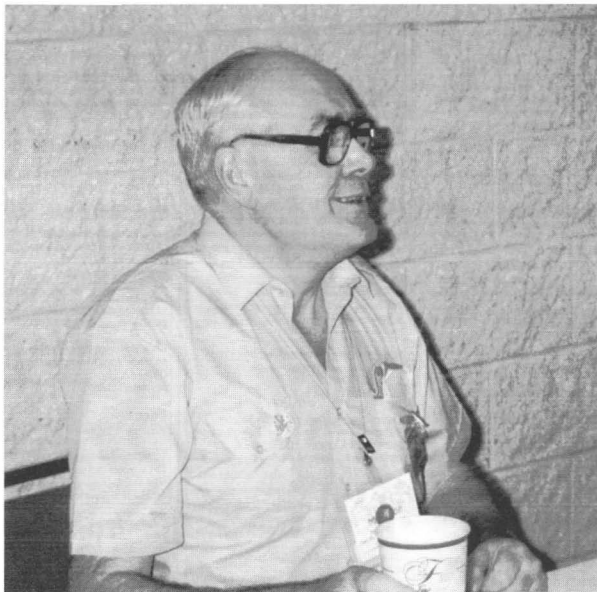


The news magazine of the British Science Fiction Association

Matrix

Issue 140

Nov-Dec 1999



James White
1928-1999

Matrix

140 □ Nov – Dec □ 1999

The bi-monthly news magazine of the British Science Fiction Association

Registered in England, Limited by Guarantee,
Company Number: 921500

Registered Address: 1 Long Row Close,
Everdon, Daventry, NN11 3BE

The BSFA was founded in 1958 and is a non-
profit making organisation, staffed entirely by
unpaid volunteers.

ISSN: 0307 3335

© BSFA 1999

Individual copyrights are the property of the
contributors and editors. Views expressed
herein are not necessarily those of the BSFA or
BSFA Committee members. Errors and
omissions are the responsibility of the Editorial
Team.

Printed by: PDC Copyprint, 11 Jeffries Passage,
Guilford, GU1 4AP

Deadline for submissions for next issue:
1 December 1999

BSFA Officers

President:

Sir Arthur C Clarke, CBE

Vice President:

Stephen Baxter

Secretary: **Vikki Lee**
44 White Way, Kidlington,
Oxon, OX5 2XA
peverel@aol.com

Treasurer: **Elizabeth Billinger**
1 Long Row Close, Everdon,
Daventry, Northants, NN11 3BE
billinger@enterprise.net

Membership Services: **Paul Billinger**
1 Long Row Close, Everdon,
Daventry, Northants, NN11 3BE
billinger@enterprise.net
UK membership: £21 pa or £14 pa (unwaged),
life membership £190, Europe: £26 pa, Rest of
World: £26 pa surface mail, £32 pa air mail.
Cheques payable to: BSFA Ltd.

US Agent: **Cy Chauvin**
14248 Wilfred Street, Detroit, MI 48213, USA
US subscription: \$37 surface or \$47 air mail,
payable to: Cy Chauvin (BSFA)

BSFA Publications

Matrix

Address mail to: **Matrix Editorial**
c/o 44 White Way,
Kidlington,
Oxon, OX5 2XA
or email to: peverel@aol.com

Fan News: **Yvonne Rowse**
Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane,
Trimpey, Worcs, DY12 1NP
yvonne@hallsfarm.softnet.co.uk

Books: **Janet Barron**
3 Ullswater Road, Barnes, London,
SW13 9PL
ullswater@compuserve.com

Magazines: **Glenda Pringle**
22 Mead Way, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 2BJ
chris@kidlington66.freemove.co.uk

Vector

The Critical Journal of the BSFA

Production: **Tony Cullen**
16 Weaver's Way, Camden, London,
NW1 0XE
tony.cullen@dfec.gov.uk

Features: **Andrew M Butler**
33 Brookview Drive, Keyworth,
Nottingham, NG12 5NJ
ambutler@enterprise.net
and
Gary Dalkin
5 Lyford Road, Bourne, Dorset, BH1 8SN
gsdalkin@connectfree.co.uk

Book Reviews: **Steve Jeffrey**
44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon,
OX5 2XA
peverel@aol.com

Focus

Writers' Magazine

Editor: **Simon Morden**
13 Egremont Drive, Sheriff Hill, Gateshead,
NE9 5SE
focus.editor@cablenet.co.uk

Contents

- 3 Editorial, Awards
 - 4 World Fantasy Nominations
 - 5 Marion Zimmer Bradley
 - 6 James White tributes
 - 7 Yvonne Rowse on Fanzines
 - 8 Stephen Baxter on Australia
 - 9 John Jarrold: Marketing the Genre
 - 10 Pulpitations: Glenda Pringle
 - 11 Media News: Gary Dalkin
 - 12 AussieCon Three: Andrew Butler
 - 13 Leonard Fell ponders cover blurbs
 - 14 Walking the Web: Tanya Brown
 - 16 Book News: Janet Barron
 - 17 Clubs Corner, 1999 BSFA Awards
 - 18 Events: Conventions
 - 19 Letters
 - 20 Competition, Credits, Late News
- cover: James White at Magicon,
1992, Orlando. Photograph courtesy
of Roger Robinson and Becon
Publications.

BSFA Services

BSFA Awards: **Chris Hill**
The Bungalow, 27 Lower Evingar Road,
Whitchurch, Hants, RG28 7EY
awards@sandman.enterprise-plc.com

London Meetings: **Paul Hood**
112 Meadows, Eltham, London,
SE9 6BB
paul@auden.demon.co.uk

Orbiter Writing Groups: **Chris Rogers**
98 Greenland Avenue, Maltby, Rotherham,
S. Yorks S66 7EU
chris@orbiter.freemove.co.uk

Publicity & Promotions:
Claire Briale
26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7HA
cbsfa@tragic.demon.co.uk
and

Mark Plummer
14 Northway Road, Croydon, Surrey,
CR0 6JE

Publications Manager: **Vikki Lee**
44 White Way, Kidlington,
Oxon OX5 2XA
peverel@aol.com

BSFA Web Site:
<http://members.aol.com/tamaranth/>
Maintained by **Tanya Brown**
E73 DuCane Court, Balham High Road,
London, SW17 7JL
amaranth@nsl.avent.co.uk

'Muchas gracias' and all that to the following
people for helping make this issue possible
without Glenda Pringle going completely
barking mad:
Steve and Vikki - for practical support, the
BSFA Committee (especially, Paul and
Elizabeth who came all the way from
Everdon) - for moral support, my fellow
Matrix team members, Yvonne and Janet -
for being on the same team with me, my
friend Graham - for help with the software,
my husband Chris - for his patience while I
took up valuable computer time) and all of
you darling contributors everywhere - you
know who you are, (especially Dave
Langford and Ansible)

The Editorial Team

Following Brian Robb's announcement of his retirement as editor of Matrix after only two issues, I hope everyone will join me in wishing him well in his new job with Titan Books. I'm sure you'll all agree that Brian's two editions of Matrix were excellently produced and put together and it boded well for future issues. However sad it is to lose such a capable editor so quickly, Matrix has to move on.

To this end, and because of lack of response so far to the call for a new member or members of the Matrix Editorial Team, this issue has been heroically put together by Glenda Pringle – with huge doses of help from all the BSFA committee members and BSFA members, ensuring continuation of Vector's little sister mag. Many thanks folks, you know who you are.

The Matrix editorial team therefore is desperately in need of new blood!

If you have the time, energy, inclination, and hopefully some understanding of a PC DTP package (such as Microsoft Publisher), and want to become part of a very supportive and active editorial team, then please do contact me by letter or e-mail (both my addresses can be found on the front cover of Matrix). It need not necessarily demand a great deal of anybody's time as the team is geared to sharing the responsibilities and being one big happy family.

I urge all of you who have a little time to spare and some writing/computer skills, to get in touch with me to see if you can help. We want to move forward with Matrix, and aim for that glossy-cover status that Vector currently enjoys.

Remember, it's your magazine, and the best way to influence its development is to become part of the editorial team.

The Matrix editorial team welcomes feedback on the magazine. If there are things you would like to see covered on either a regular or occasional basis, then write to us and let us know. If we do not hear from you, we assume everything is fine and the balance is acceptable.

This goes for the letters column as well. Do write and tell us how we're doing, and don't be afraid to criticise – *constructive* criticism is always welcome, and if we don't have room to print your letter, then we'll reply personally.

Vikki Lee, Publications Manager

1999 Hugo Awards

The 1999 Hugo Awards were announced on 5 September at Aussiecon III:

Novel

To Say Nothing of the Dog – Connie Willis (Bantam Spectra)

Novella

Oceanic – Greg Egan

Novellette

Taklamakan – Bruce Sterling

Short Story

The Very Pulse of the Machine – Michael Swanwick

Non-fiction Book

The Dreams Our Stuff is Made Of: How Science Fiction Conquered the World – Thomas M Dirsch (Simon & Schuster)

Dramatic Presentation

The Truman Show (Paramount)

Professional Editor

Gardner Dozois

Professional Artist

Bob Eggleton

Semi-prozine

Locus – Charles N Brown (ed)

Fanzine

Ansible – David Langford (ed)

Fan Writer

David Langford

Fan Artist

Ian Gunn

Campbell Award

Nalo Hopkinson

It is worth noting that the annual Dozois best of science fiction collection this year just so happens to have all three of the short form Hugo winners, which is very cool for those of you who like to go back and read the winning stories again – or even for the first time.

Presumably Dave Langford is going to have to have the foundations of his house underpinned soon to accommodate the weight of all those Hugos. Congratulations Dave, and to Karen Pender-Gunn, Ian Gunn's widow.

Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine Awards

The results of the 13th annual Readers Awards were published in the September 1999 issue of *Asimov's Science Fiction*:

Novella

Oceanic – Greg Egan

Novellette

Echea – Kristine Kathryn Rusch

Short Story

Radiant Doors – Michael Swanwick

Best Poem

Egg Horror Poem – Laurel Winter

Best Cover Artist

John Foster

Best Interior Artist

Alan Giana

British Fantasy Awards

The British Fantasy Awards were announced at FantasyCon XXIII on 23 September:

Karl Edward Wagner Award (British Fantasy Special Award)

Diana Wynne Jones

August Derleth Fantasy Award for Best Novel

Bag of Bones – Stephen King

British Fantasy Award for Best Anthology

Dark Terrors 4 – Stephen Jones and David Sutton (eds)

British Fantasy Award for Best Collection

Ghosts and Grisly Things – Ramsey Campbell

British Fantasy Award for Best Short Fiction

The Song My Sister Sang – Stephen Laws (*Scaremongers 2: Redbrick Eden* – Steve Saville (ed))

British Fantasy Award for Best Artist

Bob Covington

British Fantasy Award for Best Small Press

The Third Alternative – Andy Cox (ed)

Dates for the 2000 Convention, Fantasy Con XXIV, were also announced: 8-10 September 2000 at the Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. Guests of honour will include Storm Constantine and Stan Nicholls, with more to be added. Further information is available from David Howe at howe@which.net.

World Fantasy Nominees Announced

The nominees for the 1999 World Fantasy Awards have been announced. This year's awards will be presented at the 1999 World Fantasy Convention, which will be held from 4-7 November in Providence, Rhode Island. The 1999 nominees and categories are:

Novel

Someplace to Be Flying - Charles de Lint (Tor)

The Antelope Wife - Louise Erdrich (HarperFlamingo)

Sailing to Sarantium - Guy Gavriel Kay (Simon & Schuster/Earthlight, UK; Viking, Canada; HarperPrism, US)

Mockingbird - Sean Stewart (Ace)

The Martyring - Thomas Sullivan (Forge)

Novella

Cold - A S Byatt (*Elementals: Stories of Fire and Ice*, Chatto & Windus, UK;

Random House, US)

Dragonfly - Ursula K Le Guin (*Legends*, Robert Silverberg (ed); Tor, US; Voyager, UK)

The Hedge Knight - George R R Martin (*Legends*, Robert Silverberg (ed); Tor, US; Voyager, UK)

The Summer Isles - Ian R MacLeod (Asimov's Oct/Nov 1998)

Mr. Clubb and Mr. Cuff - Peter Straub (*Murder for Revenge*, Otto Penzler (ed); Delacorte)

Short Story

Shoggoth's Old Peculiar - Neil Gaiman (*The Mammoth Book of Comic Fantasy*, Mike Ashley (ed); *Smoke and Mirrors: Short Fictions and Illusions*, Neil Gaiman)

Every Angel is Terrifying - John Kessel (F&SF Oct/Nov 1998)

The Death of the Duke - Ellen Kushner (*Starlight 2*, Patrick Nielsen Hayden (ed); Tor)

The Specialist's Hat - Kelly Link (Event Horizon, 15 Nov. 1998)

Travels with the Snow Queen - Kelly Link (Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet Vol. 1 No. 1, 1997/1998; *The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror: Twelfth Annual Collection*, Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling (eds))

Collection

The Night We Buried Road Dog - Jack Cady (DreamHaven Books)

Black Glass - Karen Joy Fowler (Henry Holt)

Last Summer at Mars Hill - Elizabeth Hand (HarperPrism)

Manitou Man: The Worlds of Graham Masterton - Graham Masterton (British Fantasy Society)

The Cleft and Other Odd Tales - Gahan Wilson (Tor)

Anthology

The Best of Crank! - Bryan Chofin (ed) (Tor)

Dark Terrors 4 - Stephen Jones & David Sutton (eds) (Gollancz)

Dreaming Down-Under - Jack Dann & Jane Webb (eds) (HarperCollins/Voyager, Australia)

Legends - Robert Silverberg (ed) (Tor)

Starlight 2 - Patrick Nielsen Hayden (ed) (Tor)

Artist

Jim Burns

Tom Canty

Alan Clark

Bob Eggleton

Charles Vess

Special Award, Professional

Les Daniels (for *Superman: The Complete History*)

Jo Fletcher (for editing)

David Pringle (for *Interzone*)

Robert Silverberg & Grania Davis (for editing *The Avram Davidson Treasury*)

Jim Turner (for *Golden Gryphon Press*)

Special Award, Non-Professional

Richard Chizmar (for Cemetery Dance Publications)

David Marshall (for Pumpkin Books)

Stephen Pasetchnik (for Edgewood Press)

Jacob Weisman (for Tachyon Publications)

Three nominees in each category were chosen by a panel of five judges, while the remaining two nominees were selected by members of the 1998 and 1999 World Fantasy Conventions. This year's nominees for the Lifetime Achievement Award will be announced at a later date.

From First Contact to New Millennium

Speaking at the Arthur C. Clarke Award earlier this year, Paul Kincaid announced new links between the Science Museum and the Award. The Museum is to join the BSFA and the Science Fiction Foundation in supporting and judging the Award, and their facilities for promoting and publicising the award will be greatly appreciated.

The Museum, which already has experience of the organisation of the Rhone Poulenc Prize for science books, has proved a popular site for the Clarke Award ceremony since 1994. This was the year in which the Museum also hosted a Clarke exhibition, organised with energy by Doug Millard who has been extremely helpful in assisting in recent years, making it possible to use the lecture theatre as a repeat venue for the ceremony.

Now the judging panel for the next year's Award, drawn from the BSFA and the SFF, will also include Doug to represent the Museum. Paul expressed delight and satisfaction that his first contact with the museum should now be even more closely connected with taking the Award into the next millennium.

James White 1928-1999

Irish author James White, well known both for his optimistic 'Sector General' xenobiological tales and for his fan writing, died August 23, 1999. He had lived with diabetes for more than fifty years.

White's first professional sale came in 1953. The Sector General stories, set in an enormous space hospital serving a variety of intelligent species and exotic biologies, include *Hospital Station* (1962), *Ambulance Ship* (1979), and *Star Healer* (1985). In an online tribute, Tor editor Patrick Nielsen Hayden praised White's work as 'witty, clever, full of supporting characters you grew to care about, and alive to the nuances of professional cooperation between sentient species' and 'ensemble-cast series SF at its best.'

White was also the co-editor with Walt Willis of the highly lauded fanzine *SLANT* (1948-53), and a popular convention guest. David Langford remembers White as 'not only hugely and understatedly talented, [but] the nicest man in the whole SF community.' (SFWA)

A special tribute page appears later in this issue of Matrix.

Marion Zimmer Bradley, 1930-1999

Marion Zimmer Bradley was born in Albany, New York on 3 June 1930. She was a fan of science fiction and fantasy from her teens and made her first professional short story sale in 1952. Though she wrote many science fiction and fantasy novels, including *The Door Through Space*, *Falcons of Narabedla*, *House Between the Worlds*, and *Ghostlight*, she was most well known for her 'Darkover' series; the first of which – *Planet Savers* – was published in 1962 and the last – *Traitor's Sun* – in 1999. Her other major work was *The Mists of Avalon* – which told the story of the Arthurian legend from the points of view of the women involved.

Her Darkover books follow the history of the planet Darkover from the crash landing of the original settlers through the long years of chaos and the emergence of the settlers' telepathic powers, the setting up of the Comyn ruling council to the times of Earth's



presence on the planet as envoys and traders. The books became increasingly feminist in

orientation during the 1970s and 1980s, especially *The Shattered Chain*, *Thendara House* and *City of Sorcery*. Her characters were always well drawn and her themes often dealt with the day to day problems people, especially women, face in varying situations and societies.

She edited *Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine* which she started in 1988. She encouraged new writers, many of them women. She also edited the annual anthology *Sword and Sorceress* for DAW Books from 1984 – 1991 and produced many Darkover Anthologies using stories by other authors writing in her universe – a unique situation.

She died in Berkeley, California on 25 September 1999, four days after suffering a major heart attack.

Carol Ann Kerry-Green

Book News

After convoluted production hassles, the first volume of Mary Gentle's latest work *Ash* has just been published by Avon in the USA as *A Secret History*, Book of Ash #1. This will be followed in February 2000 by *Carthage Ascendant*, Book of Ash #2, in June by *The Wild Machines*, Book of Ash #3, and culminate in December with *Lost Burgundy*, Book of Ash #4.

British fans will have to wait until April 2000 but then will rapidly overtake the American readership since Orion is releasing the whole cycle as *Ash: A Secret History* in one mega-volume. 'It's a science fictional counterfactual, set in 1476 and the year 2000, and it reads like a historical novel,' says Mary, 'so of course it's being published as fantasy...'

Matt Weyland of Pulp Publications has filed for bankruptcy. The 'Pulp Fictions' imprint included such titles as H Rider Haggard's *She*. Many of the imprint's artists, including Bob Covington, are among the creditors queuing up for payment. As are David Pringle (for four book introductions), and the magazine *Interzone* and the BSFA (for advertisements).

Matt Weyland won the Runner Up prize of £750 in the Shell LiveWIRE Young Business Start Up Awards for Pulp Fictions earlier in the year.

HarperCollins US gave 75 staff the chop without warning on 21 September. Among the victims were John Douglas, John Silbersack and Lou Aronica.

Borgo Press, respected small critical press founded by Michael and Mary Burgess under the pseudonym Robert Reginald in 1975, folded in June after nearly a quarter of a century. Borgo published nearly 300 titles, often in small editions of around 100, including many sf/fantasy and horror bibliographic and reference works. Their *Sleepless Nights in the Procrustean Bed*, by Harlan Ellison, was a 1985 Hugo nominee.

David Langford leads the lamentations for the passing of 'fandom's last hand-typeset, letterpress fanzine, *Stefantasy*' which has ceased publication after 44 years and 123 issues. Apparently, editor Bill Danner feels that at 92 he's 'slowed down' too much to complete the last issue.

A fantasy novel written on a palmtop computer in a café has secured a nine-book deal for its author thanks to hordes of his fans spreading the word on the internet. Leading publishers fought to sign up Steven Erikson after reading the enthusiastic reviews fans had posted across the internet for his debut novel *Gardens of the Moon*. Erikson, a Canadian living in Britain, secured a deal worth £675,000 for his next nine books. *Gardens of the Moon* has been described as a fantasy 'without the endless dwarves or elves.'

In *The Beginning*...according to Neal Stephenson, *Was the Command Line*. Stephenson's 37,000 word internet essay on the origin and development of computer operating systems, originally written for *Wired*, but never used, caused a flood of

traffic when it appeared on Avon books' website. Avon are now releasing it as a trade paperback original at \$10.00

Steve Sneddy's poem 'Thirty Years Beyond Oorts' has won the recent SF poetry competition organised jointly by the Lite Circle Inc writers' group and the Baltimore SF Society. The poem will also appear (along with contributions from Neil Gaiman and Darrell Schweitzer) in the organisers' new anthology *Lower than the Angels*, edited by Crist and Kriebel. The anthology is available for \$14.95 from Lite Circle Books, P O Box 26162, Baltimore, MD 21210, USA.

Toy manufacturer Hasbro, who own the toy rights to George Lucas's *Star Wars*, agreed a deal on September 9th to purchase Wizards of the Coast for over \$300 million. No major changes to Wizards' operations are envisaged. With the acquisition, Hasbro gains Wizards of the Coast's flagship products *Magic: The Gathering* card game and the recently acquired TSR line, which includes the *Dungeons and Dragons* fantasy role-playing game. Wizards of the Coast had previously indicated that they were going to drop the TSR logo from future products, including the third edition of the *Dungeons and Dragons* rules, scheduled for August 2000, to bring them all under the Wizards of the Coast banner. The circulation-troubled *Amazing Stories* will also pass to Hasbro in the deal, but its future is more uncertain.

Special thanks to David Langford and *Anisble*.

Special Tributes to James White (1928-1999)

My Tribute to James White, by John Berry

I was absolutely shattered this morning when I received notification that James White had died as the result of a stroke on 23rd August 1999, because I had received a letter from him at the end of July, and I immediately replied, the first time we had been in communication for over thirty years. He wrote to comment favourably on my FABLES OF IRISH FANDOM volumes, and I told him that my wife and I intended to visit Northern Ireland soon and might travel to the north of the Province to pay Peggy and himself a visit.

I knew him particularly well for several years on a twice-weekly basis between 1954 and 1961 and can confirm that he really was the most pleasant and friendly gentleman, extremely witty, highly intelligent and extremely perceptive.

It is well known that he suffered from diabetes for many years, and I do recall that in the fifties he was in a Belfast hospital for treatment for his ailment, obviously not to be given sugar-based medicines. In the same ward was another James White, an elderly and rather emaciated patient, who had to be stuffed with glucose. A mix-up occurred, whereby the James Whites were unfortunately juxtaposed medically, and our James White almost met his death fifty years too early.

James was very much like Bob Shaw insofar as fandom was concerned ... an all-action fan ... fanzine writer, conventioneer, professional author with many books to his credit, a most witty conversationalist, and a punster. James actually produced the worst pun ever made, and I mean that most sincerely folks...here it is:- SCRIBBANS KEMP BE CHOOSERS.

He was always kind to me, especially in my neofan days, when I didn't know what HYPHEN meant! Sometimes he would publicly castigate me at Irish Fandom meetings for always picking items from glorious conversations on which to base my Irish Fandom stories, but there was always a twinkle in his eyes, and he was always ready to suggest titles for my stories.

It is so sad to read the names of Irish Fandom and close associates who have left us over the last few years ... George Charters, Vince Clarke, Bob and Sadie

Shaw, Arthur Thomson and now James White.

You know, in retrospect, perchance the recent letter I received from James White indicated a quiet realisation...

James White: A gentle fan, a gentleman by Tommy Ferguson

James White was always a fan, and then a Science Fiction writer. We all know that the Sector General books were real sensawunda Science Fiction. Most of us know that he wrote some of the best fannish articles to appear in Fandom (The Exorcists of IF, for example, was a tour de force.) We also know him as a dedicated follower of the Science Fiction convention and fannish scene in Ireland, and abroad. We all know this.

What we also know is that he was one of the gentlest human beings we have ever had the pleasure to meet. I don't remember him saying a bad word about anyone, and in over 50 years of fandom and Science Fiction, that is no mean feat. He had an encouraging nod to any new fan that happened to show an interest. An abiding love for new ideas and new technology. A wonderful sense of life.

His slow and easy style of conversation made you pause and listen to him. His easygoing delivery meant that he always had your full attention. It made you think about what he was saying. It may just have been his way, but it was very effective. It was because of this that every atrocious pun he came out with, each awful joke he made and every wry witticism raised its deserved groan of appreciation and chuckle of laughter. The man was a genius at this. We all know that.

He was never a well man. His diabetes kept him from his beloved writing as much as it dared. His new, large format screen meant that he never stopped writing. The 14 point type letters his many fans and friends sent him kept him abreast of developments. The large format zines that a lot of editors produced especially for him meant that the huge magnifying glass he carried with him could be held away from the page under interrogation, rather than on it. His frequent visits to the hospital meant that his visits to conventions and social occasions were limited, though that didn't stop him making (and often succeeding) in the attempts to keep his

contacts going. His ill health never stopped him being a SF writer or fan.

One of his latest wheezes was TerraCon 3000 - an idea where the whole world would be one convention centre. Although he later wrote up some of these wonderful ideas in Götterdämmerung the original brainstorming session at one of the Octocon conventions in Dun Laoghaire remain one of my many enduring memories of James. This was because I had had too much to drink the night before and had lost my voice.

I wasn't an overly active participant in the discussion, which revolved around James and about a dozen other fans. All I could do was sit back and be amazed at the invention, wit and gracefulness of the man who came up with an amazingly funny idea and then let everyone around him run with it, adding and contributing some of the more hilarious contributions and developing others.

This was the only time where I felt that the modern day fandom of Ireland, a bunch of guys down the pub basically, had ever successfully competed with the fandom that gave birth to us all. The level of humour, the intelligence and respect for words and ideas that was thrown around that night made me reflect on the Willis' and Shaw's of thirty or forty odd years ago. The invention was similar, the good nature was there for all to see and the openness of the discussion was fun to behold. James White was the epicentre of it; the originator, the contributor, and as the article in Götterdämmerung shows, he concluded the discussion as well.

Others who took part in that night made many notes. Had great ideas for articles based on it. Had maps and descriptions all drawn up to illustrate how the con would work. There were lists of puns, and jokes that had been made. A whole slew of material was recorded that night. Only James echoed the fandom of Ireland past and actually produced an article for publication based upon this great night.

He truly epitomised what fandom has meant, at its very best, for all of us, a warm and welcoming place, with happy smiles and open arms. A place to be comfortable and to have friends. That was James White and the merest echo of that in our contribution to fandom and life will be the best tribute that could ever be made to his own life. But then, we all know that.

Fanzines

Yvonne Rowse on the wonderful world of fanzines

Fanzines are one of my favourite things. I've got lots of them, and I only started receiving them eighteen months ago.

Apparently 'where have all the fanzine fans gone' is a recurring theme in fandom. Fanzine editors come and go. Looking at the list of British zines reported as available by the Nova Award administrator you might think we'd gone into one of those lulls in production. What is available though is excellent and a time when fewer zines are being produced is a good time to start looking at fanzines. The sparking between zines, which is such a joy of the literature, is so much easier to recognise when you can easily obtain all the significant fanzines.

One of my favourite fanzines is *Tortoise* from Sue Jones. Sue is an artist and therefore naturally revered in fanzine circles where artists are as common as a clean plate in a shared house. It seems desperately unfair to me that someone who can draw their own illustrations can also write as entertainingly as Sue does. Sue tells me that she started out LoCcing (sending letters of comment) fanzines for two years before plunging in with her own. In *Tortoise 5* she writes about maps and legends. There is a short advice column on keeping legendary animals; 'Working people will appreciate the advantage of having a pet (werewolf) that has done the washing and ironing while they have been out, has cooked the evening meal, and which will later be ready to change its shape and go for a run in the park.' Claire Brialee contributes an article about maps, legends and books. Her 'own legend of exploration stems from trying to navigate through deepest Sidcup while Mark gave me directions from a street map of Sheffield'.

Sue reviews three voyages of discovery. *The Science of Discworld* by Terry Pratchett, Ian Stewart and Jack Cohen, *The Voyage of the Beagle* by Charles Darwin and *Neither Here Nor There* by Bill Bryson. There's a letters column, a piece about the Myth Museum in Shrewsbury, and assorted small snippets which are probably my favourite part. Did you know that 'In China it is a great insult to call someone a tortoise. The female tortoise is believed to be unchaste, and is vulgarly known as

Wang Po: 'the creature that forgets the eight rules of right and wrong' – politeness, decorum, integrity, sense of shame, filial piety, fraternal duty, loyalty and fidelity.'

I find Sue's relationship with her imaginary tortoise, Siberia, interesting, but her relationships with her electronic equipment is absolutely fascinating. 'Dear Bill, the Compaq Presario 4540 has celebrated his first anniversary as my resident computer.' 'Bill, despite his modelling background (he's an ex-display model from Curry's), works conscientiously on routine tasks: typing filing and printing. He's reliable and sturdy.' What sort of Birthday treat would he like? 'Well, he said, he rather fancied teaming up with a scanner. He feels that most of the applications he runs don't really tax his resources, and he would like to grab hold of some big graphics files occasionally and play around with them.'

Sue's fanzine is mildly eccentric, personal and delightful.

Tony Berry, in his fanzine *OK Ken?* demonstrates a completely different attitude to his computer. While Sue regards her computer affectionately, as a friend, Tony views his new computer with deep suspicion. 'Why does the hard drive keep whirring and chuntering while I'm not doing anything? Does it have it's own agenda? Is it being used by the Secret Masters? I think we should be told.'

I like Tony's forceful style. 'Office 97 Pro seems pretty groovy apart from various annoying things like the green and red wavy lines all over the place, and of course the talking fucking paperclip, who keeps saying things like "You seem to be writing a letter, would you like any help?" NO, piss OFF! The whole of this paragraph has been underlined in green squiggle, and when you ask why it says "No suggestions". Ha, ha.'

Tony reports that 'CDs are crap – official', complains about 'the errant apostrophe', discusses the search for the Millennium Man (his bet is on Turing, not Shakespeare), slips in an obligatory mention of IKEA (although why IKEA is a constant theme in fanzines I don't know) and recommends *Drink – A Social History* by Andrew Barr in a

fascinating review. He tells us that 'socks and tights cause an average 6,585 accidents every year'. He tells us his housing problems. 'A forty-ton truck will actually rattle the windows as it tries to get from 45 mph to 3 mph in less than its own length, hitting the manhole and bouncing excitedly across the road. At night of course the sound is amplified a thousandfold – snore... wheeze... whoosh **BANG squeal aargh Jesus CHRIST** rattle squeal judder. It's like living in a Don Martin sound effect.'

These two fanzines are very different in tone and content and yet they're both wonderful examples of the fanish mind. They both make me laugh and they both give me something to think about.

I recently received *Fandom Denied*, volume 5 of John Berry's collected writing, *Fables of Irish Fandom*. John was a member of Irish fandom at the same time as Walt Willis, Bob Shaw and James White. These are thick zines (80pp) full of hugely entertaining writing. The art work is by ATOM, Arthur Thompson. This is the sort of stuff I always think I'll get round to writing, detailing the hectic SF social life, but never do. As an historic collection this is important and well worth getting but the real reason I get it is because it's such fun to read.

Next issue I will look at *Plokta* and *Banana Wings*, the two 'big' fanzines of British SF.

The fanzines mentioned can be obtained, for the usual, from:

Tortoise, Sue Jones, Flat 5, 32/33 Castle Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 2BQ (please address the letter to Sue and not *Tortoise*)

O.K. Ken? Tony Berry, 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 4EP/*Fandom Denied*, John Berry, 4 Chilterns, South Hatfield, Herts, AL10 8JU or from the publisher, Ken Cheslin, 29 Kestrel Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 2PH (£2.00/\$5.00 towards production/postage would be appreciated.)

'The usual' includes a fanzine in return, a letter of comment or a sae. In the first instance I would just write asking for a copy.

Stephen Baxter on the Australian experience

It's an old cliché, but nevertheless true, that travel broadens the mind. I'm no hardy backpacker. But as my mind could always use a little broadening, I relish excuses to travel when I can - especially if I can persuade the tax man to give me a little unwitting assistance with my 'research.' Thus in September 1999 I attended Aussiecon, the Worldcon, in Melbourne, Australia. I found the con great fun - smallish for a Worldcon, but full of enthusiastic Aussies, and laced with the perpetual pleasure of meeting old friends in unfamiliar places.

British publishers have a strong presence in Australia; this may or may not be desirable from a cultural point of view, but it did mean I was met by the gratifying sight of (as Robert Silverberg put it to me) 'obscene piles of Baxter books' (and other UK authors) all over the place. The one real disappointment was that Greg Egan didn't turn up, even to collect his Hugo. But then the colleague who picked it up for him remarked that he lives two blocks from Egan and even he's never met the great man.

After the con my wife joined me, and we began our travels: a few more days in Melbourne, and then on to Sydney. Given the mildly exotic nature of Melbourne (it has a US-style downtown for instance), it was odd to find the Queen's head staring out at us from the coins. I very quickly formed a strong opinion that the Aussies must dump the monarchy and begin the new century as a truly independent nation. The Aussies, in fact, turned out to be a culturally complex bunch. (The worst thong-wearing tinnie-glugger caricatures I encountered were on the way out - in Heathrow Terminal 4.)

Our jaunt coincided with the East Timor disaster, the period in which Australia tried to put together a UN peacekeeping mission. Timor seems to



have caused the Aussies genuine fear and anguish.

It is after all only two centuries since the western nation was born - and Australian history is full of sfnal stories: the explorations of Cook (a Heinlein competent man if ever there was one), the dumping of the first convict colonists on an unforgiving coast, the first encounters

between baffled Europeans and an alien land. But transportation continued for decades, and the nation's earliest days were marred by social divisions and episodes of unspeakable cruelty. It seems that it is only in recent years that the Aussies have begun to throw off their 'cultural cringe' (their phrase) towards the mother country, to come to terms with the native population - and to be proud of themselves; one fan I met was eager to announce himself a descendant of a First Fleet convict. They are even developing their own cuisine, an exotic (and not always successful) mix of Asian recipes with local ingredients (kangaroo stir-fry, anyone?).

A long way from the rest of the English-speaking nations, the Aussies have in recent years made overtures to the Asian nations around them. But the Timor episode has put this strategy in doubt. For better or worse Australia is a western nation, with western values, stranded in Asia; it may be that in the future the Aussies may move on from some of their antiquated cultural ties to Europe, and the ethically dubious compromises they have made with their less desirable neighbours, and chart a new course of their own. And good on them.

Anyhow, after our encounter with Australian culture and history, on we travelled - and it was away from the cities that Australia came imaginatively alive for me. I'll write about that next time.

Snippets

From Locus (October 1999):

"Stephen King wrist" is a new medical condition discussed by Dr. Rudolf Noble, a San Francisco physician in the *Western Journal of Medicine* - its symptoms pain in the wrist and weakness in the hand's grasp. After one of his patients complained of these symptoms, Dr. Rudolf Noble learned that "for the previous three nights [she] had been engrossed in the latest Stephen King thriller, a 702-page paperback novel," holding it in her left hand for two to three hours while reading in bed. King granted Noble the permission to use his name for the disorder, but noted "it could just as easily be called James Michener wrist." Treatment? Stop reading for a day or two, and alternate hands when reading weighty tomes!

From Sepia:

"I recently sent a review copy to The Times Literary Supplement, in vain hope of some kind of review. They put it in their listings section (basic details) and I receive an invoice for an 'advert' I had placed with them. When I queried it they sent me a final demand, followed by a threat for court action to claim the money with the added incentive that this could affect my credit rating. They eventually explained that "since last November" it was their policy to list any review material sent to them and to charge (£11.75) for the privilege unless it was specifically stated that the copy was not for listing. I consulted a friend who lectures in law who said that I would win any case in the courts but it would cost me several hundred pounds in solicitor's fees. They advised me to pay up. I did. But be warned, don't send review copies to TLS. Murdoch's Empire may have got £11.75 out of me but I will never again buy anything from his company or subsidiaries. I wonder who the Minister for Fair Trading would side with? (That was a rhetorical question!)"

Stephen King has purchased the minivan which put him in hospital some months ago and is planning a private *Fawley Towers* re-enactment with a large sledgehammer.

John Jarrold – Marketing the Genre

The last time I saw any market research on book covers, it said that over 50% of all paperbacks were bought on the strength of the cover artwork. I would reckon it might be well over that figure now. Covers work in several ways; firstly, they need to be attractive enough to say "pick-me-up-and-buy-me". This is the Sales department's requirement. Secondly, they should have something to do with the book - if there's a dragon on the front of the book, and no dragon inside, any punter is well within their rights to feel cheated. Thirdly, they can be a form of shorthand - by using a recognisable artist who works on a bestselling author's books for a new writer's first novel, the publisher is saying: if you like that you'll like this.

The pitfalls are many and varied. Often, they involve artwork being shown at a general Art Meeting, where the editorial team might be discussing cover artwork for books by thriller writers, literary novelists, non-fiction writers and (quite often last) SF and fantasy writers. Many of that editorial team would rather be seen dead than read a genre title, and their input to cover design is often positively unhelpful - this isn't always the case, but it happens all too regularly. Or the book arrives late and the cover is rushed, so the artist isn't the one you'd have chosen if you had more time. Or, very occasionally, an author is unhappy with more than one piece of artwork and you end up with something that no one likes.

Several people have asked about the genesis of the cover for Jon Courtenay Grimwood's *reMix*, which I published at Earthlight in April 1999, so this is a chance to explain how it came into being and also some of the thought processes behind cover design.

Back in 1993, I bought the Bantam US edition of William Gibson's *Virtual Light*. You may remember Viking Penguin's cover for the UK edition - it looked like a bad picture of Madonna in sunglasses (he said, very subjectively!). The American cover was dead cool, all matt grey, with stylish lettering and gloss black sunglasses stretching across the front of the cover. When I took on Ken MacLeod at Legend, I gave that cover to the Random House Art Director, Dennis Barker, and asked him to come up with something similar but different (art

directors are covered in the scars of that sort of request from editors). What Dennis designed is the cover you now see on *The Star Fraction*, and that gave us a style for Ken's future books, which has been continued, to a degree, since Orbit took over Legend. Anyway, back to *reMix*...when I acquired Jon Courtenay Grimwood's books at Earthlight I wanted something equally stylish. Something that said "science fiction" but was also cool and a nice artefact. Now, at Earthlight I don't work with the Art department, I commission all the artwork myself and work with an outside agency, The Whole Hog, on design. So I gave the guys at the Hog a copy of *The Star Fraction* and said...yes, you can see a pattern emerging here, can't you? But if you look at those three covers - *Virtual Light*, *The Star Fraction*, and *reMix* - you'll see they are all very different. What I feel they have in common is a sense of style, of having had thought put into them and an unwillingness to go an easy "skiffy" route. Not to say that isn't absolutely the route to go on some occasions. Ah, but that's a story for another occasion (he said, leaning back in his easy chair and puffing on his pipe).

Next time, I'll talk about the book trade.

More Snippets

From Fortean Times (November 1999)

Reports reach me [Hierophant] from distant Belfast that the UK's first alien theme pub has been opened in the city centre. Named "The Outer Limits", the pub serves cocktails with such hilarious space-based names as Heavenly Body, Warp Factor and Beam Me Up. The owner, Irish disc jockey Lawrence John, is of no small fortan interest; in 1997, he vanished for two days near the Northern Irish border and subsequently told police that he had been abducted by benevolent aliens. Last year, he ran for the Northern Ireland Assembly on behalf of the Space Party, polling a whopping 15 votes after an election campaign which occasionally saw him pressing the flesh in a silver space suit. It's probably as well he wasn't elected - the word is that the Unionists wouldn't sit with him until the greys decommissioned [sic] their anal probes and stopped carrying out punishment abductions.

More Awards

Brian Stableford won the SFWA's Pilgrim Award for scholarship in the field of science fiction. Previous recipients of the Pilgrim Award include John Clute.

The 1999 Prometheus Award, given by the Libertarian Futurist Society, was won by John Varley's *The Golden Globe* (Ace). Ken MacLeod's *The Star Fraction* was a previous winner of the Prometheus Award. The Prometheus Hall of Fame Award went to *A Planet for Texans* (1958, v.t. *Lonestar Planet*) by the late H. Beam Piper and John McGuire. Jerry Pournelle accepted the award.

The 1998 Sidewise Awards, presented at Aussiecon Three, went to Stephen Fry's *Making History* for Best Long Form Alternate History and Ken MacLeod's 'The Summer Isles' for Best Short Form Alternate History (*Asimov's* 10-11/1998).

The Mythopoeic Awards for 1999 were announced at Mythcon XXX in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on August 1st by the Mythopoeic Society. Neil Gaiman's *Stardust* won the Fantasy Award for Adult Literature and Dianna Wynne Jones's *Dark Lord of Derkholm* won the Fantasy Award for Children's Literature. Other awards included Walter C. Hooper's *C.S. Lewis: A Companion and Guide* for the Scholarship Award in Inklings Studies and Donna R. White's *A Century of Welsh Myth in Children's Literature* for the Scholarship Award in Myth and Fantasy Studies.

See/Hear

Judging by a preview snippet of next week's BBC *Bookworm* program (Tues Oct 26th, 7.30pm), Iain Banks has apparently taken up amateur rocketry as a hobby. Hotels and conventions beware!

BSFA Vice President Stephen Baxter made a brief appearance on 'Spitfires to Other Planets' (Radio 4, Fr 22nd October)

Actor and fan Ken Campbell is the demonic headmaster Wackford Squeers in BBC's adaptation of *Nicholas Nickleby* for Radio 3 (all week from Mon Oct. 25, in Women's Hour 10am, and repeated each evening at 7.30pm)

PULPitations □ Glenda Pringle on SF magazines

I've got to admit to a certain amount of bias when it comes to anything produced by TTA Press. I've been a subscriber since issue 4 of *The Third Alternative* ('cutting edge horror, dark fantasy & SF') and have watched it evolve from its original small format to a glossy A4 contemporary cross-genre short fiction magazine. I've always thought it was quite a classy, thought-provoking read, both in terms of content and of production. So, apparently do the multitude of contemporary writers it has attracted (such as Ian Watson, Liz Williams, James Van Pelt, Mike O'Driscoll and Peter Crowther, to mention just a few who appear in the more recent issues). To top it off, the artwork is always stunning. Their recent British Fantasy Award for best small press was well-deserved and, to my mind, long overdue.

With all this praise, you won't be surprised then when I tell you that I'm also quite enamoured of TTA's new crime fiction publication entitled *Crimewave* (*CW*) – especially because it carries on the tradition of high quality production and fine fiction set by *The Third Alternative* itself. The most recent issue (*CW2*) includes contributions from Ian Rankin and Molly Brown amongst others, and every story within its colour covers was an absolute, if not highly wicked, pleasure to read.

It's hard for me to pick favourites from among the 14 stories in *CW2*, but "Danny Gets it Right" by Michael Z Lewin, "Parker" by Alan Austin, "The Back of Beyond" by Margaret Walker, "Feathers in the Rain" by S J Gilpin a and "Blue Valentine" by Mike O'Driscoll are all contenders. The themes range from the historical to the fantastic to the downright surreal (a

duck detective?!). The general standard of *CW2* (and it's predecessor *CW1*) is so high that "Symptoms of Loss" by Jerry Sykes (*CW1*) and "Taking Care of Frank" by Antony Mann (*CW2*) are two of the three shortlisted contenders for this year's Macallan Short Story Dagger Award for best crime short story.

TTA Press is also very active in encouraging new authors – primarily through its regular publication *Zene* (a writers' guide to the independent press) but also through their website

"Shadowlink"

(<http://www.tta-press.freewire.co.uk> – NB this is a different address from the one given at the end of last month's column).

A new email list (Talkback) has been created for TTA

Press subscribers, through which they can provide feedback on all the TTA publications as well as network with other like-minded souls. Hmm, TTA Press must take their readership very seriously if they're providing all these services...

Go on, treat yourself to a subscription to any or all of the TTA stable of publications. You'll be glad you did.

□ *CW, The Third Alternative* and *Zene* are all available from: TTA Press, 5 Martins Lane, Witcham, Ely, Cambs, CB6 2LB. Special rates are available if you take out subs to more than one publication at a time.

Magazines for review, including small press and fanzines, should be sent to Glenda Pringle, 22 Mead Way, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 2BJ (email: chris@kidlington66.freemove.co.uk).

CRIMEWAVE 2



Infinity

Sony FriendFactory has announced the creation of Infinity, a new online chat show dedicated to science fiction, fantasy and horror in all mediums. Starting 17 October 1999, it will be on air 7-9pm BST every Sunday www.friendfactory.co.uk. Hosted by Stan Nicholls, the chat show will focus on a different and controversial science fiction topic each week. Recent topics have included "Just how health is science fiction?" and "Why is fantasy so popular?" To take part, one simply needs to register on the web site for free and download the FriendFactory ConnectionCentre software.

Gaylexicon Spectrum Awards

Regular awards were presented in two categories for works originally released in 1998. In the Best Novel category, two works were selected as co-winners. They were: *Accidental Creatures* by Anne Harris (Tor Books) and *Dark Water's Embrace* by Stephen Leigh (Avon Eos Books).

In the Best Other Work category, the winner was: *Bending the Landscape: Science Fiction* Nicola Griffith and Stephen Pagel (eds.).

In addition, to honour works released prior to the creation of the award, a special Hall of Fame category was available for works originally released prior to 1998. Two works were selected as co-winners in the Hall of Fame Category. They were: *China Mountain Zhang* by Maureen McHugh (Tor Books) and *Uranian Worlds* by Eric Garber and Lyn Paleo (GK Hall Books).

Finally, a special People's Choice Award was given to the single work receiving the most nominations from members of the Gaylactic Network. The People's Choice Award winner was: *Shadow Man* by Meliisa Scott (Tor Books) and if anyone wants to see the equally deserving short-list it can be found at:

www.lambdasf.org/gaylexicon1999

Media News

Gary Dalkin, among others, tears his eyes from the screen long enough to bring you the latest on film and TV

Barrymore in *Barbarella Redux*?

In the years that have passed since its 1968 release, Roger Vadim's campy sci-fi flick *Barbarella* has attained cult classic status - thanks in no small measure to the striptease performed by Jane Fonda (the director's better half at the time) during the opening credits. Now *Variety* says Warner Bros. is willing to bet you'll fork over \$8 to rediscover the magic, particularly if Drew Barrymore agrees to inherit the title role from Fonda. Right, OK, they wanna remake the movie - cut to the chase already. We all know what the important question is: Will the historically unabashed Barrymore, who once executed an impromptu, on-air, peek-a-boo happy birthday dance for Late Night host David Letterman, reenact Fonda's famous entrance? Alas, Warner Bros. has yet to release any production details. If Barrymore - who has apparently expressed interest in doing a *Barbarella* remake before - signs to portray the spacefaring sexpot, she will reportedly also join the project as a producer, under her Flower Films label. The original movie, a somewhat liberal adaptation of the racy comic created by Jean-Claude Forest, found Fonda's fetching 41st-century astro-babe doing battle with Milo O'Shea's villainous Duran Duran, a scientific sort attempting to snatch a nefarious death ray. (Yes, '80s pop supergroup Duran Duran took their name from O'Shea's character.) Warner Bros. reportedly intends to abandon the camp elements with which Vadim infused his adaptation in favor of a gritty, edgy tone, a stylistic decision purportedly more in keeping with the spirit of Forest's comic. The remake has no start date, as of yet, but Barrymore will likely shoot Columbia's Charlie's Angels with Cameron Diaz before setting her sights on the stars.

The Iron Giant on Video and DVD

Animated masterpiece *The Iron Giant* is scheduled for release on VHS and DVD in the US on 23 November. The film will be available in widescreen on both platforms, and the VHS comes with a free action figure, while the DVD includes bonuses like a 'Making of' documentary. *The Iron Giant* is the story of the friendship between a young boy and a 50-foot robot war machine.

Lord of the Rings

While no official announcement has been made, Ethan Hawke has said he'll play Faramir (opposite Sean Bean as Boromir) in New Line Cinema's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Other recent additions to the cast include Brian Serpentine (*Braindead*, *Meet the Feebles*) in the bit part of the hobbit Ted Sandyman and Uma Thurman as Eowyn.

Doomsday

In the US, UPN has ordered 13 episodes of the animated series *Doomsday* for its autumn 2000 season. Howard Stern is an executive producer on the post-apocalyptic comedy, and he'll supply the voice of the family dog.

Comic Book Superheroes

Fox has announced the *X-Men* feature film will open in the US on 30 June, 2000. Film release schedules constantly shift, but as it stands, *X-Men* will open opposite Mel Gibson's *The Patriot*. And while a few websites have denied it, James Marsden (*Disturbing Behavior*, *Second Noah*) has officially signed on to play Cyclops in *X-Men*.

Production Delays for Spielberg

Cinescape reports production on Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report* has been pushed back another month, to February 2000, so as to allow writer Scott Frank more time to work on its script.

Blackadder at the Dome

The BBC reports a *Blackadder* feature film, *Blackadder Back and Forth*, will premiere at London's Millennium Dome on 1 January 2000. In an adventure scripted by Ben Elton and Richard Curtis (*Four Weddings and a Funeral*), Edmund Blackadder (Rowan Atkinson) and servant Baldrick (Tony Robinson) are sent on an out-of-control journey through history. *Back and Forth* will also star Hugh Laurie, Stephen Fry, Miranda Richardson, Rik Mayall (*The Young Ones*), and Kate Moss (*The Thin One*).

Judge Dredd Downsized

The newest issue of comic ordering guide *Previews* has an exclusive offer to order a first wave of 2000 A.D. action figures. Highly detailed and articulated, the first wave includes Judge Dredd,

Judge Death, Judge Anderson, Slaine, Johnny Alpha, and Durham Red. Each figure is 6 1/2" in height, and comes with assorted accessories, like Dredd's boot knife, Lawmaster gun, day stick, and lie detector.

Dracula Makes a Comeback

Universal is releasing on video a series of classic early 'talkies' including *Frankenstein*, *The Mummy* and *The Invisible Man*. The first to be released in the UK in late September 1999 was *Dracula*, which includes a specially commissioned (and suitably creepy) score composed by Philip Glass.

Spielberg to Direct Kubrick Film?

According to a recent article in the *Sunday Times*, Steven Spielberg may direct Stanley Kubrick's last proposed film project *A1* - the story of which is based on the Brian Aldiss story 'Supertoys Last All Summer Long.' Both writers Sara Maitland and Ian Watson have been involved in the script.

Star Trekkin'

Star Trek: Voyager begins its new season with the conclusion of a two-parter which guest starred John Savage as a Starfleet Captain who tried to take control of the ship. Marina Sirtis and Dwight Schultz (The A-Team) will guest star on a new episode of *Star Trek: Voyager* scheduled to air later in the season, in which their *Next Generation* characters, Counselor Deanna Troi and Lieutenant Barclay, get involved in an attempt to contact the crew of the *Voyager*.

Superheroes on the Small Screen

The *Comics Continuum* reports the new *Avengers* animated series didn't make its scheduled September premiere as a result of production delays. The series is still expected to premiere in the US this autumn. Based on the Marvel Comics series, *Avengers* is set in a near future, and stars a cast of characters that include Wonder Man, Vision, Hawkeye, Falcon, Ant Man, Wasp, and Tigra. For a prequel to the show, check out the first two issues of Marvel Comics' new *Avengers: United They Stand* series, which begins with the origin of the animated Ultron and all the heroes' new high-tech battle gear.

AussieCon3 Special

The BSFA Committee Reports Back from the Outback

**'Oh my god, they've
Kilkenny':
A Blurred View of
Aussiecon 3**

The Americans have plenty of practice. They have Worldcons most years, and know what to do and what to expect. For the rest of the world (and it is *Worldcon* after all), it's a little more difficult. In Britain it comes around once a decade or so. 1999 saw the third Australian Worldcon ever. Perhaps whatever we experienced would not be as slick or professional as an American Worldcon, or perhaps the Australians would reinvent the wheel. Still, a group of us – your treasurer, membership secretary, the publicity team, our former administrator, and ex-reviews editor (and current GUFF candidate) and your faithful correspondent – decided to throw caution to the wind and travel halfway around the world to Melbourne to investigate.

Registration was a little slow, despite several hundred people behind the desks (or perhaps, because) and I had the added fun of trying to track the volunteers' desk down in order to check whether their idea of what I was going to do on the programme matched with my idea. I'd agreed to be on two panels, and give a talk, although this talk had vanished from the final timetable on the grounds they'd heard I wasn't going. Since my name was attached to two panels, this seemed a little odd. I was rather concerned that the programme was in



meltdown, and a tad annoyed to find my name misspelt in the Read Me. Fortunately I'd been able to email some of the organisers and my talk was back on. Which meant I had to give it after all. Bum.

This talk was the infamous Non-Linear Panel which I'd given at the Manchester Eastercon, dusted off on the request of Aussiecon 3 Fan Guest of Honour, Bruce Gillespie. We'd rendezvoused with Bruce at Slow Glass Books at noon a couple of days before, and gone for an excellent Chinese meal before adjourning to bookshops in Carlton for various accidents, his place to see the result of many years of accidents in Carlton and Slow Glass Books, and then to an excellent Thai restaurant. At this rate, we'd run out of superlatives.

Back to my panel, or rather a talk, which involves my plucking pieces of paper with headings on them at random from one of two plastic bags, and then improvising a discussion of the writing techniques of sf around them. Clearly this was less than serious, and I wondered whether one of the jokes would go down very well: 'In *The Archers*, for example, a number of plots a few years ago revolved around characters trying to watch *Neighbours*. No character in *Neighbours* ever listens to *The Archers*. There may well be good reasons for this. For a start Radio 4

FM reception is lousy in Melbourne, and they make do with Test Match Special.' And as I improvised, I realised that two or three people seemed to be taking serious notes, and then asked serious questions.

This talk necessitated a retirement to the bar, the only bar in the convention. This lack of amenities was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, one bar was clearly not enough. On the other hand, it was a guaranteed meeting point if you were looking for British fans. Even this bonus is a doubtful one: much as I like all the British fans who were in that bar, I did begin to wonder if I'd really gone 10,000 miles to hang out with the die-hards of the BSFA London meetings. What about all the Americans? More to the point, what about all the Australians? Would this convention degenerate to a stagger between bar, bookroom and occasional panel item?



*we thought we'd stopped sending our convicts to Australia.
With Fan Goh! Bruce Gillespie (left), l-r: Marl Plummer,
Pat McMurray, Claire Braley, Elizabeth Billinger and
Dave Lanford*

I needn't have worried. On the Saturday I was on a debating platform with author and critics Damien Broderick, Richard Harland and academic Helen Merrick, among others, discussing postmodernism and sf, and trying to get an argument going. After the panel a couple of people came up to chat, Gin Graham, a student at La Trobe University where I was going to be giving a talk on Terry Pratchett and to teach the following week and a familiar face. It took a few seconds, but at last I placed him: Andrew Macrae, whom I'd met at a conference at the University of Liverpool some years earlier. In turn they introduced me to people they



the non-linear Andy Butler

AussieCon3 Special

The BSFA Committee Reports Back from the Outback

were with, and the next night we all sloped off to a bar somewhere in South Melbourne and drank Kilkenny.

Over the years, I've found fandom to be a largely welcoming place, but only if you know someone in the first place, and know the right person. I've no idea how new fans, unless they have more self-confidence than I do, progress from knowing nobody to being a mover and a shaker. And so after meeting two people, I got to meet and know half a dozen or so other fans, and indeed got to know other Australian fans apart from them. But the ice must be broken first.

And the convention came alive for me from that meeting: the huge symposium on the post-human with Gregory Benford, Joe Haldeman, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Helen Merrick and myself in a vast auditorium seemed doable, even enjoyable. The other panels began to sparkle. Faces became familiar rather than staying strange. The circles in the bar weren't just the English abroad. Dave Langford won his two Hugos. *The Truman Show* won a Hugo. I even went to the closing ceremony.

I'd still say there were faults with the convention, but as with many British Eastercons the attendees made it work for themselves. The programme is maybe just a distraction. I have to say that I felt each panel item had one or two too many speakers on it, and most desperately needed a chair who could argue with the panellists and foster debate, rather than it simply being half a dozen people speaking in turn. Perhaps that would be too structured



skiffy talk. l-r. unknown, Bruce Gillespie, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Bill Congreve

for most people's tastes. But the programme rooms were a reasonable size, and for those of us with bad memories of The Scottish Convention fan strand, the rooms had roofs and microphones. What more can you ask?

On the last night, Paul and Elizabeth Billinger and I had pizza in the food court of the casino on the other side of the river to the convention with Justin Ackroyd, proprietor of Slow Glass Books and organiser of the bookroom. A sort of cross between Mark Plummer and Rog Peyton. Had he had a good convention? His grin spread even wider. We walked along the river



how will I tell Hazel we need yet another dresser?

front, watching the balls of gas explode into the air, pondering the difference between life in the UK and in Melbourne, and which we preferred, and having flashbacks to *Blade Runner*.

And then we had the rest of Australia to play with: another week to do the bookshops of

Melbourne, to play tourist and for me to do my couple of gigs up at La Trobe University. And then west and north along the coast to Adelaide to meet again up with Damien Warman and Juliette Woods and other amazingly friendly fans and to have an authentic Australian barbecue. We barely had time to scratch the surface of Adelaide, having decided to go to a wildlife park for Kangaroos and Koalas, before we took the overnight train to Alice Springs, and thence our separate ways to Ayers Rock.

Paul, Elizabeth and I returned, exhausted and exhilarated, to Melbourne to more good food, more bookshops, more trams, more superlatives and another visit to Slow Glass Books, before we had to head back to Blighty and the next *Vector* deadline. In total, we'd travelled around thirty thousand miles, missed at least four nights of sleep, and consumed copious amounts of Australia beer and Kilkenny.

We're counting the days until we go back.

© Andrew M. Butler 1999.

17 Hugos, Dave?



...that's not so many.

The Leonard Fell Page

'a Henry Root for the fag end of the 90s' – Jon Courtenay Grimwood

I was reading Dr Greenland's tips on aspiring writers for *Focus*, and I was struck by the perceptiveness of his comments on patience. Patience is clearly a skill that is vital to any writer's armory. I have to confess that that's one of my faults; I want to go places, and now. But clearly I won't go places until I learn this art of patience. As Dr Greenland's a published writer, and he clearly is a fine dispenser of advice, I emailed him to see if he has any tips about short cuts to being patient.

As I said last time, at the Easter Convention I had a chance to meet my fans in the flesh. And my there was quite a lot of flesh. My athlete's physique is clearly going to intimidate some people. I offered to sign my *Matrix* piece so that it could go on the tombola, but the gentleman with short red hair suggested it wasn't the done thing. Ah well. All I want to do is what's right.

In the evening a sheet of paper was doing the rounds, publicising a new book by a first time author. Always keen to check out the opposition, I perused the publicity to see if I could pick up any tips. It consisted mostly of two reviews. One of them started off by praising the book, but the reviewer admitted that she hadn't actually finished reading the book. I was outraged.

For about five minutes.

Since if you don't have to read all of the book to write a review, that lets me into a lucrative market of publishing reviews based on whatever I can be bothered to read of any one's book. Think of it, my name spreading like wild fire across dust jackets.

More importantly, it forms a stepping stone to getting reviews of my book from those who haven't read it yet. Of course, I'm still only seven hundred words into writing it, but I'm sure that's enough to form an accurate assessment of the superior quality of the whole. In fact, wouldn't it be better for them not to be prejudiced or blinded by the brilliance of the work (I do so hate sycophancy, my darling readers), and get them to write the review, or a cover blurb, anyway. It would save time later.

One of the writers in evidence at the convention was Jon Courtenay Grimwood, a rising young star at the cutting edge of British cybershock, and

the bastard offspring of Pat Cadigan and Sam Pekinpah. The opening pages of his tome *reMix* offer two quotations culled from BSFA publications. The first came from *Matrix*: 'Jon Courtenay Grimwood eats hard-boiled punk SF for breakfast...with soldiers.' This came from the contents page of *Matrix*, and referred to a particular article.

The second came from *Vector*, a sober journal of critical record and occasional acumen: '...sex, violence, real-seeming computer games (the Lucifer's Dragon of the title), corrupt mega-corporation, genetically-altered humans in street gangs ... Lucifer's Dragon is publicised as "cybershock" – and shocking it certainly is.'

Something about those ellipses made me ponder, and I went to the original review, written by one Mr Christopher Hill (manager of the BSFA Awards and thus clearly a good egg who ought to remember me at shortlisting time). Mr Hill called Mr Courtenay Grimwood's epic 'a reasonably competent thriller', which strikes me as damning with faint praise. In case we're in any doubt about his feelings, Mr Hill had written in his previous sentence that: 'As much as I wanted to, I could not really take to [it]'. You can see that Mr Hill was trying, but clearly didn't like the book. And here we have him endorsing the blurb copy.

I tackled Mr Courtenay etc about this bending of the truth, and he suggested that this was perfectly standard practice. Such activities are known as 'filleting' apparently, and are sometimes revenge on reviewers who didn't 'get' the book. (I'm sure that Mr Hill, a respected awards administrator, got the book. How could he have reviewed it if he hadn't got the book? I'm sure there's a reviews editor who sent him the book. Unless Mr Hill reviewed and damned the book without being given a copy. What would be the point of that? He wouldn't get his name in lights in Mr Courtenay's next tome).

But, still, if the review is fair game, you shouldn't just stop there. I suggested that Mr Hill's final sentence 'If you are looking for something thoughtful with a moral or political point then you are probably going to have to look elsewhere' offered the fillet 'thoughtful ... moral ... political'. But to give him credit, Mr Courtenay Grimwood ducked

the possibility of being labelled 'thoughtful': 'I can't see why any PR department would want "thoughtful ... moral ... political" on a book cover unless your name was Robert Wright and it was a heavyweight philosophical follow-up to *The Moral Animal*.'

Yet, surely, post *The Swallow*, sf is going heavyweight and moral. And thoughtful. And political. But with spaceships. Such a quotation would fit a book emulating the success of *The Little Book of Calm*, say *The Little Book of Cybershock*.

I've offered a fair swap. I'll fillet the quote 'Certainly more fun than the glossies' from Mr Courtenay's email, 'Not sure this helps any but as the alternative was writing something on Babbage for one of those glossies it was certainly more fun!', in return for writing a filletable quote about him.

It makes you wonder about the quotes which appear on other books. On the Stephen Donaldson books by Thomas Covenant: 'Comparable to Tolkien at his best.' Whose best? Who is he comparable to at his worst? And is there a 'Not' missing from the beginning? Jack Womack gained a 'dazzling' from *Locus*. That could have meant almost anything. 'Dazzling in its ineptitude.' 'Dazzling to someone who hasn't read this before.' 'Dazzling in its brilliance.'

Meanwhile research on vampires for the novel proceeds. I was thinking back to my degree (so very nearly a First) when we studied psychoanalysis (A third is only two grades lower). The child becomes aware of its identity through looking at itself in the mirror. This also anchors the child in language. It's all to do with castration anxiety, which I think is a load of balls.

But picture that child vampire, growing up, trying to find its identity in the mirror. No dice. (Well, no reflection, but I was being figurative, OK). And so the vampire grows into adulthood being completely screwed over its castration, and ends up as a delinquent. No wonder it starts ripping throats out.

It's twenty-four hours since I started to write this column, and I'm afraid to say that Dr Greenland still hasn't answered my query about patience. Next time, perhaps.

Walking The Web: another ramble through skiffyspace with Tanya Brown

The World Wide Web's diversity is an excellent example of Sturgeon's Law – '90% of everything is crap'. Let the BSFA website (<http://members.aol.com/tamarianth>) be your gateway to the remaining 10%!

ORBITER There's a new link from the BSFA web page to the recently-launched **Orbiter** page (www.orbiter.freemove.co.uk). The site introduces the Orbiter concept – postal writers' workshops, each consisting of five members (including one co-ordinator) which provide a forum for members to circulate and comment upon works in progress. Prospective Orbiter members can contact the Orbiter Co-ordinator via the website, which also features the quarterly newsletter, *Trajectory*.

The Orbiter site uses frames: having jumped to the Links page, you may prefer to pick 'open in new window' to follow any of the links listed, rather than display new pages in the right-hand pane of the Orbiter page.

The Critters page (<http://www.critique.org/users/critters/resources.html>) is a pageful of links chosen especially for writers and critics. Here you'll find hints and types about SF and fantasy writing from well-known authors such as C J Cherryh and Vonda McIntyre: links to potential markets, and to market guidelines: a whole section devoted to criticism, and workshopping vocabulary; and a selection of chat groups and news groups. Probably not all you'll ever need to be a best-selling author – but certainly an excellent and comprehensive list of resources.

We picked **Terry Bisson** (<http://www.sff.net/people/Thisson>), author of the award-winning short story 'Bears Discover Fire'. The page is titled 'Terry Bisson's Short Story Showcase', and it features links to several of his stories, as well as capsule film reviews – of *The Blair Witch Project*, 'not scary but artful and sly' – a selection of critical articles, play scripts, e-book links ... a must for any Bisson fan, and worth bookmarking as a source of fiction and criticism.



One of Bisson's stories, 'England Underway', also appears on what he terms 'the excellent **Infinity Plus** online fiction website'.

(<http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/iplus/>). It's a fine site, with more online fiction than one could hope to have time to read, contributed by more than 60 authors ranging from Patricia Anthony to Jonathan Wylie.

Much of what's available is in the form of excerpts from longer works, but there are a number of short stories. Several authors have also provided additional material not available elsewhere: for example, Gwyneth Jones' essay on the background to her story 'Bold As Love'.

Infinity Plus's links page offer several online publishing ventures – definitely a medium worth watching, as it's still very much early days for web-based publishing. **The Ministry of Whimsy** (<http://www.mindspring.com/~toones>) is introduced as 'an independent publisher dedicated to the promotion of fantastical literature', which published Stepan Chapman's 'The Troika', winner of the 1998 Philip K Dick Award. It's a fascinating site which includes reviews, features and fiction – and a, probably actionable, plan to publish Harlan Ellison's *The Last Dangerous Visions* in looseleaf format, so as to be able to remove all the editorial content without wrecking the book ...

devoted to a number of (post?)modern authors – 'The Garden of Forking Paths' for Borges, 'The Brazen Head' for Joyce ... the site's page headings are also malapropic parodies: "where like Aleph, the sacred rivener, babeling books run down to a sudden sea" ...



Legends

Refusing to be diverted by the soothing Republic of Pemberley (a Jane Austen site) we wend our weary way to **Legends** (<http://www.legends.dm.net>) – a site exploring the history, literature and lore of a host of fictional – and real – characters and archetypes. Whether you'd like to read about King Arthur, or the facts behind a Shakespearean plot, or a discussion of the life and works of William Morris, this site provides a wealth of information and a host of digressions. Which is what the Web, at its best, is all about!

PENGUIN CLASSICS

Follow 'Ariadne's Thread' to the Links page, where those in need of comfort can resort to the **Penguin Classics** site (<http://www.penguinclassics.com>). Here you'll find notes on those proto-SF novels – *Frankenstein*, *Flatland*, *The Golden Ass* – as well as a bookish screensaver, a page on classic-based film and TV, and an intriguing selection of 'Classics Links' (via 'Resources').

Tanya Brown is the BSFA's Webmistress. Visit her at <http://members.aol.com/tamarianth>

Books

Forthcoming books and publishing schedules compiled by Janet Barron

Key to book listings:

HB = hardback

TPB = trade paperback

PB = paperback

NOIP Now out in paperback

= Reissue

*** = nonfiction

*** Watch out for these

All others, first UK edition.

Unless references are given, all quotes are from the publishers' PR.

Mark Anthony *The Keep of Fire* (Earthlight Nov TPB £9.99 544pp)

NOIP Mark Anthony *Beyond the Pale* (Earthlight Nov PB £6.99 544pp)

***** Tom Arden** *Sultan of the Moon and Stars* (Orion, Millennium Nov HB TPB £16.99 £9.99 528pp)

The Third Book of the Oroken

NOIP Tom Arden *The King and Queen of Swords* (Millennium Nov PB £6.99)

Greg Bear *Eternity* (Millennium Nov PB £6.99)

Greg Bear *Hegira* (Millennium Nov PB £6.99)

Greg Bear *Strength Of Stones* (Millennium Nov PB £6.99)

Joanne Bertin *Dragon and Phoenix* (Earthlight Dec TPB £9.99 512pp)

NOIP Joanne Bertin *The Last Dragonlord* (Earthlight Dec PB £5.99)

James Bibby *Shapestone* (Orion Dec HB £16.99 224pp)

Alice Borchardt *Night of the Wolf* (Voyager Dec TPB £10.99 384pp)

Second part of shapeshifter trilogy set in alternate Byzantine Rome written by the sister of Anne Rice.

Chaz Brechly *Feast of the King's Shadow* (Orbit Dec PB £5.99 608pp)

Second Book of Outremer

Arthur C. Clarke & Michael Kube-McDowell *Trigger* (Voyager Nov HB £17.99 528pp)

'A chilling near future military thriller from the world's greatest living science fiction writer' in collaboration with Michael Kube-McDowell of *Star Wars* fame.

***** John Clute** *Applesed* (Orbit Dec HB £15.99)

'A profound and dazzling science fiction debut from one of the best known voices in the field.'

Stephen Jones (ed.) *The Mammoth Book of Best New Horror 10th Anniversary Edition* (Robinson Oct PB £6.99 512pp)

NOIP David Drake *Queen of Demons* (Millennium Dec PB £6.99)

David Garnett *Bikini Planet* (Orbit Dec PB £5.99 320pp)

'The ultimate anarchic, action packed science fiction romp' by long-time editor of *New Worlds*.

NOIP Terry Goodkind *Soul of the Fire* (Millennium Nov TPB £11.99 512pp)

***** Joe Haldeman** *Forever Free* (Orion Nov HB £16.99 224pp)

Sequel to *The Forever War*

Joe Haldeman *Forever Peace* (Millennium Nov PB £5.99)

Harry Harrison *The Stainless Steel Rat goes to the Circus* (Orion Dec HB £16.99 256pp)

Harry Harrison *Bill, The Galactic Hero* (Millennium Dec PB £5.99)

Harry Harrison *Bill, The Galactic Hero on the Planet of Robot Slaves* (Millennium Dec PB £5.99)

Frank Herbert *Dune* (Orion Dec HB £16.99 448pp)

Tom Holt *Snow White and the Seven Samurai* (Orbit Nov HB £15.99 256pp)

Oliver Johnson *The Last Star at Dawn* (Orbit Nov PB £5.99 416pp)

Final part of fantasy trilogy.

Fritz Leiber *Return to Lankhmar* (Millennium Nov PB £6.99)

Holly Lisle *Vengeance of Dragons* (Orion Millennium HB TPB £16.99 £10.99 320pp)

Anne McCaffrey *Pegasus in Space* (Corgi Dec PB £5.99)

NOIP Anne McCaffrey *Nimisha's Ship* (£16.99 256pp)

***** Maureen F. McHugh** *The Mission Child* (Orbit Dec PB £6.99 288pp)

Maureen F. McHugh *Half the Day is Night* (Orbit Nov PB £6.99 352pp)

Juliet E. McKenna *The Swordsman's Oath* (Orbit Nov PB £5.99 576pp)

The Second Tale of Einarinn

Michael Moorcock *Behold the Man* (Millennium Nov PB £6.99)

Terry Pratchett *The Fifth Elephant* (Doubleday Nov HB £16.99 318pp)

NOIP Terry Pratchett *Carpe Jugulum* (Corgi Nov PB £5.99 426pp)

NOIP Robert Rankin *Snuff Fiction* (Corgi Dec PB £5.99)

NOIP R. A. Salvatore *Demon Spirit* (Millennium Dec PB £5.99)

***** NOIP Robert Silverberg** (ed.) *Far Horizons* (Orbit Nov £10.99 544pp)

'Eleven masters of science fiction return to their legendary worlds.' Includes new stories by Ursula Le Guin, Greg Benford, Nancy Kress and Greg Bear.

NOIP Alison Sinclair *Cavalcade* (Millennium Dec PB £5.99)

***** Neal Stephenson** *Cryptonomicon* (Heinemann Nov TPB £12.99)

James Stoddard *The High House* (Earthlight Dec PB £5.99)

Wookery Nook

Media, novelisations and tie-ins Compiled by Steve Jeffery

Terry Pratchett and Stephen Briggs—*Discworld Assassins' Guild Yearbook and Diary 2000*

Gollancz, 1999, hb £9.99

Trek

Michael and Denise Okuda and Doug Drexler—*Star Trek Sticker Book*. Pocket Books, 1999, £9.99

Your fridge needs this book!

Pamela Sargent and George Zebrowski—*Star Trek: Across the Universe*. Pocket Books, 1999, pb £5.99

TNG

Peter David—*Star Trek TNG*:

Triangle: Imzadi I (Pocket Books, 1999, £5.99)

John de Lance and Peter David—*Star Trek TNG: I.Q.* (Pocket Books, 1999, hb, £12.99)

William R. Forstein—*Star Trek TNG: The Forgotten War* (Pocket Books, 1999, pb, \$6.50)

Voyager

Diane Carey—*Star Trek Voyager: Equinox* (Pocket Books, 1999, pb, \$6.50)

Jeri Taylor—*Star Trek Voyager: Pathways* (Pocket Books, 1999, pb \$6.50)

Who

Peter Haining—*The Nine Lives of Doctor Who* (Headline 1999, hb, £16.99)

Merlin

James Mallory—*Merlin: The King's Wizard* (Voyager, 1999, pb, £6.99)

TV miniseries novelisation. Sequel to *Merlin: The Old Magic*

X Files

Ben Mezrich—*The X Files: Skin*. (Voyager, Nov. 1999, pb, £6.99)

Ellen Steiber—*The X Files: Grotesque* (Harpercollins, Oct. 1999, pb, £3.99)

Earth Final Conflict

Fred Saberhagen—*Earth Final Conflict: The Arrival* (Ebury Press, pb, £5.99)

David Brin's Out of Time

Nancy Kress—*David Brin's Out of Time, 1: Yanked* (Avon, 1999, pb \$4.99)

Sheila Finch—*David Brin's Out of Time, 2: Tiger in the Sky* (Avon, 1999, pb \$4.99)

Roger McBride Allen—*David Brin's Out of Time, 3: Game of Worlds* (Avon, 1999, pb \$4.99)

Club Corner

Belfast Science Fiction Group.

Alternate Fridays 8.30 pm at the Monaco Bar, Rosemary St. Belfast. Contact Eugene Doherty 01232 208405 tinman@technologist.com

Birmingham: Brum SF Group

Second Friday of the month on the second floor of the Britannia Hotel, New St. Membership is £15/year. Contact Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, W. Midlands WV11 1HX. bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk

Cambridge SF Group.

Second Monday of the month in The Cambridge Blue, Gwydir St, Cambridge.

Cardiff Sf Group

First Tuesday on the month 7.30pm in Wellington's Café Bar, 42 The Hayes, Cardiff

Colchester SF/F/Horror Group.

Third Saturday of the month at 12.30pm in The Playhouse pub, St John's St. Contact Des Lewis 01255 812119

Glasgow SF/F Writers' Circle.

Second and fourth Thursdays at 8pm at Borders bookstore. Contact Gary Gibson at garygibson@skiffy.freemove.co.uk

Hull SF Group

Second and Fourth Tuesdays, 8.30 to 10.30pm Ye Olde Blue Bell, Market Place, Hull. Contact Ian and Julie on 01482 447953, or Dave and Estelle on 01482 444291

Leeds Alternative Writers

Second Saturday at 2pm in central Leeds. For venues and details contact Ian on 0113 266 9259 or Sean 0113 293 6780.

London BSFA meetings

Fourth Wednesdays of the month (except December) from 7pm at the Florence Nightingale ("Dead Nurse"), Waterloo/ Westminster tube. Check Ansible for details and guests, or organiser Paul Hood on 0181 333 6670 paul@auden.demon.co.uk

London Circle

First Thursdays at the Florence Nightingale (see above) from around 5pm

Manchester: FONT

Second and fourth Thursdays from 8pm, Wetherspoon's pub, corner of Piccadilly Gardens. Contact Mike Don on 0161 226 2980.

North Oxford.

Last Thursday of the month at The Plough, Wolvercote from 7.30pm. Irregular and just starting, so contact Steve and Vikki on 01865 371734 or peverel@aol.com for details

Peterborough SF Group

First Wednesdays at the Bluebell Inn, Dogsthorpe and third Wednesdays in the Great Northern Hotel, opposite station Contact Pete on 01733 370542.

Portsmouth/South Hants SF Group

Second and fourth Tuesdays at the Maggie, Fratton Road, Portsmouth

Reading SF Group.

Each Monday from 9pm at the Hop Leaf, Southampton St. Reading

BSFA Awards

Things have gone a bit quiet again since the last time I wrote. I have had a small number of new Book and Artwork nominations but no new Short Fiction nominations at all. There is still some time left before the end of the nomination period, but it is time for you to start putting your thinking caps on!

The following lists show all the valid nominations received this year up until 3rd October:

Best Novel

Children of God - Mary Doria Russell
The Bones of Time - Kathleen Ann Goonan
Headlong - Simon Ings
ThiGMOO - Eugene Byrne
Factoring Humanity - Robert J. Sawyer
The Astrological Diary of God - Bo Fowler
The Sky Road - Ken MacLeod
Distraction - Bruce Sterling
A Deepness in the Sky - Vernor Vinge
Terenesia - Greg Egan
Silver Screen - Justina Robson
Sea Dragon Heir - Storm Constantine

Best Short Fiction

The Gateway of Eternity - Brian Stableford (*Interzone* 139/140)
Gorillagram - Tony Ballantyne (*Interzone* 139)
Hunting the Slarque - Eric Brown (*Interzone* 141)
Angelmakers - Paul di Filippo (*Interzone* 141)
The Volvox Immersion - Tom Arden (*Interzone* 143)
Malignos - Richard Calder (*Interzone* 144)

Best Artwork

Cover Matrix 136 - Colin Odell
The Dream Archipelago - Jim Burns (cover of *The Dream Archipelago* by Christopher Priest)
Darwinia - Jim Burns (Cover of *Darwinia* by Robert Charles Wilson)
The Gateway of Eternity - SMS (Cover of *Interzone* 140)
Cover of *Banana Wings* 14 - Colin Odell

Nomination rules

Nominations for any of the categories can be sent at any time during the year. Please remember that it is the items with the most nominations on the closing date for submissions that will be shortlisted. So please remember if you want something to appear on the shortlist then nominate it **even if it is already in the list of nominations.**

The eligibility rules are as follows:

Best Novel. First published in the UK in the calendar year 1999.

Best Short Fiction. First appearance in the calendar year 1999, irrespective of country of origin (thus stories in non-UK magazines and anthologies are eligible).

Best Artwork. First appearance in the calendar year 1999.

The closing date for nominations is **28th January 2000.** You have plenty of time, but please remember to keep sending nominations throughout the year. If you are not sure whether a particular item qualifies please send it anyway. I would rather receive a nomination and have to discard it than not receive nominations!

Events: Forthcoming conventions

30-31 October 1999

M. R. James Weekend

Royal Victoria & Bull Hotel, Rochester, Kent. Registration £25. Contact (SAE) 150 Elstree Park, Barnet Lane, Borehamwood, Herts, WD6 2RP.

4-7 November 1999

World Fantasy Convention/Voyages

Rhode Island Convention Centre, Westin Hotel and Biltmore, Providence, Rhode Island. Guests of Honour: Patricia A. McKillip, Charles de Lint, Robert Silverberg, Samuel R. Delany. Membership \$125 to 15 October 99, then more; \$35 supplement; banquet \$42, payable to MCFL. Contact World Fantasy Convention, Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701, USA; fax 617 776 3243, wfc@mcfl.org; www.worldfantasy.org

5-7 November 1999

Novacon 29

Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. Guest of Honour: Ian Stewart. Registration £32 to 30 October, £35 at the door. Contact 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS.

12-14 November 1999

Armadacon 99

Cophorne Hotel, Plymouth. Guests of Honour: Stephen Baxter, Michael Sheard, Lionel Fanthorpe. Registration £27, £22 concessions or £11 per day. Contact P O Box 38, Plymouth, Devon.

13-14 November 1999

Memorabilia

Huge SF and miscellaneous pop-culture collectors' fair. Hall 17, NEC, Birmingham. Box office 0121 767 4555.

25-27 February 2000

POTLATCH 9

University Plaza Hotel, Seattle, Washington. Membership \$30/£18.75 advance; may be more later. \$10 supporting. Contact POTLATCH 9, Box 31848, Seattle, WA 98103, USA; UK agent Linda Krawecka, 1A Mountray Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 1RJ.

3-5 March 2000

Corflu 2000

University Plaza Hotel, Seattle, Washington. Membership \$45; \$15 supporting. Contact Corflu, Box 31848, Seattle, WA 98103, USA; UK agent Linda Krawecka, 1A Mountray Road, Eastbourne, E. Sussex BN21 1RJ.

21-24 April 2000

2Kon/Eastercon 2000

Central Hotel, Glasgow. Guests of Honour: Guy Gavriel Kay, Deborah Turner Harris, Katherine Kurtz. Membership £25; £15

supporting. Contact 2Kon, 30 Woodburn

Terrace, St Andrews KY16 8BA;

2Kon@dcs.st-and.ac.uk; www.theory.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/2Kon

11-14 May 2000

World Horror Con 2000

Adams Mark Hotel, Denver, Colorado. Guests of Honour: Peter Straub, Melanie & Steve Rasnic Tem, Harlan Ellison, J. Michael Straczynski, Ellen Datlow. Toastmaster Dan Simmons. Membership \$75 to 31 Dec 1999, \$100 to 30 April 2000, \$125 door. Contact WHC2000 Inc. Box 32167, Aurora, CO 80041, USA; trbarker@earthlink.net or ebryant330@aol.com; www.wfc2000.org

18 June - 28 July 2000

Clarion West Writers Workshop

Seattle, Washington. Teachers to include: John Crowley & Paul Park (team teaching), Geoff Ryman, Candas Jane Dorsey, Pat Murphy, David Hartwell & Carol Emshwiller. Deadline for applications is 1 April 2000 (only 17 places). Contact Clarion West, 340 Fifteenth Avenue East, Suite 350, Seattle, WA 98112, USA; www.sff.net/clarionwest

27-31 July 2000

2000 Millennium Hand & Shrimp (3rd)

Discworld Convention

Radisson Edwardian, Heathrow, London. Membership £30 advance. Contact The Discworld Convention, Box 189, Patchway, Bristol, BS32 8YE; queries@dw-con.space.org

28-30 July 2000

ESE European Smoffing Event

Darmstadt, Germany. Contact European Conventions, Fiona Anderson, 129 Colegrave Road, Stratford, London, E15 1EA; fiona@intersec.demon.co.uk

2-6 August 2000

Eurocon 2000

Tricity (Gdansk, etc.) Poland. Guests of Honour: to be announced. Membership \$25 to 31 December 1999, \$30 to 30 May 2000, \$35 at door. Contact Krzysztof Papierkowski, Chłopska 7/107, 80-362 Gdansk-Przymorze, Poland; mirek@thenet.eti.pg.gda.pl

21-13 August 2000

Lexicon (Unicon 2000)

St. Hilda's College, Oxford. Dates not yet confirmed. £5 supporting; full rate to be announced. Contact 18 Letchworth Avenue, Bedford, Middlesex, TW14 9RY.

8-10 September 2000

FantasyCon XXIV

Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. Guests of Honour: Storm Constantine, Stan Nicholls. Contact howe@which.net

26-29 October 2000

World Fantasy Convention

Omni Bayfront Hotel, Corpus Christi, Texas. Guests of Honour: K. W. Jeter, John Crowley. Membership \$90 to 10 November 1999, then more; payable to FACT/World Fantasy Convention. Contact WFC 2000, Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755, USA; fduartejr@aol.com

27-29 October 2000

BATS2000

Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, London. Multimedia/Horror/SF. Guests of Honour: Storm Constantine, plus media guests. Membership £49 to 31 December 1999, then £90; supporting £15. Contact bats2000@burburle.com; www.burburle.com/bats2000.

29 December 2000 - 1 January 2001

Hogmanaycon

Central Hotel, Glasgow. Guests of Honour: Spider & Jeanne Robinson, Sydney Jordan, Archie Roy, Vince Docherty, Oscar Schwighofer. Membership £35. Contact Hogmanaycon, c/o 26 Avonbank Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2PA; john@gelsalba.demon.co.uk; www.members.tripod.co.uk/Chris_Boyce/co_npage.htm

13-16 April 2001

Paragon: Eastercon'01

Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. Guests of Honour: Stephen Baxter, Lisanne Norman, Michael Scott Rohan. Membership £25 advance, then more. Contact Paragon, c/o S. Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ; members.paragon@keepsake-web.co.uk; www.keepsake-web.co.uk/paragon

30 August - 2 September 2001

Millennium Philcon/Worldcon 59

Pennsylvania Convention Center & Philadelphia Marriott, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Guests of Honour: Greg Bear, Stephen Youll, Gardner Dozois, George Scithers. Toastmaster: Esther Friesner. Membership \$135 to 15 November 1999; \$40 supplement. Contact Philcon, Box 310, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006, USA; phil2001@netaxs.com; www.netaxs.com/phil2001

29 August - 2 September 2002

Conjose (60th Worldcon)

San José, California. Guests of Honour: Vernor Vinge, David Cherry, Bjo & David Trimble, Ferdinand Feghoot. Registration \$100 to 31 May 2000. Contact P O Box 61363, Sunnyvale, CA 94088, USA; UK Agents 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, RG30 2RP.

Letters

Roy Gray, via email

In re Gary Dalkin's "The good, the bad and the box office" in Matrix 139, all industries have changed, including the cinema, over the past 20 years. For cinema, Gary is somewhat unfair in his analysis of the reasons. Sure money plays its part but that happens everywhere now.

My reasons for saying this include the following. The advent of video and therefore faster release is needed to cope with piracy and counterfeiting. Inflation in the 1970s-1990s meant loans were very expensive, so it is necessary to make money back faster. Technology allows more prints to be manufactured at reasonable cost. Multiscreens need to be filled. Stockport has 20 screens now. In the cinema heyday of the 1940s/1950s it is ever that? Advertising spend and publicity is greatest at the release of a film so it makes sense to have the capacity for most of audience at that time. This keeps publicity spending at its most efficient. It is good business sense. Any industry would do it.

As for summing weekend takings, modern communications allow it to be done easily and at low cost. If it had been that easy in 1960 it would have been done then too. Hollywood isn't the only industry that wants to know exactly what the receipts are and how they were generated every day. Tesco and their ilk do the same but tins of beans don't have the same media glamour as buses on seats, though there is a connection.

In the past, it may have taken many weeks for films to make their way round the country. However, in those distant days I often missed films I wanted to see because they were only around my area for a week or two and were often gone by the time I had a free night, cash, transport, date, company or whatever. We don't all live in the London area. These days I can catch a popular film, still on screen, 2 or 3 months after it has opened.

On another topic entirely, I'd like to ask Gary if there is a Bollywood sf genre worth seeing? I would expect normal UK media to ignore Bollywood films despite their UK distribution but not the BSFA. What's happening out there? Am I missing something?

Gary Dalkin replies: Roy makes some good points as to the reasons for changes in the film industry. However, I really don't think these changes serve the customer well - you can no longer even phone your local Odeon for specific information, but have to ring a national number which won't have details about your local cinema. Film presentation has had everything special removed from it. There is no sense of occasion, and films are now shown in small auditoriums with tiny

screens, badly set-up and ill-focused projectors, etc, before the film is almost immediately transferred to video. Two-three months after most films come out, the only possibility of seeing them is panned and scanned on a TV set. Sadly, convenience now seems to be valued much more highly than quality of presentation. The casual viewing habits associated with video have lowered people's standards, such that we no longer even expect much out of the cinema. If modern multiplex audiences were to see a 70mm film such as *Ben-Hur* well presented on an 50-80 foot wide screen, they might begin to see how much worse things have got over the last 30 years. They might even start to demand quality again.

Certainly, multiscreens need to be filled: but near where I live is a ten-screen multiplex. They used to run 10 different films a week when they opened, plus one-off screens mid-week. Now they sometimes only have four different films on, with each on two or three screens (the *Phantom Menace* was on six of the ten). It's the worst of both worlds - no more choice than before, but instead of being able to enjoy a film on a huge screen, you have the choice of seeing it on several small ones.

Regarding your question about the possibility of Bollywood sf. It's an intriguing idea, but I've never heard of any such genre. Given the amount we now hear about Hong Kong fantasy movies, if Bollywood sf existed I would have expected to have heard something about it. So I can't really say if you are missing anything, but I suspect not. No doubt someone out there will know differently.

John D Rickett, Uley, Gloucestershire

I was really interested in the Bryan Talbot feature in Matrix 139. That man can surely draw a mean picture.

Alas, despite my 10 years or so of congoing, I was unable to identify all the authors in the scene from *Heart of Empire*. I fear that I have not had the pleasure of meeting all authors who are con-goers, nor yet that of having them all pointed out to me.

However, I did have a start of recognition on the same page at the pic of the tavernly gathering. It was the shapely young lady boarding the tram (*A Streetcar Named Heredia*?) heading for Islington. I just knew that I had seen her or her sister somewhere before. Finally, I tracked it down.

I'm enclosing two pics for you. One is Talbot's young lady and the other was taken by that great French master of the decisive moment in photography, J H Lartigue in New York in 1900. The similarity is amazing, as I think you'll agree, even down to the seamed stocking.



Lartigue Talbot

Do I get a prize for this recognition? Like a menseh? I'd also be most interested in any comments that Bryan himself may have. I'd dearly love to know whether he modelled his young lady on the same original...

Marcel de Graaff, The Netherlands

Being a new member of the BSFA, I'm not up to date with the contents of previous issues, but when reading Fay Symes's letter in Matrix 139 (in turn in response to a letter published in Matrix 138) I couldn't help also being intrigued by the comments of John Ashbrook about reviewers. I share Fay's sentiments completely. I mean, to stay in tune with today's media hype, just because I know the ending of the new Star Wars movie (inevitable when you're on the internet) doesn't automatically mean I won't enjoy it when finally viewing it in the cinema (some weeks away...). Of course, it's nice to be surprised by a book's ending (although that seldom happens), but it is the means of getting to that ending that's the most important! I too must admit to sometimes checking the end of a book before I finish it, which partly, yes, comes from being a fast reader (and a serious character flaw, according to some people). And I always re-read a book I enjoyed some days after I finish it for the first time, the tension is off and I can fully enjoy a book's subtleties (I just did so with Lois McMaster Bujold's latest, *A Civil Campaign*). I was really pleasantly surprised by the letter, it's seldom I find someone who has a similar mindset and has some of the same interests (Babylon 5, Deep Space Nine). So hereby I'm sending my regards as a fellow 'weirdo.' I wonder how many people would agree with the position that knowing the end of a book/movie enhances one's appreciation of it when reading/viewing it...

BTW: I take it that Fay doesn't have an internet connection, or else a review of the final episode of *Deep Space Nine* would be easy to get. I know the details, and indeed it does enhance my viewing experience...

Jo's Time-wasters Competition 140

Alphabet Soup

Idly toying with my lunch last week, I found the names of a famous administrator and three authors, all with that popular modern fashion accessory, three names. The letters were:

AAAAAABBCCCDDDEEEEEEE
EHHIIIKLLLLMMMMNNNOOO
OPRRRRRRRRSSSSSTTUYYYY.

If you can unscramble them you could win this month's prize.

You could also still win Competition 139, for which there have been no entries at all. To make it easier, can you match the characters' names to the novels? Here they are:

- 1) Babel-17
- 2) The War in the Air
- 3) The Mind of Mr Soames
- 4) With a Strange Device
- 5) Earth Abides
- 6) Roofworld
- 7) The Witches of Karres
- 8) Lord of the Rings
- 9) Space Family Stone
- 10) Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy
- 11) The Gods Themselves
- 12) Cities in Flight

Answers to John Ollis, 49 Leighton Road, Corby, NN18 9EU by 3 December 1999.

Your Magazine Needs YOU

Matrix urgently needs new people to become part of the editorial team and as contributors and newshounds. We would particularly like to hear from anyone with layout and production experience, and access to PC DTP (or the ability to make Microsoft Word jump through hoops) and a good high quality laser printer, who can help put the magazine together. We'd also like to hear from media and film news-gatherers and reviewers to keep us abreast of what's new on big and small screens, satellite and video, and from late night skiffy surfers who can supply news and reviews of genre-related websites. Everything helps, no matter how small: clippings from the press, short news items, interviews and humorous snippets. We'd also love to hear from artists for covers and interior illustrations.

Contact Vikki Lee, Publications Manager, 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2XA. 01865 371734 peverel@aol.com

Chuck (Chuch) Harris

Chuck Harris died on 6th July 1999. He died quickly in his favourite chair.

Patrick Neilsen Hayden writes:

Chuck never got the hang of email and Usenet, so many of you will have to take our word for it when we talk about how wonderful he was. Some of it comes across in his fanwriting -- a fistful of brilliantly funny semi-formal articles and a great deal of coruscating, uninhibited stream-of-consciousness, much of the latter nominally in the form of columns and LoCs.

Chuck lost all of his hearing in the military, in the 1940s, and this configured the rest of his life. I will not say it never got him down, or that he never let it bother him, because that would be exactly the sort of sentimental cant he would make merciless fun of. What there was about Chuck...well, in a real sense, it was that quality summed up in the proverb "perfect love driveth out fear." Chuck loved the things he loved -- his family, his friends, fandom -- and was so grounded in these things that he often seemed completely fearless about everything else. He would say anything, and frequently did. To be around Chuck in public was to constantly alternate between being mortified and nearly dying of laughter. He knew what was really important. I will miss him terribly

And Rob Hansen added:

I met Chuck in the very early '80s, around the same time I met Vince Clarke and ATom, and - like so many - I liked him immediately. When Avedon and I used to make the periodic trek over Vince's place for meetings of Kent TruFandom, it was always Chuck or ATom who would be there waiting in their cars to whisk us away as soon as the Woolwich Ferry docked. They were always lots of fun those meetings, held in the ultra-fannish surroundings of Vince's fan-room, the ATom and Chuck double-act usually in full flow, keeping the rest of us laughing as we scribbled notes for Chuck on the many clipboards provided by the ever-thoughtful Vince. They were my personal trinity of fannish elders, those three, warm, witty, wonderful guys who epitomised what fandom can be and what it should be, and I feel privileged to have been their friend. Now, with Chuck's death, they're all gone, an era has passed, and I feel diminished..

Late News

Eddie Jones 1935-1999

Former Boskone Official Artist Eddie Jones died of a stroke at 65 years of age, in a hospital in Liverpool. He'd been somewhat reclusive in recent years, but appeared at last year's Eastercon at the Liverpool Adelphi Hotel.

He was quite prolific with SF covers in the UK, Germany and the US in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and in 1969 he moved from part-time (and self-taught) illustrator to become art director for *Visions of Tomorrow*. Probably his best known covers were his few *Star Trek* covers for the early/mid '70s Bantam Books based on the original series.

Conventions Update

<plokta.con> 26-29 May, 2000

Holiday Inn, Leicester

Guest of Honour Ken MacLeod

Looking to recapture the spirit of Attitude: the Convention and Year of the Wombat, <plokta.con> will feature a single stream program with an emphasis on fannish fun. An array of superfluous technology will be on hand to hook up the con on the Internet and to encourage people to produce one-shot newsletters and fanzines throughout the convention.

Membership £20, hotel rates £27.50 per person (double/twin) or £37.50 (single) Contact 3 York Street, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH. Details in future issues of Plokta fanzine and on the web at www.plokta.com

Credits

Matrix 140 was edited and produced by Glenda Pringle with assistance from Steve Jeffery and Vikki Lee. Laid out in Publisher 98, abandoned in exasperation and transferred to Word 97.

Printed by PDC Copyright of Guildford and collated and mailed by Bramley Mailing Services

Heroes of the Revolution

For help and patience beyond the course of duty. The BSFA Committee: Paul and Elizabeth Billinger, Andy Butler, Gary Dalkin, Chris and Penny Hill, Mark Plummer and Claire Brialley (especially for photos of Aussiecon and James White), Tanya Brown, Tony Cullen and Dave (I'll stay at 20) Langford, Carol Ann Kerry Green, Colin Odell and Mitch Le Blanc. Thanks too to the people at *Plokta* for helpful advice.