has much of a clue what is going on, least of all the hapless viewer.

Throughout, there is an inescapable feeling that the characters are really lost in special effects, wandering around non-existent sets (they call 'em 'virtual sets', apparently), staying in the background as much as possible, waiting for the far more impressive visuals to be loaded up into the foreground and all around them.

Before too long, the same CGI technology which has taken away a good living from set constructors, extras, model builders and animators will soon be seeing scriptwriters on the dole. I can't find it in my heart to feel sorry for them. Maybe the machines will be more inspired than the present crop. Who are, no doubt, already hard at work pounding out big-screen renditions of such small-screen classics as *The Banana Splits*, *T. J. Hooker* and *The Jerry Springer Show*. Can't wait.

— © John Ashbrook 1998

engineered. Having shown her and health control hubby Peter Mann (Jeremy Northam) where they'd found the bugs, the kids go off in search of further discoveries before they are splatted. Yes, kids die in this picture. For 97% of its length it's willing to be sadistic. Before long, the characters are lost down the abandoned Underground tunnels, and trying to save their asses from creepy-crawlers.

Director del Toro, best known for the Mexican vampire flick *Cronos*, knows how to crank up the tension. Most of the movie involves a mere five characters, so the picking-them-off-one-by-one opportunities (the old "Let's split up!" routine) are limited. But picked off they are, with suitable gore. He wisely knows that if the insect is seen in daylight (they seem able to mimic tall men in sinister raincoats) then the illusion will be shattered. On the other hand, the thought of insects being able to fly carrying a human does seem far-fetched. Lingering doubts about the insects' ability to breathe at such a size are supposedly dismissed by discovering that they have lungs. That's OK then....

So we're in horror territory rather than sf, and on that level it does chill and disturb. The shots of Mann and Taylor groping for a dropped torch when the audience knows about an insect just beyond their reach is particularly creepy. At times there is even a sense that the characters won't survive to win the day, and Sorvino shows real emotions and brains as an action hero. This has to be counterbalanced by the fact that *cuteness* does win the day, and one or two unintentionally ludicrous moments puncture the atmosphere. Certainly worth a look, but not if you are at all squeamish.

— © Andrew M. Butler 1998

**Mimic** — 1997. Dimension Films. Director Guillermo del Toro. Producers Bob Weinstein, Ole Bornedal. B. J. Rack. Screenplay Matthew Greenberg. Matthew Robbins, del Toro (plus John Sayles and Steven Sonderbergh, uncredited) from the story by Donald A. Wollheim. Special effects Al Broussard, Mike Marco Beltrami. Cinematography Dan Lausten. Cast: Mira Sorvino, Jeremy Northam, Charles S. Dutton, F. Murray Abraham. 105 mins. Cert. 18. UK release 26 June 1998.

film

## SLIDING DOORS

—What if one split second sent your life in two different directions?—

That's the highly original concept behind Peter Howitt's directorial debut *Sliding Doors*. Fed up with the sort of roles he's been offered (he was Joey in the sitcom *Bread*), Howitt has turned to directing his own pictures, striking financial gold with this first outing, both in America and the UK.

Gwyneth Paltrow, the former Mrs Brad Pitt, plays PR woman Helen, who loses her job as a result of borrowing the company's vodka. And then, according to whether she catches the tube train home or not, she is mugged, and goes via hospital to her guilty-looking boyfriend Gerry (John Lynch) or is charmed by the handsome Scot James (John Hannah) before arriving home to find Gerry in bed with Lydia (Jeanne Tripplehorn). The consequences of these two possibilities are intertwined throughout the rest of the film, before the threads are sewn together in the final few minutes.

Rather wisely, the decision is taken to remake one of the Helens, so that the colour of her hair immediately tips off the audience as to which version it is. The other characters remain much the same, although the unmet James obviously only comes in the version where Helen stays with Gerry. In this thread it's a comedy of sexual paranoia, with the growing suspicions of Helen – reduced to selling sandwiches to corporations and waiting on tables – fed by the equally growing jealousy of the mistress. In the other thread, Gerry seems rather more regretful about his loss, with the mistress again contributing to his lot. But here the spotlight is upon Helen and James's

Alan Ayckbourn has explored this question on at least one occasion, notably in the sixteen versions of *Intimate Exchanges* where each of the scenes bisect into two subsequent possible scenes. None of those raving about Peter Howitt's debut *Sliding Doors* seems to know this.

As with the underrated *Shooting Fish* and *Martha Meet – Daniel, Lawrence and Franky* who cares, the film takes the three Brits and a Yank approach to cracking the American market; not so much Paltrow, who is credibly English, but Tripplehorn, the rather one-dimensional bitch returned from America to reclaim Gerry. Even the opening dialogue, consisting entirely of swearing, is a homage to *Four Weddings*.

The comedy of *Monty Python* runs through the film as a leitmotif, but this only serves to restate the genius of Python and the comparative poverty of Howitt's script.

The will she make the train or not

realistically drawn relationship, as a romantic comedy which eventually develops dark edges.

Gwyneth Paltrow shines in both roles – dowdy as the unknown cuckoo, radiant as the young lover – and all traces of her American accent are subsumed by a credible English one. It's the same woman, the same mannerisms, and yet the two stay distinct. John Lynch, with Irish accent, floppy fringe and puppy dog eyes, gives some indication of why Helen would be in love with him, whilst slipping into Woody Allen territory in his indecisiveness over which of the two women he should choose. John Hannah (Helen clearly has a thing for Celts) plays his role just the right side of smug, and always threatens to steal the show as he did in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

But this is as intelligent as romantic comedy ever gets, this side of Woody Allen anyway, and it does ask a fair amount of the audience. The drawing together of the two time lines is clumsy, but then there is no easy way to find a closure for both versions of Helen, Gerry, Lydia and James. Credulity is stretched to the limit, and your feelings about the movie will depend on whether you can buy the conceit. Still, like milkshakes, it remains a light and frothy way to spend an evening or a wet afternoon.

—© Andrew M. Butler 1998

*Sliding Doors* — UK / USA 1998. Intermedia Films / Mirage Enterprises / Miramax Films / Paramount Pictures. Director Peter Howitt. Screenplay Howitt. Producers Philippa Braithwaite, William Horberg, Sydney Pollack. Cinematography Remi Adefarasin. Music David Hirschfelder. Cast: Gwyneth Paltrow, John Hannah, John Lynch, Jeanne Tripplehorn. Cert. 15.

## DARK CITY

reviewed by dave m roberts

ALEX PROYAS' previous film, *The Crow*, displayed, if nothing else, a certain visual flair. In *Dark City* he uses this flair for visuals to hit you smack between the eyes with a story of his own devising.

In a city seemingly held in perpetual night, the Dark Ones 'tune' the physical world with the power of their minds. John Murdoch (Rufus Sewell) wakes up in a hotel bath minus his memories, and apparently having killed a woman. This turns out to be just the latest in a string of bizarre killings. The Dark Ones are clearly not happy about him, largely because he too has the power to tune. On his trail are Inspector Burnstead (William Hurt), an overly fastidious detective, and the nervous Dr Schreber (Kiefer Sutherland) who claims that he wants help.

The story soon develops along much more interesting lines. Every night at midnight the Dark Ones shut the city down and reshape it. They also swap people's memories around, for reasons of their own. They do this with the help of Dr Schreber. The Dark Ones search for Murdoch by injecting the memories he doesn't have into Richard O'Brien.

We are into Phil Dick territory here. The city and its people (and their remembered pasts) are subject to change. Murdoch is the only person who knows that things are changing, as he is the only person able to stay awake during the 'tuning'. He concentrates his efforts on trying to locate the semi-mythical Shell Beach – a place that everybody knows but can't quite remember how to get to. In

order to survive Murdoch has to convince people of what is going on. Dr Schreber knows, but wants to inject memories into Murdoch.

This is all fascinating stuff, but where Proyas really scores is with the look of the whole thing. The cityscape that the film opens with looks very much like *Metropolis* crossed with film noir and a lot of rain. It is a dark gothic mush-mash of styles, faintly reminiscent of the Gotham City created by Tim Burton for *Batman*. The big difference being that where Gotham is heavily stylised, *Dark City* feels real. It's a place where you wouldn't want to be out at night... which is unfortunate as night is the only time that is available there. The Dark Ones are a truly sinister group of tall, thin vampire-like beings who feed on people's minds, but for study rather than sustenance. The effects are remarkable. The metamorphosis of the city comes on like Terry Gilliam on acid.

The performances from the main players are generally better than adequate, with William Hurt strolling through the sort of rôle he can do in his sleep, and Ian Richardson as the leader of the Dark Ones is suitably imposing. Richard O'Brien is at his sinister best in a custom-made rôle, but it is Kiefer Sutherland who really pulls the stops out with a genuinely enjoyable turn as the year's best Peter Lorre.

There are flaws. The build-up to the climactic psychic battle between the Dark Ones and Murdoch is somewhat rushed, and the learning experience that Murdoch goes through in the run-up to it is rather dubious. The confrontation itself rapidly gets reduced to a head-to-head between Richardson and Sewell, most of the Dark Ones being quietly dropped from the picture.

*Dark City* can be forgiven these quibbles, because what we have here is a genuine Science Fiction film, probably the best since *Twelve Monkeys*. It is a film with a disorienting plot that demands – and gets – a response to match. Alex Proyas has succeeded in producing something different; he is clearly someone to watch.

—© Dave M. Roberts 1998

*Dark City* — 1998. Director Alex Proyas. Screenplay Proyas. Cast: Rufus Sewell, Kiefer Sutherland, William Hurt, Jennifer Connolly, Ian Richardson. 100 mins. Cert. 15. UK release 29 May 1998.

# —out of focus—

Out Of  
Focus

Carol Ann Kerry-Green  
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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 autumn – 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.

## — Calling Artists! —

*Focus* is looking for artwork for its front cover competition, and invites you to enter. Send your designs to Carol Ann or Julie at either of the above addresses by 31 August 1998.

The winning entry will appear on a future front cover of the magazine, and there will be appropriate prizes awarded.

## — Orbiters —

Interested in getting to know other writers? Not sure if the story you're writing is working properly? Want to know if your novel is going in the right direction? If so, then the BSFA's Orbiters groups might be for you.

Orbiters are groups of five writers who each put a manuscript in a parcel, with coherent criticism of the others already in there, and send it on to the next person on the list. In return you get four sets of comments on your own piece of work.

Orbiters has groups for writers of short stories and novels. We are now looking at the possibility of setting up new groups for **scribblers**, **poets** and **non-fiction** writers.

If you are interested in joining any of the groups – established or new – please write to (or email) Carol Ann Kerry-Green at the above address.

— @ Carol Ann Kerry Green & Julie Venner 1998

## BSFA AWARDS

Chris Hill  
The Bungalow, 27 Lower Evingar Road  
Whitchurch, Hants, RG28 7EY  
Tel: 01256 893263  
Email: cphill@enterprise.net

AS YOU will have seen from the last issue, the BSFA Awards were announced on Sunday 12 April at Intuition. The winners were:

**BEST NOVEL:** Mary Doria Russell *The Sparrow* (Black Swan)  
**BEST SHORT FICTION:** Stephen Baxter *"The War Birds"* (Interzone)  
**BEST ARTWORK:** SMS *"The Black Blood of the Dead"* (Interzone)

Unfortunately none of the winners were present to receive their trophies. However, I was able to present Mary Doria Russell with her trophy at the Arthur C. Clarke Award ceremony at the Science Museum on 27 May. Many thanks to ACCA Administrator Paul Kincaid for allowing me to hijack the ceremony for such a nefarious purpose!

While I am on the subject I would like to make a few other thank-yous: to everyone who nominated and voted this year, without whom, as they say, the Awards would not be possible; to **Mitch Le Blanc** and **Colin Odell** for designing and constructing the trophies (which consisted of a polished block of wood with the letters 'BSFA' spelled out on four of the faces in Braille); to **Colin Greenland**, **Molly Brown** and **Jim Burns** for announcing the awards at the ceremony; finally, to **Chris Terran**, **Andy Butler**, **Maureen Kincaid Speller** and **Penny Hill** for their encouragement during the year.

And so this year ... for those of you who might be new to the BSFA the awards are presented annually to works in the following categories:

**BEST NOVEL** – presented for the best novel that receives its first British publication during the 1998 calendar year.  
**BEST SHORT FICTION** – presented for the best piece of short fiction published during the 1998 calendar year. This can be from any magazine or anthology. Do not forget the small press magazines for trial!  
**BEST ARTWORK** – presented for the best artwork first appearing during the 1998 calendar year.

**How To Nominate** – You can nominate any number of items at any time during the year. Just send them to me at the address above. Alternatively feel free to email me with your nominations. Remember that it is the items with the most nominations that will appear on the final shortlists. So if an item has already been nominated do not let that stop you from nominating it again. If you are not sure about the eligibility of a particular item please pass the details on to me anyway and I will check.

**• Best Novel Nominations received:** John Kessel *Compromising Dr Nove* (Gollancz: £16.99 hb); Jack McDevitt *Eternity Road* (Voyager: £5.99 pb); Ken MacLeod *Passion* (Orbit: £15.99 hb); John Meany *To Hold Infinity* (Bantam: £5.99 pb).

— @ Chris Hill 1998

# eastercon programme books yvonne rowse

OVER THE YEARS I've collected a stack of theatre programmes. Ever since I've been able to afford a programme as well as a ticket I've bought one. Why?

There are only two in the stack without adverts: *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* and *The Rat in the Skull*. The rest, even *Can't Pay, Won't Pay*, are more adverts than information. Much more. I suppose a programme gives us something toicker over before the play starts.

Recently two very different programme books have augmented my stack, those for *Intervention* and *Intuition*, the 1997 and 1998 Eastercons.

It's obvious that the purpose of theatre programmes is to squeeze a bit more money from the customer while generating advertising revenue. What then is the purpose of the convention programme book? I'm not really sure. You don't pay any more for it. If you got it before the con you could read up about the guests. But you don't – it comes in the plastic bag they hand to you when you register. Some people flick through it briefly if they've arrived before their friends and before the dealers' room opens. It's traditional, however, to read it on the train journey home. I do. If you drive you probably never read it at all. Well, you should! Get your old programme books out and read them.

*Intervention's* programme book was a beautifully glossy production with an uncluttered black-and-white cover, lovely cream paper and nicely chosen typefaces for the titles. In a cunning attempt to get people to read the thing they included the 'Read Me' information on programme items.

It is a triumph of style over content. It's not bad – in places it's very good – but it lacks substance. For example, almost three pages – six columns – were devoted to Guest of Honour Brian Aldiss, but four and a half were taken up by a bibliography and details of awards he's won. Harry Harrison had to fit all the enthusiasm that should have been spread over five columns into a meagre one. It wasn't a problem to Harry, he appreciates ferociously.

The *Ansible* review of the year, an essay and three (good) short stories by Jon Bing, and an article by Arthur C. Clarke reprinted from the *Sunday Times* saved the book from being a collection of lists interspersed with brief (good) author biographies. There wasn't much written specifically for the publication: only the author biographies and 'The Committee', written by each other and friends, were original. My favourite of these was of John Bark, as by 'W. McG.', which begins:

O Conference Science Fictional that does this day  
Grace the banks of the River Mersey

Lovely!

The *Intuition* programme book, though less 'designer', was far more satisfying; there were lots more words for your money. I liked the format of the guests' articles, apparently writing about whatever they wanted to, and someone else writing about them. Ian McDonald and Connie Willis both produced moving and witty pieces, and Martin Tudor's extract from his TAFF report showed a man seriously in need of Valium. Do people really put themselves through this level of anxiety for fun?

The second half of the book, the overview of things science fictional, gave me some insight into the bits of fandom I usually ignore. I actually read Chris Terran's 'Sleeping With the Enemy', about genre publishing in 1997, whilst at the con, shakily highlighted a few books to buy then drifted back into hangover coma. I read the pieces about cinematic sf, comics, fanzines and science. They inspired me to want to know more. Mark Plummer's 'Wombats and Wallpapers', about UK conventions in 1997, kept me entertained but the pieces on costuming and filking left me as confused and uninterested as ever. I think my favourite bit was 'Little Robots ... Hitting Each Other', an excellent article by SMS written in the style of J.G. Williams.

'The Committee' was by themselves and was the only part that *Intuition* did less well than *Intervention*. When writing about others, people are almost always more inventive and amusing than when forced to 'Write about yourself in 100 words'; it's horribly reminiscent of school essays.

So there you are. There's more interesting stuff, more creativity, in one convention programme book than in my entire pile of theatre programmes. I have never re-read a theatre programme. I'm going to put *Intervention* and *Intuition* away now in the sure knowledge that when I disinter them in some grand future tidy-up I will be able to 'waste' half a day re-reading them.

— @ Yvonne Rowse 1998

**Intervention Programme Book:** Terminus Borealis Press, 1997; ISBN 0 9530217 0 X; A4, 68pp. Editors Pete Wright, Steve Green. Design / layout Pete Wright.  
**Intuition Programme Book:** Intuition, 1998; ISBN 1 870824 29 6; A4, 64pp. Editor Maureen Kincaid Speller. Design / layout Claire Bialek, Mark Plummer.

## 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, 22 Jul 98; 26 Aug 98; 23 Sep 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!

6 Aug 98; 3 Sep 98.

• **Birmingham** The Brum SF Group meets on the second Friday of the month on the second floor of the Britannia Hotel on New Street, venue of this year's Novacon. Membership is £15 per year, which includes a monthly newsletter.

♣ Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarks Lane, Wilenham, West Midlands, WV13 1XH.

♣ bsf@btinternet.co.uk

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

• **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

♣ rbeane@iolabnet.co.uk

• **Manchester** — FOMT meets in Waterspoons's pub (on the corner of Piccadilly Gardens, near the BFI station) on the second and fourth Thursdays in the month, 8pm onwards.

♣ Mike Don on 0161 226 2980

• **Peterborough** SF Group meets on the first Wednesday of the month at the Bluebell Inn, Dogsthorpe, and on the third Wednesday of the month in the bar of the Great Northern Hotel, opposite the BFI station.

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

♣ Pete on 01733 370542.

• **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, Friar Street, Reading.

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

## 3-5 Jul 1998: Intercontact 98

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

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

♣ elf@origo.no

## 10-12 Jul 1998: Infinity

Angel Hotel, Cardiff. Guests include Diane Duane, Peter Morwood, Colin Baker, Ed Bishop, Dave Prowse, Jack Cohen, Lionel Fanthorpe, Andy Sawyer, M. J. Simpson. Reg. £45.

♣ Infinity, Swn y Nant, 12 Stuart Street, Treherbert, CF42 5PR

♣ infinity@infinity@hotmail.com

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

## 17-19 Jul 1998: Nexus 98

Media convention at Bristol's Hilton National Hotel. Guests include 85's Peter Juraski, Richard Arnold. Reg. £44, under 14s half price, under 55s free. Instalment scheme available. Supp. £15.

♣ Nexus 98, 1 Lullingdon Rd., Knowle, Bristol, BS4 2LH

♣ http://www.coshan.demon.co.uk

## 1 Aug 1998: WestCon

A one-day media con at Bristol City Football Club, organised by members of the Nexus conrunning team. Guests include Barry Morse and Ziena Meron. Reg. £20 to 14 July, £22.50 thereafter and on the door; under 16s £14 / £16.50, under 5s free. Price includes a buffet meal, instalment scheme available.

♣ Westcon, 46 Brins Close, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8XU

♣ na@nexuscon.demon.co.uk

## 5-9 Aug 1998: Bucconeer

The 56th Uncon at Baltimore, Maryland. Guests C. J. Cherryh, Milton A. Rothman, Stanley Schmidt, Michael Whelan.

## UK Agent:

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

♣ 01223 570179

♣ jgd@icx.computelink.co.uk

♣ 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' Lebowitz, John Matthews. Reg. £75 (instalment scheme available), £80 at the door; under 17s half price, under 12s free. Room rates: £40ppn triple, £42ppn double or twin, £47ppn single.

♣ The Wrap Party, PO Box 505, Reading, RG1 7OZ

♣ TheWrapParty@teanradio.com

♣ http://www.steancradio.com/TheWrapParty

## 22-23 Aug 1998: The Prisoner

Probably the last Prisoner con to be held in Portmeirion in north Wales, where the cult 60s series was filmed.

♣ Six of One, PO Box 66, Ipswich, IP2 0TZ

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

Premiere con of the Southern USA, at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta. The huge guest list includes Harlan Ellison, C. J. Cherryh, Ray Harryhausen, Larry Niven, Brian Lumley, James P. Hogan, Jerry Pournelle, Storm Constantine, Roger Dean, Anthony Daniels. Reg. \$50.

♣ Dragon\*Con 98, PO Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362-0696, USA

♣ http://www.dragoncon.org

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

At Sacha's Hotel in Manchester. Guests Gerry Anderson, Stephen Weeks, and from Hammer Films Hazel Court, Aida Young and Eddie Powell. Reg. £25 to 30 Jun, rising thereafter; under 16s £20, under 12s £15.

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

♣ 0161 707 3747 (evenings only); fax 0161 792 0991

♣ hnad@iolabnet.co.uk

♣ http://savvy.com/~festival

## 4-7 Sep 1998: Cult TV

Media con focusing on kitsch tv. Venue Telford Mot House in Shropshire. Guests include Johnnie Ball (Zoe's dad, among other claims to fame), Reg. £44 to 1 Jun, £49 thereafter; children 9-15 half price, under 9s free.

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

♣ culttv@btinternet.com

♣ http://culttv.basg.org

## 11-13 Sep 1998: Fantasycon 22

British Fantasy Society con. Venue Albion Hotel, Birmingham. Guests Freda Warrington, Jane Yolen; MC Ramsey Campbell. Reg. £50 (£40 BFs members). Sup. £25 (£20).

♣ Fantasycon, 46 Oxford Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 6DT

♣ http://www.djb.u-net.com

## 11-13 Sep 1998: AKFT 98

Star Trek con at the Warwick Arms Hotel, Warwick. Reg. £30.

♣ AKFT 98, 7 Belgrave Close, St Mary Cray, Orpington, BR5 3TJ

## 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-guest, Stephen Briggs and Dave Langford. Reg. £40, £30 unwaged. Bookings close 15 July, and there are no on-the-door memberships.

♣ PO Box 4100, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 2GZ

## 25-28 Sep 1998: Albacon 98

Central Hotel, Glasgow. Reg. £30 alt., £35 on the door. Guests Diana Wynne Jones, Ray Harryhausen, Kim Newman, and astronomer Prof. John Sallhouse.

♣ Albacon 98, Fliz, 10 Atlas Road, Glasgow, G21 4TE

♣ 0141 558 2862

♣ albacon@ial.pipex.com

## 26-27 Sep 1998: Multicon 98

Commercial media con at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. Reg. £30.

♣ Dave Prowse Promotions Ltd, c/o 12 Marshalsea Road, London, SE1 1HL

## 2-4 Oct 1998: Masque 6

The sixth British costume convention at the Albany Hotel, Eastbourne. Reg. £20, pre-GCSE children half price.

♣ Masque 6, 43 Millbrook Gardens, Cheltenham, GL50 3RQ

♣ http://www.zm92.demon.co.uk/masque.htm

## 9-11 Oct 1998: Voyage in Person 1998

Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea convention at the Novotel, Sheffield. Guests Terry Becker, Allan Hunt, Del Monroe. Reg. £45, Sat. £22.50, Sun. £16.50.

♣ VIP, 26 Milner Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 9PQ

♣ 106530.32@compuserve.com

♣ http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/trn file/vip.htm

## 10 Oct 1998: Octocon Lite

Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, nr Dublin. Guest James White. Reg. £10.

♣ 43 Eglinton Road, Dublin 4, Ireland

UK agent:

♣ Dave Lally, 64 Richmore Terrace, London, SW8 1AX

♣ 0171 735 3819

## 13-15 Nov 1998: Novacon 28

Venue Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. Guest Paul J. McAuley. Reg. £32.

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

## 20-22 Nov 1998: Armadacon X

SI / cult tv con at the Cophorne Hotel in Plymouth. Guests include Jim Burns, Douglas Dixon. £25 alt., £19 unwaged.

♣ Armadacon X, PO Box 38, Plymouth, Devon

♣ 01752 257635/257673

♣ eurobell1.co.uk/buttons/armadacon

## 20-22 Nov 1998: BOZ-CON

SI con at the Golden Tulip Hotel, Bergen op Zoom, Netherlands. Guests TBA. Reg. NLG 65 (about £22).

♣ Annemarie van Eywck, Oorchestrastraat 4, 2517 VT Den Haag, Netherlands

♣ vantent@few.eur.nl

ALWAYS ENCLOSE AN SAE

## 26-28 Feb 1999: *Redemption*

Babylon 5 and Blake's Seven can at the International Hotel in Ashford, Kent. Guests: Gareth Thomas, Jane Killick, Sheelagh Wells, Joe Nazzari. £35 alt. to 1 Sep 98, thereafter £40.   
 \*Redemption, 28 Diprose Road, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 3QY   
 \*Judith@blakes-7.demon.co.uk

## 2-5 Apr 1999: *Reconvene*

The 50th UK National SF Convention and the last of the twentieth century, venue is the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool and the guests are Jeff Noon, Peter S. Beagle, John Cule, Ron Tiner and Tom Holt. Newsletter from [Qibag@ic.ac.uk](mailto:Qibag@ic.ac.uk) It's themed around "Time is Time, Time is Time, Time is Time" until Nov 98 £30, over 60s 5-14s and sup. £15, under 5s free.   
 \*3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ   
 \*mychelle@firedrake.demon.co.uk

## 20-24 May 1999: *Trinity (Eurocon)*

Dortmund, Germany. Reg. £33.   
 \*Science Fiction Tage e.V., Am Kattenbrauk 28, D-44287 Dortmund, Germany   
 \*http://www.cbg.de/sf-tage-nrw UK Agent:   
 \*Mike Chester, 42 Elm Grove, Southsea, Hants, PO5 1JG

## Jul 1999: *Baroque*

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

## 24-25 Jul 1999: *Telefantastique 2*

"Multi-media" con at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow. Reg. £45.   
 \*38 Rochford Avenue, Loughton, Essex, IG10 2BS

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

Multi-passes through Cornwall, Northern France, Romania and bits of Italy.

## 13-15 Aug 1999: *Wincon V*

The 1999 Uncon at King Alfred's College, Winchester. Guests include Diana Wynne Jones, Reg. £20 alt. £10 sup.   
 \*Wincon V, 53 Hyatt Road, North End, Portsmouth, Hants., PO2 7HH   
 \*wincon@ponpey.demon.co.uk

## 26-29 Aug 1999: *Nucopia*

Venue Anaheim Marriott hotel, Anaheim California. Guests Jerry Pournelle, Nicki & Richard Lynch, Ellen Datlow. Reg. £45, sup. £15.   
 \*UK Agent: John Harold, 8 Warren Close, Langley, Slough, Berkshire, SL3 7UA   
 \*info@99.nasfic.org   
 \*www.99.nasfic.org

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

The Worldcon goes overseas to Melbourne. Guests Greg Benford, Bruce Gillespie, the deceased George Turner will still be honoured. Reg. £90 (with complicated variations - ask 'em!)   
 \*UK Agent: Martin Hoare, 45 Tilehurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT   
 \*martinhoare@cix.co.uk

## 25-26 Sep 1999: *Hypotheticon: 1999*

"Scotland's other national convention" at the Central Hotel, Glasgow. Reg. £15, under 15s £10, under 5s free, sup. £5.   
 \*Hypotheticon: 1999, Flat Q/2, 11 Clegmont Street, Glasgow, G22 5RN

## 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 0SL   
 \*vdputte@simplex.nl

## 26-29 May 2000: *CostumeCon 18*

Costuming con at Hartford, Connecticut. Reg. \$50 to 9 Aug 98.   
 \*CostumeCon 18, 11 Winter Street, Amesbury, MA 01913-1515, USA   
 \*info@ccc2000.org \*www.ccc2000.org

## 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.

# Unconvention

reviewed by Claire Brailley

It's not quite axiomatic that you shouldn't go to a *Fortean Times* convention and bark yourself, but give us time. This year's Unconvention had a conspirator's theme, although the only immediate candidate for conspiracy theory was what the organisers had done with the barking mad speakers of yesterday; they've either decided that they should only have sceptical Forteanians as speakers, or they've run out of barking people who can take the questioning. So gone is the man who was harassed by the police after he saw the Highgate Vampire - he had some evidence but he'd left it at home because he thought we wouldn't be interested. Banned is the man who knew the Apollo moon landings were faked and even had the photographs - he could prove it when he wanted, but he'd have the time. Forever farther to Mayan Man (Incredible Barking Man of 1996) who had spent five years of his life tracing the inscriptions from Mayan coffin lids on to OHP slides and superimposing them - there, you see, just wiggle them around a bit and there's the lord of death with a banana on his nose in a go-kart.

Unconvention is sort of like a sf convention, but without most of the sf fans. Most of Croydon fandom and the London *Hitchhiker's* fans go along, but not many other people we recognise. Lots of Uncon attendees look similar to sf fans; in fact some of them look uncannily like specific sf fans and make us all double-take. It's probably a conspiracy.

The programme was potentially as interesting as usual, however, even without the promise of mad staring eyes and lost islands of Atlantis. Unfortunately it was let down by the venue. Two years ago, Uncon left the University of London Union for the Institute of Education because ULU was too small. Now the IoE had become too expensive and ULU suddenly became more attractive. At least in theory. The suicidal orange decor of the student union bar seemed bad enough at 10:30am; it was considerably less inviting after five hours of not being able to get

into the programme. It was bad enough that you had to queue for fifteen minutes before each talk - thereby having to miss the last fifteen minutes of the previous one if it was in the other room. It was even worse that by the time you discovered you couldn't get in to the talk you wanted to see, the other one was full too.

The parts of the programme we did see were pretty good. David Barrett was deadpan and informative on the common ground between reports of alien abduction, religious experiences, religious cults and the death of Diana. Damien Thompson gave an update on impending millennial madness and why people are strange. Doug Skinner was very interesting on the Shaver mysteries and showed some slides of extremely loud pulp sf magazines in the process.

But the star of the show was Colonel John Blashford Snell. He is, fundamentally, a Victorian explorer born 150 years too late. His most recent trip had been the search for a confused sort of elephant in Nepal which locals swore looked just like an extinct woolly mammoth - which it did, apart from the minor details of the wooliness and the being extinct. From his introduction: "I'm a Royal Engineer, which is not the same as a real engineer. They build things, and by and large we blow them up." He was a showman and the audience was hooked. Having found two male not-mammoths-at-all, they needed to lure them out of the forest to get a better look. "We got the male female elephants to give a mating call - which isn't at all difficult as you can get them to give a mating call to anything - and these two just totally ignored them. Typical, we thought. Gay elephants." Eventually, however, they showed a bit more interest, leading to a subtle raid on the camp one night and the elopement of one of the female elephants. The Colonel set off into the trees in pursuit. "We found her. Then I got a good look, and it wasn't her. You do feel a bit stupid being chased round a forest in the middle of the night, wearing only a sarong, by a randy male elephant."

But it's not like it used to be. We'd had some hopes for the Pagan Origins of Scouting talk, but there was nary a rain of frogs in sight. . . .

— © Claire Brailley 1998

UK Agent: Martin Hoare, 45 Tilehurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT   
 \*martinhoare@cix.co.uk   
 \*PO Box 642057, Chicago, Illinois 60665, USA   
 \*chil2000@chicon.org   
 \*http://www.chicon.org/

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

Celebrate the real millennium at the Central Hotel, Glasgow. Guests Spider & Jeanne Robinson, Sydney Jordan, Vince Docherty, Prof. Oscar Schweighofer. Reg. £25 alt. £5 sup.   
 \*26 Abchurch Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2PA   
 \*0141 569 1934

## BIDS BIDS BIDS BIDS BIDS

### 21-24 Apr 2000: *Eastercon*

Venue will be decided at the 98 Eastercon. Current bids are:   
 Radicon at the Radisson Edwardian, Heathrow: £2 presupporing.   
 Pam Wells, Flat 6, 7 Bootham Terrace, York, YO3 7DH   
 Central Hotel, Glasgow: £2 presupporing.   
 15 Kersland Street, Glasgow, G12 8BW

### 2001: *Worldcon*

Boston Presupporing \$8. Venue is Disneyworld in Florida.   
 \*PO Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701-0205, USA   
 \*http://world.std.com/~slarsky/b2001.html   
 Philadelphia Presupporing \$10.   
 \*Suite 2001, 402 Huntington Pike, Rockledge, PA 19046   
 \*2001@cyber.com

### 2003: *Worldcon*

Toronto Presupporing \$9.   
 \*UK agent Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, RG1 5AU   
 \*ansible@cix.co.uk   
 \*hancock@infocorp.net   
 \*http://www.worldhouse.com/worldcon-2003   
 Cancun, Mexico Presupporing £537.   
 \*KIM Campbell, 69 Lincoln St., Leeman Rd., York, YO2 4YP   
 \*or PO Box 905, Euseux, TX 26039-0905, USA   
 \*artem@cyberpanc.net   
 Bärcon (Berlin) No further details.

## Members' Noticeboard

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

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

GET IN AT THE START! News, a new magazine, invites sf, fantasy and horror subscribers up to 8,000 words. No hard 'y' gone 'honor', experimental or poetry please. Guidelines available by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope to:   
 Lesley Milner, c/o Penguin House, Fairmure, Cornwall, TR11 2PR   
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John  
Ollis's

# Time Wasters

Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin.

I'd like to say what an honour it was to be selected for this rôle from the thousands of applicants, but it wouldn't be true. Everyone knew it'd be an impossible job following the legendary Roger Robinson (to whom many thanks for his good wishes, if that is what they were), which perhaps explains why muggins here was the *only* applicant. Oh well, here goes . . .

## COMPETITION 132: "THE WORD"

There follows twelve sets of jumbled letters; each set when rearranged forms part of one of the title. One word is common to each title, and the letters of that word have been omitted from the mixes. Titles and authors, please. If you can't get them all, do as many as you can; you still might win.

1. HELEN HITS GOLFER
2. FOSTER PAT HALL
3. OH FAIREST
4. DOWN TOWARD ETH
5. CAT OF HELL
6. POSTER OF MEN
7. IN MOROSE HUGO
8. ECHO MEMORAN
9. FREE MILD OX
10. GIT ARM OFF
11. HIT NO LONE KING
12. GIMLI PORTAGE

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

John Ollis  
49 Leighton Road  
Corby  
Northants.  
NN18 0SD

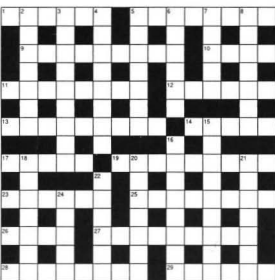
by  
Wednesday 10 August 1998

## Matrix Crossword 23

by John English

### Across

1. The trouble with this is children getting upset when doctor leaves. (6)
5. Nebula with fuel on fire. (8)
9. Porn's made differently with perturbed balls! (9)
10. Sun-god returning to my fighting men. (4)
11. Farmer's novel ("Grass") describes strip club; one in Sansato, perhaps? (8)
12. Drink for 22, by the sound of it? (6)
13. Zindell's work, with head full of old writer. (9)
14. Rate in backward part of Deep South? (5)
17. Distrustful type of eye covered in bubbles. (5)
19. Bubble-shaped ship, clear to be destroyed. (9)
23. Commander-in-chief imprisoned on French island sees wintry stalactite. (6)
25. Tidal waves possibly stun Kingsley. (8)
26. Author getting close to sea . . . (4)
27. . . . spent nice worrying about Clarke in BSFA rôle. (9)
28. Anderson's craft? Idiots go back to dull colour. (8)
29. Where wardrobe went, where drain ran backward in part. (6)



7. The final frontier for spelling expert? (5)
8. Deploying ECM, roar reveals where Clarke keeps lion. (7)
15. Pirate ship takes soldier with hesitation. (9)
16. An evil organisation captures America for an inhabitant of a nearby planet. (8)
18. Right taken in, but with passage extracted. (7)
20. Aquatic mammal in Paraguay makes earthenware vessels. (7)
21. Williams' book is a riot when re-read! (7)
22. Favourite returned with each author? (6)
24. Body of work about unknown author? (5)

### Down

2. Power used by Kirk on a whim. (7)
3. Settler's land, some upset at being taken in by return of Grim Reaper. (9)
4. Skitties capable of holding 40½ gallons. (8)
5. Design boxes containing Ecstasy. (7)
6. Judge female foot? (6)

# Big Butt ALPH

mainlines the news

• **CLARKE STUFF** Whilst the smart money was on *The Black Swan* (London: Sparrow, 1997) to win the Arthur C. Clarke Award, it was disqualified from the even more prestigious *Po Award* for lacking a spaceship on the cover. (Presumably your actual spaceships was in someone's back yard.) Meanwhile *John Whitbourn* will no doubt be *John Jarrold's* Po nomination for 1998. *The Royal Changeling* lacks a spaceship, yes, bears quotes saying "miles ahead of any other fantasy" and "a master of fantastic literature", but Earhlight has clearly labelled it "File under Science Fiction". Dookheads should take note. • A week before the Clarke Award bash in the Science Museum, a certain author was heard to ask "Who do I have to fuck to get a ticket?" just before having lunch with *John Jarrold*, as the saying goes. He turned up, and Aleph is wondering . . . • Pappazzzi (or however the hell you spell it) would have had a field day in the pub round the corner afterwards. Sitting with an incoherent Victor staffer, a mysterious woman in a revealing dress and an even drunker man in a dress (less revealing, thank God) was a disgracefully sober *Chris Terran*, who for some reason seemed to be making frantic efforts to keep them away from *Angie Edwards*, Sir Arthur's niece. No fun, these editors.

• **KING BILLY** Aleph gets sent some strange items. For example: A joint press release from Buckingham Palace and Microsoft announced today that the latest operating system from Microsoft, Windows 98, is to be renamed *Diana, Princess of Windows*. A spokesman for Microsoft said that this was in tribute to the late ex-royal, and is a fitting name in that the product will look lush, be mostly superficial, consume vast amounts of resources and crash spectacularly.

• **OVER THE HILL** Cuddy BSFA Awards Administrator *Chris Hill* had his sense of humour destructively tested before the awards ceremony at Eastercon. When he checked with trophy designers and builders *Colin Odell* and *Mitch Le Blanc*, Colin said "Damn! Knew we'd forgotten something . . ." Chris goes white. Match twists the knife: "Only a joke, ha, ha, only a joke. They're in the car. Both of them."

Chris is making a slow recovery in hospital.

• **WHY UNBUTTERED** A spokes-kin and co-editor of *Victor* who wishes to remain anonymous has perhaps discovered just what his esteemed colleague *Dr Butler* gets up to at the weekend. In that immortal classic of sf (and definitely not just another book about dinosaurs cobbled together to rip off *Jurassic Park*), *Footprints of Thunder* by James F. David (Tor 1997), we find on p273-4:

His tone sounded final, and Angie and Ellen pulled each other closer. Coop had never had much authority, and even that was eroding fast. If they sent Coop back, or worse, nothing would keep Carl from Ellen. Coop was watching nervously to see if Kishton would intervene. They were interrupted by the grisly sight of Butler roaring up with the head of the dinosaur strapped to the back of his motorcycle.

Jolly James continues:

The others followed, each with a dinosaur leg strapped to the back of his bike.

"You call that baby a dinosaur?" Ellen asked. All heads turned towards her.

"Baby?" Butler said, jerking his head towards the head on the back of his bike. "You call this mother a baby?"

Sadly, the author reveals little more about Butler. On p342 we discover that "John could smell and hear Butler's loud whizzing", which is probably more than we wanted to know. On p453 Butler becomes dino-fodder, but this is obviously misinformation designed to lead biographers astray from his Victor activities. The question remains, who were those others with dinosaur legs on their bikes? Could they be the mysterious BSFA Committee? We would investigate further, but apathy forbids. ☐ — N.K.<N.K.

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

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

the pathetically unhip matrix is straight-edged on an acorn a5000, intimately peppered by various bits of software (notably zap, the prince albert of text editors), painfully tattooed by an hp laserjet 5l, copied (of course) by pdc copyprint, wrapped in rubber by bramble mailing services, fondled by the royal mail, and asked for a date by you

—matrix 132— soundtracked by mouth music, alan green, jan garbarek & the hillside ensemble, austin powers— (groovy), nirvana, bob dylen, abbca, arcangelo corelli, garbage, and the hissing of summer lawns

— "what if god was one of us / just a slob like one of us — just a stranger on a bus / trying to make his way home"