

# · MATRIX ·

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· JANUARY / FEBRUARY 1999 ·



Web Cruising

Blade Runner?

About Mooching

$\pi^3$

# MATRIX

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

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and photography  
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**NOTE  
CHANGE**

Special thanks to • **Elizabeth Billinger**  
**Lee Montgomerie**

Media • **John Ashbrook**

BSFA Logo • **Ian Brooks**

Cover • A tribute to the Australian cartoonist **Ian Gunn**, who died on 8 November. Ian produced thousands of cartoons and drawings, freely given to fanzines and magazines the world over. He was an extraordinarily generous and talented man, and will be much missed.

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## MAGAZINES

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## news

## BSFA FOUNDER DIES

Vincent A. Clarke, a leading and much loved British fan for many years and one of the original founders of the BSFA, died on 29 November aged 76. He had been fighting illness for some time, and finally succumbed to pneumonia.

Vince was an active fan for much of his life, with a hiatus between 1960 and 1982. In 1948 he became editor of *Science Fantasy News*, publishing many who would later go on to greater fame, such as Arthur C. Clarke and John Wyndham. In the early 1950s he shared a London flat with Ken Bulmer, collaborating on some novels, and in 1954 was the first winner of TAFF though he was unable to make

the trip to America. More recently, his knowledge of fandom (and his enormous fanzine collection) was much consulted by Rob Hansen during the writing of his history of British fandom, *Then, and 1995*. Vince was honoured at the Intersection, the Glasgow Worldcon, as Fan Guest of Honour.

Known for many for his extraordinary kindness and generosity – as I can personally testify – Vince will be very much missed. □

- *Donations in Vince's memory to The Arthritis Research Foundation, Copeman House, St Mary's Court, St Mary's Gate, Chesterfield, S41 7TD*
- *More on Vince next issue.*

## IAN GUNN

THE LEADING Australian cartoonist and fan Ian Gunn died on the evening of Sunday, 8 November after a long and courageous battle against cancer. The day before he died he married his long-time partner Karen Pender-Gunn in the hospital chapel, with 50 friends attending. That night his condition deteriorated and the next day, surrounded by friends and family to the last, he died in his sleep. Later, according to his wishes, those at his funeral wore bright colours and at the wake helium balloons with Gunn cartoons attached were released.

Ian won many Ditmar Awards in Australia, and was nominated for a Hugo in 1996, 1997 and 1998. *Claire Briley & Mark Plummer write:*

The death of leading Australian fan artist Ian Gunn on 8 November was not a complete surprise but still came as a shock. At one point, Ian was convinced that he'd beaten the cancer first diagnosed last year, but it came back to claim him in the end with a quick deterioration in the final week.

He edited several fanzines (*Stun Gunn* in the 1980s, the Melbourne SF Club's *Ethel the Aardvark*, and, more recently, *Mind Wallaby*) – and it should also be remembered that he was no mean fan writer – but he really made his name as an artist. His artwork appeared in dozens of fanzines in Australia and overseas, ranging from small filler cartoons – some of which appeared here in *Matrix* – to a gorgeous wrap-around cover for *Mimosa*. They earned him a number of Dittmars, the Australian sf awards, as well as Hugo nominations in the fan artist category.

Along with his partner, Karen Pender-Gunn, he attended the 1995 World SF Convention in Glasgow as GUFF (Get Up-and-over/Gong Under Fan Fund) delegate. Karen remains the Australian administrator for GUFF. Ian and Karen had been together for nine years and were married shortly before his death.

Ian's funeral was held on 16 November and included a celebration of his life, with mementoes provided by many of his friends and messages from sf fans worldwide.

— Claire Briley & Mark Plummer, 18 November 1998

## NAOMI MITCHISON DIES AT 101

THE WRITER Naomi Mitchison has died, aged 101. Sister of J. B. S. Haldane, friend of the Huxleys and tribal mother to a village in Botswana, she wrote 70 or so books including the sf works *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* (1962) and *Solution Three* (1997) (which playfully proselytise for birth control and sexual tolerance) as well as the darker *Nod by Broad Alone!* (1983) (about the failure of the Green Revolution)

and several novels which could be classified as fantasy. □

## BRIAN MOORE

Dead at 77 of a blood clot on the lungs is Irish writer Brian Moore, whose slipstream fantasies include *The Great Victorian Bazaar* and whose closest approach to sf was in the near-future novel *Catholics!* (1972). □

## 1998 DICK AWARD SHORTLIST

THE JUDGES of the Philip K. Dick Award – given for the best original paperback published in the US – have announced their 1998 shortlist (see right).

The winner will be announced at Norwescon 22 in Seattle on 2 April, and this year's judges are Jeff Vandermeer (chair), James Alan Gardner, Angus MacDonald, Lance Olsen, and Sarah Zettel.

It's a good year for Brits both native and honorary, with three out of the five nominations. Paul J. McAuley continues his fine record in the awards with *The Invisible Country* collection; he was one of the very first winners of a Dick Award with *Of the Fall* (published in the UK as *Secret Harmonies*).

STEVE AYLETT  
*Slaughtermatic*  
(Phoenix; Four Walls Eight Windows)

PAUL DI FILIPPO  
*Lost Pages*  
(Four Walls Eight Windows)

NALO HOPKINSON  
*Brown Girl in the Ring*  
(Warner Aspect)

PAUL J. MCAULEY  
*The Invisible Country*  
(Gollancz; Avon Eos)

GEOFF RYMAN  
*253: The Print Remix*  
(Penguin; St. Martin's Griffin)

## SPELLER WINS NOVA

BSFA Administrator and TAFF winner Maureen Kincaid Speller has crowned her triumphant year by winning the 1998 Nova Award for Best Fan Writer. For the second year running the Best Fanzine was *Banana Wings*, edited and mostly written by Mark Plummer and Claire Briley, and D. West collected the Best Fan Artist Award.

Also notable in this year's results, voted on by attendees at Novacon in Birmingham, were the high placings of newcomer Yvonne Rowse: joint 7th as Fan Writer and 4th Best Fanzine for *Barnmaid*. Yvonne has produced four issues in the past year as well as taking on the editorship of the Brum Group's monthly newsletter – and she's also contributed to *Matrix*.

Mark, Claire and Maureen are all actively involved in the BSFA, and other workers also did well, notably Publications Manager Steve Jeffery and former *Vector* Reviews Editor Paul Kincaid. Congratulations to all.

FULL RESULTS ON PAGE 9

## WYNDHAM ON SHOW

Andy Sawyer writes:

The Return of the Triffids  
A display from the John Wyndham archive  
15 January - 26 February 1999

THE WORK of John Wyndham Parkes Lucas Beynon Harris (better known as John Wyndham), author of *The Day of the Triffids* and *The Midwich Cuckoos* will be celebrated in this exhibition marking the thirtieth anniversary of his death.

The estate collection of manuscripts and papers was recently acquired by the University of Liverpool with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This important acquisition has further enriched the international standing of the Science Fiction Foundation Collection and other sf archives deposited in the Special Collections and Archives Department of the Sydney Jones Library.

The exhibition will include important biographical information relating to John Wyndham as well as shedding light on the development of an author and his work.

There will also be a display of supporting material from the Science Fiction Foundation Collection.

• For further information contact:

Andy Sawyer, Librarian/Administrator, Science Fiction Foundation Collection University of Liverpool Library, PO Box 123, Liverpool L69 3DA, UK

asawyer@liv.ac.uk

• <http://www.liv.ac.uk/~asawyer/sffchome.html>

## INCENSE AND INSENSIBILITY

... is a wonderfully-named conference on 60s sf, its practice and influences. It's all happening at Liverpool University on 12 June. For further details contact Andy Sawyer, as above.

## WATERSTONE'S CHARTS

Due to store reorganisation and refurbishment, we're unable to bring you the Waterstone's SF Sales Chart. It will return next issue.

# Here and there

## MORE ELRIC

Michael Moorcock will be writing three more 'Elric' novels in his long-running fantasy series. The books will be published as Warner Aspect hardbacks in late 2000 or early 2001, and are currently entitled *The Dreamthief's Daughter*, *The Silverskin* and *Mourblade*.

## WELSH SF ASSOCIATION



Jonathan Jones writes:

Due to the lack of a national SF organisation in Wales, we have decided to set up The Welsh Science Fiction Association (WSFA). The WSFA has been founded with the aim of promoting science fiction fandom in Wales, by bringing together SF groups, fanzine publishers, convention organisers and individuals. Membership of the Association is FREE to individuals, fan clubs, groups, fanzine publishers and convention organisers running in Wales.

- The aims of the WSFA are to:
- establish an informal yet committed network of fans in Wales;
  - provide mutual support to existing groups and new groups;
  - provide expertise, experience and resources to members;
  - promote SF in Wales, in all its forms;
  - encourage promotion of the Association in the UK. ☐

Contact (SAE please):

The Welsh Science Fiction Association, GFF, 32 Theobald Road, Canton, CARDIFF, Wales, United Kingdom, CF5 1LP  
Email: [WelshSFA@hotmail.com](mailto:WelshSFA@hotmail.com)

Web:

<http://members.xoom.com/WelshSFA/>

## SF IRELAND

SF Ireland has risen from the ashes of the Irish SF Association, and was launched at Octoon Life last year. Membership costs £12 per year, and includes the *Blank Space* newsletter.

☐ SF Ireland, 43 Eglington Rd, Dublin 4, Ireland

## STERLING ON TIME

Bruce Sterling received the accolade of a two-page spread in *Time* in their 21 December issue, in the 'Science and Society' section. He's described as "perhaps the sharpest observer of our media-choked culture working today in any genre", and there are complimentary remarks on his new sf novel *Distraction*.

# SAWYER RESIGNS SFWA PRESIDENCY

THE CANADIAN sf writer Robert J. Sawyer has resigned as President of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA), less than six months after taking up the appointment on 1 July. The SFWA's Canadian Regional Director, Edo van Belkom, has also stepped down.

Former Vice President Paul Levinson is Sawyer's replacement, and his first actions were to appoint Ann Crispin as Vice President, Allen Steele as Eastern Regional Director, and Deryll Murphy the new Canadian Regional Director.

The reasons for Sawyer's resignation are unclear at press-time. However, Norman Spinrad has announced that he is standing for the SFWA Presidency because of what he terms an "extraordinarily malodorous situation" (see box below), and in a statement the new President referred obliquely to recent problems: "These past months have been painful for many of us. I apologize for what I contributed to that, and promise to do better in the months ahead." Levinson continued, commenting on the departing President: "I want to say a few words about Rob Sawyer. He attempted many things in his Presidency, some of which I agreed with, some not. But I never doubted his commitment, as he saw it, to do what he thought was best for our organisation. I sincerely wish him well, as a now Past President, and as a friend. And, on behalf of our organisation, I want to thank Rob Sawyer and Edo van Belkom for their work for SFWA."

## REFERENDUM

Sawyer's main achievement in his tenure, as promised in his election platform, was to put a referendum to the membership on a number of important issues. This was conducted in September 1998, and resulted in some significant changes to the bylaws of the SFWA and the Nebula Awards, which are voted on by the SFWA membership:

### • INTERNATIONALISATION

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### • ELECTRONIC ELIGIBILITY

Sales to electronic publications – on the Internet or the World Wide Web, CD-ROM, computer disc or similar media – are now acceptable as membership credentials for joining the SFWA (passed by 72.6% to 24.4%). Previously only US sales counted, but now sales to magazines such as *Interzone* and publishers like Voyager / HarperCollins will be taken into account.

### Norman Spinrad's statement:

This is to formally announce my candidacy for President of SFWA.

I hope I will be able to withdraw from the race at a later date. Because the main reason I am running is to demand a full, complete, and public accounting of the resignation of President Robert Sawyer and Canadian Regional Director Edo van Belkom, followed by the appointment of Eastern Regional Director Ann Crispin as VP by incoming President Paul Levinson and then the appointment of Allen Steele as Eastern Regional Director to replace Crispin.

This means that after President Levinson appoints a new Canadian Regional Director, four members of the Board of Directors will hold offices to which they were not elected. Four members of the Board of nine. Including a President who may cast a second vote in case of a tie.



— Robert J. Sawyer —

### • DRAMATIC NEBULA

The Nebula Awards will have an award for Best Script next year. There hasn't been a Nebula for dramatic presentations since 1975 (when *Young Frankenstein* won it) but in the referendum SFWA members decided by 63.5% to 32.0% to honour "a professionally produced audio, radio, television, motion picture or theatrical script". A committee, also headed by Levinson, decided on the following wording for admissibility: "Script: a professionally produced audio, radio, television, motion picture, multimedia, or theatrical script. The Nebula Award for Best Script will be awarded on the basis of the finished product."

• The SFWA membership rejected proposals to allow gaming sales as SFWA membership credentials, by 64.9% to 26.2%, and to allow first publication in English anywhere in the world to count for Nebula eligibility, by 48.5% to 40.9%. Also rejected, by 65.3% to 30.2%, was a proposal to impose a requalification clause requiring one sale to a professional market every five years, OR one book in print, OR one book under contract for publication no more than three years hence. But the membership passed by 73.6% to 19.2% a resolution to confer free associate (non-voting) membership for life on members who have been in the SFWA for 30 years, at least 25 of which have been active.

• The SFWA has announced the venues for the 1999, 2000 and 2001 Nebula award ceremonies, in Pittsburgh, New York and Los Angeles respectively. ☐

This may all be as innocent as it does not seem. Or not.

But until the events surrounding this extraordinarily malodorous situation are fully and publicly explained, the credibility of this Board of Directors is seriously in question, as well as the very existence of SFWA.

And until this happens, and/or until there is a full slate of candidates opposing each of these unelected Board Members, (whom, for probity's sake, should perhaps not seek election to the offices to which they acceded by non-electoral means) I remain a candidate for President at the very least to see to it that it does.

Anyone who does not like my doing this is cordially, and I do mean CORDIALLY, invited to replace my candidacy with their own.

— Norman Spinrad

# PRATCHETTIANA

## BREAK A LEG

Interest in amateur and not-so-amateur productions of **Terry Pratchett's** 'Discworld' books continues. Upcoming productions around the UK include:

### Carpe Jugulum

• Abingdon, Oxfordshire, Unicorn Theatre, 20-23 Jan

• Stephen Briggs, PO Box 655, Oxford, OX4 3EU  
\* sbriggs@ci.co.uk

### Guards! Guards!

The professional production featuring **Paul Darrow** is touring the country after last year's successful shows:

• Colchester Mercury Theatre, 21 Jan

• Brighton Theatre Royal, 1 Feb

• London Wimbledon Theatre, 8 Feb

• Darlington Civic Theatre 22 Feb

• Swansea Grand Theatre, 1 Mar

### Mort

• Birmingham Crescent Theatre, 26 Jan - 6 Feb

• Crescent Theatre, 20 Sheepcote Street, Brindley Place, Birmingham, B16 8AE

• 0121 643 5858 (Mon-Sat 12-7.00 pm)

### Maskerade

• Canterbury 10-12 March, University of Kent Drama Society, Gulbenkian Theatre, Kent University

\* nn5@ukc.ac.uk

\* http://alethea.ukc.ac.uk/SO/Societies/Drama

## 000K

The annual events put on by Clarcraft, a friendly bunch who make Discworld figurines, attract much interest. The 1999 one will be between 30 July and 1 August 1999 at their Suffolk shop, with confirmed guests **Terry Pratchett**, **Stephen Briggs** (whose stage adaptations of 'Discworld' books are available from Corgi), and **Dave Hodges**.

• Clarcraft Woolpit, Suffolk, IP30 9UP

• 01359 241277, Fax 01359 242253

\* elton@clarcraft.com

\* http://www.clarcraft.com/

## MORE POLLS

American librarians and booksellers have compiled 100-best-books-of-the-century lists, perhaps responding to the tedium of the *Modern Library* list which was apparently compiled by extremely conservative academics.

Both new lists put **Harper Lee's** *To Kill a Mockingbird* in first place, but unlike the *Modern Library* list there's a good sprinkling of sf and fantasy. On the right are titles of sf interests; the first figure is the librarians' placing, the second the booksellers'.

• You can see the full results at: <http://www.koen.com/top100.html>  
<http://www.bookwire.com/ljdigital/roundups/hundredbest.htm>  
• The *Modern Library* conducted a readers' poll, whose top ten included *Lord of the Rings*, 1984 and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. ... with the other seven all by Ayn Rand or L. Ron Hubbard. Will you ever trust a poll again?

## 000K 000K

Whatever next? 'Discworld' cross-stitch, that's what. Produced by **Julia Froggatt**, the kits are based on Discworld characters drawn by Josh Kirby, Stephen Briggs and Paul Kidby.  
• SAE to Julia Froggatt, Lyndisfarne, Quarry Lane, Kelsall, Tarporley, CW6 0NJ  
\* http://www.lyndisfarne.demon.co.uk

## 00K!

The third 'Discworld' computer game is now being worked on by Perfect Entertainment. Called *Discworld Noir*, it should be out in the autumn. It's different from the first two in that it isn't based on particular books in the series but has an original story, and is much darker in feel. New characters have been created with Pratchett's approval, and he's also helping out on the script.

## SQUEAK (NET RESOURCES)

• Much of the information here was gleaned from the splendid *Discworld Monthly*, a free email newsletter with an 11,000+ worldwide readership. Subscribe at their website:

\* http://www.aquapal.co.uk/discworld/discworld.html

• The North American Discworld Society also publishes an email newsletter, *Wossname*, and has a Klatchian Foreign Legion for us lot who aren't fortunate enough to be American.

\* http://discworld.imaginary.com/discworldsociety

• 'The Guild of Fans and Disciples' is a Discworld fan club:

\* http://fly.to/discworld

• The Discworld Ring links together various Pratchett-related sites:

\* http://www.users.bigpond.com/bornel

• Finally, the 'Church of Pratchett' considers the Prophet Pratchett's books are holy texts. Worship at:

\* http://www.algonet.se/~m-nyman/index2.htm

- |     |    |                       |   |
|-----|----|-----------------------|---|
| 3   | 10 | J. R. R. Tolkien      | <i>The Lord of the Rings</i>                |
| 7   | 6  | George Orwell         | 1984  |
| 8   | 13 | George Orwell         | <i>Animal Farm</i>                          |
| 9   | 12 | William Golding       | <i>Lord of the Flies</i>                    |
| 12  | 32 | E. B. White           | <i>Charlotte's Web</i>                      |
| 14  | 20 | Kurt Vonnegut         | <i>Slaughterhouse Five</i>                  |
| 16  | 27 | Ray Bradbury          | <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>                       |
| 22  | 22 | J. R. R. Tolkien      | <i>The Hobbit</i>                           |
| 36  | 17 | Margaret Atwood       | <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>                  |
| 40  | 14 | Robert A. Heinlein    | <i>Stranger in a Strange Land</i>           |
| 41  | 24 | Aldous Huxley         | <i>Brave New World</i>                      |
| 58  | 49 | Anthony Burgess       | <i>A Clockwork Orange</i>                   |
| 62  | 1  | L. Frank Baum         | <i>The Wonderful Wizard of Oz</i>           |
| 63  | 1  | C. S. Lewis           | <i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i> |
| 65  | 82 | Ayn Rand              | <i>The Fountainhead</i>                     |
| 69  | 59 | Marion Zimmer Bradley | <i>The Mists of Avalon</i>                  |
| 76  | 62 | Arthur C. Clarke      | <i>2001: A Space Odyssey</i>                |
| 79  | 1  | Kenneth Grahame       | <i>The Wind in the Willows</i>              |
| 85  | 5  | Edgar Rice Burroughs  | <i>Tarzan Of The Apes</i>                   |
| 89  | 1  | E. L. Doctorow        | <i>Ragtime</i>                              |
| 100 | 1  | T. H. White           | <i>The Once and Future King</i>             |
| 44  | 44 | Richard Adams         | <i>Watership Down</i>                       |
| 48  | 48 | Frank Herbert         | <i>Dune</i>                                 |
| 79  | 79 | Stephen King          | <i>The Stand</i>                            |
| 80  | 80 | Jack Finney           | <i>Time and Again</i>                       |
| 85  | 85 | William S. Burroughs  | <i>The Naked Lunch</i>                      |

If SLEAZY videos are your thing, **Red Hot Bazooms** (yes, really) offer *Pervillea* (featuring Jonathan Ross and Mark Lamm), *The Frat Shack* ("almost 90 minutes of unbearable crap" says the cover) and *The Perv Parlor* ("A time travelling demonic brothel alights in a techno-Victorian society promising to satisfy all appetites", with music from *Adventures of Parsley* and the wonderfully-named *Sexton Ming* (and others)).  
Contact: RHB Exotic Entertainment, phone/fax 0171 2781074



## ALTERNATIVE SOCIALISM

• **Robert Harris**, millionaire author of the alternative history • *Fatherland* and *Tony Blair's* favourite writer, is reported to be interested in buying the New • *Statesman*. We mustn't ask why he keeps writing about Hitler.

## SPliced

• **George Alec Effinger** and **Barbara Hambly** were married on 14 November.

## VERSE AND WORSE

• Leading light of the Peterborough sf scene and BSFA contributor and member **Cardinal Cox** was runner-up in a Council-sponsored competition to find a 'Poet for Peterborough'. He last appeared in the pages of *Matrix* with a nifty poetic tribute to the late **William Burroughs**.

## GOING GOING . . .

• **Sotbey's** is auctioning **Sam Moskowitz's** sf collection in June, with catalogues available in May.

## PRIZES

• **Robert Sawyer's** 'Block Universe' won the 1998 Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya prize for the second year running, winning about £5,000 in the anonymously entered competition.

## MEET AND GREET

• The monthly BSFA and London Group Meetings now take place at the Florence Nightingale pub (a.k.a. The Dead Nurse), following landlord Kevin's move from the Jubilee. It's on the east side of the roundabout where York Road joins Westminster Bridge Road. BSFA dates: 27 Jan; 24 Feb, with guest **Christopher Evans**.  
• The **Terror Scribes** are an informal group of writers, publishers and artists in sf and related genres, and for those with an interest in the small press. They'll be meeting in Peterborough courtesy of the Peterborough SF Group and Writers' Circle on 24 April, congregating in the railway station at 1pm.

Contact: SAE to 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5RB  
• **Peterborough SF Writers' Circle**: SAE to Helen Gould, 28 Bathurst, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough

• Also in Peterborough, the Nth Dimension media fan group is now meeting on Mondays.  
Contact: SAE to Tony McRitchie, 43 Canterbury Road, Werrington, Peterborough



# BSFA AWARDS

Chris Hill

**SEND  
NOMINATIONS  
TO**

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WELL, here we are again: the last chance to nominate for the BSFA Awards this year. The closing date for nominations is

**Friday 27 January 1999**

That's a whole week later than last year, so you will have plenty of time to read those new books that Father Christmas has been kind enough to bring you! Remember though that only works up to the end of 1998 are eligible. I apologise for not putting this in the previous issue of *Matrix*. What with one thing and another I had not realised quite how late in the year we were. No one's fault but mine!

The shortlist will be prepared shortly after this date and the ballot papers will be in the next BSFA mailing. However, as last year, if

you wish to know what is on shortlist earlier than that then please drop me a stamped addressed envelope or email me to get the list. In addition, the shortlist will appear on the BSFA web page as soon as possible after this date.

Incidentally, my work email address (hill@oup.co.uk) is no longer valid and so should no longer be used.

The current list of nominations is as below. As always remember that you can nominate any number of items. Also remember that if an item has already been nominated, that does not mean that you cannot nominate it again (unless you have already nominated it yourself of course!).

— Chris Hill

## Best Novel

**Sarah Ash** *The Lost Child*  
(Orion: £9.99 tp, £5.99 pb)

**Iain M. Banks** *Inversions*  
(Orbit: £16.99 hb)

**John Barnes** *Earth Made of Glass*  
(Orion: £9.99 tp)

**Stephen Baxter** *Moonseed*  
(Voyager: £16.99 hb)

**Pat Cadigan**  
*Tea From an Empty Cup*  
(Voyager: £5.99 pb)

**John Dodge** *Not Fade Away*  
(Rebel Inc.: £6.99 pb)

**Colin Greenland** *Mother of Plenty*  
(Voyager: £5.99 pb)

**Robert Holdstock** *Gate of Ivory*  
(Voyager: £16.99 hb)

**John Kessel** *Corrupting Dr Nice*  
(Gollancz: £16.99 hb)

**Jack McDevitt** *Eternity Road*  
(Voyager: £5.99 pb)

**Ian McDonald** *Kirinya*  
(Gollancz: £16.99 pb)

**Ken MacLeod**  
*The Cassini Division*  
(Orbit: £15.99 hb)

**John Meaney** *To Hold Infinity*  
(Bantam: £5.99 pb)

**Christopher Priest** *The Extremes*  
(Simon & Schuster: £16.99 hb)

**Michael Marshall Smith**  
*One of Us*  
(HarperCollins: £14.99 hb)

**Tricia Sullivan**  
*Dreaming in Smoke*  
(Orion: £9.99 tp)

**John Whitbourn**  
*The Royal Changeling*  
(Earthlight: £5.99 pb)

## Best Short Item

**Sarah Ash**  
"Merveille"  
(Interzone 129)

**Bill Drummond**  
"Let's Grind"  
(Disco 2000)

**Timons Esaiias**  
"The Mars Convention"  
(Interzone 135)

**Dominic Green**  
"Queen of the Hill"  
(Interzone 130)

**Dominic Green**  
"That Thing Over There"  
(Interzone 132)

**Thomas M. Disch**  
"The First Annual Performance Arts  
Festival at the Slaughter Rock Battlefield"  
(Interzone 131)

**Gwyneth Jones**  
"La Cenerentola"  
(Interzone 136)

**Mary Soon Lee**  
"The Day Before They Came"  
(Interzone 133)

## Best Artwork

**Jim Burns**  
"Lord Prestimion"  
Cover of *Interzone* 138

**Dominic Harman**  
Cover of *Interzone* 129

**Dominic Harman**  
"Jedella Ghost"  
Cover of *Interzone* 135  
(for "Jedella Ghost" by Tanith Lee)

**Dominic Harman**  
"The Gardens of Saturn"  
Cover of *Interzone* 137  
(for "The Gardens of Saturn" by Paul McAuley)

**Roy Viggo**  
Cover of *Interzone* 130

# Scribble Scribble Scribble...

✍ **Brian Aldiss's** wife Margaret died of pancreatic cancer in late 1997, and Brian has written *When the Feast Is Finished*, an account of her illness and death. "He details the kindness of friends, and the support he receives from colleagues, doctors and the Macmillan nurses who cared for Margaret. He portrays his wife as stoical, uncomplicated and brave, and he shows how the tragedy affects his four children."

"This frank and un-warmly memoir is as human and accessible an account of dying and being bereaved as you will read."

The book will be published in May by Little Brown, simultaneously with *Abacus* editions of volumes three and four in *The Squire Quartet*, *Remembrance Day* and *Someone East of Life*.

✍ **Greg Egan's** new novel *Teresina* is out from Orion in August.

✍ **Ken MacLeod** was putting the final touches to *The Sky Road* (formerly *The Earth Tendency*) over Christmas, the fourth novel in his future history series. He says: "The *Sky Road*, like the others, is meant to stand on its own, but it's also an alternative history within the 'future history', in which the world of *The Stone Canal* doesn't lead to the world of *The Cassini Division*. Like the others after *The Star Fraction*, it takes a minor character from another book and makes them central – in this case, Myra Godwin. It was also meant to be a definitive 'series stopper', but – as an BT-seeded series, it's possible of a sequel..."

"Oh, and I've got about 18,000 words to go. By the 15th of January."

If Ken makes it on time, it should be out in June from Orbit. Good luck!

✍ **Maggie Furey** has *The Heart of Myrial* out in May from Orbit. It's the first volume in a new fantasy dystopian, set in a world where the magical barriers that hold things in place for aeons are breaking down, threatening the world with both natural and human-made disasters. The only hope of salvation lies in the hands of the Shadowlodge...

✍ **Vernor Vinge** has completed a prequel to his award-winning grand space-opera *A Fire Upon the Deep*. Called *A Deepness in the Sky*, the book tells of Pham Nuwen's final adventures in the Slow Zone of the galaxy and is due out from Tor in March. Vinge is now working on a contracted third volume in the 'Zones of Thought' series.

✍ **Jon Courtenay Grimwood's** *reflex* (Earthlight) is set for publication in April "with a launch at the Saturday night at Eastercon, which will allow me to get drunk, claim it's really work – and for once it will be true[ish]". Jon also reports progress on *redRobe*, for which he's just finished the first draft. It's about "a talking CIP-Hopper which falls in love with the Dalai Lama's computer. Most of the book takes place inside a giant stone bubble and the human here (using both words loosely) is a Mexican chief who doubles as a hitman."

✍ **Paulina Borsook** is a Californian science writer specialising in high tech – she writes for *Wired* – and *Cyberflesh*, out in April from Little, Brown, is an analysis of cyberspace. Subtitled *Liberalism, High-Tech, and the True Revue of the Nerds*, it's described as "a critique of the narcissism, ignorance and anti-communitarianism of the digital élite and their culture."

✍ **Edwina Currie** – now there's a name you never thought you'd see in *Matrix* – has written an SF novel. Out in April from Little, Brown, it's called *The Ambassador*, is subtitled 'A Novel of Prediction' (mustn't call it sf, of course), and bears little relation to Henry James. A century hence the 42-nation EU is the dominant force in the world, challenging China and leaving the US a poor third. Science has beaten disease and ageing with gene therapy, and clones – NTS, 'Nuclear Transplants' – are widespread but not mentioned in polite society. A new ambassador arrives in London, sent from a US taken over by Fundamentalists and without the benefit of genetic advances. He meets two NTS, Prince Marisa Vronsky, an elected Lord, and Dr Lisa Pasteur, a government panjandrum in the genetic programme. Then it turns into a thriller – flies go wackies, "a chromosome disintegrates", a mysterious lorry appears... but no eggs, it seems.

✍ **James Flint's** *Habitus* is out in paperback in June from 4th Estate. Marketed as mainstream, it's genuine sf. Catch it.

✍ **David Brin** concludes the trilogy of sequels to Asimov's *Foundation* series with *The Secret Foundation*, due next June from Orbit. (The first two volumes were *Foundation's Fear* and *Foundation and Chaos*, by Gregs Benford and Brin respectively.) Hari Seldon is old, and his work finished, he retires to tend his garden. The First Foundation is in place, the Second is working secretly with its psychic powers. But neither will prove ultimate solutions. The Seldon Plan has a third possible outcome... or so he thinks. The future still holds some surprises...

✍ **Edwina Currie**... who's next? Well, here's Mike and Gaby's *Space Gospel* from film-maker and Tommyknocker **Ken Russell**, out in June from Orbit. "In the beginning was a spaceship. And the spaceship was called A.R.K. 2001. The robot crew members – Mike, the pilot, and Gaby, the navigator – are able to do something quite remarkable. They are all set to consign two humans to the surface of a planet called Earth. And in these two experimental prototypes, named... 'hey, see, you can guess...' Adam and Eve after a couple of pot holes, the entire robot cosmos has placed its hope of survival."

It's described in the publicity as "brilliantly original".

✍ **William Gibson's** new novel, as yet untitled, is out in the US from Putnam in August.

✍ **Suzi McKee Charnas** has completed *The Conqueror's Child*, the fourth and final book in her 'Holdfast' series, and delivered it to Tor for May publication. The sequence of feminist novels, begun in 1974 with Charnas's first novel *Motherlines* and continued in *Walk to the End of the World* and *The Furies*, portrays a future America sinking into savagery, slaveholding savagery and recovering with the aid of a society of amazon women, according to the author – who regards the series as "a sort of 'life-work', if you consider 25 years in sf as a 'life' – it's an attempt to portray 'the costs and rewards and continuing change wrought by the effort to create a society in which the standard of human behaviour is not male but female'."

✍ **James Herbert's** *Others* is out in April from Macmillan, his new publisher. "My redemption began in Hell", it begins, and tells the story of a private investigator with a secret. He's hired to find a missing baby, and the search takes him to 'Perfect Rest', a nursing home for the elderly... or is it?

✍ **Terry Pratchett, Ian Stewart and Jack Cohen** are working on a book with the working title *The Science of the Discworld*, due in October from Ebury. Mathematician Stewart and biologist Cohen will look at real science from a Discworld perspective, and TP will be revealing what really gets built in the squash court at Unseen University... Meanwhile, the next 'Discworld' map is in preparation, *Death's Domain*, for May publication.

✍ **Virtual Organisms** by **Mark Ward**, out in April from Macmillan, is a survey of Artificial Life research around the world, including – God help us – a BT-developed 'organic' computer program to control phone networks, evolved by natural selection. It looks to be ploughing a similar furrow to Drexler's books on nanotechnology, with interviews and bringing science-to-life populism.

✍ After finishing *Muezzinland* ("The most difficult novel I've had to write"), **Stephen Palmer** has started work on a new novel, provisionally entitled [that's the letter after H]. It's a near future thriller set in various countries of the Pacific Rim, he says.

✍ *The Modern Library* is an annotated list of the 200 best novels in English since 1950, written by **Carmen Calilli & Colm Toibin** and out in April from Picador. It's been prompted by the recent fashion for reading groups. How much it will be in it? The progenitor of this kind of book, Anthony Burgess's *Ninety-Nine Novels: The Best in English since 1939* (1984), showed a healthy willingness to trail genre literature and included authors such as Roberts, Aldiss, Ballard, Peske and Hoban.

✍ "Something is stirring in London's dark, stamping out its territory in brick dust and blood..." **China Miéville's** first novel *King Rat* is out in paperback next June from Pan. Praised by M. John Harrison, it's a dark fantasy set in a London of drum and bass, urban waste and grotesque murders.

✍ From London to New York and points west, as **Katherine Ramsland**, biographer of Anne Rice, goes 'undercover with vampires in America today' in *Piercing the Darkness*, out in May from Boreas. Susan Walsh was a journalist investigating US vampire cults, and in 1996 she vanished while researching in New York. KR's book attempts to solve the mystery, and takes us into various vampire cults from simple rôle-players to full-blown psychotics.

✍ **Anne Rice's** *Vittorio the Vampire* is out in March.

✍ Briefly noted highlights: **Paul Anderson** *Operation Luna* (Tor: Aug. '98)

**Stephen Baxter** *Time Voyager* (Aug. '98)

**Greg Bear** *Darwin's Radio* (Del Rey: Jul. '98)

**James P. Blaylock** *The Rainy Season* (Ace: Aug. '98)

**Ben Bova** *Return to Mars* (Hodder & Stoughton: Oct. '98)

**Orson Scott Card** *Enchantment* (Del Rey: Apr. '98)

**Jonathan Carroll** *The Marriage of Sticks* (Gollancz: May. '98)

**Arthur C. Clarke** *Greetings, Carbon-Based Biped: Collected Works 1944-1998* (St. Martin's Press: May. '98) — Non-fiction

**John Clute** *Applescore* (Orbit: Aug. '98) — Clute's much-anticipated space opera, sadly not out in time for his appearance as

Eastern guest of honour /

**Storm Constantine** *Sea Dragon Heir* (Gollancz: Apr. '98)

**Samuel R. Delany** *Shorter Views* (University Press of New England / Wesleyan: May. '98) — Non-fiction coll.

**Thomas M. Disch** *The Substitute* (Random House: Jul. '98)

**David G. Hartwell & Damien Broderick** (eds) *Centaurus: The Best of Australian SF* (Tor: Jun. '98)

**Paul J. McAuley** *Shrine of Stars* (Gollancz: Sep. '98)

**Fredrik Pohl** *The Far Shore of Time* (Tor: Jun. '98)

**David Pringle** (ed) *The Interzone Pulp Anthology* (Pulp Fictions: Sep. '98) — Looks very interesting.

**Kim Stanley Robinson** *The Martians* (Voyager: Apr. '98)

**Neal Stephenson** *Cryptonomicon* (Avon: May. '98)

**George Turner** *Down There in the Darkness* (Tor: May. '98)

**Tad Williams** *Otherland 3: Mountain of Bad Glass* (Orbit: Sep. '98)

**Jack Williamson** *The Silicon Dagger* (Tor: Apr. '98)

**N. Lee Wood** *Bloodrights* (Ace: Sep. '98)

## Many thanks to

John Ashbrook, Elizabeth & Paul Billinger, Claire Brialey, Andrew M. Butler, Cardinal Cox, Tony Cullen, Roy Gray, Colin Greenland, Jon Courtenay Grimwood, Chris Hill, Paul Hood, Steve Jeffery, Carol Ann Kerry-Green, Dave Langford, Ken MacLeod, Les Montgomerie, Pearce O'Case, John Ollis, Mark Plummer, Yvonne Rowe, Andy Sawyer, SF Weekly, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Sue Thomas, and Bridget Wilkinson.

# glittering lights

media news . tv . film

## NEUROMANCER

The inexperienced British director **Chris Cunningham**, known for his work on commercials and promo videos, is to direct the Seven Arts Pictures film of *Neuromancer*, from a script by the book's author **William Gibson**.

## MORE DICK

**Stephen Spielberg** will direct and **Tom Cruise** will act in a film of **Philip K. Dick's** 1956 story "Minority Report" (in volume 4 of his collected stories, *The Days of Perky Pat*). **Jon Cohen** has already been preparing a script at Twentieth Century Fox for director **Jan De Bont**, who will remain as producer of the new project. Spielberg has pushed back his *Memoirs of a Geisha* film to pursue the idea, along with another sf script based on **Michael Marshall Smith's** *Spare*. Although Spielberg originally said the reports were "tremendously premature" the project does in fact appear to be going ahead.

## CLEAR AS MUD

Well-known scientist and actor **John Travolta** is apparently going to make a film of **L. Ron Hubbard's** *Battlefield Earth*, with work starting as early as this summer. What a way to start the year . . . and it's only the first of ten volumes.

## STAR WARS

The trailer for the new *Star Wars* film was released in November, and after bootlegged copies instantly appeared on the Internet Lucasfilm gave up and posted it on their own site. With predictable results: the site was jammed and nearly inaccessible as soon as the news broke. Meanwhile, US fans were reported to be paying full price to visit cinemas just to see the trailer, and leaving before the main film.

• *Star Wars: Episode 1* will get its UK premiere on 16 July 1999. Meanwhile, some scepticism has been expressed by cynics about the alleged title, *The Phantom Menace* – it may be a deliberately-planted spoiler to try to wrong-foot the producers of unlicensed tie-in products.

## BICENTENNIAL MAN

After some dithering by Disney executives over the high projected cost, the film of **Isaac Asimov's** "Bicentennial Man" is going ahead – with a budget much lower than the \$100m it had risen to. **Robin Williams** will play the robot in **Chris Columbus's** script under the direction of **Nicholas Kazan**.

## PRACTICAL DEMONKEEING

Sony Pictures has bought the film rights to *Practical Demonkeeing*, a 1992 comic fantasy/horror novel by **Christopher Moore**, from Disney. **Terri Hughes** and **Ron Milbauer** are working on the script, and perhaps they'll keep the café run by **H. P. Lovecraft** . . .

## PLUTO NASH

**Ron Underwood**, whose remake of *Mighty Joe Young* is set for release over Christmas, has been

hired to direct the sf action comedy *Pluto Nash*, in which nightclub owner **Eddie Murphy** leads a lunar revolution in 2087.

## NO CRUSADE - YET

**J. Michael Straczynski** has announced that the *Babylon 5* spin-off *Crusade* will now start showing in June, pushed back from January.

## GARRY'S DILDO

**Garry Shandling** is an alien with no penis, packed off to Earth to reproduce with human women. Or at least he is in the Columbia film *What Planet Are You From?*, to be directed by **Mike Nichols**. Apparently his substitute organ proves very popular . . .

## FIRST WAVE BREAKS

The Sci-Fi Channel has bought twenty-two episodes of *First Wave*, an sf series whose executive producer is **Francis Ford Coppola**. It's about humanoid aliens who take over the Earth and frame our hero for the murder of his wife, and is described by USA Networks, the Sci-Fi Channel's parent, as "out-of-the-ordinary, imaginative programming". Well.

## UNIVERSAL SOLDIER II

The sequel to 1992's *Universal Soldier* is set for an August release in the US; it features **Jean-Claude Van Damme** reprising his lead rôle, with wrestler **Bill Goldberg**, female bodybuilder "Kiana" and actor **Michael Jai White** supporting.

## GHOSTS AND TOTTY

Director **Jan De Bont** has started shooting the remake of *Shirley Jackson's* *The Haunting of Hill*

*House* for Dreamworks, with, as suggested last issue, **Catherine Zeta Jones**, **Liam Neeson**, **Lili Taylor** and **Owen Wilson**. The book has previously been filmed as *The Haunting* (1963) and *The Legend of Hell House* (1973).

## BRIEFLY . . .

• Oscar-winning special effects man **Michael Lantieri** is turning to directing with *Komodo*, an independent production about Komodo dragons and a boy whose parents have just died.

• **Bruce Willis** features in the new Activision Playstation game *Apocalypse*, a shoot-'em-up which includes ten minutes of video footage and scanned images of Bruce.

• **James Cameron** is being sued for divorce by his actress wife **Linda Hamilton**; the couple worked together on both *Terminator* films and were married in June 1997.

• **Escher's Code** is about an AI anti-virus program that – sigh – takes over the world, and the story's been sold to Fox 2000 by writers **Zack Penn** (*The Last Action Hero*) and newcomer **Martin Signore**.

• A two-hour *Star Trek: Voyager* special is being filmed. "Dark Frontier" is apparently something to do with the Borg and the Seven of Nine, whatever that's all about.

• **Leonard Nimoy's** Alien Voices troupe, previously known for radio and audio work, has signed with New Line TV to make a series of sf TV movies, including adaptations of Wells and Verne stories.



# PRINCE OF DARKNESS

To coincide with this year's total solar eclipse on 11 August, the Romanian publishing house Nemira is organising an international sf convention featuring **Norman Spinrad**, **Robert Shekley** and others. Romania is the best place to see the eclipse, with 2 minutes 23 seconds of totality – it's also visible from Cornwall, but only for about 30 seconds.

The week-long series of events is programmed with an almost socialist precision, and includes visits to sites associated with Dracula, monasteries, curative springs, rock bands, fruit farms, museum trips, art festivals . . . and much else (including folk dancing, so you are warned). Here are selected highlights:

10 August: arrive in Bucharest, travel to Olănești

11 August: 11:00: visit to the monastic Complex Pahomie

12:00: transportation to the eclipse viewing site and a presentation of the phenomenon by Professor Florin Munteanu;

14:00: the eclipse;

Eclipses are considered 'malefic' phenomena by various secret societies in Romania, and you'll get a chance to meet the Călușari and Măscăti, now theatrical and dancing groups 18:30: attending the preparation of a Romanian folk meal . . . then eating it;

21:30: Perseids meteor shower)

12 August: 15:30: Festival of Medieval Art in Sighisoara, birthplace of

Vlad Tepes (Dracula) 21:30: dinner in a restaurant opened in the house where Vlad Tepes lived

13 August: trip to Bran Castle, where Dracula was captured by the Hungarian king Matei Corvin's guards, and another traditional Romanian meal blessed by priests.

14 August: Inaugural Ceremony, with author **Ion Hobana**

12:00: "Complexity science and science-fiction culture" (author **Roberto Quaglia**)

17:00: "Welcoming the third millennium in science-fiction literature" (author **Norman Spinrad**)

15 August: visit to the Muddy Volcanoes, with a performance by the Transylvanian Band show, with rock music, theatre and stunts.

16:30: "Science beyond borders" (professor **Florin Munteanu**)

18:00: "Science-fiction literature and cinema" (author **Robert Shekley**)

16 August: 11:30: awards, closing ceremony

## PRICES

Membership is limited to 150, and registration until 1 February is \$30, afterwards \$50. All accommodation, meals, travel and transport in Romania (I assume you'll have to make your own way to Bucharest) costs \$495.00; \$200 up front before 1 July and \$295 on arrival in Romania. Cheques to Nemira Ltd, 19 Crinului Street, 78419, Bucharest, Romania.

✉ Nemira Publishing House, 1 Casa Presei Libere, sector 1, 71341, Bucharest, Romania

☎ http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Troy/7045/



# 1998 NOVA RESULTS

## Best Fanwriter

1. Maureen Kincaid Speller (60)
2. Claire Brialley (47)
3. Mark Plummer (36)
4. Christina Lake (31)
5. Martin Tudor (25)
6. Mark McCann (24)
7. Mike Abbott (19)
8. Yvonne Rowse (19)
9. Paul Kincaid (14)
10. Mike Ashley (12)
11. Debby Kerr (12)
12. Dave Langford (11)
13. Alison Freebairn (9)
14. Judith Hanna (8)
15. Simon Ounsley (7)
16. Bridget Bradshaw (6)
17. Lillian Edwards (6)
18. Ian Sorensen (6)
19. Dr Plokt (6)
20. Mike Scott (5)
21. Ann Green (3)
22. Steve Jeffery (3)
23. John Berry (2)
24. Elizabeth Billinger (1)
- Tanya Brown (1)
- Steve Davies (1)
- Sue Jones (1)
- Alison Scott (1)

## Best Fanzine

1. *Banana Wings* (80)
2. *Plokt* (46)
3. *Götterdämmerung* (39)
4. *Barmid* (30)
5. *Attitude* (24)
6. *Snufkin's Bum* (24)
7. *Salromania* (19)
8. *International Revolutionary Gardener* (17)
9. *Did I Say That Out Loud?* (16)
10. *Bob* (15)
11. *Snufkin Goes West* (13)
12. *Taffion Tudor* (13)
13. *Bumper Snufkin* (11)
14. *Ansible* (9)
15. *The Wrong Leggings* (4)
16. *Pognophobia* (3)
17. *Standing in the Shadows* (3)
18. *Olaf* (2)
19. *Balloons Over Bristol* (1)
20. *Blip* (1)
21. *BW: A Pair of Wombats* (1)
22. *Drunken Fuckwit* (1)
23. *Fables of Irish Fantasy* (1)
24. *Never Quite arriving* (1)
25. *Quiggeldy Hoy* (1)
26. *The Ubiquitous They* (1)
27. *Thunderbox* (1)

## Best Fanartist

1. Don West (76)
2. Sue Mason (65)
3. Dave Hicks (60)
4. Steve Jeffery (Esjay) (49)
5. Dave Mooring (37)
6. Jim Barker (22)
7. Ken Cheslin (8)
8. Atom (1)
- Bridget Bradshaw (1)
- Steve Green (1)

## FAN FUNDS

NEW YORKER **Velma 'Vijay' Bowen** has won the US to UK TAFF race, and will be attending Reconnence in April. She'll arrive in London around 28 March, go up to Liverpool for Eastercon and travel round the country until 16 April. If you want to meet her (or even put her up: "I'm housebroken, short-haired, fairly well-domesticated, with no allergies; I don't smoke, but don't mind staying in smoking households; and I'm easily entertained, as well as easily talked into absurd situations") contact her at PO Box 156, Village Station, New York, NY 10014-0156, USA.

Full results:

	Vijay Bowen	Sarah Prince	Holdover Funds	No Preference
US	47	12	3	10
UK	8	3	2	6
	55	15	5	16

• During her trip last summer, UK to US TAFF winner **Maureen Kincaid Speller** sent back regular newsheets, and these are now available in collected form as *Snufkin Goes West*, with a Sue Mason cover; her full trip report is now being written. £1.50 (proceeds to TAFF) from Fishlitter Press, 14 Northway Rd, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 6JE.

## FANDINGO

The 1999 GUFF race is on, with the winner attending Aussiecon 3, this year's Worldcon in Melbourne in August. In contention are **Steve Davies**, **Julian Headlong** and **Paul Kincaid**. For a ballot send an SAE to Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Road, Tottenham, London, N15 4JU.

• DUFF is the US-to-Australia version of GUFF, with **Lise Eisenberg**, **Janice Gelb** and **Andy Hooper** standing.

welcome (see the web site for guidelines). £2.75 for one or £10.50 for a four-issue subscription (payable to 'Noesis').

• Noesis, 61 Pengarth Rise, Falmouth, Cornwall, TR11 2RR

\* [lesley@noesis.co.uk](mailto:lesley@noesis.co.uk)

\* <http://www.ndirect.co.uk/~rvaddling/Noesis/index.html>

• *Tangent*, the short fiction reviews magazine, has launched a twice-weekly web update:

\* <http://www.sfsite.com>

• *Data Dump* from **Steve Sneyd** is a continuing series of fact sheets on genre poetry and music. 70p from Hilltop Press, 4 Nowell Place, Almondsbury, Huddersfield, HD5 8PB.

• *Handshake* is a free zine containing poetry, market information and news of sf-poetry-related events. SAE to J. F. Haines, 5 Cross Farm, Station Road, Padgate, Warrington, WA2 0QG.

## Here and there

### GET WELL SOON

- Grand Old Fan **Walt Willis** has recovered physically from the stroke he suffered in August, but remains confused.
- **Ken Bulmer**, currently in a Tunbridge Wells nursing home, is writing again.
- **Ray Gibberd** of Birmingham's Andromeda bookshop was taken to hospital just before Christmas and operated on for a brain tumour; he's now in radiotherapy and will be away from work for some time. Cards and good wishes c/o Andromeda, 2-5 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, B1 1LT. Tel. 0121 643 1999.

### GUARDIAN OF SF

- Guardian readers will have been pleased to see **Martin Woolacott's** piece on 21 November, arguing that sf and "junk science" is setting the agenda for politicians.
- What was particularly interesting here was that Woolacott - more noted for political commentary - clearly knows his sf, using *Thomas M. Disch's The Dreams Our Stuff is Made Of* as a source and ending with a discussion of *Dick's Time Out of Joint*.
- The piece didn't go unnoticed, with complimentary follow-up letters from **Peter T. Garratt** and **Doreen Norman**, both drawing attention to the paper's current poor coverage of serious sf in the books sections (where **Dave Langford** used to have a regular review column). Is there hope?

### ELLISON SCHMELLISON

- **Susan Ellison** recently told net watchers that although **Harlan Ellison** ('HE' to aficionados) appreciates all the gifts his multitude of fans send him, he would rather they didn't. Oh, apart from historical figures (toy soldiers). And a James Baldwin coffee mug. And some Italian sf magazines.... Catch up with HE at 'Ellison Webderland':
- \* <http://www.harlellison.com>
- \* (and there's a modest address).

### SNIPPINGS

- **Colin Greenland** reports that **Stephen Baxter** and **Peter F. Hamilton** will be guesting at a science and sf event called 'Event Horizons' at Lincoln Library in March.
- **Gwyneth Jones** has set up a web site, with a bibliography, essays, "and other stuff":
- \* <http://www.homeusers.prestel.co.uk/dreamer/>
- 'The Twisted Realities of Philip K. Dick' is a website with reviews, a biography, message board, artwork and more:
- \* <http://www.philipkdick.com>

## SMALL PRESS

• *The Third Alternative's* 18th issue is out, with fiction by **Alexander Glass**, **Antony Man**, **Sten Westgaard** and others, plus an interview with **Joyce Carol Oates** and a splendid feature on **Greg Egan's** writing by **Reger Keen** - and like the rest of us, TTA hasn't managed to get a photo of the elusive author. There's also a new design, and it now looks distinctly superior to *Interzone*. Recommended.

• TTA Press, 5 Martins Lane, Witcham, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 2LB

\* [ttapress@aol.com](mailto:ttapress@aol.com)

\* <http://pu1.oclc.org/net/ttaonline>

• The first issue of *Noesis* came out just before Christmas, a new sf magazine edited by **Lesley Milner** and **Robin Wadding**; submissions are

# recent & forthcoming books

## Orbit



Including Abacus: Little, Brown: Virago: Warner

- Amir Azel** *Probability One* (Little, Brown: Mar; £17.50 hb, c240pp) — Non-fiction. The author of the surprise best-seller *Fermat's Last Theorem* turns to the possibility of alien life, examining the evidence collected so far and using probability theory to argue that its existence is a near-certainty.
- Natalie Angier** *Woman: A Celebration of the Female Body* (Virago: Mar; £17.99 hb, c480pp) — Not quite what it sounds: it's a kind of systems approach to the biochemistry of being female.
- Robert Asprin** *Another Fine Myth* (Jan; £5.99 pb)
- Robert Asprin** *Myth Conceptions* (Jan; £5.99 pb)
- Robert Asprin** *Myth Directions* (Jan; £5.99 pb) — Re-issues of three so-called humorous fantasies.
- ★ **Alexander Beshar** *Chi* (Jan; £9.99 pb, c288pp) — AB's third novel, a cyber-thriller set in the next century when "technology and the human psyche have found a new way to coexist".
- Alexander Beshar** *Mir* (Dec; £9.99 pb) — Cyberpunkish sf in which "the ultimate virus gets out of control in a frighteningly believable cyber future".
- Edmund Blair Bolles** (ed.) *Galileo's Commandment* (Little, Brown: Feb; £20.00 hb) — Subtitled "An Anthology of Great Science Writing", this includes selections from Marie Curie, Herodotus, Primo Levi, Isaac Asimov, Stephen Jay Gould, and Carl Sagan arguing against alien visitations.
- Chris Bunch** *The Warrior King* (Mar; £9.99 pb, c286pp) — Final volume of the fantasy series set in the savage kingdom of Numantia.
- ★ **Richard Calder** *Frenzetta* (Feb; £5.99 pb) — New novel from the author of the exceedingly strange "Dead..." trilogy. Odd and compelling.
- K. C. Cole** *The Universe and the Teacup* (Abacus: Mar; £6.99 pb, c224pp) — Pop-maths, subtitled "The Mathematics of Truth and Beauty" and highly thought of by Dava Sobel, author of *Longitude*.
- ★ **Storm Constantine** *Thin Air* (Warner: Feb; £9.99 pb, c320pp) — Dark fantasy. SC's fifteenth book. A sassy music journo meets a dissolute, screw-you rock star with a conscience, and falls in love. Several years later she has grown used to his depressions, violent arguments and occasional disappearances... but this time he seems to have gone for good. He becomes an uncomfortable memory intruding into her new life, until he's spotted again and she is drawn back into his world... but is it this world? "Or has he stopped dreaming of escape, and escaped into his dreams?"
- ★ **Julia Gray** *Ice-Mage* (17 Dec; £6.99 pb, 535pp) — New fantasy novel, with a strong recommendation from Maggie Furey. JG is a pseudonym for "an author whose previous novels have sold over 300,000 copies".
- Michael Guillen** *Five Equations That Changed the World* (Abacus: Feb; £7.99 pb, c288pp) — Pop-science. An interesting choice: MG, a Harvard physics professor, picks Faraday, Bernoulli, Newton, Einstein and... Rudolf Clausius. Who he? I had to look it up too: along with Kelvin, he established the second law of thermodynamics.
- Peter Haining** (ed.) *The Flying Sorcerers* (Feb; £5.99 pb, c352pp) — Anth. of comic fantasy, with a new "death" story from Terry Pratchett and other tales by Roald Dahl, Arthur C. Clarke, Vonnegut, Carter, Lewis, Moorcock and, er, Wedoohouse.
- Mark Hertsager** *Earth Odyssey* (Abacus: Mar; £9.99 pb, c384pp) — Non-fiction, a trip "Around the World in Search of our Environmental Future" that takes in 19 countries and unending destruction of the environment.
- ★ **Tom Holt** *Only Human* (Mar; £15.99 hb, c352pp) — Comic fantasy. God goes on holiday for a couple of days, leaving His Only Begotten Son to look after things... and "a minor hiccup with a human soul and a welding machine soon leads to a violent belch, and before you know it the human condition — not to mention the lemming condition — is tumbling down the slippery slope to chaos".

## Key

pb = paperback; hb = hardback; tp = trade (large format) paperback; pp = extent  
 ill. = illustrated; ed. = edited; R(x) = reissue / reprint (first publication date)  
 > x = review in *Vector* #x/date; GN = Graphic Novel; ab = AudioBook; YA = Young Adult  
 coll. = story collection (same author); anth. = anthology (different authors)  
 ★ = Highlight; ✱ = Editor's choice; 1 = First UK edition  
 Treat future dates with caution. All unquoted remarks by Chris Terran.  
 Quoted comments are from publishers' material — caveat emptor!  
 — Thanks to Michael J. Cross for his index: <http://www.ajckh.deacon.co.uk/topbsfa.htm> —

**Mark Jeffery** *The Human Computer* (Little, Brown: Mar; £16.99 hb, c320pp) — Non-fiction arguing that "computers of the future will be as worthy of the epithet 'human' as their creators". Since 1997 Oxford graduate MJ has been posted at the Rothera by the British Antarctic Survey.

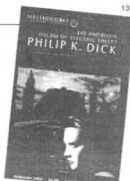
- ★ **Emily Jenkins** *Tongue First* (Virago: Jan; £9.99 pb, c256pp) — non-fiction, "a smart, humorous exploration of bodily thrills and paranoia from aerobics to acupuncture, strip shows to sensory deprivation" taking in going to the dentist, putting on a black lace bra, jogging, drinking wine, getting tattooed, snoring heavily, reading a dirty magazine, shaving your head... what interesting lives some people lead.
- J. V. Jones** *A Cavern of Black Ice* (Jan; £16.99 hb, c864pp) — Epic fantasy, first in the new *Sword of Shadows* series. Two brothers survive a vicious attack which kills their father and clan chief. One can't accept the brutal new regime and takes off with his uncle for the city, where the Overlord is showing an unhealthy interest in his putative ward. The uncle knows that the girl has powers that could destroy the world if she can't learn to control them, and our young hero is the only one who can protect her while she grows and learns.
- ★ **Garry Kilworth** *Land-of-Mists* (14 Jan; £6.99 pb, 375pp+5pp glossary) — Final volume in the "The Navigator Kings" fantasy trilogy. Kieto and his Polynesian armies come into conflict with the Celts and Picts of the Land-of-Mists — a relocated Scotland. Garry wrote about this book in *Matrix* 131.
- Juliet E. McKenna** *The Thief's Gamble* (7 Jan; £5.99 pb, 437pp) — Debut fantasy from a new British writer, formerly an Oxford classics student, a bookseller with Ottavians and now a full-time mother and writer. "Livak is a part-time thief and full-time gambler, long accustomed to living by her wits. But when she tries to sell a stolen antique to a passing merchant, she finds herself drawn into political intrigue, danger and an adventure that will demand all her cunning and courage." Targeted at those who like J. V. Jones, Maggie Furey and Robin Hobbs, the book will be followed by another set in the same world. There's also a free promotional booklet containing the first chapter.
- Lydia Millet** *George Bush, Dark Prince of Love* (Virago: Apr; £9.99 pb, c256pp) — No sf connection (it's the story of a woman's crush on GB), but what a title!
- L. F. Modest** *It's the Spelling War* (Feb; £6.99 pb, c672pp) — Fantasy, book two of "The Spelling Cycle", set in the world of Erde (as in Mahler's *Das Lied von der... presumably where music is magic*). A part-time and music teacher from Iowa finds herself in Erde, where her vocal ability makes her a great sorceress. Having defeated evil powers in the first volume and risen to Regent, she now — surprise surprise — faces another evil power. Will she overcome it? Well, there's a question.
- ★ **Larry Niven** *Rainbow Mars* (Mar; £16.99 hb, c352pp) — Hmm. Even the cover looks like a Stan Robinson book... but this novel sees LN returning to his light-hearted "Svetz" series, the next time-traveller whose adventures appeared in *The Flight of the Horse*. On returning from a trip into the past, Svetz finds his employer has died. The new Secretary General doesn't approve of hunting for extrinsic mythical animals, so Svetz is dispatched much further back in time to uncover the secrets of Mars, and its one-time inhabitants. But the Martians are unaware of an incredible tree that has taken root in their canals, that won't stop growing until it has drained all life from the planet. And then... next stop, Earth!
- Richard Rudgley** (ed.) *Wild Dreams: An Anthology of Drug-Related Literature* (Little, Brown: Feb; £18.99 hb, c432pp) — Non-fiction from the compiler of *The Encyclopedia of Psychoactive Substances* (see below), with contributions from all the usual suspects as well as Boccaccio, Marco Polo, J. M. Barrie (now we know what fairy dust is) and Cary Grant.
- Richard Rudgley** *The Encyclopedia of Psychoactive Substances* (Abacus: Feb; £9.99 pb, c320pp) — From chocolate to cocaine, glue to grapple liver.
- Joseph Skibell** *A Blessing On the Moon* (Abacus: Feb; £8.99 pb, c272pp) — After-life literary fantasy in which a Jew wanders the Earth after he and his fellow villagers are shot during the Second World War.
- D. M. Thomas** *Alexander Solzhenitsyn: A Century in His Life* (Abacus: Feb; £9.99 pb, c608pp ill.) — Associational biography — DMT was an early contributor to *New Worlds* and various of his novels are of sf interest — of the Russian writer, set in the "disturbing and haunting" context of the history of the 20th century.
- Margaret Weis & Tracy Hickman** *Nightworld* (Mar; £5.99 pb, c416pp) — The second *Starshield* science fantasy novel, sequel to *The Mantle of Kendeis*. Data: High adventure in a galaxy filled with minotaur space pirates, deceitful elves, dragons discovering civilisation, and a quest "to recover Nightworld, the most feared and powerful weapon ever known". Do we dare hope that the ambiguity (*Night-Sword* / *Night's World*) is deliberate?
- Margaret Wertheim** *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace* (Virago: Feb; £14.99 hb, c352pp) — Non-fiction examining the concept of "space" from Dante to the Internet, and arguing that "one way of understanding cyberspace is as an attempt to realise an electronic version of Heaven". Cyberspace, MW says, is "a genuine yet immaterial world in which people are invited to commune in a non-bodily fashion, just as medieval theology brought intangible souls together in heaven".
- **Coming Soon...**
- David Brin *The Secret Foundation* (Jun)
  - Kate Elliott *The Burning Stone* (May)
  - Maggie Furey *The Heart of Myriad* (May)
  - Ken Russell *Mike and Gaby's Space Gospel* (Jun)

## Orion

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



- ★ **Stephen Baxter** *Grey Hair* (Millennium) (Jan 99; £12.99 hb, c336pp) — First in the 'Mammoth' trilogy, this YA novel tells the story of the mammoths from pre-history to the present and into the far future.
- ★ **Alfred Bester** *The Stars My Destination* (Mar (R 1977); £5.99 tp) — 'SF Masterworks' reissue, and there won't be much argument about applying 'masterwork' to this title. Although you may know it as *Tiger! Tiger!*, the title previous UK editions have borne.
- James Bibby** *Ronan's Revenge* (Dec; £5.99 pb) — Comic fantasy.
- ★ **James Blish** *Chitons in Flight* (Feb (R 1977); £5.99 tp) — 'SF Masterworks' reissue.
- Windsor Chitton** *Cold Fusion* (Jan 99; £16.99 hb, c356pp) — Crichton-style sci thriller; in a wintry 2061 world devastated by a meteorite impact ten years before, the race is on to find other inhabitable planets.
- ★ **Samuel R. Delany** *Babel-17* (Mar (R 1977); £5.99 tp) — 'SF Masterworks' reissue.
- Philip K. Dick** *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (Feb (R 1977); £5.99 tp, £5.99 pb) — 'SF Masterworks' reissue, in two formats — the second badged as *Blade Runner*.
- ★ **Ray Haldeman** *The Forever War* (Jan (R 1977); £5.99 tp) — 'SF Masterworks' reissue of JH's superb anti-war novel, a timely response to the recent film of *Starship Troopers*. Recommended.
- Harry Harrison** *The Stainless Steel Rat Goes to the Circus* (Oct Nov; £16.99 hb, c256pp) — New 'Rat' novel.
- Harry Harrison** *The Stainless Steel Rat Goes to Hell* (Dec; £5.99 pb) — ... and the previous one. The poor old Rat is looking a tad tired these days, sadly.
- Ray Kurzweil** *The Future* (Oct Jan 99; £18.99 hb, c288pp) — Non-fiction, plonkingly subtitled 'How Computer Technology Will Change the Way We Work, Live and Think in the 21st Century'. Includes a CD-ROM containing examples of intelligent software.
- Richard Matheson** *I Am Legend* (Jan (R 1977); £5.99 tp) — 'SF Masterworks' reissue.
- Stan Nicholls** *Bodyguard of Lightning* (Oct Jan 99; £9.99 hb, c288pp) — Fantasy, delayed from October and the first volume of the 'Orcs' series which 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.

- Darren O'Shaughnessy** *Ayamarca* (Jan 99; £5.99 pb, c384pp) — Interesting-looking debut fantasy from a new 23-year-old writer, this is likened to Clive Barker and Ian Banks.
- ★ **Alison Sinclair** *Cavalcade* (Oct 31 Dec; £16.99 hb, c299pp) — SF from the author of *Legacies*, much delayed but finally here. Aliens come to Earth and issue an invitation to a better world. A selection of humans find themselves in an enormous cathedral-like edifice, in which their advanced technology ceases to work. No one meets them, and it seems that the ship itself is the alien, in search of a new crew. Two groups form: a US army reconnaissance team and a women's group in search of self-determination... but only one woman is wise enough or mad enough to believe that communication is possible, or desirable.
- Ian Stewart** *The Magical Maze* (Phoenix; Dec; £7.99 tp)
- Ian Stewart** *Nature's Numbers* (Phoenix; Dec; £5.99 tp) — Two pop-maths books from the fine populariser.
- Christian Toubert** *The Chocolate Bible* (Weidenfeld) (Jan 99; £20.00 hb ill. [in all senses]) — Look, I know my market. Any book about chocolate, cats, beer or mushrooms gets in here, OK?

## Voyager



Including HarperCollins (HC), Flamingo, Fontana, Thorsons.

- Greg Bear** *The Forge of God* (26 Nov 98 (R 1987); £5.99 pb, 473pp) — GB's apocalyptic tale of rival alien beings and the destruction of the Earth.
- Patrick Curry** *Defending Middle Earth* (HC; 7 Dec 98; £7.99 tp, 165pp+41pp references, appendix, index) — Non-fiction, an interesting looking examination of the popularity of Tolkien and *The Lord of the Rings*, and a defence of the author. 'Far from being reactionary and escapist', PC argues, 'The Lord of the Rings addresses the most important conflict of our time — the struggle of community, nature and spirit against the modern union of state power, capital and technology'.
- Philip K. Dick** *The Cosmic Puppets* (7 Dec 98 (R 1956); £5.99 pb)
- Raymond E. Feist** *Shards of a Broken Crown* (7 Dec 98; £11.99 tp) — Book 4 of the 'Serpentwar Saga'.
- Raymond E. Feist** *Kronor: The Betrayal* (7 Dec 98; £11.99 tp) — New 'Riftwar' novel to tie in with a CD-ROM release of the new game from Pyro Technics.
- ★ **Kathleen Ann Goonan** *Queen City Jazz* (7 Dec 98; £5.99 pb, 465pp) — First novel from the gifted American short story writer, exploring the nature of reality in an America transfigured by nanotechnology.



**Barbara Hambly** *Israfel's Quest* (Oct 16 Nov 98; £5.99 pb, 307pp) — Fantasy.

- ★ **Robert Holdstock** *Gate of Ivory* (7 Dec 98; £5.99 pb, 345pp) — It's one of those titles that won't be done, with alternative visions from Penelope Fitzgerald and Margaret Drabble. Holdstock's prequel to *Mythago Wood* and the superb *Lavondyss* was well-received, but not, alas, by me.
- George R.R. Martin** *A Clash of Kings* (Oct 16 Nov 98; £17.99 hb, 708pp+31pp appendix) — Fantasy, Book Two of 'A Song of Ice and Fire', the first volume, *A Game of Thrones*, was extremely well received.
- Les Martin** *The X-Files #13 Quarantine* (7 Dec 98; £3.99 pb) — One of a series of novelisations of episodes of the TV classic, as opposed to:
- Ben Mezrich** *The X-Files: Skin* (7 Dec 98; £16.99 hb) — An original novel based on the TV series.
- Ben Mezrich** *The X-Files: Skin* (HC; Dec 98; £8.99 ab, 2xMC) — The audio version of the above, read by Gillian Anderson, no less.
- ★ **Kim Stanley Robinson** *Antarcica* (21 Sep 98; £7.99 tp, 559pp+2pp acknowledgements) — Near-future eco-thriller.
- R. A. Salvatore** *Luthien's Gamble* (Nov; £5.99 pb, c304pp) — Fantasy, book 2 of 'The Crimson Shadow'.
- Sheri S. Tepper** *The Family Tree* (16 Nov 98; £5.99 pb, 480pp + 12pp trailer) — Pb of her previous, Clarke-nominated novel. The trailer is from her new novel *Six Moon Dance*.
- ★ **Sheri S. Tepper** *Six Moon Dance* (Oct 16 Nov 98; £11.99 tp, c384pp) — SI. 'A dramatic interstellar being has lived on one of the 6 moons of Newwhome for millennia, but only the Questioner, the judge from the Council of Worlds, knows that. The inhabitants of Newwhome have another secret entirely.'

## Avon



Ray Bradbury Ahmed and the Oblivion Minutes (12 Dec; £14.00 hb, 64pp unpaginated) —

- Subtitled 'A Fable', this new novelette is a short tale for children and adults 'about the importance of letting dreams take flight', illustrated by Chris Lane, and very nicely produced.
- ★ **Ray Bradbury** *Diving Blind* (Oct; £6.50 pb, 255pp + 3pp afterword) — Coll. of 21 stories, 4 of which have appeared previously.
- Jocelyn Foxe** *The Wild Hunt: Vengeance Moon* (Sep; £3.99 pb, 312pp) — Debut fantasy in Avon's excellent series of bargain-priced first novels, a tale of 'wonder and exhilaration, power and passion, death and courage'.
- Neil Gaiman** *Stanford* (Spice; Jan 99; £22.00 hb, 235pp + 1p afterword) — New fantasy from NG (one of the top ten post-modern writers in America according to the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, up there with Pynchon and Burroughs) following up on his *Neverwhere*. This is a heartwarming tale of a lovestruck young boy in a small English village discovering the route to the Faerie Kingdom, and embarking on a quest to win his love's hand by finding a falling star.
- ★ **Martin H. Greenberg** (ed) *Lord of the Fantastic* (Sep; £14.00 tp, 364pp) — Anth. of 23 stories in honour of and inspired by the late and lamented Roger Zelazny, from Neil Gaiman, Gregory

Benford, John Varley, Robert Silverberg, Robert Shekley, and many others, 20 of the stories are originals and only 3 reprints (by Silverberg, Walter Jon Williams and Gaiman). **Alexander Jablokov** *Deepdrive* (Aug; £14.00 hb, 311pp) — Hard sf, 'astounding complicated' and 'semi-surreal' says *Kirkus Reviews*. Eleven alien races are known in the 21st century, and have settled the solar system; humans are often ignored as lower-level beings, but when an alien craft crashes on Venus the hunt is on for the secret of the aliens' life device.

- Ron Sarti** *The Lanterns of God* (Sep; \$5.99 pb, 305pp) — Final fantasy in the 'Chronicles of Scar' trilogy, 'one series I don't want to see end,' according to Robert J. Sawyer.
- Marilyn Kaye** *Last on Earth* (11 Dec; \$4.99 pb, 172pp) — Second volume in the 'Convergence' series, this continues the story of a group of maths students who find they are the only people left on Earth. An old plot, but there may be significance in the naming of a lead character as 'Travis' (R.J. G. Ballard).
- ★ **Paul J. McAuley** *The Invisible Country* (11 Dec; \$13.50 tp, 310pp) — PJM's second coll., this contains nine stories with author's notes, culled from *Interzone*, *F&SF*, *Omni* and elsewhere; four are set in the imagined world of the wonderful (though regrettably titled) *Fairlyland*, two in the *Pasquale's Angel* alternative reality, and there's an introduction from Kim Newman. This is shortlisted for the Philip K. Dick Award, which usually restricts itself to novels.

# The Rest



Jonathan Cape  
Paper Tiger  
Bantam  
Vintage

**Lou Anders & Eric Fredrickson** *Babylon 5: The Movies* (Titan: 1 Mar; £8.99 pb, c56pp ill.) — Illustrated guide to the three recent BS TV movies. In the Beginning. Threespace (see page 20), and River of Souls.

**Anon** *Robot Wars* (Bodtree: 1 Jan; £12.99 pb, c128pp ill.) — Picture book / technical manual accompanying the BBC2 series, the highest rated programme ever on the network, a sort of Great Egg Race meets Gladiators as viewer-built robots fight the show's own machines.

**Anon** *How to Draw Disney's A Bug's Life* (Titan: 1 Mar; £5.99 pb, c40pp) — Tie-in to the CGI movie, set for a February release. Also available in the series through the year: *Aladdin*, *Snow White*, *Hercules*, *The Lion King* and *Bambi*. Haven't you always wanted to draw Bambi?

**Anon** *Myths and Magic: The Complete Fantasy Reference* (Titan: 1 Mar; £12.99 pb, c288pp ill.) — Introduction by Terry Brooks, cover by Bob Eggleton. This claims to be "A comprehensive, all-in-one guide to the mythical, the mystical and the medieval for writers and readers of fantasy and historical fiction." Perhaps wisely for a book up against *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* and *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland*, the author(s) apparently wish to remain anonymous.

**Marina Benjamin** *Living at the End of the World* (Picador: Jan; £5.99 pb, c304pp) — Non-fiction. "Few of us expect the year 2000 to coincide with Armageddon. So why do we behave as though we are living at the end of the world?" MB looks at the apocalyptic myth in film, fiction, fitness culture, Biosphere 2, oryctes, the religious and the secular.

**Don Breton & Hector Gomez** *Buff the Vampire Slayer: The Dust Waltz* (Titan: 1 Jan; £5.99 GN, c80pp) — Tie-in to the recently-arrived cult TV series.

**Jessie Chan / Ian Jackie Chan** (Pan: Mar; £12.99 pb, c360pp ill.) — Autobiography of the martial-arts actor, famed for doing his own stunts.

**Don DeLillo** *Underworld* (Picador: Jan; £10.00 pb, c287pp) — Associational, the new novel from the author of the final *Rainier* and *White Noise*.

**William C. Dement & Christopher Vaughan** *The Promise of Sleep* (Macmillan: 1 Jan; £16.99 pb, c320pp) — Pop science about sleep. With sheep on the cover.

★ **Julian Dibbell** *My Tiny Life* (Fourth Estate: 1 Jan; £15.99 hb, c336pp) — Non-fiction recounting a true story of rape and ideological warfare in cyberspace, sparked by encounters in LambdaMOO, a strange kind of fantasyland on the Internet.

**Garth Ennis & Steve Dillon** *Preacher: War in the Sun* (Titan: 1 Mar; £9.99 GN, c240pp) — There's a Preacher! film in production, for 2000 release. Oh, joy.

**Charles Fernyhough** *The Auctioneer* (Fourth Estate: 1 Apr; £9.99 pb, c320pp) — England is stricken with a mysterious disease characterised by euphoric forgetfulness, and inside an old mill a man is compiling a list of significant things. A debut novel.

**Colin Forbes** *This United State* (Macmillan: 1 Mar; £15.99 hb, c488pp) — Near-future thriller. The PM has been assassinated, a giant power appears determined to absorb Britain into its own system, enemies fold over the country, terror grips London, and all is resolved on Romney Marsh as a hostile naval force approaches the country.

**Richard Francis** *Fat Hen* (Fourth Estate: 1 Jan; £9.99 pb, c332pp) — Can this be the same RF who wrote the splendidly bizarre little sf novel *Blackpool Vanishes* (Faber, I think) in the 70s? Set in 1948 Stockport, it's about a man who makes a chance discovery that allows him to build a complete alternative life for himself. Meanwhile his odd family become increasingly bizarre, with his son believing that the world is an afterlife fantasy and Granny becoming increasingly obsessed with Walter Scott and executions.

★ **Val Gough & Jill Rudd** *A Very Different Story* (Liverpool University Press: 1 Jan; £32.00 hb, £15.95 pb) — Non-fiction, an anth. of essays on Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

**Edward Gross** *The Interplanetary Star Wars Compendium* (Bodtree: 1 Feb; £9.99 pb, c288pp ill.) — Unofficial guide.

**Maxim Jakubowski & Nathan Braund** (eds) *The Mammoth Book of Jack the Ripper* (Robinson: 1 Mar; £7.99 pb, c512pp) — 15 Ripperologists argue their pet theories, plus a complete chronology and a full bibliography and filmography.

**B. S. Johnson** *The Unfortunates* (Picador: Apr; £20.00 hc, c292pp) — Aleph had some fun with this book a while back, wondering if Terry Pratchett's choice of [bloody] Stupid Johnson as the name of an incompetent iconoclast was entirely coincidental. Read it and find out — it's an experimental novel in a book, intended to be read in random order apart from the first and last sections.

**Walter Koenig** *Warped Factors* (Titan: 1 Apr; £12.99 hb, c328pp ill.) — Autobiography of the Star Trek and Babylon 5 actor, with a foreword by J. Michael Straczynski. Why are people interested in actors? Defeats me. Perhaps Walt will be in *Craig Hosada* *The Bare Facts* video guide (Titan: 1 Jan; £4.99 pb, c192pp), which gives details of which films contain shots of actors without their clothes on. Includes Kate Winslet and Gwyneth Paltrow's dribbles the blur.

**Charles de Lint** *Somewhere To Be Flying* (Pan: Mar; £5.99 pb, c640pp) — Affecting tale of Native American myth creatures in a modern world, written with CDL's usual warmth.

**Elizabeth A. Lynn** *Dragon's Winter* (Pan: Mar; £5.99 pb, c448pp) — Fantasy. EAL's first novel for some years.

**Jay Merrick** *House Latitudes* (Fourth Estate: 1 Feb; £10.99 pb, c288pp) — A first novel. Set in 2021, it's literary in which a young botanist stumbles across an old man in a cardboard city near London, and finds him to be the only living relic of the long-forgotten British colony of Noraima. He hears the tale of an expedition into the forest to collect rare horses, and a meeting with a mysterious recluse.

**Frank Miller** *San City: Booz, Broads and Bullets* (Titan: 1 Jan; £9.99 GN, c160pp) — A new coll. of short stories.

**Grant Morrison, Phil Jimenez & John Stokes** *The Invisibles: Counting to Nine* (Titan: 1 Mar; £12.99 GN, c224pp)

★ **Kim Newman** *Millennium Movies* (Titan: 1 Apr; £12.99 pb, c256pp ill.) — Subtitled "End of the World Cinema," this is KN's "comprehensive and accessible illustrated survey of how cinema has dealt with the idea of Armageddon." Coverage includes "Second World War nuclear movies, atomic spy flicks, 50s monster movies, post-nuclear films, alien invasion movies, World War Three and Cold War anxiety, post-holocaust tales, right up to 'Pre-Millennial Tension' films like *Independence Day* and *Armageddon*." Recommended unless you're a cynic.

**James O'Barr** *The Crow: The Author's Edition* (Titan: 1 Mar; £24.99 hb GN, c280pp) — A "deluxe collectors' edition" with previously unseen material.

**Victor Pelevin** *The Clay Machine Gun* (Faber: 1 Apr; £9.99 pb, c336pp) — Literary fantasy from a contemporary Russian writer. Of possibly more interest is:

**Victor Pelevin** *The Life of Insects* (Faber: Apr; £6.99 pb, c160pp) — A Russian cyberpunk fantasy set in a future Black Sea resort, where the cast of drug addicts, racketeers and mystics exist simultaneously as human beings and insects.

★ **Phil Rickman** *The Wine of Angels* (Pan: Mar; £5.99 pb, c524pp) — Horror / fantasy. A female vicar and her teenage daughter move to a picture-postcard parish and a haunted vicarage. The villagers are staging a play about a 17th century clergyman accused of witchcraft... and it's a story that certain residents would rather be held untold. I like PR — his novels are always entertaining and readable, not stretching but not insulting. Give him a try.

**Mark Salisbury** *Writers on Comics Scriptwriting* (Titan: 1 Apr; £12.99 pb, c288pp ill.) — Interviews with Neil Gaiman, Todd McFarlane, Frank Miller, Garth Ennis, Grant Morrison and others.

**Michael A. Stackpole, Scott Tolson, John Nadeau & Jordi Ensign** *Star Wars: X-Wing: Rogue Squadron: The Warrior Princess* (Titan: 1 Jan; £9.99 GN, unpaged) — Spin-offs of spin-offs of spin-offs of spin-offs... but sadly, nothing to do with Xena.

**J. Michael Straczynski & Peter David** *Babylon 5: In Valen's Name* (Titan: 1 Dec 98; £5.99 GN, unpaged) — Artwork by Michael Collins and David Ross. The ruins of Babylon 4, lost for over 1,000 years, are rediscovered in this background story to the TV series. Includes an interview with JMS.

**Roy Thomas, Tom & Mary Bierbaum** *Xena: Warrior Princess: Tooth and Claw* (Titan: 1 Mar; £7.99 GN, c96pp)

**Christopher Vogler** *The Writer's Journey* (Pan: 1 Mar; £14.99 hb, c320pp) — Second revised edition of a classic book on film writing by the Director of Development at Fox 2000, inspired by Joseph Campbell's work on myths. CV looks at how the best movies make use of myths, from Hitchcock to Lucas, Spielberg to Tarantino — and gives a step-by-step guide to putting a script together.

★ **Jay Westfall** *The Mechanics of Wonder* (Liverpool University Press: 1 Jan; £32.00 hb, £14.95 pb) — Non-fiction coll. of essays on "The Creation of the Idea of Science Fiction." You will probably be familiar with GWR's conservative style and opinions from his regular interzone columns.

**Lewis Wolpert** *Malignant Sadness* (Faber: 1 Feb; £9.99 pb, c224pp) — Wolpert writes about his depression, a tie-in to a forthcoming BBC TV series.

**IMPORTS**

**Paul Anderson** *Starfarers* (Tor: Oct 98) — Alien signals are received on Earth, and a relativistic star light sets out on a thousand light year journey, returning to an unrecognisable Earth.

**Steven Brust** *Dragon* (Tor: Oct 98) — A new 'Talots' fantasy.

★ **Octavia E. Butler** *Parable of the Talents* (Avon: Dec 98; £20.00 hb, c385pp) — Sequel to *Parable of the Sower*, set five years later in 2032.

**Dave Duncan** *The Gilded Chan* (Avon: Oct 98) — Swashbuckling fantasy.

**Neil Gaiman** *Smoke and Mirrors* (Avon: Oct 98) — Coll. of NG's short fiction, an expanded version of *Angels and Visitation*.

**Neil Gaiman** *Stardust* (Vergil: Oct 98) — A magical fairy tale, illustrated by Charles Vess.

★ **K.W. Jeter** *Noir* (Bantam: Spectra: Oct 98) — Cyber-noir thriller set in near-future Los Angeles, bearing some relation to *Dr. Adder*.

**Robert Jordan** *The Path of Daggers* (Tor: Oct 98) — Eight in the bestselling 'Wheel of Time' fantasy series.

**Kathe Koja** *Extremities* (Four Walls Eight Windows: Oct 98) — Horror / dark fantasy coll.

★ **Kim Newman** *Journal of Tars: Anno Dracula 1959* (Carroll and Graf: Oct 98) — Dracula goes to Rome and gets mixed up with James Bond in the third volume of KN's alternative history.

★ **Patrick Nielsen Hayden** (ed) *Starlight 2* (Tor: Oct 98) — Follow-up original anth. to the highly successful *Starlight*.

**Rachel Pollack** *Burning Ship* (Cambrian: Oct 98) — Complete coll. of RP's short fiction.

★ **Bruce Sterling** *Distraction* (Bantam: Spectra: Dec; £23.95 hb, c439pp) — BS's first novel since the superb *Cold Fire* is about a newly-elected senator in a near future dominated by economic problems.

★ **Theodore Sturgeon** *The Perfect Host: The Complete Stories of Theodore Sturgeon* Volume IV (North Atlantic: Oct 98) — Covers stories first published in 1947-1949, with two previously unpublished.

**Gahan Wilson** *The Clift and Other Odd Tales* (Tor: Oct 98 ill.) — Coll. of tales from a writer better known as a cartoonist.

**Jane Yolen** *The One-Armed Queen* (Tor: Oct 98) — Fantasy, sequel to *White Jenna*.

**Sara Zettel** *Playing God* (Warner: Aspent: Nov 98; £22.00 hb, c417pp) — St set in a mostly female alien world threatened with terrorizing by a big bad Earth corporation.

## LETTERS TO

## MATRIX

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

Send letters to **Matrix**53 Riviera Gardens, Leeds,  
West Yorkshire, LS7 3DW, UK**NOTE CHANGE**

Or email .....matrix@riviera.demon.co.uk

Or fax .....01327 361661

(marking emails and faxes clearly 'For Matrix')

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

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

BEST LETTER WINS A BSFA T-SHIRT

• Last issue had a terrific typo. I refer of course to Michael Marshall Smith's forthcoming book of "short stories". As is well known, things like this are actually inserted by the Post Office in the mail (there's a special department) - how else to explain the fact that you *never* notice them beforehand?

I also managed to leave in an editorial checking note. Memo to self: read the zine before you send it off.

A smaller crop of letters, but the one from encyclopedist Peter Nicholls in Australia makes up for it. Meanwhile, there are some richly merited commendations of Mike Cross's indexing work...

**John Howard**11 Chesterfield Court, Middleton Hall  
Road, King's Norton, Birmingham, B30 1AF

ALL THANKS for the latest *Matrix*. Mike Cross certainly deserves his life membership for his work on the BSFA Index. Now - is it possible to have a printed-out copy, for poor (in a financial sense) sods like me who don't have a computer? Or is there a kind soul out there who could do this for me (for which I'll gladly reimburse them)? It would be so good to have real access at last to 21 years worth and many shell inches worth of *Vector*... well done again, Mike!

About *Focus*. I was pleased that Joe Nicholas proposed its abolition recently. When I did so a few mailings further back, there was no real discussion.

I still think the BSFA shouldn't waste our money on *Focus*. There are plenty of other places for aspiring writers to aspire, and the non-fiction useful stuff can, I'm sure, be slotted in to *Matrix* or *Vector*, if necessary.

Therefore I still think that *Focus* should go... unless there can be a system for ensuring that certain parts of the mailing are not received if not desired. But I imagine this would cause more hard work than it would be worth. ☹

**Dave M. Roberts**97 Sharp Street, Newland Avenue, Hull,  
HU52AE

THANKS for the coverage of the Hull Group's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is fair to say that a good time was had by all. I do think I should correct you when you say "all organised by Dave M. Roberts". A lot of work was done by a number of people.

who all know who they are. I just have the loudest voice.

Theo Ross is quite right to say that we should be careful not to state that a book says something that it doesn't. In the case of *Starship Troopers*, I really don't believe I am guilty of this. The government does restrict voting rights to those who have undertaken direct government service. Theo's own quotes support that statement. For me, it doesn't matter that anyone can volunteer, it is still a restriction on the basic rights of an individual. You have to earn your right to help select your own government. Surely you earn that by having to live by the decisions it takes. Maybe the phrase "pick and choose" was ill-chosen, and I should have said "restrain".

Far from finding the book a painful read, I did enjoy it. As with a lot of Boys'-Own-Adventure stories, if you avoid analysing its politics too much there is a lot to recommend it. However, if I was going to re-read Heinlein, I'd pick on something different, like *The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag*. ☹

**Roy Gray**

roygray@cwcom.net

CONTROVERSIAL Subject or Just SF?

Continued

So the consensus seems to be that it's all fuddy-duddy nonsense and I'm too right, though...

I'm sorry Mr Haine thinks I'm a "sad twisted perversion" but I suppose one man's perversion is another man's *métier*. I'm sure some curious teenagers would do more than look at the covers and, while these books and their content may not "convert" them, there are many who think that a steady drip of images (and ideas does make the abnormal (loaded term I agree) seem very normal. Andrea Dworkin claims this about glamour pornography and pornography affecting men's behaviour towards women. Others should be free to argue that other images and texts can have reciprocal effects.

Perhaps I could have made it clearer that one concern is the difference in ages between participants rather than their absolute age.

Here is a hook for James Tanser. Let's assume that technology results in an increase in life span to 150 - 200. Also

there are plenty of follow-ups to *Viagra* in the pharmaceutical industry development pipeline to give these centurion pensioners the wherewithal to lead a fullish life. Should sex between a 150 and a 16-year-old be legal? This seems a legitimate interest for an sf readers' organisation.

Personally I find it quite difficult to judge the ages of youngsters on a first meeting. Before they become a familiar presence and personality the difference between 16 and 18 seems very small. In fact it is 11 to 12% of your life at that age but relative to a 50-year-old it's 4% and for our postulated 150-year it drops towards 1.3%. A difference of 4% of your age at one and a half centuries represents 6 years, 16 to 22.

Also it's usual for 18 year olds to be short of money. For many pensioners the opposite applies and infirmity and/or character stop them using this wealth to buy sex. There is plenty of evidence to show character will not suffice once infirmity is less of a problem. It also seems unfair that a penniless teenager can be punished for selling their sexual favours but a rich pensioner client would go free.

So is discussion of the age of consent, and its equalisation, something we should leave to right-wing newspapers or can we attempt to discuss it within the BSFA?

I don't know the Hull and Leeds bookshops Andy Butler frequents so I won't comment beyond saying this needs some research.

Obviously the size of a bookshop is important. It is difficult to separate material when space is limited.

The stocks, 10 books or 2,000 - all different, their presentation and the images displayed.

The books' content: pornographic, academic, literary etc. (It's a dirty job, can someone else do it.)

The displays either side of or within the 'bay'.

Is the shop frequented by children? Sounds like a job for the membership. I'll check out Waterstone's in Macclesfield.

Retailers have lots of technology to show who is buying what, and in what combinations. They can use this information to place temptation in the path of their customers. If a supermarket sells books and discovers a large proportion of sf buyers also pick up a six-pack of draught Bass then you can expect to find a stack of six-packs very close to the sf shelves. I don't know that bookshops use these techniques but big sophisticated chains, such as Books Etc., may.

PS. I don't read a lot of the horror genre and maybe the contents are beyond reproach but some of these books' cover images don't seem suitable for areas frequented by youngsters. Should there be a category of high shelf horror? ☹

**Peter Nicholls**

pnicholl@ozeemail.com.au

Dear Sir,

I was interested to see the letter in *Matrix* 134, signed Joseph Nicholas (Major General (Rtd) Mrs).

I well remember Corporal Nicholas (Ms. as he was then) at various parties in the 1970s and 1980s, carrying out his undemanding duties as NCO much of the time while lying on the floor. He was and presumably still is frankly not a gentleman, and therefore by definition not an officer. I don't want to hurt Corporal Nicholas's feelings, but frankly, his claim to have been a Major General is the outcome of enugh.

I write as a person who has earned his rank. My reviews these days are signed Peter Nicholls (Colonel, retired), and I have earned this appellation the hard way, by never writing a favourable review in forty years. I'm damned if I'll see some superannuated enlisted man who has spent half his career in care of the military police making false claims to outrank me.

Yours outragedly,

Peter Nicholls

Notorious Editor and Colonel (retired)

I can't top that. See you next issue, and a very happy and prosperous new year to you all — Chris



# BLADE

reviewed by john ashbrook

THE OPENING scene of *Blade* is set in a typical basement night club, complete with hundreds of damp, whirling bodies, pounding, indecipherable music and, of course, gallons of blood pouring from the overhead sprinklers. Well, Wesley Snipes' name must have been on the list, because he gets in, clad from top to toe in leather, sporting those dual essentials for any good night out: a pump-action party-popper and a six-foot broadsword. Oh, and, as it's dark, he's wearing sunglasses!

Wes, you see, is a vampire; but one with a difference: instead of sucking the life out of the diaphanous-clad virgins of the world, he makes do with the occasional syringe-full of "serum." This gives him the strength to go out and kill some kith. Hence his sudden violent gate-crashing of this children-of-the-night-club. Blade has various hi-tech methods of dealing with the undead - including silver bullets, ultra-violet torches, anti-coagulant darts and, when all else fails, a rapidly-applied elbow to the solar plexus.

Imagine, if you will, the latter half of *From Dusk to Dawn* boiled down to about ten minutes; that's the opening stanza of *Blade*. This is another of those films based on a comic no one has read - as with *The Mask*, *The Crow*, *Spawn* and, lest we forget, *Barb Wire* - which was in turn inspired by Nancy Collins's *Sunglasses After Dark* novels which gave vampirism a Goth street-cred. Unlike most of the other films based on comics, this one drops us right in the middle of an ongoing crusade. A thirty-second pre-title flashback is as much of an origin as *Blade* is afforded; everything else about him you have to pick up as you go along. Consequently this all hangs together much more successfully as a self-contained filmic narrative than any of its superhero predecessors.

OK, that said; the plot is hardly rocket science. Stephen Dorff turns up as uber-vamp Frost, driven to extreme deeds by the fact that he was born human and became a vampire and thus has to live down his status as a 'mongrel'. Meanwhile, on the side of the good guys, Kris Kristofferson shambles about as a lanky-haired, Creedence-loving Obi-Wan figure, delightfully enmonickered Abraham Whistler.

Fairly obviously, the one is going to put paid to the other, in order to motivate the hero into rushing headlong at the film's third, climactic act in *The Temple of the Blood God*.

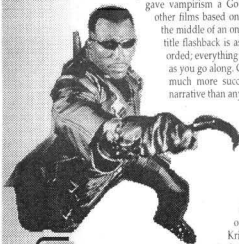
The thing that was wrong with Channel 4's *Ultraviolet* was its leisurely pace and its failure to break completely away from archetypal British worthiness. Maybe the powers-that-be held the creators back back from being as nasty as they wanted to be, or maybe the demands of six one-hour episodes stretched the concept beyond breaking point; either way, the series lacked the energy it needed to see it through.

Although *Blade* is directed by a Brit, Steven Norrington (whose previous credits include the lamentable *Death Machine* (1975)) there is nary a hint of British reticence in here. The film doesn't have a stick of Ikea to its credit! It charges along in a very forceful Hollywood-type manner. Yes, this does mean that there is an emphasis of formaldehyde over content but, rather than disguising the threadbare plot, the pomp and circumstance of the framing, lighting and editing revel in filling the space that mere character development and dialogue would otherwise occupy. This film is gloriously free of pretension, but manages to rise above the scum of Hollywood airhead movies by its single-minded determination to spin a yarn rather than to sell merchandise.

The high-velocity fight scenes integrate *très-très en vogue* kick-boxing and gruesome CGI effects (these vamps don't quietly crumble away; they explode) with pop-video editing. This is particularly effective in the subway scene where Wes uses a passing train to wipe the grin off one seemingly unstoppable bad-guy.

Less ashamed of its preposterous worthlessness than, say, *The Crow*, and far less dependent on the audience's knowledge of the original comic than was *Judge Dredd*, *Blade* is the comic book adaptation to treat yourself to, at least until Kevin Smith gets done with *Superman*.

— © John Ashbrook 1998



**Blade** (New Line; USA 1998)  
 Director: Steven Norrington.  
 Written by: David S. Goyer.  
 Producers: Robert Engelman, Peter Franklurt, Wesley Snipes.  
 Co-Producers: Jon Divers, Andrew J. Horne.  
 Executive Producers: Avi Arad, Joseph Calamari, Lynn Harris, Stan Lee.  
 Original music: Mark Isham.  
 Cinematography: Theo Van de Sande.  
 Costume Design: Sanja Mikovic Hays.  
 Production Design: Kirk M. Petrucci.  
 Editor: Paul Rubell.  
 Cast: Wesley Snipes, Stephen Dorff, Kris Kristofferson, N'Bushe Wright, Donal Logue, Udo Kier, Arly Jover, Traci Lords.  
 Cert 18.  
 Distributor: Entertainment Films.

Film

# THE POSTMAN WITH NO NAME

Kevin Costner's epic film of David Brin's

## THE POSTMAN

is out on video

reviewed by john ashbrook



FILM pundits were foaming at the mouth at the prospect of the double-Oscar-winning producer / director of *Dances with Wolves* dropping the proverbial ball with this, another tale of life on the frontier. This was the third Kevin Costner film to have been dubbed "Kevin's Gate" by the press, alluding to the studio-destroying disaster that was *Heaven's Gate* back in the early 1980s, the other two being the aforementioned *Dances with Wolves* and *Waterworld*.

All-in-all, it's safe to say that this film was not welcomed with open arms by an expectant public. It played the multiplexes of this fair isle for as long as a week in some area, and then vanished like a sour memory.

I was one of the expectant souls who made the journey and sat there, buttocks falling asleep, as this tale of the rebuilding of America made its unhurried trek through three hours of screen time. The best thing I had to say for it at this stage was "I didn't hate it."

Now, curiously, having watched it on video, with the all-important ability to switch it off and get up and do something else for a bit, my opinion of it has improved.

But let's begin at the beginning. Or, rather, the end.

As with so many post-holocaust heroes before him, our Kevin (whose given name is never revealed) wanders out of the encrusted desert wasteland. A voice-over tells us that he was born in 1973, and was a child when the great cities fell. Do the maths. Obviously there is some part of America that has been consumed by nuclear war, and we haven't been told about it.

Creating a hill, Kevin seems to find himself on Walton's Mountain, lined with charming trees and lush with life. He finds a township where, in exchange for educating the kids with sound-bite chunks of Shakespeare (ably assisted by his faithful donkey), he gets fed.

Then, with timing... almost worthy of a Hollywood movie - General Bethlehem, the world's one and only remaining bad guy, arrives, looking for "recruits" for his private army: "Men between 15 and 50 and of suitable ethnic origin." This means no blacks and no one with radiation-induced birth defects. This racial-purity angle is an interesting aspect of Bethlehem's mania, which is not mentioned again.

Straight off, in an attempt to see who has the biggest quill, Kevin and Bethlehem get into a Shakespeare-quoting fight. Initially, Beth finds Kevin an interesting challenge, which could lead to some intriguing plot developments. Then this point too is forgotten.

Portentously, Beth's men have a very direct approach to film criticism. When a film they don't like is put on, they simply stone the projectionist until he puts on their preferred movie: *The Sound of Music*. Funny old world, innit?

The first act of the movie ends when Beth sends Kevin to a thicket to fight a lion, armed only with a knife. How very Biblical. Anyway, Kevin makes his inevitable escape, and so, donkey-less but free once more, he begins to wander the highways and by-ways of... well, it looks like New England, all green and pleasant. Hell, if we'd known nuclear war was going to be this good for the environment, we'd have had one years ago.

Stumbling onto a long-crashed mail van, he sees the uniform and bag of undelivered letters as a shoo-in scam for the next town he arrives at. Sure enough, he tells them some guff about "The Restored United States" and the new White House in Minneapolis (the old one was burnt down by General Bethlehem), making up every word as he goes along, and these embittered, hardened survivors... believe him.

They invite him in, feed him fit to burst, have a hoe-down in his honour, and Abby, the only good-looking young female on the Eastern seaboard, decides to sleep with him because she can tell by looking at him that he must have "good semen". As he says to himself, "It must be the uniform!"

These people may have forgotten the old American constitution, but the recipe for mom's apple pie appears to have been passed on in the genes. Also, I can't help but wonder: if country music is going to survive the holocaust, is society really worth saving? Sorry, I digress.

So, buoyed by their belief and weighed down by their mail, he finds, as he sets off for the next town, that he really is a postman. And, as he goes out the front door, who should ride in the back door? That's right, his old mucker Beth.

In a stroke of coincidence... almost worthy of a Hollywood movie, Beth's eye settles on the nubile Abby. Well, she's not interested - after all, there's semen and there's semen - but he insists, killing a few people in the process, and taking her along on his travels. This, of course, gives Kevin the perfect opportunity to rescue her, and give Beth his nemesis, all in one fell swoop. As in all such epics, the villain creates his own nemesis, and is consequently brought down by his own hubris - eventually.

You get the gist: *The Postman* is not the brightest, cutting-edge film ever made... even by Hollywood. You have to accept clear skies and glorious vistas in a post-apocalyptic setting, you have to accept Abby's never-ending pregnancy, you have to accept the constant worshipping of the American flag. It's a lot to take, but somehow on video, where it resembles a mini-series more than a movie, it mostly hangs together.

However cynical I try to be, I can't help but be entranced by the idea that the children of the future, inspired by Kevin's lies, set about determinedly rebuilding communication networks, and society follows inevitably in its wake.

There are some lovely moments, such as the appearance of ageing hippy and eternal optimist Tom Petty playing ageing hippy and eternal optimist Tom Petty. There's the point when their resident Vietnam vet and ex-NASA engineer wonders aloud about the Galileo Space Station, still orbiting, a dozen skeletons grinning down at us. Then there's the moment when Kevin's deputy meets a postman from California - a kid he doesn't know from a state he doesn't go.

Costner's limp liberalism softens the impact of the message he is trying to project, whilst his casting of Will Patton (a skilful character actor, but hardly a scenery-chewer) as Bethlehem robs the film of a strong heart.

Whilst it is nice to have an optimistic sf film for once, and one that relies on human beings to tell its tale rather than CGI, this film is far from the masterpiece the subject matter needs and deserves.

— © John Ashbrook 1998

### The Postman

(Warner Home Video; USA)

Director: Kevin Costner.

Written by Eric Roth, Brian Helgeland from the novel by David Brin.

Producers: Lester Berman, Kevin Costner, Steve Tisch, Jim Wilson.

Original music: James Newton Howard.

Cinematography: Stephen F. Windon.

Production Design: Ida Random.

Editor: Peter Boyle.

Cast: Kevin Costner, Will Patton, Larenz Tate, Olivia Williams, James Russo.

Daniel von Bargen, Tom Petty.

Cert 15. 177mins. Technicolor.

video



# CUBE

reviewed by **andrew m butler**



**S**O YOU WAIT years for a mathematical sf movie, and two come along at once.

*Cube* stars no one you've ever heard of, but that shouldn't put you off. It begins with a man, in khaki-green overalls, stepping nervously forward. A glimpse of movement: a huge egg slicer, except it cubes or dices. The man falls to pieces before our eyes. Cool.



The scene is set for one of the nastiest and most unsettling science-fiction / horror movies since last year's *Event Horizon*. A group of people wake up inside a number of large Cubes - a criminal escapist, a cop, a doctor, a mathematically gifted teenager, an autistic twentysomething and someone who claims to be entirely ordinary, but who clearly knows more than they're letting on.

Most of the cubes are connected to each of their six neighbours by means of an escape hatch, so all they have to do to leave is to keep going in a straight line until they reach the outside world. Except, as the audience knows and they soon realise in a spray of acid, some of

the cubes are booby-trapped. And some of the party might not want all of them to survive. And - always another and - someone or something is moving about in the distance.

The solution to their dilemma - involving nine-digit numbers on each hatchway - is ingenious, and makes a warped kind of sense. The presence of a mathematical advisor in the credits almost persuades me that the director and writers are playing fair with us, although a lot of dramatic licence is taken with the speed of calculations and combinatorial theory. But everyone is there for a reason, which lifts it above *The Crystal Maze* challenge it at times appears to be.

Some of the acting is a little ropy, but not enough to ruin the film. With filters and careful use of camera angles, the director makes his two or three sets look like an infinity of cubes, shaped into a labyrinth. This summer it was claimed that size is everything; this autumn small was beautiful.

— © Andrew M Butler 1998



## another view . . .

by **ian simpson**



**T**HE DEBUT feature by Canadian director Vincenzo Natali, brought to the screen by the Canadian Film Centre, is something of an oddity among recent sf releases. There's no big star, no budget to speak of, no grand design, and no reliance on computer graphics to drive the plot along. Six actors and one set. Co-written by Andre Bijelic, the director, and Graeme Manson, this sounds worth a look.

We don't know when, we don't know where and we don't know why, but a group of people wake up in a maze, which quite obviously is a cube. The opening sequence illustrates quite graphically that the maze is booby-trapped. Not for the faint-hearted.

So, we have a bunch of characters, minimal special effects and a mystery. Get out before they starve to death or kill each other trying.

My tone might suggest that I have a problem with what might be the most interesting and relevant sf flick in ages.

Well, it's all so obvious! To begin with, the dialogue is, in places, awful (Executive Producer Colin Brunton says the script took three months to write - you can tell!) The ideas have been done to death and the characters are walking clichés who solve the issues half an hour after you have.

The characters: Dr Holloway and her conspiracy theories, Inspector Quentin the divorced cop, maths student Leavan (the cube is solvable using maths), the mentally disadvantaged Kazan with the most obvious line in the film, the office worker Worth with the inside info,

the escape artist and criminal Rennes: guess who is first to get it! The performances are great despite the dialogue. Maurice Dean Wint is a natural leader as the cop. It's his mystery. The metamorphosis from good cop to bad cop is superbly subtle. Nicole Debar plays the spoiled Leavan; you know she's pissed off. For a maths genius, however, she comes across as a bit lacking, only realising her errors when the plot needs moving along. Nicky Guadagni handles Holloway adequately when dealing with 'medical' situations but her succession of paranoid rantings is silenced by an incredibly weak rebuttal from David Hewlett's Worth: "There is no Big Brother." Whatever you say, Worth. Outstanding performance goes to Andrew Miller as Kazan. Shame it's so obvious he's the key: it's all about factors.

*Cube* feels wrong and is wrong. They should never have moved. No? But then there would have been no film. QED.

The rooms are moving. Really? That was the noise and shaking, then!

The redeeming feature about *Cube*, with the exception of the original concept and the fact that it's real sf, is the ending. Even with a plot hole in it (where did Quentin come from?) and the fact that I'd seen it coming for 15 minutes, it was the best ending of any film I'd seen recently.

Good idea, Mr. Natali; better luck next time.

— © Ian Simpson 1998

Film





$\pi$ , ON THE OTHER HAND, takes a grainy black and white as its palette, veering between bleached out to pitch black. It was also made on a shoestring, this time raised from 4 string of hundred-dollar stakes from the director's friends and relatives (since repaid, with interest).

paranoia is faith in a hidden order behind the visible

Maximilian Cohen (Sean Gullette), temporarily blinded by the sun after ignoring his mother's orders not to look at it, is a mathematics genius, working on trying to find the patterns in the chaotic fluctuations of stock market prices. He is convinced that the world – containing as it does expressions of the golden spiral, mean and rectangle, as well as Fibonacci numbers – is defined by mathematical laws and that the underlying pattern can be found. This is something which has already left his mentor Sol (Mark Margolis) recovering from a stroke induced by trying to locate the patterns in  $\pi$ .

the message in your head is the true name of god

The practical side of Max's work is seen by an investment company, who wish to give him money and a new chip in return for his predictions. But he is distracted by a chance meeting with Lenny (Ben Shenkman) in a bar: Lenny is obsessed by the numerology contained in the *Torah* and introduces him to Kabbala, the mystic branch of Judaism. A recurring two-hundred-odd digit number from the *Torah* seems to echo a sequence of  $\pi$ , and the number which Max's old computer spat out before it died. This number clearly has great significance and consequences.

there is no simple solution

Max's descent into madness suggests either that this is just paranoia (but then both the stockbrokers and the cabal of Jews are after him) or that this number is just too dangerous to know. It's all played with a straight bat: I suspect any attempt to insert the tongue into the cheek would destroy it. The central performance is utterly convincing, and I suspect he has a great career in David Lynch movies (or Shinya Tsukamoto, should he start making movies in America). And he, like all of the characters, isn't particularly likeable.

a darkened room near you in august

$\pi$ , like the other great sf movies of 1998, treads a fine line: it engages the brain as much as the senses, it makes you think as well as gasp. On the other hand, like all of them it probably breaks down under too much scrutiny:  $\pi$  and Cube's calculations defy credulity, *Gattaca* and *The Truman Show*'s back-stories were thin to the point of non-existence. But even these near-miss truly sf films are infinitely preferable to the brainless pap of the disastrous blockbusters which self-destruct before the opening credits are over.

— © Andrew M Butler 1998

survival of the fittest and we've got the fucking gun

reviewed by andrew m butler

#### Cube

(1997 Canada: Trimark)  
Director: Vincenzo Natali.  
Producers: Betty Orr, Mehra Meh.  
Executive Producers: Colin Brunton, Justine Whyte.  
Cinematography: Derek Rogers, Scott Smith.  
Editor: John Sanders.  
Original Music: Mark Korven.  
Production Design: Jasna Stefanovic.  
Maths Consultant: David W. Pravica.  
Written by Andre Bijelic, Graeme Manson and Vincenzo Natali.  
92 minutes. Colour.  
Cast: Maurice Dean Wint, Nicole de Boer, Nicky Guadagni, David Hewlett, Wayne Robson, Andrew Miller, Julian Richings.



```
max.cohen.  
let x = x2(  
for(false)  
runtime(res  
c://euclid/
```



#### $\pi$

(1997 USA: Artisan Entertainment)  
Director: Darren Aronofsky.  
Producer: Eric Watson. Co-Producer Scott Vogel.  
Executive Producer: Randy Simon.  
Co-Executive Producers: David Godbout, Jonah Smith, Tyler Brodie.  
Written by Darren Aronofsky.  
Story by Darren Aronofsky, Sean Gullette, Eric Watson.  
Cinematography: Matthew Libatique.  
Production Design: Matthew Maraffi.  
Editor Oren Sarch.  
Make-Up and Original Special Effects: Ariyela Wald-Cohain.  
Judaica Advisors: Richard Lifschutz, Rabbi Alan Zelenetz.  
Go Advisors: Barbara Calhoun, Michael Solomon, Dan Weiner.  
Music: Clint Mansell.  
85 minutes. Black and white.  
Cast: Sean Gullette, Mark Margolis, Ben Shenkman, Pamela Hart.

## PSYCHEDELIA CENTRAL

— <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/2162>

'Psychodelia Central' isn't a shop devoted to hippy cookbooks, it's **Stephen Palmer's** web site. Steve is the author of two sf books, *Glass and Memory Seed* (both Orbit paperbacks), plays in his band *Mooch* – see below – and still finds time to write the occasional article for BSFA publications.

Graphics heavy, it looks smashing (though that may not be apparent in the reproduction here). Steve has clearly taken some care over the presentation, and as with his music there's a distinctly hippy-trippy flavour to it. The 'index' icon is a magic mushroom, and there are some rather beautiful pastel background tilings which add to rather than detract from the feel of the site. Overlaid on these are bleed-through, irregular images guiding you through the site... to such goodies as a paean to tie-dye, a pagan calendar, downloadable music by Mooch, a gallery of surreal drawings, video downloads, a West Country area, the obligatory links page – to an eclectic and interesting range of sites, including Julian Cope's – and, of course, much of direct sf interest.

As well as publicity for his books (and he isn't afraid to quote unflattering reviews), Steve has posted revised versions of his articles over the last few years for *Vector* and *Matrix* on music and sf, politics and voting, sf and love, and artificial intelligence. There's some background information on his novels – how he names characters, some maps of his invented city Kray – along with reviews and a short story.

It's an eminently browsable set of pages, clear, uncluttered and extremely good to look at. But it is more or less unusable if you have a slow connection and limited memory (as I do) since there's no text-only facility. But given the nature of the site and its rather beautiful design and layout, in this case it's excusable. With audio downloads at about 500k each and similarly sized video footage, I guess I'll have to stick with the Mooch CDs....

## IN SEARCH OF THE ACID METAL GRILLE

## Mooch\*

(Garry Lewin; Steve Palmer (see right); Phil Watson; Pete Wyrer) *Dead Earnest DERNCD 33*; Jan 99; CD, 70.01, unpriced Tracks: "Ocean of Mercury", "In Search of Homo Sapiens Psychedelicus", "Acid Drenched Symphony", "Vastscape". Produced and mixed by Steve Palmer.

"Writing about music is like dancing about architecture," said Theloniou Monk, and while there's some truth to that I've never quite understood why you can't dance about architecture. Or perhaps that's what he meant....

I've been viewing Steve's web site while listening to the latest Mooch offering, and they do fit together. Like the previous Mooch CDs it's ambient trance<sup>†</sup>, but there's considerably more bite than before, due in no small measure to Pete Wyrer's fine guitar playing, alternately reminding me of Robert Fripp and Steve Hillage. The other Mooch CDs I've heard – *3001* and *Postvorta* – have been rather too reliant on samples for my taste, and, I feel, suffered from an attempt to tell a story.

In *3001*, the sleeve notes tell us that "The lengthy first piece takes the listener via a star ship to a nearby star, where a planet, and then sentient inhabitants are found. Arriving, a crystal-like soundscape of harmonics and radio interference brings the listener down from the rhythmic journey." And so on for the other four tracks. This is programme music, and perhaps having a story to fall back on makes musicians a little lazy, even when there are no actual words involved – they're all mood pieces, maybe designed more as a film soundtrack (*Solaris* comes to mind). The tale is continued in *Planetfall* (unheard) and concluded in *Postvorta*, and despite this backstory, the music, Tangerine Dreamy and slightly thin-sounding, resolutely fails to grip or go anywhere.

\* Steve may or may not know that the adapted Chinese ideograms used in the bands' "Mooch" logo – as in the graphic above left – are mukokorissukung. Meaning "woodmouthmouth/privatefolded hands".

PSYCHEDELIA CENTRAL

WELCOME!

First, some introductory stuff...

Stephen Palmer's first novel was 'Memory Seed', published in 1996, a novel of neo-gothic catastrophe in the dystopian style of John Wyndham. It has been compared with the work of Gill Allott, Brian Clevett, and others. His second novel is 'Glass' (1997), the first chapter of which is available on the SF pages, which also include news, reviews, features, extracts, etc.

Mooch are a psychedelic-ambient band now based in the Westcountry (U.K.), presently recording new albums called '3001' and 'Mooch Four Nonstop Ocean'. The Mooch pages feature downloadable video and audio, and include news about the band, their new CD, a pag guide, etc.

There is a pagebook on the Miscellaneous pages.

To enter one of the six zones on this website, please click on the buttons below:

SF art mooch misc westcountry

Or use the Site Index

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Designed by **PAUL JONES** Get your own Free Home Page



STEPHEN PALMER

<http://www.geocities.com/Area51/2162>

Steve Palmer lives in the West Country and has been involved in Mooch since 1992. The band has been played on Mark Radcliffe's old, much-missed evening show, and regularly gigs in the South West of England. Steve is currently setting up another project, Keltio, a new band which will produce acoustic music in a Celtic/Pagan style.

*Acid Metal Grille*, on the other hand, is considerably more focused and musically tighter, gaining much from the absence of an explicit storyline. The music is left, as it should be, to sing for itself. The first track has a very early-Pink Floyd feel, with bits of *Atom Heart Mother* and *Meddle* to the fore (no bad thing), and ends after 15 minutes of – perhaps slightly over-extended – electronic twiddling with a superb showcase for Pete Wyrer's guitar work. By this time you're getting into the mood, lighting incense, relaxing in your floor cushions and saying things like "wow" and "far out".

Track two – and this one is certainly overlong – is a cool, jazzy bridge to the best cut on the CD, "Acid Drenched Symphony". Echoes of "On the Run" from *Dark Side of the Moon* here, with some neat synth and a mind-numbing hypnotic riff. Superb.

But here I am, dancing about architecture. I never could dance....

— Chris Terran

† Ambient trance: music characterised by slow heart-beat rhythms, kaleidoscopic and repetitive riffs, gradual changes in tone colour and a largely electronic palette. Trace through Terry Riley's *A Rainbow in Curved Air* via Tangerine Dream and Minimalism to the Aphex Twin and beyond.



## AIR WONDER STORIES

Volume 1, Number 1, July, 1929

Hugo Gernsback, Editor

Air Wonder Stories

### Table of Contents:

MAGAZINE DEDICATION by Hugo Gernsback

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT (A Story in Four Parts) (Part I) by Victor MacClure

DEADLY IN THE AIR by Lowell Howard Munroe

THE BEACON OF AIRPORT SEVEN by Harold S. Styles

THE BLACKNESS WAR by David R. Kellie, M.D.

MEN WITH WINGS by Leslie Bowe

WHAT IS YOUR AVIATION KNOWLEDGE? Aviation Quizmaster

AVIATION NEWS OF THE MONTH

THE READER AIRS HIS VIEWS, Letter from Reader

Advertisement for Stellar Publishing Corporation (Hawarden)

Advertisement for Lancelotti, Stephens, Schell (when Lancelotti went) (Hawarden)

## Virginia Tech SF Project

### WHERE TO BEGIN?

The World Wide Web is big. You won't believe how big ... and so forth. Getting access to the web - as I've done recently - induces alternate feelings of irritation and ... well, that old sensunder we all know and love. There's irritation at slow and flaky connections, people who design sites to be inaccessible unless you've got exactly the right browser, and those who insist on overloading their sites with pointless, enormous graphics.

But there's a real feeling of awe when it all goes right, and you unearth some gem ... you start wondering what isn't on the net. SF is particularly well served, naturally enough, and though I've only made the slightest dent in the resources available it's clear that I could browse forever, and still find new things to see and do.

Where to begin? According to some, it all began with *Air Wonder Stories* back in July, 1929. So it's appropriate to start this occasional series looking at web sites with the:

### VIRGINIA TECH

### SPECULATIVE FICTION PROJECT

— <http://ebbs.english.vt.edu/vtsf/>

... which aims to "make available on the Internet public domain materials relating to the study of the fantastic in literature and art". And they've started with the first sf - scientification as it was then - magazine of all, Hugo Gernsback's *Air Wonder Stories*. The VTSF project has used material from the Heron Collection of Science Fiction at the Special Collections department at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, and has so far put the full text of *Air Wonder Stories* #1 on the net, complete with illustrations and adverts, along with *Cosmic Stories* #1-3 (1941), *Marvel Science Stories* #3-1 (November, 1950) and *Super Science Stories* #3-2 (November, 1941). It's obviously a slow process - they've been at it since 1994.

The site is spare, with minimal graphics, and gives prominence to the content. Some pages are reproduced in facsimile form, but most are text files. So if you've ever wanted to know what Gernsback really said in his first editorial, here's the place to go. Let's hope the project continues.

# World wide web

Chris Terran

goes all goggle-eyed  
as he surfs the web

### INFINITY PLUS

— <http://www.iplus.zetnet.co.uk>

Next stop is *Infinity Plus*, a UK sf resource site and on-line magazine run by sf writer Keith Brooke (*Expatia*, and so on). If you're new to the web and interested in sf, this - along with the Foundation site - should be among your first visits. It's bursting with fiction - its main purpose - from mainly UK authors, most of whom you'll know from *Interzone*. A selected list: Sarah Ash, Stephen Baxter, Bruce Bethke, Eric Brown, Molly Brown, Tony Daniel, Greg Egan, Christopher Evans, Colin Greenland, Peter F. Hamilton, Simon Ings, Garry Kilworth, Dave Langford, Paul J. McAuley, Ian McDonald, Kim Newman, Alastair Reynolds, Alison Sinclair, Ian Watson, David Wingrove, and many others.

There's also much non-fiction and book reviews. It's almost totally book-oriented, with just a couple of film reviews, and other contributors include *Focus*'s Carol Ann Green, Jon Courtenay Grimwood, Ken MacLeod, and, of course, Keith Brooke. It's a real treasure-house, cleanly designed, copiously linked, well indexed and maintained, and - very importantly - kept bang up to date. A jewel among sites.



Infinity +

### EGAN AND BAXTER

Egan — <http://www.sam.math.ethz.ch/17epkeller/Egan-Page.html>  
Baxter — <http://www.sam.math.ethz.ch/~pkeller/Baxter-Page.html>

I'd like to be as positive about the fan sites for Greg Egan and Stephen Baxter, both of which I intended to feature more prominently. Unfortunately, while nicely designed and informative they're both badly out of date, with numerous links that no longer work - a perennial problem - and signing tour details for the year before last, for instance. But there is much of interest: the Baxter page includes a full (though dated) bibliography, with cover scans and blurbs, links to reviews and sites of related interest, foreign editions, awards and much else. But until the site maintainer does some, er, maintenance, these can't be wholeheartedly recommended.

— Chris Terran

web

# Babylon 5 — The Motionless Picture

## Babylon 5: Thirdspace

reviewed by john ashbrook

video

It is 2261, the year between wars. The much anticipated Shadow War has fizzled out, but Sheridan hasn't yet bullied his way into the President's throne. In other words, it's that saggy, boring patch in the middle of series four! With all that to-ing and fro-ing about Mars, we could have done with an incident like this to give those episodes some focus, but instead they decided to hang on to this storyline and give it the movie treatment.

Interesting to see that Claudia Christian features prominently here, given her recent bust-up with *Babylon* supremo J. M. Straczynski. I'm not sure if this was filmed before she left, or after she realised that, without B5, her career had gone back to her taking her clothes off. Either way, it's nice to have someone with balls back on board.

What we have, to be blunt, is a reworking of the first *Star Trek* movie. Gigantic mysterious alien artefact turns up, does nothing for a while, takes over the mind of someone on B5, does nothing for a long while... Sheridan goes EVA in a jet-powered suit and into the centre of the artefact, it does something for a short while, big shoot-out, the end.

I think a mortal wound in the side of this film was the decision to leave out Gary Baldy, Londo and G'Kar. Obviously, in a standalone story, it is a good idea to keep the number of characters down, to avoid confusing newcomers. However, it is also true that Straczynski has never been very adept at getting to his point. Consequently, everyone stands and stares at the artefact for the best part of an hour, during which time he could have had Londo and the others getting up to all kinds of mischief.

I suspect the subtext of what we have here is JMS (keenly aware that B5 without the Shadow menace is like *Nest Gen* without the Borg) trying to create a new Ultimate Badguy. Or, rather, a very old Ultimate Badguy.

You see, they figure out that the artefact is an impossibly ancient Jump Gate which leads not to good old-fashioned hyperspace but to somewhere else — Third Space, if you will. However, Lyta the telepath has some rather disturbing news — what lies on the other side of that gate, just bursting to get through to our universe, is an armada of alien ships determined to destroy everything they consider inferior — i.e. anything that isn't dead yet. She sums them up simply as "anti-life".

There's just a touch of the old Miskatonic there, methinks. Well, obviously these galaxy-devouring monstrosities reckoned without the steely-jawed determination of Cap'n Sheridan. Sic 'em, boy.

What we actually have here is an overlong episode, and not a desperately good one at that. This hangs together better as a video than the first one, "In The Beginning" did, because that one, being a prequel, didn't really show us anything that we haven't seen in B5 before. Here, the plot may be old hat to *Star Trek*, but at least it's new to Bab-land.

I think the problem is that since this was shot on the same soundstages, possibly at the same time, as the main series, it can't shake off the shackles of the show, and therefore fails as a standalone story. When they eventually promote themselves to full-blown feature film production, I suspect JMS's innate talent and intelligence will allow him to expand the concept to an appropriate scale. *Star Trek* was revitalised by being rethought and pitched to a new audience; I'm sure the same will eventually be true of *Babylon 5*.

— © John Ashbrook 1998

"Babylon 5: Thirdspace"  
Director: Jesus Salvador Trevino.  
Distributor: Warner Home Video.

## Competition Results . . .

### RESULTS OF ACROSTIC 2

Set by Peace O'Cake.

1 PERCH  
2 EARTHLIGHT  
3 RAFT  
4 METHUSELAH  
5 UNKNOWN  
6 THESIS  
7 AXIOMATIC  
8 THEM AND US  
9 INTERFERE  
10 ORPHANOGENESIS  
11 NINE  
12 CHURCH  
13 INFANTA  
14 THE CUTIE  
15 YARBRO  
16 GREENLAND  
17 RED MARS  
18 EASIER  
19 GAM  
20 EACH  
21 GAPPY  
22 A STUPID IDEA  
23 NEW WORLDS

The extract was from Greg Egan's 1995 novel *Permutation City*. There were many entries — acrostics seem popular! — and the lucky winner was Theo Ross.

### RESULTS OF COMPETITION 134: "THE WORD"

'Mars' was the odd word out, the workings being as follows:

- |                    |               |                 |                |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| A) Parasite Planet | F) Cog/swell  | K) Rogue Moon   | P) Missing Man |
| B) Second Variety  | G) Solar/is   | L) Green/land   | Q) Staple/don  |
| C) Roof/world      | H) Moor/cock  | M) Time Machine | R) Were/wolf   |
| D) Earth/works     | I) Night/fall | N) Stable/ford  |                |
| E) Rode/rick       | J) Star King  | O) Break/away   |                |

An almost entirely correct entry, the winner being Andy Mills. No gripes, either, so I may try another of these sometime.

Gripe of the month — the transposition of numbers 29 and 30 in the answer grid for Acrostic 2. Humble apologies herewith [My fault entirely; sorry — Ed]; nevertheless everybody got it right, and a prize will be on its way to Theo Ross. The closing date of 9 December 1992 — not guilty, honest. [Oh dear, I'm gonna have to watch my step here. . . — Ed]

David A. Green writes that the prize he got for Acrostic 1 was his first ever competition prize. That's it, David — start at the top. Terry Jeeves "had much fun in doing Comp 134, but couldn't get anywhere with it". They're designed for fun, so how about more of you trying them? Is there anyone out there who always tries the puzzles but never solves them? Are they too difficult? Too easy? Your feedback is welcome.

— John Ollis

HE WAS IN A HOSPITAL GOWN  
THERE WAS A DRIP IN HIS  
RIGHT ARM AND A CATHETER  
IN HIS URETHRA HE GLANCED  
UP TO SEE AN INTERFACE  
HELMET A BULKY HEMISPHERE  
OF MAGNETIC AXON CURRENT  
INDUCERS SUSPENDED FROM  
A GANTRY

# ARE WE HAVING FUN YET?

A Canadian TV movie of Kurt Vonnegut's

## HARRISON BERGERON reviewed by john ashbrook

**T**his Canadian TV movie came as a real bolt from the blue. It was hidden away on BBC1, so early on Thursday 5 November that it actually appeared on Wednesday's page of the *Radio Times*. Indeed, had its potted review not mentioned Kurt Vonnegut, I might well have missed it completely.

Vonnegut, of course, penned the short story from which this film grew. It begins with a school-age Harrison (Sean Astin) earning a detention by getting another A-grade in an exam. You see, despite the presence of his intelligence-inhibiting headband, he's just too damn smart.

It's 2053 and America is modelled on the homogenised halcyon days of 1953, before the double whammy of the Kennedy assassination and the Vietnam War took away the nation's virginity. Progress has been brought to an end and everyone is steadfastly average. The Constitution now tells us that all men are not born equal, and it is therefore the government's sacred trust to render them so. Then, as now, it's called 'levelling the playing field'.

TV, revelling in its traditional rôle of teaching the masses how to think and what to think about, now tells them not to think at all. I can't help but find this particularly apposite in the year when it became impossible to read the words 'Radio 4' without finding everyone's favourite onomatopoeia 'dumbing down' lurking somewhere within the same sentence.

So, why has society ossified so successfully? Because of the Second American Revolution. Before it, 15% of America's population were intelligent and wealthy, the rest were destitute and dumb... but smart enough to know they were badly done to, at any rate; so the unsnapped and unwashed overthrew the high and mighty and initiated a system where no one is allowed to excel.

All of which makes Harrison a bit of an outcast. At one point he is invited to a brothel, wherein he finds glamorous women who will happily enjoin in a conversation about philosophy, a debate about Cubism, or, if you're feeling particularly frisky, play a little chess.

Of course, the brothel is really the gateway to the next level of society. Bergeron is led into the corridors of power where, in binary opposition to *The Truman Show*, those who live in the bubble control the lives of those outside. Enter Christopher Plummer, leader of the upper echelon and, to all intents and purposes, the O'Brien to Sean Astin's Winston.

He escorts Bergeron through a guided tour, showing him how politics has been acknowledged as a job anyone of average intelligence (or less) can do, so election has been replaced by selection. At random. "Hello Mrs Cuffuffle, congratulations! You have been chosen to be the next Governor of Arkansas, you will be inaugurated tomorrow... yes, you will have time to do your hair!"

Bergeron is introduced to the all-powerful television censors as they assess a new sitcom: "There's nothing original, the writing's mundane, the acting pedestrian... I like it." They proudly fanfare the fact that they have rigorously expunged all 'quality' from TV.

This being a TV film, it feels the need to patiently explain, then illustrate, then underscore all of its criticisms, reproducing the undemanding, patronising attitude American TV execs have towards their consumers. I chose to see this as deliberate irony.

The difference between this and Orwell's 1984 (apart from the obvious gulf that exists between an acknowledged classic and something which is simply 'good') lies in the latter's intent: 1984 was a warning which gave us all a chance to alter things before they got out of hand. *Bergeron*, being a product of the mid-nineties, cannot lay claim to such altruism because it is already too late.

I suspect that Vonnegut, should he even be aware of this adaptation, would probably approve of its acceptance of failure. In the decade where apathy and postmodernism have extinguished innovation, a satire such as this falls flat - not for want of trying, but for the simple fact that mass culture has meandered beyond parody. Irony died, choking on its own profits. This film reflects much of Vonnegut's work in that it warns of a state where all art is history. The problem is, we're already there.

Nevertheless, this film opens up more ideas for discussion than a hatful of summer blockbusters; it does so without resorting to CGI effects, and hasn't an exploding spaceship to its credit. The end cunningly combines *Mr Smith Goes to Washington* with the considerably more cynical *Network*, to tell us that, when all else has gone, as long as we have breath, we have potential. Just, maybe, not very much of it.

*Harrison Bergeron* (1998)  
Directed by Bruce Pittman.

— © John Ashbrook 1999

Film

# events



- 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.

## 1999

**5 Jan-26 Feb: Return of the Triflids**  
John Wyndham exhibition in Liverpool. See page 3.

**29-31 Jan: Warpcorn IX**  
Ireland's main gaming con, in its ninth year, at University College, Cork Campus.  
 \* Warpcorn IX, UCC Accommodations Office, University College, Cork, Ireland  
 \* Donal.jac@hotmaill.com

**5-7 Feb: Xi-Phonix**  
Eleventh annual British sci (st-related music) convention, at the Hilton National Hotel, Basingstoke. Guests Dave Clement, Lawrence Dean. Reg. £25 (unwaged £16) until 31/12/1998 then £30/20.  
 \* XiPhonix, c/o 34 Hill Top Drive, Oakham, Leicestershire LE15 6NF  
 \* xiiphonex@stargate.demon.co.uk  
 \* http://www.altrion.org/xiiphonex

**6 Feb: Piccon**  
London Imperial College's annual one-day general sci con - recommended if you've never tried a con before. No further details at press time.

**19-21 Feb: Lightspeed 99**  
Media con at the Hilton Hotel, Coventry.  
 \* 16 Bramwell St, Eastwood, Rotherham.

South Yorkshire, S65 1RZ

**26-28 Feb: Chronicles 99**  
Highlander con at the Grand Moat House, Birmingham. Reg. £45.  
 \* David Simons, 69 Martin Crescent, Edgware, Middx, HA6 6JB  
 \* dsimons@msn.com  
 \* http://members.aol.com/dsimons206/chronicles99.htm

**26-28 Feb: Fal Tor Pan**  
Classic Star Trek con at the Britannia Hotel, Birmingham, UK. Non-commercial - any profit goes to charity.  
 \* Fal Tor Pan, 26a Napier Avenue, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS11 1LZ  
 \* ftpcon@aol.com

**26-28 Feb: Redemption**  
Babylon 5 and Blake's Seven con with a fanish slant at the International Hotel in Ashford, Kent. Guests Gareth Thomas, Jane Killick, Sheelagh Wells, Joe Nazzaro. Reg. now £40.  
 \* Redemption, 28 Diprose Road, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 3QY  
 \* judith@blakes-7.demon.co.uk  
 \* http://www.smof.com/redemption/

**4-7 Mar: World Horror Convention**  
In Atlanta, Georgia. Guests include John Shirley, Neil Gaiman, Lisa Snellings. Reg. \$75 to 15 Feb 99, \$100 on the door.  
 \* World Horror Convention 99, PO Box 148, Clarkston, Georgia 30021-0148, USA  
 \* horrocon@aol.com

**6-7 Mar: Microcon 19**  
Small sci con at the University of Exeter. No further details!

**13-14 Mar: Mecon 2**  
"Northern Ireland's Science Fiction Convention" in the Senior Common Room, Queen's University of Belfast, with guests including Michael Marshall Smith, Diane Duane, Graham Joyce, Ian McDonald, James White and David Wingrove. Reg. £10 (IR12), sup. £5 (IR18), cheques to "Queen's University Science Fiction Society".  
 \* Stephen Rushe, Flat 2, 12 Ashley Avenue, Belfast, BT9 7BT  
 \* steve@blackstar.co.uk  
 \* http://quis.qub.ac.uk/fantasy

**19-21 Mar: Starlury 99**  
Highly commercial con - from 'Tomcat Productions' - celebrating 'Women in Sci-Fi'

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 \* steve@blackstar.co.uk  
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(it says here). Guests Tracy Scoggins, Claudia Christian. Tickets cost £45.  
 \* Starlury 99, 148a Queensway, Bayswater, London W2 6LY  
 \* http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Chamber/2784/sean\_harry@PS10Corps.com

**2-5 Apr: Reconvene**  
The 50th UK National SF Convention and the last of the twentieth century, venue is the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool and the guests are Jeff Noon, Peter S. Beagle, John Clute, Ron Tiner and Tom Holt. Newsletter from *Who's the Hottest?* (a.k.a. John Grant, a.k.a. Paul Barnett). It's themed around 'Time was, Time is, Time shall be'. Reg. until 1 Dec 98 £30, over 60s, 5-14s and sup. £15, under 5s free. Book now! Late bookings will have to pay substantially more. To encourage early booking and enable better advance budgeting and use of money, con organiser Chris Bell says 'We are going to hike the price through the roof before the con'; from 1 Feb 99 registration will cost £50, on the door £80. But a £15 supporting membership bought before 1 Feb can be upgraded to full membership for another £15 at any time, including on the door.  
 \* 3 West Shrubbery, Reddand, Bristol, BS6 6SZ  
 \* mychelle@firedrake.demon.co.uk

**30 Apr-3 May: Supernova 99**  
Star Trek con at the Jarvis Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester. Reg. £45.  
 \* Supernova Conventions, 4 Burford Corner, Westmuth Street, Dorking, Surrey, RH45 6BS  
 \* supernova.conventions@virgin.net  
 \* http://freespace.virgin.net/supernova.conventions/

**9 May: Fantasy Fair 9**  
Cheap one-day market-type event at the Cresset Exhibition Centre, Bletton, Peterborough, from 10.30-4.00pm. Sponsored by Peterborough SF Club. Guests include Dave Hodges, immortalised as 'Hodgesaargh' in Terry Pratchett's 'Discworld' books.  
 \* Bruce King, 1 The Hallards, Eaton Socon, St Neots, Cambs. SG13 3QW  
 \* 01480 216372

**21-24 May: Trinity (Eurocon)**  
Dortmund, Germany. Multilingual (including English). Guests include Sam J. Lundwall,

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Brian Aldiss, Harry Harrison, Terry Pratchett. Reg. £31 to 3 Dec 98, then £34.  
 \* Beluga Post (Chari), Frankfurt Weg 18, D-59439 Holzwickede, Germany  
 \* 049-2301-5745 Fax 049-2301-5743  
 \* TRINITY@cbg.de  
 \* http://www.cbg.de/sf-tage-nrw UK Agent:  
 \* Mike Cheater, 42 Elm Grove, Southsea, Hants. PO5 1UG  
 \* 01705 361632  
 \* mike@frasers.demon.co.uk

**28-30 May: Seccon**  
General sci con with a light but varied schedule and plenty of opportunity to socialise at the Hertfordpark Hotel, Stevenage. Guest Stephen Baxter. Reg. £17.50.  
 \* Seccon, c/o 92 Lichfield Road, Cambridge, CB1 3TR  
 \* seccon@sjbradshaw.cix.co.uk  
 \* http://www.cix.co.uk/~sjbradshaw/seccon.html

**4-6 Jun: Avalon**  
Star Trek con at the Meadowside Centre, Burton upon Trent. Reg. £50, £20 per day.  
 \* Avalon, 28 Yew Tree Road, Hatton, Derby, DE65 5EX

**12 Jun: Incense and Insensibility**  
Superbly titled psychedelic sci conference in Liverpool. See page 3.

**16-18 Jul: Baroquon**  
The annual UK role-playing con, at New Hall College, Cambridge. Guest Mary Gentle. Reg. £18, sup. £4.50. \* 8 Sadder's Close, Baldock, Herts. SG7 6EF  
 \* baroquon@phlin.demon.co.uk  
 \* http://www.phlin.demon.co.uk/Baroquon/Main.html

**16-18 Jul: Nexus 99**  
Sci / media con somewhere in Bristol.  
 \* Nexus 99, 1 Mullington Road, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 2LN  
 \* nexus@cohan.demon.co.uk  
 \* http://www.coshan.demon.co.uk

**24-25 Jul: Telefantastique 2**  
"Multi-media" con at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow. Guests Mira Furlan, Diane Duane, Peter Morwood. Reg. £45.  
 \* 38 Rochford Avenue, Loughton, Essex, IG10 2BS  
 \* fn62@ial.pipex.com

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**BSFA London Meetings**  
New venue! The BSFA's London meetings are held at 7.00pm on the fourth Wednesday of every month (except December), at the Florence Nightingale pub - nearest stations Waterloo (mainline or Underground) or Westminster (Underground). If you get there early we'll be in the main bar; if in doubt, ask the landlord. Meetings are open to all.  
 \* Paul Hood on 0181 333 6670 for further information.

**Upcoming meetings:**  
 \* 27 Jan 99 New venue!  
 \* 24 Feb 99  
 \* 24 Mar 99  
 \* 28 Apr 99

**London Circle Meetings**  
Also at the Florence Nightingale (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!  
 \* 4 Feb 99, 4 Mar 99, 1 Apr 99 (honest); 6 May 99

**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, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV11 1HX.  
 \* bsf@btinternet.demon.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 Cafe 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. The Hull Group marked its tenth anniversary in October.  
 \* Ian & Julie on 01482 447953 or Dave & Estelle on 01482 444291.

**Leicester** SF Group meets on the first Friday of the month; venue varies.  
 \* Tim Groome on 0116 279 2280  
 \* rbean@lola.net.co.uk

**Manchester** - FONT meets in Wetherspoons' pub (on the corner of Piccadilly Gardens, near the BR station) on the second and fourth Thursdays in the month, 8pm onwards.  
 \* Mike Don on 0161 226 2980

**Peterborough** SF Club meets on the first Wednesday of the month at the

Bluebell Inn, Dogsthorpe, and on the third Wednesday of the month in the bar of the Great Northern Hotel, opposite the BR station. Guesting on 7 April is Alex Stewart.

\* SAE to 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 4SB  
 \* 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 Wetherspoons pub 100 yds from the station, on the second and fourth Thursdays in the month, 8pm.

**ALWAYS ENCLOSE AN SAE**

**11 Aug: Total Eclipse of the Sun**  
Totality passes through Cornwall, Northern France, Romania and bits of Italy. Cornwall and France have been booked solid for some time now, but Jonathan Cowie is hoping to organise an eclipse trip to Romania, where the best seeing will be, taking advantage of local fan links. Enquiries (no commitment necessary yet) to:  
✉ 44 Brook Street, Erith, Kent DA16 1JQ  
See also page 8.

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

The 1999 Union at King Alfred's College, Winchester. Guests include Diana Wynne Jones, John Barnes, Warren Ellis. Reg. £25 att. £15 supp.  
✉ Wincon V, 53 Havant Road, North End, Portsmouth, Hants, PO2 7HH  
✉ wincon@pomey.demon.co.uk  
✉ http://www.pomey.demon.co.uk/wincon.htm

#### 14-15 Aug: *Finncon*

Turku, Finland. Guest Connie Willis.  
✉ http://www.utu.fi/tfs/finncon

#### 26-29 Aug: *Conucopia*

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

#### 26-29 Aug: *Polcon*

The Polish national convention in Warsaw.  
✉ klub@rassun.art.pl  
✉ http://rassun.art.pl

#### 27-30 Aug: *Galileo IV*

The 48th British Star Trek convention at the Heathrow Park Hotel, London. Guest Walter Koenig. Reg. £40, supp. £10.  
✉ 38 Planetree Avenue, Fenham, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 9TH  
✉ http://www.homeusers.prestel.co.uk/mrichardson/galcon.htm

#### 28-30 Aug: *Shinnenkai 99*

Annual anime (Japanese animation) con the Radisson Hotel, Heathrow. Apparently the name will change shortly. Reg. £25 to Feb 99, £30 to 1 Aug, £35 on door.  
✉ PO Box 110, Didsley, Oxon, OX11 7YH  
✉ shinnenkai@new-noon.demon.co.uk  
✉ http://www.direct.co.uk/~newno/shinnenkai/

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

The Worldcon goes down under to Melbourne. Guests Greg Benford, Bruce Gillespie; the deceased George Turner will still be honoured. Reg. £90 (with complicated variations - ask 'em).  
✉ info@aussiecon3.worldcon.org  
✉ http://www.aussiecon3.worldcon.org  
UK Agent:  
✉ Martin Hoare, 45 Tlehurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT  
✉ martinhoare@ciix.co.uk

#### 17-20 Sep: *Breakaway 1999*

The Worldcon. Cult tv/media con; the title celebrates the weekend that the Moon blew out of Earth's orbit in Space: 1999. Venue is Pontin's Sand Bay Holiday Village in Weston-Super-Mare. Registration plus 3 nights half-board for £128, with variations. Holding a con in a holiday camp is, er, unusual (and you don't appear to be able to attend without taking advantage of Pontin's doubtless splendid accommodation). But given the subject matter it's appropriate. Hi de

hi!

✉ Breakaway 1999, PO Box 1701, Peterborough PE7 1ER  
✉ 01733 205009  
✉ culttvuk@geocities.com  
✉ http://www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/1042

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

"Scotland's other national convention" at the Central Hotel, Glasgow. Reg. £15, under 15s £10, under 5 free, supp. £5.  
✉ Hypothetical: 1999, Flat O/2, 11 Cleghorn Street, Glasgow, G2 5RN

#### 2 Oct: *Rebellion 99*

Star Wars on at The Most House Hotel, Northampton. Many guests.  
✉ Rebellion 99, Kentstone Close, Kingsthorpe, Northampton NN2 8UH

#### 8-10 Oct: *Octacon 10*

Irish convention at the Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, near Dublin. Guests include Robert Rankin. Reg. £14 to Easter, £18 to mid-September, £22 on the door.  
✉ Octacon 10, 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX

#### 8-11 Oct: *Gaylaxicon: 1999*

The tenth Gaylaxicon, "a science fiction, fantasy and horror convention for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered people and friends", in Washington D. C. Guests Diane Duane, artist Nancy Jaska.  
✉ Gaylaxicon 1999, PO Box 656, Washington D. C. 20044  
✉ gcon1999@aol.com  
✉ http://www.gaylaxicon.org/GNetwork/index.html

#### 23-24 Oct: *Convergence*

Media con at the Staks Bristol Hotel, Bristol. Guests include Michael Shev, Warwick Davis, Jacqueline Pearce. Attendance limited to 200. Reg. £35.  
✉ Convergence, 46 Brins Close, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8XU  
✉ Mail on 0117 940 9017, mobile 0961 994969  
✉ mal@nexcon.demon.co.uk

#### 5-7 Nov: *Novacon 29*

Birmingham's annual sci convention at the Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. Guest is mathematician and writer Ian Stewart. Reg. £23 to 15 Nov 98, £28 to 5 Feb 99.  
✉ Carol Morton, 14 Park Street, Ley, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS  
✉ 01384 825 386

#### 27 Dec-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, 2/R, 4 Aldie Street, Hyndland, Glasgow, G12 9PR  
✉ vdputte@simplex.nl

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

The 2000 Eastercon at the Central Hotel, Glasgow. It's themed on "Celtic SF and Fantasy" and the guests are Guy Gavriel Kay, Deborah Turner Harris and Katherine Kurtz. Reg. £25, £20 unwaged; supp. £15. Progress Report 1 now out.  
✉ 2000, 30 Woodburn Terrace, St Andrews, KY16 8BA  
✉ 2000@cs.st-and.ac.uk  
✉ http://www.theory.cs.st-and.ac.uk/k/2000

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

Costuming con at Hartford, Connecticut. Reg. \$50 to 9 Aug 98.  
✉ CostumeCon 18, 11 Winter Street, Amesbury, MA 01913-1515, USA  
✉ info@cc2000.org  
✉ www.cc2000.org

#### 2-6 Aug: *Eurocon 2000*

Gdynia, Poland. Reg. £10.  
✉ Gdansk Klub Fantastyki, PO Box 76, 80-325 Gdynia, Poland  
✉ +48 58 531073

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

The 58th and millennial worldcon, guests Ben Bova, Bob Eggleton, Jim Baen, Bob & Anne Passovoy, and Harry Turtledove (toastmaster). UK Agent: Martin Hoare, 45 Tlehurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT  
✉ martinhoare@ciix.co.uk  
✉ PO Box 642057, Chicago, Illinois 60665, USA  
✉ chicon2000@chicon.org  
✉ http://www.chicon.org/

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

Celebrate the real millennium at the Central Hotel, Glasgow. Guests Spider & Jeanne Robinson, Sydney Jordan, Vince Docherty, Prof. Oscar Schweighofer. Reg. £25 att. £5 supp.  
✉ 26 Avonbank Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2PA  
✉ john@elsaba.demon.co.uk  
✉ 0141 569 1934

## 2001

#### 24-27 May: *SFRa 2001*

The Science Fiction Research Association Academic Conference at the Schenectady Ramada Inn & Convention Center, Schenectady, NY, USA. Features "Provocative Papers, Winning Workshops, Amazing Art, Riving Readings, Pleasurable Parties, Lavish Luncheon, Copious Conflatation, Non-Banquet Banquet, Fabulous Frozen Feast, Brodingnagian Banquet, and more".  
✉ Jan Finder at the wombat@juno.com  
✉ http://www.klink.net/~fcs/sfra2001.html

#### 30 Aug-3 Sep: *The Millennium Philcon*

The 2001 Worldcon, at the Pennsylvania Convention Center and the Philadelphia Marriott

Hotel. Guests Greg Bear, Stephen Uoull, Gardner Dozois, George Scithers and Toastmaster Esther Friesner.  
✉ Suite 2001, 402 Huntington Pike, Rockledge, PA 19046, USA  
✉ phil2001@netaxs.com  
✉ http://www.netaxs.com/~phil2001

#### BIDS BIDS BIDS BIDS BIDS

#### 2001: *Eastercon*

**Blackpool**  
Paragon is the name, the Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool the venue. Pre-supp. £2.  
✉ Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Rd, Sheffield, S2 3HQ  
✉ members.paragon@keepsake-web.co.uk

#### 2002: *Worldcon*

**Seattle**  
The Seattle 2002 bid has collapsed after hotel difficulties: the Starwood Hotel's regional manager (one Yogi Hudson) issued instructions that sci conventions were not welcome, despite pleas from the city authorities, the convention center and local businesses. The now unopposed San Francisco bid will convert Seattle presupporting memberships for the \$10.01 price difference until 5 April 1999.  
✉ PO Box 1066, Seattle, WA 98111-1066, USA  
✉ seattle2002@sonedia.com  
✉ http://www.webcitycon/seattle02/

✉ UK agent Chris O'Shea, 18 Letchworth Avenue, Bedford, Middx. TW14 9RY  
✉ connotation@smof.com

#### San Francisco

✉ info@s2002.sfscf.com  
✉ http://www.sfscf.org/worldcon/  
✉ UK agents Steve Davies & Gullia de Cesare, 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2RP  
✉ steve@vindex.demon.co.uk

#### 2003: *Worldcon*

**Toronto Presupporting E9**  
✉ UK agent Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, RG1 5AU  
✉ ansible@ciix.co.uk  
✉ hancoc@infornet.net  
✉ http://www.worldhouse.com/worldcon-2003

## Members' Noticeboard

Advertisements and announcements are FREE to BSFA members. Send your ad to the editorial address, or phone (0113) 225 0283.

#### WANTED

**WANTED** - Copy of *Dan Dare's Book of Science* (Hulton Press, 1963). Good price paid for copy in legible condition. Offers to Mike Brown, 5 Flinders Road, London, W4 1NQ

#### FOR SALE

**FOR SALE** - A *Littleborough Childhood*, self-published, nearly 200 pages, many photographs, only £8 including postage. Contact Jim England, 'Roses', The Compas, Kinner, West Midlands, DY7 6HT

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#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**NOESIS SF MAGAZINE**: Issue 1 now available! £10.50 for a full year subscription. £2.75 for a single issue. Please make cheques payable to **Noesis**, Lesley Milner, 61 Pengarth Rise, Falmouth, Cornwall, TR11 2RR. Email Lesley.milner@noesis.com. Please come & visit the Noesis website for guidelines, previews of forthcoming issues etc.: <http://www.direct.co.uk/~rwdwiddling/noesis/index.html>

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**Wits End**, 37 Coventry Road, Iddley, Essex. IG1 4QR. Email cjm@compuserve.com

# JO's Time Wasters

## COMPETITION 135: "I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T A CLUTE"

(... the encyclopedia, that is.) But I do have an absorbing reference book containing the answers to all the following questions. All I need to know is what the members of each group have in common. As many answers as you can, please, to the wilds of Northants by the closing date.

— John Ollis

1. Jerome Bixby; Harlan Ellison; Richard Matheson; Theodore Sturgeon.
2. Leigh Brackett; Catherine L. Moore; Lisa Tuttle; Kate Wilhelm; Judith Merrill.
3. Bela Lugosi; John Carradine; Udo Kier; Louis Jordan.
4. Bela Lugosi; Kiwi Kingston; Peter Boyle; Joe Dallesandro.
5. *Resurrection Days* / Tucker; *The Coming Race* / Bulwer-Lytton; *The Female Man* / Russ.
6. Philip José Farmer & Anne McCaffrey; Spider Robinson & James Tiptree Jr.
7. *Web of Everywhere* / Brunner; "Flash Crowd" / Niven; *Mindbridge* / Haldeman; *Way Station* / Simak.
8. Jack Finney; Anthony Boucher; J. T. McIntosh; George Orwell.
9. Peter Cushing; Trevor Martin; Peter Davison; Patrick Troughton; Tom Baker.
10. John Varley; Tom Reamy; Cherry Walder; Joan D. Vinge.
11. M. John Harrison; Keith Roberts; Angela Carter; John Sladek; Michael Moorcock.
12. *The Puppet Masters* / Heinlein; *The Genocides* / Disch; *Nightwings* / Silverberg.
13. Poul Anderson; Ben Bova; Harry Harrison; Keith Laumer.
14. *Sinister Barrier* / Russell; *A Wreath of Stars* / Shaw; *For Love* / Budrys.
15. L. Sprague de Camp; Sam Moskowitz; Theodore Sturgeon; Donald A. Wollheim.
16. Frank Herbert; Brian Aldiss; Roger Zelazny.
17. Forrest J. Ackerman; Harlan Ellison; Fritz Leiber; Tom Reamy.
18. Gregory Benford; John Norman; Chad Oliver; Vernor Vinge.

19. *The Paradox Men* / Harness; *Slam* / van Vogt; *Player Piano* / Vonnegut; *CHTHON* / Anthony.
20. *Gather Darkness* / Leiber; *Fury* / Kuttner; *Children of Dune* / Herbert; *Deathworld* / Harrison.
21. Alice Mary Norton; Pauline Ashwell; Lillian Craig Reed; Alice Sheldon.
22. A. E. van Vogt; Isaac Asimov; Robert A. Heinlein; Alfred Bester.
23. J. G. Ballard; Mervyn Peake; Andrew Stephenson; J. R. R. Tolkien.
24. Ian Watson; Brian Aldiss; Brian Stableford; Isaac Asimov; Dave Langford.
25. Malcolm Edwards; Maxim Jakubowski.
26. Finally, what is the full title of the book? There are clues in some of the questions.

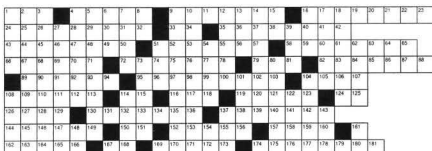
[Editor's Note: I think this one's a stinker, so amusing and / or creative answers will be just as acceptable as correct ones! — Chris]

Solutions and winners of last issue's competition and crossword can be found on page 20

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

John Ollis  
49 Leighton Road  
Corby  
Northants.  
NN18 0SD

by  
Wednesday 10 February 1999



# Big Butt ALPH

ignores the news

• *Wish You Were Here* Alph is on holiday in Euroland, and sent us a postcard. He's sure he won't be missed ("at least, judging by the size of my mailbox) and if they let him out he'll be back next issue.  
Here's the card. I wonder what it means?

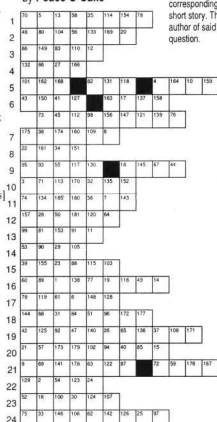
— Chris



Sign Of The Times  
See <http://europa.eu.int/euro/>

BIG BUTTERS: (Names withheld on legal and medical advice.)  
• Alph welcomes scurds, rumour, clippings, cuttings, droppings, small pieces of cheese, and bribes (for editorial address).

## Matrix Acrostic 3 by Peace O'Cake



Method: Solve the clues, fill in the grid on the left, and transfer the letters to the corresponding squares in the other grid to obtain a quotation from an sf novel or short story. The initial letters of the solutions to the first grid spell out the title and author of said piece. Starred clues are partial and refer to titles by the author in question.

1. The whales, warns Hal, are jumping. (8)
2. Pen Tory loss of energy. (7)
3. Upmarket actor; it shows you to your seat. (5)
4. Affliction produced by topless JGB novel. (4)
5. How fat fell off an unorthodox manner. (3,3,4)
6. "Move Over Darlin'" is a new way to put it. (4,4,9)
7. Bad deals about a Dickens substance, one that rots. (6)
8. Vulgar, loud fan turns up. (4)
9. Consider the sign of love. (5,4)
10. David badly singed about 500. (7)
11. Joanna meets the train with a pound for Eric. (7)
12. ... to swan around with lan. (6)
13. Basic instinct for gold and uranium. (5)
14. Thin strip cut from flat hardwood. (4)
15. Sight changes in the parts in which you answer this puzzle. (6)
16. Bury a gride for a mag. (9)
17. Pies sadly and quietly for fruit. (6)
18. Ridicule about killer whale with love and a grouse. (8)
19. Him, great snog ... a Peake experience. (11)
20. One forest for a mainstream writer. (9)
21. Morning cherub undergoing a chemical reaction. (7,6)
22. Hard to give a toss about aggressive remarks. (5)
23. Do tidy up; it's really strange. (6)
24. Material for a writer: money, slop and the Queen. (9)

the snowed-under matrix was drizzled on by an acorn a5000, blown in all directions by various bits of software (notably zap, the ford zephyr of text editors), completely fogged up by an hp laserjet 5l, sunnily illuminated by pdc copyprint, wrapped up warmly by bramley mailing services, dropped in a puddle by the royal mail, and wrung dry by you —matrix 135— soundtracked by bob marley (-exodus-), party poppers (happy new year!), moose, sleep john estes, mouth music, bonfire crackles, fatboy slim, mozan, robert johnson, electronic, and england lring on all cylinders  
—I'm mad i am, i just don't care.