

The news magazine of the British Science Fiction Association

MATRIX

Issue 141

Jan-Feb 2000



The Blair Witch Project Gormenghast BSFA Award Novacon Fanzines

Matrix

141 □ Jan – Feb □ 2000

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

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

Deadline for submissions for next issue:
1 February 2000

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Credits : Matrix 141

Matrix 141 was edited and produced by **Glenda Pringle**, **Steve Jeffery** and **Vikki Lee**, with the assistance of a cast of thousands, if not literally dozens, whose names are withheld under medical advice.

Safe when used as directed.

Printed by PDC Copyprint of Guildford,
Collated and mailed by Bramley Mailing
Services.

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BSFA News

Out of Focus

Julie Venner and Carol Ann Kerry-Green started their joint editorship of *Focus* with issue 24 (June/July 1993) and gracefully retired with the recent issue 36, more than six years later.



Issue 24 took a giant leap forward from the previous issue of *Focus* (October 1991) and rescued the BSFA's writers' magazine from what looked like extinction. The new editors' first issue was stuffed with advice from a wide selection of writers and critics and introduced Dr Greenland's Prescription which has continued through the subsequent 13 issues. The high standard and wide-ranging advice has continued over the years, bringing us Geoff Ryman on characters, Cherith Baldry on maps and dragons, world-building with Storm Constantine, Ian Watson detecting shit, Stephen Baxter on research and much, much more. During their editorship, working quietly and sticking to deadlines, Carol Ann and Julie have made *Focus* a popular and valuable resource to the many BSFA members who aspire to be writers as well as readers.

In December at a Santa Lucia party in Hull (which involved the consumption of sufficient quantities of Swedish food and mulled wine to enable the assembled masses to attempt singing and dancing in Swedish) Paul Billinger presented Julie and Carol Ann with Book Tokens of Appreciation, expressing thanks on behalf of the BSFA for all the hard work that has been put into *Focus*.

New editor Simon Morden takes over the reins of *Focus* from the next issue, *Focus* 37, and we wish him well.

Special Award to Maureen Kincaid Speller at Novacon

In a surprise (at least to Maureen) special award at Novacon 29, former BSFA Administrator Maureen Kincaid Speller was awarded with an impressive cross stitched sampler specially made by multi-talented Carol Ann Kerry-Green, commemorating Maureen's long association with the BSFA – as a book and magazine reviewer (with the column 'Barbed Wire Kisses'), editor of *Matrix* from issue 73 to 85, as BSFA Co-ordinator (1990-1991) and as BSFA Administrator from 1993-1999.



Maureen announced her retirement as Administrator at the BSFA AGM, held at Eastercon earlier this year, in order to devote more time to fanwriting, a new fanzine, and the completion of her 1998 TAFF trip report. She remains a member of the BSFA Council and as a BSFA reviewer.

Rowse wins double Nova

Also at Novacon, Matrix Fan News Editor Yvonne Rowse scooped this year's Nova Award polls with both Best Fanzine, for *Barmaid*, and as Best Fanwriter. Congratulations. Full results of the Novacon 29 Awards on page 6

Editorial

The New Matrix Editorial Team

Since last writing, I was heartened by the response to my plea for help with the future production of *Matrix*. Several people came forward and offered their time and skills, and as a result we now have a full strength editorial team once again.

Andrew Seaman has kindly volunteered his services as overall editor; **Avril Brown** is welcomed aboard as the new Web/Internet features editor, and **Gary Wilkinson** likewise as the new media/film features editor. Along with our already established editors, **Glenda Pringle** (Magazines), **Yvonne Rowse** (Fanzines/Fandom) and **Janet Barron** (Books/Publishing news), things once again look pretty exciting for future issues. I hope you'll all give them your support in trying to make *Matrix* better than ever before.

Two other volunteers have also been found posts in the BSFA to exercise their particular skills. We welcome **Martin McGrath** as our new 'special projects' editor, and **Ian Simpson** as our roving article generator and writer.

Once again, my special thanks go out not only to Steve Jeffery and Glenda Pringle who have again dropped all else to produce an issue of *Matrix*, but the army of others who have helped in all sorts of ways, both large and small, to ensure there has been no break in production. There are stalwarts to numerous to name that have helped *Matrix* over this difficult period, and to you, my thanks, and best wishes for the new millennium.

Vikki Lee
Publications Manager - BSFA

**A very Happy New Year,
Decade, Century and
Millennium to all our
readers from everyone
at *Matrix* and the BSFA**

News

Books

John Jarrold has acquired a first novel by a UK writer for Earthlight, Simon & Schuster UK's SF and fantasy imprint. *Talisker* is set partially in this world, in a dark and very recognisable Edinburgh, and partially in a fantasy world.

"The first ten pages made me sit up and take notice," said Jarrold. "They read like a mixture of Ian Rankin and Iain Banks. The cross-overs from one world to the other are seamless, and the characters are as three-dimensional as any I've read in recent years. And, of course, anybody who names their novel after a malt whisky is okay by me. I expect to see books called *Bowmore*, *Laphroaig* and *The Macallan* arriving on my desk Real Soon Now..."

The author, who is already working on sequels, has been shortlisted for a major literary award, and has written the novel under the pseudonym Miller Lau. Earthlight will publish *Talisker* in the spring of 2001. Jarrold concluded the deal with Stella Wilkins of the Abner Stein Agency.

Enigma Press have boosted their range with *The Hand that Feeds*, a major new chapbook by Peter Crowther & James Lovegrove, the Autumn 1999 issue of Enigmatic Tales, and two new "Enigmatic Novellas" editions, Sarah Singleton's *In the Mirrors* and *Candlelight Ghost Stories* by Anthony Morris.

Competitions

The Marches Literary Prize is inviting entries of original poems of not more than 50 lines and short stories of not more than 2,000 words in any genre. Entry costs £3 with the winners in both the short story and poetry classes receiving £200, second place £100, and third place £50. The competition is open until 31 March 2000, and entry forms are available from the Competition Secretary, 48 Erw Wen, Welshpool, Powys SY21 7HL. A booklet of the winning entries will be produced in the summer of 2000, and can be pre-ordered now for £2.50. Cheques should be made payable to: Marches Literary Prize Group, with all surplus funds supporting the Welsh Marches charity Deaf Children in Powys.

Warner Books has announced a contest for new and unpublished science fiction and fantasy authors. The winning manuscript will be published by Warner Aspect, the SF and fantasy line, as part of the "New Aspects" program featuring first novelists of outstanding talent and potential. An advance and royalties against copies sold will be paid.

The contest will be open to authors who have not previously published a novel. Entries will be judged by Warner Books and award-winning writer Tim Powers, author of *The Anubis Gates*, *Last Call*, and many other novels.

This is the second time Aspect has run such a contest. "The original First Novel Contest resulted in our discovery of Nalo Hopkinson and her manuscript *Brown Girl in the Ring*," said Betsy Mitchell, Editor-in-Chief of Warner Aspect. "After we published that book in July 1998, it went on to become a finalist for the Philip K. Dick Award, win the Locus Award for Best First Novel, and receive widespread review attention. And Nalo herself received the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer at the 1999 World Science Fiction Convention. So the contest was definitely a success!"

Warner Aspect has launched a number of new authors who have become successful, including J.V. Jones, David Feintuch, Sarah Zettel and James Stoddard. The contest will give Aspect a chance to read unengaged manuscripts, which it normally does not have the staff to review.

Entries must be received between 15 December 1999 and 30 June 2000. Only one submission is allowed per entrant. All submissions must include a disposable copy of a synopsis of the complete story plus the first several chapters of the manuscript (up to 60 pages maximum), typed double-spaced on white, 8 1/2" X 11" paper. Enclose a business-sized SAE for response. Entrants must consent to the jurisdiction of the State and Federal courts located in the State of New York and agree that the laws of the State of New York shall apply. No purchase is necessary to enter. No employees of Time Warner or their immediate family members may enter.

Finalists from round one will be invited to submit their complete manuscripts. The winner will be notified in writing by 1 December 2000.

Mail Entries to: Warner Aspect First Novel Contest, Editorial Department, 1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020, USA. Be sure to include name, address, and daytime telephone number.

The next L. Ron Hubbard Writers of the Future Contest has been announced, with judges Kevin J. Anderson, Doug Beason, Gregory Benford, Algis Budrys, Anne McCaffrey, Larry Niven, Andre Norton, Frederik Pohl, Jerry Pournelle, Tim Powers, Robert Silverberg, Jack Williamson and Dave Wolverton. Winners get cash prizes, an all-expenses-paid trip to Hollywood for the award ceremony, publication of their works in the annual *L. Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future* anthology

(15 volumes published thus far), etc. Much derided when it was first launched, the contest now has a track record of being of genuine benefit to good new writers who might otherwise have been overlooked by book editors, agents, etc. See: www.writersofthefuture.com.

Who's Reading What

Waterstones having, with seasonal acumen, offered a two-for-the-price-of-three deal in Discworld paperbacks, were gratified to notice a slight bias in their list of *s/f* bestsellers as Christmas approached:

1. *Carpe Jugulum*, Terry Pratchett
 2. *The Fifth Elephant*, Terry Pratchett
 3. *The Last Continent*, Terry Pratchett
 4. *Soul Music*, Terry Pratchett
 5. *Wyrd Sisters*, Terry Pratchett
 6. *The Light Fantastic*, Terry Pratchett
 7. *Witches Abroad*, Terry Pratchett
 8. *Interesting Times*, Terry Pratchett
 9. *Reaper Man*, Terry Pratchett
 10. *Sourcery*, Terry Pratchett
 11. *Lords and Ladies*, Terry Pratchett
 12. *Pyramids*, Terry Pratchett
 13. *Small Gods*, Terry Pratchett
 14. *Men at Arms*, Terry Pratchett
 15. *Feet of Clay*, Terry Pratchett
 16. *Jingo*, Terry Pratchett
 17. *Hogfather*, Terry Pratchett
 18. *Prelude to Dune*, Brian Herbert & Kevin Anderson
 19. *Mort*, Terry Pratchett
 20. *Guards! Guards!* Terry Pratchett
- (Results courtesy of Waterstones, Leeds) Readers are invited to spot the odd one out, but will not receive the prize of a Terry Pratchett paperback, on the grounds that they undoubtedly found one or three in their Christmas stocking...

Forbidden Planet London revealed their list of top ten bestselling books for October:

1. *All Tomorrow's Parties*, William Gibson (Viking)

2. *The Naked God*, Peter Hamilton (Macmillan)
3. *Playing God*, S. Zettel (Aspect)
4. *Bodyguard of Lightning*, Stan Nicholls (Millennium)
5. *Great War: American Front*, Harry Turtledove (NEL)
6. *House Atreides*, Herbert/Anderson (Hodder)
7. *Destroyer: Deadly Genes*, Murphy/Sapir (Gold Eagle)
8. *Buffy: Obsidian Fate*, D. Gallagher (Pocket)
9. *Legion of Thunder*, Stan Nicholls (Gollancz)
10. *Fantasy Art of the New Millennium*, Dick Jude (Voyager)

BSFA Awards

Chris Hill

Well, the year has certainly flown! Here we are with your last chance to send me nominations for the 1999 BSFA Awards. If your Awards Administrator has got his act together, there should be a form enclosed with this mailing on which you can list your nominations and send them to me.

Before moving on to the full list of nominations, I would just like to mention briefly *Cryptonomicon* the latest (and very long!) novel by Neal Stephenson. After receiving several nominations for this I was in two minds about whether to allow it. I have read it myself and I cannot quite decide whether it really has any science fiction elements to it. I think it is arguable, but as I like to be *inclusive* rather than *exclusive* then I have allowed it, but with reservations (I understand that recently John Clute has voted it one of the best 10 sf novels of the decade, prompting a member of the BSFA committee, who shall remain nameless, to comment that obviously science fiction is now what John Clute points at and says is science fiction...)

The following lists show all the valid nominations received this year up until 29th November:

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
Teranesia – Greg Egan
Silver Screen – Justina Robson
Sea Dragon Heir – Storm Constantine
Time – Stephen Baxter
Metal Fatigue – Sean Williams
The Naked God – Peter F. Hamilton
Penumbra – Eric Brown
Cryptonomicon – Neal Stephenson

Best Short Fiction

The Gateway of Eternity – Brian Stableford (*Interzone* 139/140)
 Gorillagram – Tony Ballantyne (*Interzone* 139)
 Hunting the Sharque – Eric Brown (*Interzone* 141)

Angelmakers – Paul di Filippo (*Interzone* 141)
 The Volvax Immersion – Tom Arden (*Interzone* 143)
 Malignos – Richard Calder (*Interzone* 144)
 The Lady Macbeth Blues – Stephen Dedman (*Interzone* 148)

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
 The Sky-Green Blues – Dominic Harman (Cover of *Interzone* 142)
 Dreaming Down Under – Nick Stathopoulos (Cover of *Interzone* 146)
 Chi – Bob Warner (Cover of *Chi* by Alexander Beshar)

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 original anthologies are eligible).

Best Artwork. First appearance in the calendar year 1999.

Remember

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!

NewsGroup News

New Kiteworld novel

Paul Fraser
 (mail@spectrumpublishing.com)
 posted the following to rec.arts.sf on 18th December
 Subject: Keith Roberts - Kiteworld II

An unpublished Kiteworld novel titled *Drek Yarnan* will be serialised in the first three issues of a new British Science Fiction magazine *SPECTRUM SF*. It is 67,000 words long and tells of the life of one of the characters from the first novel. Although the author refers to it as a 'semi-sequel' it is, in fact, complete in its own right.

The original Kiteworld novel consisted of several linked stories and was published in 1985 to much acclaim. A few of the stories had previously been published in *Interzone* and *Amazing*. The latter magazine published a further Kiteworld novella, "Tremarest" in 1986.

Further details can be found on the website below. I hope to have an extract from the novel (Chapter 2) up at the end of the month/year/millennium.

Paul Fraser
 email: mail@spectrumpublishing.com
 web: www.spectrumpublishing.com

Differences between the US and UK editions of THE TRIGGER

Michael Kube-McDowell, co-author with Arthur C. Clarke of *The Trigger*, posted the following announcement to rec.arts.sf.written

"On December 1, Bantam Spectra will publish *The Trigger* by Arthur C. Clarke and Michael P. Kube-McDowell. The British edition from HarperCollins Voyager) is already on the stands.

The American and British editions of *The Trigger* are not identical; in the most striking difference the former has 26 chapters, the latter 33 chapters. An explanation of the differences (and the reasons for them) can now be found at: <http://www.sff.net/people/K-Mac/trigger.htm>
 The material posted there includes the five chapter intros which appear in the UK edition but not the US edition."

[The UK Voyager edition of *The Trigger* by Arthur C. Clarke and Michael Kube-McDowell (550pp, £17.99 ISBN 0-00224711-9) is reviewed in this month's *Vector*.]

Awards News

Prix Aurora Awards

The 19th annual Canadian SF and Fantasy awards, the Prix Aurora Awards, were presented in Fredericton, New Brunswick at inCONsequential II on 16 October 1999. The Aurora Awards honour Canadians in ten different categories:

Best Long-Form Work in English (1997-98): *Darwinia*, Robert Charles Wilson (Tor, June 1998)

Best Long-Form Work in French (1997-98): *Corps-machines et rêves d'anges*, Alain Bergeron (Vents d'Ouest, 1997)

Best Short-Form Work in English (1998): "Hockey's Night in Canada," Edo van Belkom (*Arrowdreams*)

Best Short-Form Work in French (1998): "La Demoiselle sous la lune," Guy Sirois (*Fantasy, Fleuve Noir*)

Best Work in English (Other) (1998): *Arrowdreams: An Anthology of Alternative Canadas*, Mark Shainblum & John Dupuis (eds.) Nuage Éditions (anthology)

Best Work in French (Other) (1998): "L'entreprise de Frankenstein," John Dupuis (*Solaris* 126) and Jean-Louis Trudel, critiques (*Solaris* 124-127) (a tie)

Artistic Achievement: Jean-Pierre Normand Fan Achievement (Fanzine): *Warp*, Lynda Pelley (ed.) (MonSFFA) (clubzine)

Fan Achievement (Organizational): Ann Methe (Con'cept 98, Chair)
Fan Achievement (Other): Janet L. Hetherington (Co-curator, 60 Years of Superman exhibit at Nepean Museum)

For more information, check out the Aurora website: www.sentex.net/~dmullin/aurora

World Fantasy Awards

The recipients of the 1999 World Fantasy Awards, for work in the 1997 award year, were announced on 1 November 1999, at the 25th World Fantasy Convention in Providence, Rhode Island.

Best novel: *The Antelope Wife*, Louise Erdrich (Harper-Flamingo)

Best novella: "The Summer Isles," Ian R. MacLeod (*Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, October/November 1997)

Best short fiction: Kelly Link, "The Specialist's Hat" (*Event Horizon*, November 1997)

Best collection: Karen Joy Fowler, *Black Glass* (Henry Holt)

Best anthology: Jack Dann & Janeen Webb, *Dreaming Down Under* (HarperCollins Australia/Voyager)

Best artist: Charles Vess

Special: Pro: Jim Turner, (Golden Gryphon Press)

Special: Non-Pro: Richard Chizmar (Cemetery Dance Publications)

Life achievement: Hugh B. Cave

Novacon 29

Novacon 29 took place at the Britannia Hotel in Birmingham over the weekend of 13-15 November. Guest of Honour, Ian Stewart, presented British fandom's annual fanzine achievement awards on the Sunday night with our own *Matrix* team member Yvonne Rowse picking up Novas for Best Fanzine and Best Fan Writer (good job she can't draw to save her life!).

Best Fanzine

1. *Barmid* Yvonne Rowse (ed.) (55 points)

2. *Plotika* The Cabal (eds.) (54 points)

3. *Banana Wings* Plummer/Brialey (eds.) (44 points)

4. *Anisble*. Dave Langford (ed.) (19 points)

5. *Fables of Irish Fandom* John Berry (ed.) (16 points)

6. *OK Ken* Tony Berry (ed.) (14 points)

7. *Anti-backuous* Vlach Baker/Bradshaw/Rosenzweig (eds.) (13 points)

8. *Parakeet* Brialey/Plummer (eds.) (11 points)

9. *International Revolutionary Gardener* Nicholas/Hanna (eds.) (9 points)

10. *Tortoise* Sue Jones (ed.) (6 points)

11. *Fandom Guardian* Hicks (ed.) (4 points)

12. (Tied) *Bob* Sorensen (ed.) (3 points); *Olaf* Cheslin (ed.); and *Balloons Over Australia*

Never Quite Aboriginal Lake (ed.)

15. (Tied) *Did I Say That Out Loud* Kerr (ed.) (2 points); *Mira*, Mike Abbott (ed.); *Ever-lasting Lamentables* Elizabeth Billinger (ed.)

16. *Guffaw* Davies/Headlong/Kincaid (eds.) (1 point)

Best Fan Writer

1. Yvonne Rowse (53 points)

2. (Tied) Claire Brialey/Mark Plummer (25 points) (Just can't be separated, can they?)

4. Dave Langford (22 points)

5. Dave Hicks (17 points)

6. (Tied) Christina Lake/Alison Scott (16 points)

8. Maureen Speller (15 points)

9. (Tied) Tony Berry/Sue Jones (8 points)

11. (Tied) Bridget Bradshaw/Joseph Nicholas (6 points)

12. (Tied) Amanda Baker/Jo Walton/D. West (5 points)

16. (Tied) Mike Abbott/Debbi Kerr (4 points)

18. (Tied) Rob Hansen/Tanya Brown/Mike Siddall (3 points)

21. Elizabeth Billinger (2 points)

22. (Tied) Tommy Ferguson/Judith Hanna (1 point)

Best Fan Artist

1. Sue Mason (54 points)

2. Dave Hicks (50 points)

3. Steve Jeffrey (40 points)

4. D. West (24 points)

5. Sue Mowbray (10 points)

6. Ken Cheslin (7 points)

7. (Tied) Dave Mooring/Sue Jones (6 points)

9. Anne Stokes (5 points)

10. Teddy (3 points)

11. Harry Turner (2 points)

12. Miki Dennis (1 point)

Ig Nobel Prize 1999

The 1999 Ig Nobel Prizes were awarded at a gala ceremony at Harvard's Sanders Theatre on the night of September 30.

Sociology: Steve Penfold, of York University in Toronto, for doing his PhD thesis on the sociology of Canadian donut shops.

Physics: Dr Len Fisher of Bath, England and Sydney, Australia, for calculating the optimal way to dunk a biscuit and Professor Jean-Marc Vanden-Broeck of the University of East Anglia, England, and Belgium, for calculating how to make a teapot spout that does not drip.

Literature: The British Standards Institute for its six-page specification (BS-6008) of the proper way to make a cup of tea.

Science Education: The Kansas State Board of Education and the Colorado State Board of Education, for mandating that children should not believe in Darwin's theory of evolution any more than they believe in Newton's theory of gravitation, Faraday's and Maxwell's theory of electromagnetism, or Pasteur's theory that germs cause disease.

Medicine: Dr. Arvid Vatle of Stord, Norway, for carefully collecting, classifying, and contemplating which kinds of containers his patients chose when submitting urine samples.

Chemistry: Takeshi Makino, president of The Safety Detective Agency in Osaka, Japan, for his involvement with S-Check, an infidelity detection spray that wives can apply to their husbands' underwear.

Biology: Paul Bosland of The Chile Pepper Institute at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico, for breeding a spicelless jalapeno chile pepper.

Environmental Protection: Hyuk-ho Kwon of Kolon Company of Seoul, Korea, for inventing the self-perfuming business suit.

Peace: Charl Fourie and Michelle Wong of Johannesburg, South Africa, for inventing an automobile burglar alarm consisting of a detection circuit and a flamethrower.

Managed Health Care: The late George and Charlotte Blonsky of New York City and San Jose, California, for inventing a device (US Patent #3,216,423) to aid women in giving birth - the woman is strapped onto a circular table, and the table is then rotated at high speed. For details, see the AIR web site www.improbable.com

SFFA Awards

The Science Fiction Poetry Association has presented Bruce Boston with its first Grand Master Poet award for outstanding genre poetry as well as for his accomplishment of winning the most Rhysling Awards from 1985 to the present day, including this year's Long Poem Award for "Confessions of a Body Thief" (Talisman). The 1999 Rhysling Short Poem Award has been won by Laurel Winter for "egg horror poem," first published in *Asimov's*.

For further information about the SFFA, contact John Nichols, 6075 Bellevue Drive., North Olmsted, OH 44070, USA or via email at bjay@worldnet.att.net.

Media News

Gary Dalkin and others
tear their eyes from the
screen long enough to
bring you the latest on
film and TV

Philip K Dick's Scanner

The film version of Philip K. Dick's *Through a Scanner Darkly* will be scripted by Mark Fergus and Hawk Ostby. The original story is about a narcotics agent who becomes hooked on a new drug and realises he is actually conducting an undercover sting on himself. Australian Kate Croghan will be directing.

Carpenter's Shades

John Carpenter's *Ghosts of Mars* will be the first project to go into production at Sony's niche label Screen Gems. A sci-fi thriller set some 200 years in the future, the film is the story of human colonists on Mars who must be rescued after becoming possessed by vengeful Martian ghosts. Carpenter wrote the screenplay in conjunction with Larry Sulkis. *Ghosts of Mars* comes on the heels of Sony's successful release last year of *John Carpenter's Vampires*, which grossed \$9.2 million on opening in the USA, the biggest-ever opening for a Halloween weekend.

Mad again

Said to be set 200 years in the future, the plot of the forthcoming *Mad Max 4* supposedly revolves around "protectors" who guard the world's most prized possession: pure genetic stock. The Max character is responsible for protecting a group of people who are free of genetic problems, and for transporting them from A to B. "Pure genetic stock" is to *Mad Max 4* what gasoline was to the earlier films. The story is the joint brainchild of Brendan McCarthy and George Miller. (The latter being the director of the first three "Max Max" films; while the former is a visual designer best known for his involvement in the *Lost In Space* feature film, the innovative TV series *ReBoot* and for being the mind behind the "Z-Men" comic.) Other rumours have had both Mel Gibson and Aussie actor Heath Ledger (*10 Things I Hate About You*) being approached for roles in the film. (Coincidentally, Ledger and Gibson are currently shooting *The Patriot* together.)

Mulder & Scully's new millennium

The long-awaited (well, for fans, anyway) crossover between *The X-Files* and *Millennium* was aired in the US on 28 November, in an *X-Files* episode guest-starring Lance Henriksen as Frank Black. Presumably, it will be aired in the UK sometime in the near future?

Elric RPG coming soon to a small screen near you

Dreamcast Octagon Entertainment and Snowball Interactive are working on an RPG based on Michael Moorcock's fantasy novel *Elric of Melniboné*. Scheduled for release on PC, SEGA DREAMCAST, and other next generation systems around Summer 2001, the story-based game will closely follow the storyline of the first of the seven Elric Saga novels, where Elric must rescue his love, Cymoril, while defeating his arch-nemesis, Yrkoon.

Oh no! Not again!

The classic 1950s giant ant film, *Them*, is to be remade. According to *Variety*, Mark Montgomery is currently writing the new script and there are also rumours that Joe Johnston (*October Sky* and *Jumanji*) is attached to the project.

The Paper Snarl

Paper Tiger's electronic news posting #5 contains extended interviews with artists Ciruelo Cabral and David Hardy and a tribute to artist Eddie Jones (see our obituary in the last *Matrix*). In #6 there are interviews with Fangorn and with Tom Abba, winner of Eastercon Paper Tiger and Ken McIntyre Awards (for *Of Clockwork Men*).

These issues also carry news of the Prix Aurora and the British and World Fantasy Awards (see *Matrix* p.7), and a report on the Aussiecon III Worldcon.

In a revamp of their web site at www.papertiger.co.uk they are looking for feedback on the idea of offering a "Gallery" space to established or new artists working in the sf, fantasy and horror fields on their web site. The offer, if it comes off, is free, although obviously with editorial control over the content of what is posted there. If the idea interests you, or you would like to submit material, you can contact them at papersnarl@aol.com or subscribe to *The Paper Snarl* news posting by sending an email with the single-word **SUBJECT** line **SUBSCRIBE**.

Anne Sudworth Exhibition

An important new regional museum, The World Of Glass, will open in St Helens on March 6. An inaugural art show, running March 6 to April 7, will be an exhibition of works by Anne Sudworth under the title *Enchanted World*, to coincide with the publication and launch of her first book from Paper Tiger. Advance copies of the book should hopefully be available.

Primarily a fine artist working in the unusual (for sf/fantasy illustration) medium of pastels, Sudworth's work shows a fascination for ethereally lit, otherworldly landscapes. Her work will be featured in US magazine *Carpe Noctem* and the web-zine *DarkEcho* (darkecho@aol.com) as well as her own online gallery at www.annesudworth.co.uk

The Book of the Game of the Game of the Book...

Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time* has been published as a computer role playing game from GT Interactive at £34.99 (reviewed in the Jan 2000 issue of *PC Zone*). You will apparently need some impressive hardware to run it, with a minimum requirement of a PII 200, 32 Mb RAM and 3D graphic accelerator card and 500 Mb spare disk space to install.

Coming from the opposite direction is Raymond E. Feist, whose recent 'The Riftwar Legacy' novels, *Krondor: The Assassins* and *Krondor: The Betrayal*, are based on the computer games *Betrayal at Krondor* and *Return to Krondor* published by Dynamix Inc./Sierra Studios.

Stephen King, meanwhile, has eschewed the printed book altogether for his latest work, the three story collection *Blood and Smoke*, which is only being issued as a Simon and Schuster audiobook (3½ hours on three cassettes, £23.95). All the stories deal with cigarette smoking and in a somewhat bizarre (and quite possibly controversial) move the first run will be packaged in a flip top box with cigarette-style warning about the contents. Expect these to become very collectable, especially if there are objections to the packaging. Two of the stories, '1408' and 'In the Deathroom' are original, while 'Lunch at Gotham City' was originally in a 1995 anthology *Dark Love*.

Film Review

The Blair Witch Project

(1999)

Directed and written by Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez. Cast: Heather (Heather Donahue), Michael (Michael Williams), Joshua (Joshua Leonard). 80 minutes. Cert 15. Distributed by Pathe in the UK.

Andrew M. Butler, our man with the packed lunch and dodgy camcorder ventures into the woods.

So, it's night, you're lost in the woods for the last week, and one of your party is missing, presumed splattered, what do you do?

- a) stick together and light a very large campfire
- b) keep together and very quiet indeed
- c) go separately into the spooky house...

But that is to get ahead of ourselves, and this is one *Matrix* film reviewer who doesn't like to give the ending of the film away.

The Blair Witch Project comes to us upon a tide of publicity, about how this low-budget horror flick has become the most profitable movie of all time on little more than word of mouth, earning something like \$140 million at the US box office on a budget of around \$20,000, equivalent to the cigar budget for Jack Nicholson on most movies. Think *Clerks*. Think *El Mariachi*. And then weep. Of course we have the tide of publicity and hype, it's no longer a sleeper, it's a cast-iron, guaranteed must-see, talk-about-it-in-the-pub-don't-have-nightmares hit. The hype has landed.

The premise of *The Blair Witch Project* is that three American teenagers have gone missing whilst making a documentary, and only their footage has been found. Fifty years before some witch had kidnapped seven children, and took them in pairs into the cellar, where it killed them. (How do we know this happened if everyone died? How do

you split seven kids into pairs anyhow? Well, I remember hearing and telling similar ghost stories in which not a soul survived, and no one batted an eyelid. Logic doesn't come into it).

Armed with a 16 mm camera, a camcorder and seemingly limitless supplies of filmstock, video and Duracell batteries, the thrilling three first interview a bunch of locals and rednecks about these events before disappearing into the woods. (If it were me, I'd be suspicious about the second fisherman, who seemed to know far more than was good for him. Haven't they seen Scooby Doo? He might've gotten away with it if it wasn't for them pesky kids...).

Deep in the woods the threadbare three some find odd sticks, peculiar piles of stones, and what looks like an old graveyard, possibly an old Indian graveyard... No, actually I made that last bit up, but it would have been that kind of graveyard if the filmmakers were playing by the rules. After all, the whole point is for two of the teenagers to shag, and then the monster/axe murderer/escaped lunatic from the local asylum is entitled to come after them. Presumably they don't have sex, or if they do, Heather fails to film it, and she seems to have the viewfinder glued to her eye throughout. And wouldn't you know it? It does come after them anyway. And so the threatened three do much running around, swearing, and filming.

It's pretty clear by now that no one is going to get out alive (we've been told that at the start of the film, pay attention at the back) and so the trick is to keep them there, in the woods, whilst one by one they are picked off. It's a very convincing portrayal of three friends under pressure, the way arguments blow up suddenly and then pass over, although a little back story about the three would not have come amiss. And they do scare very well. But it still isn't quite enough to be genuinely scary.

From what I can gather, the film was basically made by sending three actors into woods, whilst the

directors disappeared off for coffee, donuts and a nice hot bath before returning in the middle of the night to scare the hell out of their cast. The screams may well be genuine. And given the budget, it was much better not to see what it is that is scaring them. Even in the age of digital effects, less is more, and *Jaws* is only scary until you see the rubber shark. From what I hear, the remake of *The Haunting* missed out on the first rule of psychological horror and went for the gore.

Still, given what we know about the ending of the film from the very start, the inevitable feeling is one of "So-what? Isn't that just a cop out?" And then a mounting feeling of despair at the thought that, even as you read this, some big-shot Hollywood producer is no doubt giving them tonnes of money to remake it, with Brad Pitt, Lisa Kudrow and Chris Tucker in the main roles.

And then you begin to wonder why the reels of film never ran out at inconvenient moments, and how their batteries lasted so long.

The Blair Witch Project is a fair enough horror comedy on a zero budget, very professionally done, blown up out of all proportion and expectation. The hype has run away with a film that is clearly aware of horror conventions and tropes, but doesn't spoof them in the manner of the *Scream* movies.

Night. A tent. A clattering sound, perhaps cymbals clashing together. What can it be? It goes on all night. In the morning I stick my head out to look and find - the horror! - a Duracell bunny... But not just any old Duracell bunny, there are seven of them, and then I look into their eyes and see

(This review was found, unfinished. The reviewer's body was never found)



TV Preview

Gormenghast (BBC 2)

Paul Billinger is eaten by owls

Six murders, two seductions and three deaths ... who will rule Gormenghast? This is how the BBC are describing their new, lavish (and costly, it's reported as being around £10 million) production of Mervyn Peake's fantasy masterpiece, the *Gormenghast* trilogy. Alternatively, it's the "first great television event of the new millennium". However they want to describe it the BBC have put a huge amount of effort into the production, with a consequent high expectation riding on it.

The four-part series, directed by Andy Wilson from a screenplay by Malcolm McKay, is based on the first two books, *Titus Groan* and *Gormenghast*, and tells of the birth of Titus, 77th Earl of Groan, and its effect on the fixed and persistent rituals of the House of Groan. Into this timeless, but decaying, world comes the malevolent and ambitious Steepkirk who charms his way from lowly kitchen boy into the favours of the family Groan and, just as importantly, into the very heart of Gormenghast castle.

The prospect of a television version is, to anyone who knows the books, something both to long for and to dread. The books are strong on visual imagery, giving a powerful but very personal vision, not only of Castle Gormenghast but also of its grotesque and eccentric inhabitants. The vision presented by anyone other than the author has a very exacting standard to meet.

So does this, the first, film version live up to its very high expectations?

To judge this, *Matrix* was invited to an exclusive (well, with the rest of the media pack) screening of Episode 1 - the first time even the producer and most of the cast and crew had seen it, as the final version was only completed the night before.

Prior to the screening I tried to think of what would, for me, be the most vital elements needed to convince and persuade that the world was real and that it was faithful (at least in spirit) to the books. I came up with two criteria: the overall "look" of the production - art design, photography, sets, costumes, music - and the characters within it - the casting, acting, direction. Only then did I start thinking about the script and what would be included and, critically, what would be left out, as even with a four-hour plus production this does not give much time for the detailed and languid pacing of the books.

On both of these elements the production is a success. Christopher Hobbs (the designer of films such as *Caravaggio* and *Edward II* - both of which have very strong visual imagery) has created some truly impressive sets (some of the best I have seen on television) based upon many influences: Mount Athos, Buddhist temples, Indian furniture, and some of the most inspiring twentieth-century artists (Kandinsky

/Miro/Klee included) to give an overall gothic, oriental feel. Commendably, most of this is done without the use of CGI, rather being based on the more traditional skills (physical sets, model-making, good blue-screen work) for which the BBC is renowned. Similar attention has gone into the music with an original score by Richard Rodney Bennett and choral music from John Tavener, the latter being particularly effective and atmospheric.

Casting is similarly strong with Jonathan Rhys Meyer, one of the stars of the very highly regarded (by some) *Velvet Goldmine*, playing Steepkirk and managing to convey both charm and grotesque characteristics (despite the handicap of being far too good-looking). Ian Richardson is a very regal, sympathetic and tragic Lord Groan; whilst John Sessions accurately portrays the excessive, florid language style of Dr Prunesquallor (making it as infuriating, at times, as it is in the books). Celia Imrie plays a very confident Lady Gertrude complete with Mr Chalk (a white raven) on her shoulder and her entourage of white cats. Neve McIntosh is a similarly strong Fuchsia with a childlike enthusiasm and a longing to escape the formal rituals of the castle. A very repulsive Swelter, with much (unhealthy?) enthusiasm for his young kitchen boys, is played by a very well made-up Richard Griffiths. The other characters in the first episode, Prunesquallor's sister Irma, the twins Clarice and Cora, Nannie Slag are all equally well portrayed.

The final main character is Flay, the "cadaverous and taciturn" manservant to Lord Groan, stalking the corridors of the castle "his knee joints reporting his progress at every spider-like step" motivated by his loyalty to his Master and his hatred of Swelter. Flay is played, quite marvellously, by Christopher Lee. The rest of the cast are good, even very good, but Lee is masterful, giving a real presence to every scene in which he appears. He comes very close to dominating and throwing everything off balance but just pulling back (or being pulled back) to evolve as the heart and conscience of the castle, a decaying and possibly terminally ill heart, but still the very core and spirit. We will see in later episodes whether the young Titus is strong enough to recover this role, which should be his by birthright, or if Steepkirk, rapidly climbing both socially and physically, will reach to the very soul of Gormenghast. Lee has the rapid, splintered, harsh voice of the Flay from the novels with appearance and mannerisms far removed from that of his most famous role, Dracula.

Some of the scenes, however, do at times feel more theatrical than filmic with single point, static camera work, although others such as the high vantage point shots inside the library are very impressive, with parallels to the one found in the film of Umberto Eco's *Name of the Rose*. Inevitably the pace is fast giving little time for some of the more exploratory aspects of the books with, for example, Steepkirk's traverse across the rooftops being much shortened. These are, however, minor points with the production as a whole succeeding admirably.

Christopher Lee, who attended the screening, along with many of the rest of the cast and crew, talked about his role. Flay, to him, was never as he first seemed, for example, he is the only one to recognise Steepkirk for what he really is. Lee knew Mervyn Peake in 1950s London, meeting him at the old Harrod's Library and describing him as "a charming, delightful man, very quiet, reserved with beautiful blue eyes, good-looking, very gentle. Obviously an extraordinary man, inventing a world and a language and almost a race of his own". Lee read the books some forty years ago and felt proud to be in the production in a role so right for him (which was exactly what came over on the screen).

Filming was not all straightforward with, at one point, the crew thinking that Lee was dead - during an epic fight with Swelter he jumped and fell some 15 feet, lying completely still on his back - happily he was only winded and was soon able to continue.

Lee will certainly be seen as one of the genre's most important icons, not only for his large body of past work (particularly for Hammer) and his role as Flay, but also for his part in the very eagerly awaited film *Sleepy Hollow* (the first great film event of the new millennium?). He described the making of this as "a joyful experience" with both Tim Burton and Johnny Depp being "marvellous to work with". As if this were not enough, when both *Gormenghast* and *Sleepy Hollow* are screened in the UK in January 2000 he will be in New Zealand, joining the cast of Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* to play Saruman. Lee always imagined *Lord of the Rings*, from the first time he read it, as being a film. He also once met Tolkien, at the Mire public house in Oxford. To sum up, Lee describes this time as "the most exciting stage of my career" (and, remember, this is his 53rd year in the acting profession).

The BBC are heavily promoting and supporting the production of *Gormenghast* with the video and DVD becoming available later in the year, along with a CD of the soundtrack, a book on the art and making of the series and even a range of jewellery. Hearteningly, the original books are being re-published by Random House, in one volume, and hopefully the BBC production will bring a whole new readership to the books.

When the screening finished all I wanted to do was stay in the screening room and watch the remaining three episodes. Unfortunately only the first was finished so I'll have to wait until they are shown on BBC 2 in mid-January 2000. The production values are high, the cast is excellent and the script is clear and well focused - vital given the scale of the world to be created - resulting in what I am expecting to be a hugely entertaining series. It reminded me that the BBC can do wonderful genre productions. It should be a success and hopefully this will convince the BBC that investing in high-quality science fiction and fantasy is worthwhile, both critically and financially. Now for a version of Jeff Noon's *Vurt* perhaps?

Guest Columns

Stephen Baxter on the Australian Experience, Part II



After the Melbourne Worldcon in September 1999, my wife and I (with discreet assistance from the tax man) raced around some of Australia's highlights. Many overseas attendees took the same opportunity, and it was a strange pleasure to travel thousands of miles and encounter such exotic fauna as the bushy-bearded editor of *Analog* (Stanley Schmidt).

I said before that travel broadens the mind. New places stimulate my sfal imagination, often in unexpected ways, and I always come home laden with notes, photos and books, material which works its way into my writing in one form or another.

Take Ayers Rock, where we bumped into Stan Schmidt. The Rock, known as Uluru to the local Aboriginal population, is a vast lump of hard, ancient sandstone, extensively carved by megayears of water flows, protruding uncompromisingly from the flat, arid land. To the Aborigines, nomads in a land like a sensory deprivation tank, Uluru and neighbouring formations must have been as striking as a cathedral looming over medieval fields. And so the Aborigines made these rocks places of totemic and religious significance, spinning Dreamtime stories from cracks and folds, until the rocks became a kind of mythic cinema. It was a triumph of the imagination.

Of course you don't see too many kangaroos at Uluru. I had my first one-to-one with a 'roo in a nature park north of Melbourne. I thought I knew about kangaroos: "What's that, Skippy?" But

close to they seemed extraordinary, with faces like outsize rodents, and those remarkable levered back legs. Their jumping gait turns out to be energetically highly efficient - useful when you're fleeing across an arid, unproductive landscape - and when they "walk" shorter distances the 'roos lever themselves with hind legs, front paws and tail. To my (non-biologist's) eye kangaroos were examples of alternative bio-engineering, like aliens from the imagination of Niven, Vinge or Jack Cohen.

Of course kangaroos and the rest of the native fauna evolved differently from us because of Australia's long isolation from the other continents. Australia sailed away from Gondwanaland with a freight of rainforest, which has since been forced to adapt to increasingly arid conditions. So the vegetation - spinifex grass, eucalyptus trees and the rest - is not like the flora of the American deserts, say; these plants are descendants of leafy bushes and trees, surviving the drying-out - an observation which gave me a wonderful sense of deep time.

Some rain forest still survives. In Queensland we were taken for a long walk through a private reserve (owned by a somewhat eccentric Sixties survivor). The soil is low on nutrients; though biodiversity is high, growth is sporadic. Surrounded by Gondwanaland ferns, we studied plants that wait centuries for a great tree to fall, for breaks in the canopy affording enough light to fuel a spurt of growth.

If Australia struck me as a theme park for Darwinism, I wondered how Captain Cook and his crews had reacted to all this: without the conceptual framework of evolution theory, how could they have made any sense of a kangaroo - let alone a platypus? But it struck me that Cook's explorations were like a template of later planetary-romance sf. Cook, after all, found a land that was alien, but not too alien: Australia was a world where you could breathe the air, eat (some of) the plants and animals, even interact with the inhabitants.

Although you can still find such worlds in modern science fiction (see for example Russell's *The Sparrow*) it seems that if/when we do reach the planets of other stars we are very unlikely to find any place so welcoming and yet so exotic as Australia was to Cook. Perhaps those wonderful 1950s planetary romances were dreams of the past, not the future.

John Jarrold

Getting Promoted

The book trade in the UK has become extremely varied in recent years, with the growth of small, specialist shops and the coming of huge superstores like Borders. However, one major change which didn't work to the advantage of SF and fantasy sales was the demise of Bookwise, the biggest wholesaler, some years ago. A publisher could reckon to sell a given number of copies to Bookwise, who would then sell the books on through small stores, tobacconists, paper shops and the like. Many of these outlets no longer stock books at all, which gives a newer author much less opportunity to reach his or her audience.

The genre's relationship with W. H. Smith has been a little topsy-turvy over the years - there have been occasions when Smiths only wanted to stock best-sellers, and not be involved with growing authors - but through this year, and on into 2000, we should all see the SF and fantasy presence in Smiths' stores growing, thanks to Greg Furlong, their national SF and fantasy buyer. Greg has already promoted genre titles from all the major imprints as Smiths' Recommendations, which gets them well displayed at the front of the store and hopefully sees them reaching an audience who don't check out the SF and fantasy shelves, like you and I do as a matter of course. From talking to my colleagues with other publishers, I know we all want to help Greg as much as possible, which has to make the genre stronger.

Waterstone's, Dillons, Ottakar's and Books Etc. have all been strong promoters of the genre, and it does my heart good to walk into my local Ottakar's, in Hastings, and see three full stacks of SF and fantasy, ceiling to floor, near the front of the shop. Both they and Waterstone's now have regular genre magazines displayed prominently which, considering how many new titles are published annually in the UK alone, should help newer readers sort the wheat from the chaff and enjoy their reading.

As a publisher, I have to rely on the general trade to take sufficient copies of a new author for ongoing sales and word-of-mouth to become possible, so my relationship with the trade is as strong as I can make it - and I know that's true of other SF editors, too. It is now a major part of the job description, as is involvement in marketing, cover design, and so forth. I tell you, it's a full life in genre publishing, these days. Renaissance Man, or what?

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's PR.

#Isaac Asimov *Buy Jupiter* (Victor Gollancz Feb PB £6.99)

#Isaac Asimov *The Bicentennial Man* (Millennium Jan PB £6.99)

Isaac Asimov *The Gods Themselves* (Millennium Feb PB £6.99)

***John Barnes *Finity* (Victor Gollancz, Jan HB/TPB £16.99/£9.99 388pp)
'A virtuoso piece of probability juggling by a master of science fiction.'

Stephen Baxter *Long Tusk* (Orion Jan HB/TPB £16.99/£9.99 304pp)

'The sequel to *Mammoth* charts the genesis of the epic battle between mankind and mammoth.'

NOIP Stephen Baxter *Mammoth* (Millennium Jan PB £6.99)

NOIP Chaz Brenchley *Feast of the King's Shadow* (Orbit Feb PB £6.99 576pp)

#Ray Bradbury *The Halloween Tree* (Earthlight Jan PB £5.99 256pp)



Kristen Britain *Green Rider* (Earthlight Jan PB £5.99)

##John Brockman (ed.) *Big Ideas: The Greatest Inventions of the Last 2000 Years* (Weidenfeld Science Jan HB

£14.99 320pp)
Compiled from hundreds of responses from scientists and technologists originally posted to the Big Ideas website.

NOIP Chris Bunch *The Warrior King* (Orbit Jan PB £6.99 464pp)

C. J. Cherryh *Fortress of Owls* (Voyager Jan PB £6.99 412pp)

High Fantasy from the Hugo Award winner.

Peter Crowther (ed.) *Foursight* (Victor Gollancz Feb £16.99 224pp)

#Philip K. Dick *Ubik* (Millennium Feb PB £6.99)

Kate Elliott *Child of Flame* (Orbit Feb HB £10.99 768pp)

NOIP Kate Elliott *The Burning Stone* (Orbit Feb PB £7.99 928pp)

C. S. Friedmann *This Alien Shore* (Voyager Jan PB £6.99 576pp)

'A cross between cyberpunk and Star Wars.' (*Publishers Weekly*)

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

##Alison Gopnik, Andrew Meltzoff & Patricia Kuhl *How Babies Think: The Science of Childhood* (Weidenfeld Science Jan HB £20.00 256pp)

NOIP Julia Gray *Isle of the Dead* (Orbit Feb PB 384pp)

NOIP Andrew Harman *The Suburban Salamander Incident* (Orbit Jan PB £5.99 352pp)

NOIP Tom Holt *Only Human* (Orbit Jan PB £5.99 352pp)

NOIP J. V. Jones *A Cavern of Black Ice* (Orbit Jan PB £6.99 816pp)

Katherine Kerr *The Fire Dragon* (Voyager Feb HB/TPB £16.99/£9.99 512pp)

#Daniel Keyes *Flowers for Algernon* (Millennium Jan PB £6.99)

Stephen Lawhead *The Black Rood* (Voyager Jan HB £17.99 512pp)

The second volume in *The Celtic Crusades*.

#Fritz Leiber *Farewell to Lankmar* (Millennium Feb PB £6.99)

Roger Levy *Reckless Sleep* (Victor Gollancz Feb HB/TPB £16.99/£10.99 352pp)

'A superbly imagined, bleakly dystopic debut of conspiracies and mistaken realities.'

John Marco *The Grand Design* (Victor Gollancz Feb HB £17.99 608pp)

NOIP John Marco *The Jackal of Nar* (Millennium Jan PB £6.99)

##John Joe McFadden *Quantum Evolution: The New Science of Life* (HarperCollins Feb HB £17.99 384pp)

'Provides a new understanding of the origins of life and the purpose of death.'

NOIP L. E. Modesitt Jr. *Colours of Chaos* (Orbit Jan PB £6.99 832pp)

Elizabeth Moon *Once a Hero* (Orbit Jan PB £6.99 416pp)

Adam Nichols *The Songster* (Millennium Jan PB £5.99)

Paperback original, publication deferred from September 1999.

Darren O'Shaughnessy *Hell's Horizon* (Millennium Feb PB £6.99)

NOIP
Ricardo
Pinto *The Chosen*
(Bantam Jan PB £6.99)



#Robert
Silverberg
Pinto *Valentine Pontifex*
(Voyager Jan PB £6.99 512pp)
The second novel in the Majipoor Cycle.

June Welch *Lord of Necron* (Earthlight Feb £6.99 544pp)

##Adrian Woolfson *Life Without Genes: The History and Future of Genetic Information*. (HarperCollins Jan HB £17.99 384pp)

An exploration of artificially evolved consciousness from Wellcome Research Fellow at Darwin College, Cambridge.

Diane Wynne-Jones *The Dark Lord Of Derkhelm* (Millennium Jan PB £6.99)

The Fanzine File: Tony Berry takes a stab at defining fanzines

A fanzine is an amateur magazine produced by fans. There, that just about sums it up. Can I go now? No? Oh, alright then.

The term "fanzine" was coined by Russ Chauvenet in 1941, and has since been borrowed and used by all sorts of fan groups, most recently by football fans. There is some argument (just for a change) about which was the first fanzine: in May 1930 the Science Correspondence Club published *The Comet* (later *Cosmology*), Ray Palmer (ed.), but this concerned itself purely with science, not SF. The following month the New York Scienceeers published *The Planet*, Allen Glasser (ed.), which was again mostly about science, but did include reviews of professional SF magazines, of which there were only four at the time. Some people regard the first "true" fanzine to be *The Time Traveller* (January 1932), Julius Schwartz and Mort Weisinger (eds.), which dealt exclusively with SF and amateur science.

As interest in SF grew, individual fans began producing fanzines and exchanging them with others in return for their own effort, a contribution or letter of comment (LoC). The content of

fanzines diversified enormously and an informal network of amateur publishers and letterhackers developed. The idea spread to this side of the pond from the US, and in 1936 Maurice Hanson and Dennis Jacques started *Novae Terrae*. Since then, fanzine production has mushroomed, and now there are hundreds of different titles all over the world. A number of professional SF authors began their careers in fanzines, for example, Ray Bradbury, James Blish, Harlan Ellison, Michael Moorcock and Robert Silverberg. Many of these "filthy pros" still contribute articles to fanzines, and one or two even produce an occasional issue themselves.

Fanzines can be subdivided into several groups: the "perzine" (personal fanzine) is written and produced entirely by the editor, while the "genzine" (general fanzine) takes contributions from others. Content can be "fannish" (the antics of fans and fandom) or "sercon" (serious and constructive) or indeed anything which the editors wish to inflict upon us (e.g., a four-page treatise on IKEA bookshelves). Some of them even mention SF.

Back in the early days of fanzines, a lot of effort was put into their

production: stencils were typed, handles of duplicators were cranked, bottles of correcting fluid were spilt, fevered brows mopped. Fans were maybe hundreds of miles apart and met once or twice a year. The fanzine became the practical means of keeping in touch; they could be looked upon as extended letters between friends. They were almost essential. These days fanzines can be word-processed, desktop-published, photocopied or laser-printed. Production has become relatively cheap and easy, but at the same time there are a hundred conventions a year, travel is not the obstacle it once was, and we can e-mail someone on the other side of the world for next to nothing. Yet, I'm glad to say that the fanzine continues to thrive. Admittedly some of them seem to be produced merely to showcase the numerous functions of the editor's new six-terabyte Cray plamtop and holographic printer, but there are many good solid, dare I say it "traditional," fanzines. Maybe that's it – maybe it's our love of real printed paper which keeps the fanzines going; something physical which we can sit and read and then put away, and it will still be there in ten years' time to read again.

Fanzine Reviews: Yvonne Rowse counts calories (and toucans)

Most British fanzines at the moment seem to be perzines (i.e., written by one person). Honourable exceptions to this are *Plokta* and *Banana Wings*.

Banana Wings (BW) has a tendency to seriousness and is one of the few SF fanzines where SF is ever written about in any detail. The rest of us include passing references to SF, BW runs serious reviews and indepth discussions. I don't always read every page of BW, not least because it's too big to read in one sitting and I will then misplace it for days, but there is always something fascinating or, at the very least, interesting and entertaining in there.

BW is edited and largely written by Claire Brialley and Mark Plummer, I particularly like Claire's style, especially when she is being frivolous. It was in a piece about shopping in BW some time ago that I first came across Claire's shoe categorisation system. As far as I know she only buys "fuck me" shoes, or at the very least, "snog me deeply and rub my

nipples" shoes.

BW 14 is the first issue to be photocopied, Claire and Mark having stuck, in the great fanzine tradition, to duplicators until now. Highlights of this issue include "Kim's Kookery Korner" with recipes for such delights as jellied moose nose, stuffed camel and barbecued loin of tapir (absolutely CHAMPION!), "Was It Something I Said?", a piece peppered with interesting quotes ("You start these rumours about me having an affair with a toilet duck" – Liam Proven) which revolves around language and what they're doing to it, and "It's Inevitable" which talks about the millennium, Wol Wontak (i.e., world one talk – you can, apparently, learn it in two days – beats French!), and who should be Person of the Millennium (which follows from an article in Tony Berry's fanzine reviewed last time – I love this interconnection in fanzines). My favourite bit of all, though, was Mark's piece at the end, about Noel

Collyer. Noel, as well as being a charming man is a stock character. If he hadn't been there they would have invented him. Maybe they have invented him.

"They're playing your song," Jim de Liscard said to Noel Collyer as the delicate tones of Chumbawumba's 'Amnesia', complete with refrain of "Do you suffer from long term memory loss," drifted from the speakers."

I think Noel is probably what makes *Parakeet*, the one-sheet BW substitute so very readable. More Noel for your reading time.

Plokta, on the other hand, isn't remotely serious. This is one of my favourite fanzines. The editors, the Plokta Cabal, have more superfluous technology than the rest of fandom put together (no surely not!) and aren't afraid to use it, which results in a beautifully produced zine with some wonderful photos and lots of good illos from Sue Mason and others.

This is the zine that brought you photos of Tommy Ferguson and Joseph Nicholas in skirts, though of course you couldn't really distinguish the exquisitely embarrassed expression on Tommy's face. This is the zine that brought you the sad tale of Marianne (Alison Scott's 2 year-old) and the escaping toucan. This is the zine that brought you the P-Plan Diet, in my view the most perfect diet ever invented, although many of us have stumbled onto it ourselves, it was *Plokta* who first wrote it all down.

"Calories don't count. Calories don't count if you're standing up. Or lying down. Remember that calories in liquid form are negligible, as they're mostly water. Be careful not to drink water without alcohol in it. Alcohol-free water causes thousands of deaths every year." Absolutely! "Anything knocked down to

half price in Waitrose is calorie free..." So I'd always suspected. "No green vegetables (unless fried)." Couldn't agree more. (Unfortunately, all this is in Vol 4 No 3, but they might still have copies. It would be well worth your pursuing this.)

Plokta (Vol 4 No 4) announces that Sue Mason is running for TAFF (more about this next issue), and that the Cabal are going to run a convention, Plokta.Con. There are moving house tales and the inevitable Australia tales (Oh! Was there a Worldcon there?) but the long piece I liked best was the article about Brian Ameringan's shoes replaced by the company if he wore them out in less than ten years. How many shoes did he receive before they got fed up of the guarantee? Send for *Plokta* and find out.

I think the thing about *Plokta* that

makes it so very entertaining is its rich cast of personas, semi-mythical (at least some of them are semi-mythical) people such as Dr Plokta, Captain Pedantic, Marianne, and Alison Scott, characters that fascinate. That and the short pieces (the bollocks) along the side of the main articles. *Plokta* is a frivolous, gossipy fanzine that is well worth reading.

Banana Wings is available for the usual from: Claire Brialey, 26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7HA, or Mark Plummer, 14 Northway Road Croydon, Surrey, CR0 6JE

Plokta is available from: Steve Davies, Westbourne Terrace, Reading, Berks, RG30 2RP, or Alison Scott, 24 St Mary Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 9RG

PULPitations □ Glenda Pringle on SF Magazines

Mea culpa! Mea culpa! Mea maxima culpa! I'm afraid putting together Matrix for the past two issues has really taken a toll on my reviewing. Even picking up a magazine, let alone reading it, has been something of a luxury the past few months. However, as you've no doubt seen from this issue's editorial, we now have a few more members of the team on board and I can stop having so many serial nervous breakdowns and get on with the task of telling all you good people out there what's on offer in the magazine world. Although I'm always open to suggestions for future reviews, I would also be delighted to hear from any budding reviewers out there who would like to share their personal favourites with us.

Having an occasional need to take a break from the heady world of magazine production (e.g. to eat, take a bath, and even visit the "throne room"), I would take time to woefully study my overflowing pile of neglected magazines. Fortunately some of them were not huge multiplexes of yet unexplored delights, but calm, slim, come-hither volumes pleasing to the eye and easy on the wrist. Such a one is *Scheherazade: The Magazine of Fantasy, Science Fiction and Gothic Romance* (A5, 40pp).

Issue 18 takes as its theme "lost lands, lost freedom, lost souls, but also...love, loyalty and hope found" and contains a letters page, an interview with Darrell Schweitzer and, of course, short stories –

including one in graphic form.

I know some people who decry letters pages that are essentially readers' critiques of previous issues as somewhat cliquish and boring. However, I like them. This is especially so with magazines like *Scheherazade* where they (to my mind) provide at least three useful functions: (1) they provide feedback to the editors as to what their readers like and don't like thus providing guidance for future issues; (2) they provide feedback to the authors, especially when comments are constructive rather than destructive; and (3) they help to provide a sense of camaraderie among the readership ("Gee! Someone else liked that story too!").

Another aspect of *Scheherazade* I particularly liked was the very fine illustrations. Although I must admit to being somewhat confused by the graphic serialisation of Jane Gaskell's *King's Daughter*, I suspect that this was more down to the fact that I had not seen the previous episodes. I had to admire the approach though – especially as it reminded me of the old Classic Comics series from my childhood in which novels such as *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *Black Beauty*, and *The Three Musketeers* were presented in easily (for kids) digestible pictorial form. I was amused to see the excellent drawing of Darrell Schweitzer that accompanied the interview. It certainly made a welcome change from photographs and helped to

capture the charm of the man.

The short stories were quite an eclectic mix. Nicholas Wood's "African Shadows" is a tale of healing and renewal that spanned from the depths of space to the primeval wild of Africa. "The Unicorn Cup" by Cherith Baldry is a poignant fairy tale where friendship blooms in the midst of treachery. Phillip Mann's "A Maggot for Kafka" lived up to its name insofar as it shows in Kafkaesque style that the difference between jailer and prisoner may only be a matter of perspective. "The Wolds" by John Light is an absolutely enchanting story of a lone driver's magical experiences in the British countryside. And last but by no means least, Peter T. Garratt's "Updating Our Equipment" was pure sf (I hope!). Envisaging the male members of the Northport SF Group showing off their "fembot-style" processors to each other (whether the old "Sextrad" model or the "Maxi-Hard Hi-Qs with fashionably exaggerated Boris Vallejo figures") had me in stitches. Ah, it's all good stuff!

Scheherazade is available from: Elizabeth Counihan, Editor, 14 Queens Park Rise, Brighton, BN2 2ZF. Subscription rates: UK £8.50 (4 issues), Overseas £10.50 (4 issues). Cheques payable to 'Scheherazade' in sterling only.

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

INTERNET EXPLOITER

Untangling the World Wide Web with Avril A Brown

A quick roundup of what's cool on the internet

Clubs & wotsits



members.aol.com/tamaranth

Check us out on the internet.



www.herebedragons.co.uk/bfs

Check out our friends at the British Fantasy Society

SIR Arthur C Clarke

www.tsl.usp.br/~rbianchi/clarke/

Our illustrious president is also a patron of the Science Fiction Foundation. This site looks at his life and his work as both scientist and author.

Through his ideas, plots and outlines, Sir Arthur remains a major influence on the genre.

The Science Fiction Foundation

www.liv.ac.uk/~asawyer/fof.html

Not the funkiest website in the world, but it's functional, tells you all you need to know about the aims and work of the Science Fiction Foundation. You can also search the catalogue of the Science Fiction Foundation Collection, which includes the John Wyndham Archive. Loads of links – pity quite a few are out of date.

SF Crowsnest .com

www.sfcrowsnest.com

Finally, a search engine dedicated to SF and fantasy. Links to books, magazines, films and other media. Love it!

So much stuff, so little time....

Publish or die



www.fireandwater.com

Home page of the publisher's HarperCollins.

Loads of authors, links and cool stuff.



www.geocities.com/Area51/1777/

A fan site run by the fan club The Guild of Fans and Disciples. I particularly enjoyed the graphics – and the irreverence. This lot publish that well-known literary organ "The Wizard's Knob"

A very popular on-line buy:



Check out fan opinion on the newsgroups below:



www.tor.com

All the latest from the US publishers. Includes schedules, new books and links to author pages.

Charles de Lint

www.cyberus.ca/~cdl/

Mr de Lint maintains his own site, so sometimes it's not as up to date as you might want it to be. Love his work or hate it, this site is a fascinating insight into what makes him tick as a person and as a writer. You can also check out his musical influences and the references he makes to them in his books. Then hop over to Amazon and buy the CD's!!

Newsgroups

alt.fan.pratchett
alt.books.pratchett
alt.fan.pratchett.announce
rec.arts.sf.fandom
rec.arts.sf.tv
alt.fan.harlan-allison

Remember your Netiquette when posting – read the FAQ if you can.

Media madness



www.buffy.com

The official site, complete with the obligatory episode guide and online store. Nicely laid out, though. Great site for fans of the Slayer.

Buy! Buy! Buy!

amazon.co.uk

www.amazon.co.uk

Loads of stuff, cheaper than your local store, but watch them sting you for postage and packing. Buy more than one item if you want to get your money's worth. Plus point is that you can order US titles online AND pre-order upcoming titles. It's cheap and it's easy – it's up to you to decide whether it's worth it.

Reel.com
THE BEST PLACE TO BUY MOVIES

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Park your credit card with someone grown-up and responsible before you visit this US site. Believe me, you will want to part with lots of money about ten seconds after you enter this site. Chock full of the latest blockbuster DVD's and videos, released months before we get them and way cheaper, this is THE place to build your home movie collection. I found that classic of films TARANTULA here. Wonderful stuff

Note: Depending on the value of your order, HM Customs & Excise may impose import duty.

The Space-Crime Continuum

www.io.com/~aylott/

These people love their books. Go here if you collect classic and vintage books. They have some great deals on early US editions of your favourite authors. They don't charge the earth for postage and packing either. Oh and the cat runs the shop.

Buying online from a major retailer (such as Amazon, Reel etc) should not pose a threat to the security of your credit card details, as all these companies offer secure server transactions. This doesn't mean, however, that these sites cannot be "hacked". Be aware before you submit any financial information.

And finally

www.unitedmedia.com/comics/dilbert

Okay, so it's got nothing whatsoever to do with science-fiction, but I'm sure we can all associate with the trials and tribulations of Dilbert and his cohorts in the Cube Farm.

Avril A Brown is a civil servant. Allegedly.

The Leonard Fell Page

The Biggest Movie of 1999 was undoubtedly *The Blair Witch Project*, which grossed zillions of dollars for next to no outlay and plenty of talent. Those of you who have followed my columns since their inception (and of course you must have been) will realise that I have no money whatsoever and will know the size of my talent. The time seemed right to me that I should grab some of the action before anyone else did.

My idea was to gather three writers together, two guys and one woman, and abandon them in one spot, with a map and provisions for a few days. I would then proceed to scare them at every conceivable opportunity, they'd write down what they felt, and I'd edit all the wordage together, taking all the credit for the creative genius at work.

Clearly I couldn't slavishly follow the idea, so witches were out for a start. But my work on vampires for the tried and trusty novel (eighteen chapters or two thousand words already written!) could provide me with a suitably horrific premise. So the *Blair Vampire Project* was born.

Except that, in writing the scenario, I found that jokes about stake-holding societies were too tempting to crack, and this is a serious piece of work. A rethink and the *Hague Vampire Assignment* was born. I also really realised that a forest location was unsuitable, given the dangerously large numbers of splinters around, and if there's one thing vampires can't stand, it's splinters. So I relocated the scene to a multi-storey car park (lift shafts, graffiti, dark shadows, low light levels, red-neck security guards, strange deposits), and reconnoitred a number of examples in the Basingstoke area.

The basic shape being in shape, I had to sit down and work out which three authors to approach. The original had had people throwing up in the aisles, and that was very much something that I wanted to replicate, I wanted vomit, and I wanted it in buckets.

Who better then to turn to than our old friend Jon Cockney Grimwood, who had been so helpful with tag lines for reviews in the past. After all, I happen to know that a certain BSFA magazine editor was physically sick when reading *neuroAddix*. If anything he was overqualified. Then I recalled a conversation with some hairy chap in the Florence Nightingale about a northern convention, which Pat Cadigan got lost on the way to. This was the kind of guy that we needed on board: the inability to read maps is crucial to keeping the three of them in the car park for a week. And given that we need two men and a woman, what better person than the ever popular Molly Brown. I'm sure her unsinkability would be a strong point.

Striking while the ironing was hot, I emailed all three of them, expecting that it would be a week before I heard back from any of these terribly busy people. Remarkably it was that very afternoon, and I hear that in her excitement, Molly Brown actually phoned the Dillingers up. And then she emailed me with the strange message: "Just out of curiosity, what other short writers are you approaching?"

That is strange, because when you think about it, most of writers are short. Apart from Geoff Ryman. I looked back to the email that I'd sent her, which suggested that she was "at the top of a very short short list." What a wag! I hadn't meant to suggest anything about the size of these people, in fact the taller they are, the more cramped those car park stairwells will look. Clearly she was overwhelmed with my suggestion, since she doesn't give any indication that she's accepted it or not.

Meanwhile, another of this busily terrible threesome emails me: Mr Cockney Grimwood himself. "Good to hear from you (and please, please tell me who felt physically sick at reading a passage in one of my books...!)" he begins, friendly enough, - and indeed he goes on to suggest we meet up for a drink: "Perhaps we could grab a pint, an orange juice, whatever." That's the second time he's suggested this. Most odd. But then he clearly feels it can make a difference to his career.

Alas, the news is not good: he's writing three novels and various articles: "I'm afraid I'm up to my eyes

with work at the moment, so I'm afraid I'm not up for the *Hague Wizard Assignment*. Sorry." Wizards? I said nothing about wizards.

That's one of the three unheard from, one non-committal, and one outright rejection. And this is not a good result for a correspondent with an organ the size of *Matrix*. I considered expanding the short short list to include Colin Greenland, but then I remember that he still hasn't got back to me about learning to be patient. What is he up to? I reluctantly shelve the ideas, with millions unearned.

Then I remember one of the other Big Movies of 1999: *Bowfinger*, in which Steve Martin is trying to make a movie with Eddie Murphy, but can't get him. This is odd, given that Murphy can't have had a hit since *Beverly Hills Cop*, but then it's years since Martin did a decent movie. Anyway, they make the movie without Murphy knowing it, with gorilla filming techniques (you know, a camera and Richard Attenborough or whoever). I could just go up to Grimwood when he's least expecting it, and scare him, recording and then transcribing the reaction. That will mean we'll have to postpone our tête-à-tête for a while, but that's the price of art. Alternatively he could give a reading of the passage from *neuroAddix* and see how many people vomit.

Meanwhile I hear back from Pat Cadigan, who comes over all macho: "I've been married three times. It's impossible to scare me." Now that, I think you'll agree, is a challenge. Pat also claims that the project is clichéd: "The Blair Witch Parody is already a well-milked trend so common as to be cliché at this point - I have seen three BW parodies on TV just this past weekend." Precisely. And when it's that common, it's a genre. So there. Now, I wonder just what it would take to scare Pat Cadigan?

(You can write to Leonard Fell with your suggestions to leonard_fell@yahoo.com)

Members are reminded that all correspondence with Leonard Fell is carried out at the writer's own risk

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 Clarks Lane, Willenhall, W. Midlands WV13 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 Borders or
garygibson@skiffy.freemove.co.uk

Hull SF Group (*note change)

Second and Fourth Tuesdays, 8.30 to 10.30pm at The New Clarence, Charles Street, Hull (from Jan 2000)
Contact Ian and Julie on 01482 447953, or Dave and Estelle on 01482 444291 or see <http://www.mjckeh.demon.co.uk/hullsf.htm>

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 *Asible* 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 (*note change)

FONT meets on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at The Goose on Piccadilly from about 8.30 onwards. 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, Dogthorpe 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 Magpie, Fratton Road, Portsmouth

Reading SF Group.

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

International

The South African Science Fiction Society is looking to make contact with SF fans/organisations in the UK. If you're interested in receiving recent copies of the SASFS's clubzine *Probe*, please send an A5 SAE with 39p stamp to Nick Wood, 22 Victoria Road, Mill Hill, London, NW7 4SB or e-mail him at,
NikWood@compuserve.com.

GUFFery

Karen Pender-Gunn and Paul Kincaid, the current GUFF administrators, announce: "G'ready, G'set, GUFF. The next GUFF race is now open. Nominations are open until Friday 14 April 2000, and the race will then run from Easter until November. The winner will attend the 2001 Eastercon in Britain. If you want to stand in this GUFF race, here's what you do: You need five nominees, three from Australia and two from Europe. You need a platform of no more than 100 words. You need to post a bond of £520. Then campaign like mad in order to set out on one of fandom's great adventures."

Further info from Karen Pender-Gunn, PO Box 567, Blackburn, Victoria 3130 (fiawol@ozramp.net.au) or Paul Kincaid, 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5AZ, UK (paul@appomattox.demon.co.uk)

Club Report: Spotlight on Peterborough

Peterborough Science Fiction Club have received a nomination for an award for Best Community Arts in the City. The award, organised by the *Evening Telegraph* is part of the Pride in Peterborough scheme. The nomination was in recognition of the Club bringing guests to the city (12 in 1999), the promotion of local authors and artists, and for encouraging research into local genre history (deceased authors, the Eastercons of the early 1960s, etc.).

As well as the Club's regular discussion nights at the Bluebell Inn, Dogthorpe on the first Wednesday of the month, there is also a social night at the Great Northern Hotel on the third Wednesday of the month. The hotel is directly opposite the rail station and is therefore more accessible for out-of-town fans. The social nights are usually in the residents' lounge or the bar.

For full information, write to the Club c/o 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5RB or ring Pete on 01733 370542.

Cardinal Cox, a member of the Peterborough SF Writers Circle, was runner-up for the second time in the Peterborough Council sponsored Poet for Peterborough competition. For more information about the Writers Circle either send an SAE to Helen Gould at 28 Bathurst, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough or check out their website at http://members.tripod.com/Pboro_SFWRITERSGROUP.

Reports from local clubs are always welcome. Please send them to the Matrix Editorial address given in the inside front cover of the magazine.

Noticeboard

New Routes in America, Peter Roberts 1977 (yes, that is 1977) TAFF Trip report is finally complete, lovingly crafted and assembled by a team of thousands, if not dozens, including illustrations from D. West, Dan Steffan, Jim Barker, Steve Stiles, Sue Mason and Steve Jeffery. 32pp A4 slip bound, £6 incl. p+p. Available from Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading RG1 5AU

Matrix Noticeboard is free to members for small ads, notices, wanted etc., up to 100 words.
Contact the editorial address.

Obituaries

Joy Hilbert (formerly Hibbert)

"I'm very sad to have to announce the death ... of Joy Hilbert (formerly Hibbert) of complications arising from Crohn's Disease. She had been in hospital for some time beforehand. She was only 40.

Always a stormy petrel, Joy made many enemies in her career in fandom, but many friends too, and she was a familiar sight at British conventions throughout the 1980s. Her fanzines such as *Sic Biscuit Disintegrat* (co-edited with her then husband Dave Rowley), *Lilith's Child* and *Zetetic* were likewise uneven but formed a notable strand of British fanac at the time.

I was in a relationship with Joy for more than three years. It ended with some feelings on either side. I am quite taken aback by how gobsmacked I am at the news. This shouldn't have happened, you know.

Goodbye, Joy, you crazy diamond."

Sandra Bond on the rec.arts.sf.fandom list

Albert J Whitlock

"Albert J. Whitlock, Oscar-winning visual effects artist, died Oct. 26 in Santa Barbara following a lengthy illness. He was 84. Born in central London in 1915, he began his career in British film studios as a young teenager. His artistic abilities brought him studio jobs in sign and title lettering, then scenic painting, and finally matte painting - the art of seamlessly combining realistic paintings with live-action photography.

In the early 1950s, his phenomenal skills caught Walt Disney's eye while Whitlock was working on one of Disney's English productions. Disney encouraged him to move his young family to America, hinting at a job offer.

After an anxious period as a billboard artist in San Francisco, Whitlock was finally hired at the Disney studio. His first assignment was lettering the titles for *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. In the early 1960s, Whitlock moved to Universal Studios to head its matte department. There he expanded the importance of matte painting, as it became a tool in filmic storytelling.

At Universal, Whitlock created matte effects and designs for more than 140 films, but he was best known for his

close association with Alfred Hitchcock, particularly for his work in *The Birds*, *Marnie*, *Torn Curtain* and *Topaz*. Hitchcock declared Whitlock to be "the finest artist working in films." Along the way, Whitlock won back-to-back Oscars for *Earthquake* and *The Hindenburg*. He stayed at Universal until his retirement in 1985; among his last films were *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes* and *Dune*. On movies including *The Learning Tree*, *Bound for Glory*, *The Sting* and *History of the World, Part One*, Whitlock made dust storms and tornadoes operate on cue, and brought the past to life. Whitlock was a former governor of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences and an associate member of the American Society of Cinematographers."

From www.variety.com.

Walt Willis (1919-1999)

On 20 October legendary Irish fan Walt Willis died of a heart attack, following his stroke last year. Walt was one of the giants of fandom, a core member of the legendary Irish Fandom of the '40s and into the '60s and whose exploits are documented in John Berry's series of *Fables of Irish Fandom* reprints. In 1948 Walt published the painstakingly letterpress-set *Slant* with James White, before producing one of the classic fanzines of all time, *Hyphen* (1952-65), with Chuch Harris and others. With Bob Shaw, he wrote the classic fan fable *The Enchanted Duplicator* (1954). Much of Walt's fanwriting was collected in a huge 600 page hardbound edition of Richard Bergeron's *Warhoon* 28. Through the '80s and '90s he remained an indefatigable loccer until he suffered his stroke. He would have been 80 at the end of October. He will be hugely missed.

Ingrid Jonsson

The ReConnaissance membership secretary has been killed, reports Bjørn Tore Sund, Chairman of the forthcoming European Con, ReConnaissance in Bergen: "On October 4 Ingrid Jonsson was killed. Her father shot first her and then her mother, before committing suicide. Everything in their home is now with the district court of Bergen until the division of the estate is over. As Ingrid Jonsson was the Membership and Administrative Secretary of ReConnaissance, this means that the district court currently hold: the database

of members, all files pertaining to the membership database, and all contributions to the short story contest. "As of today," said Sund, "we do not know when we can get these papers and the database back. We hope to reach an agreement with the district court of Bergen so that we don't have to wait until the division is over, which could take a year. But we do not know."

Norman Shorrocks (1929-1999)

A long-time Liverpool fan, Norman died on November 9th aged 70. He was a founder member, along with his wife Ina, of the Liverpool SF Society in 1951. LSFS, operating out of a microscopic, rented cellar room named the Space Dive, was one of the most groundbreaking fan groups of the time, largely due to Norman's enthusiasm for tape recording. In 1953, Norman persuaded the LSFS to buy a second-hand tape recorder for £25, with which the group wrote, recorded and produced a number of taped plays. The first, *The Alien Archives* (co-written by Walt Willis and Don McKay), was featured at the 1954 SuperMancon, and followed by *The March of Slime* and *First and Last Fen*. Then, in 1956, Norman bought a movie camera, producing *May We Have the Pleasure* (shown at the US Midwestcon) and *Fanzapoppin*. In March 1956, LSFS were among the first fans to achieve national coverage, being invited to take part in a programme on the BBC.

The group's other activities under Norman's enthusiastic encouragement were no less original, with a 108 page 7th issue of the fanzine *Space Diversions* and a symposium of sex and sadism in sf.

(sources: *Ansible*, *Then*, Harry Warner's *A Wealth of Fable*)

Desmond Llewelyn (1914-1999)

Desmond Llewelyn, who played Q in the James Bond films, died on 20 December 1999 from injuries sustained in a head-on car crash. His first Bond film was *From Russia With Love* (1963) and he played the role until *The World Is Not Enough* (1999), only missing *Live and Let Die*.

Source: *The Times* and BBC News Online)

Events: Forthcoming Conventions

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 Mountney 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 Mountney Road, Eastbourne, E. Sussex, BN21 1RJ.

20-24 April 2000

Swancon 25, 39th National Australian Science Fiction Convention

Ascot Inn, Belmont, Western Australia. Guests of Honour: Connie Willis, Ian Nichols. Other guests include Stephen Dedman, Sue Isle, Jack Dann, Jane Webb, Sean Williams, Tess Williams. More info from swancon25@megabyte.murdoch.edu.au, or <http://www.swancon.iinet.net.au>, or Swancon 25, GPO Box G429 Perth, WA 6892, Australia

21-24 April 2000

2Kcon/Eastercon 2000

Central Hotel, Glasgow. Guests of Honour: Guy Gavriel Kay, Deborah Turner Harris, Katherine Kurtz. Membership £25; £15 supporting. Contact 2Kcon, 30 Woodburn Terrace, St Andrews KY16 8BA; 2Kcon@dcs.st-and.ac.uk; www.theory.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/2Kcon

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

May 26-29 2000

Plokta.Con

Holiday Inn, Leicester. Guest of Honour: Ken MacLeod. Further info from 3 York Street, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH, or plokta.con@plokta.com.

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

30 June - 2 July 2000

Aliens Stole My Handbag!

Shepperton Moat House Hotel, Shepperton, Surrey. Literary humour & SF. Guest of Honour: Robert Rankin. Membership £20, supporting £10, £27.50 on the door. Contact Aliens Stole My Handbag, c/o Stefan Lancaster (UK Agent), 16 Dulverton Road, Ruislip Manor, Middlesex, HA4 9AD; aliensstolemyhandbag@lostcarpark.com; www.lostcarpark.com/aliensstolemyhandbag

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-on.lspace.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

11-13 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 £45 (£25/day) to 31 December 1999, then £50 (£30/day). Contact (SAE) 47 Bennet's Court, Bristol, BS37 4XH. Email: bats2000@burbble.com Web: www.burbble.com/bats2000.

10-12 November 2000

NOVACON 30

Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham. Guest of Honour: Christopher Priest; Special Guest: Rog Peyton; & Guest Artist: David A. Hardy. Attending membership £23.00 until 8 November 1999 then £28.00, rising to £32.00 from 25 April 2000, £35.00 on the door. Hotel booking forms now available. Contact Steve Lawson, Registrations, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ

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

Leonard Fell, via email

Re: the letter from your twelve-year-old correspondent, Master Roberts, who was inquiring after my location. Well I'm here and I'm fine, but I presume Brian Robb decided that other authors such as Steven Baxter needed the same sort of coverage as I have benefited from in *Matrix* and elsewhere. Brian has a column around his person from me, and perhaps the new regime will find the space to print it, or get some extra pages. If Master Roberts wants to see my column in private, I'm happy to forward it to him or to anyone else who wishes to share on this great adventure in British science fiction at the cutting edge of the zeitgeist.

Toodle-pip

Fay Symes, Bournemouth

Your recent issue is as interesting as usual. Keep up the good work. Thanks for printing my last letter.

I was delighted to know that Marcel de Graaf shares my views about foreknowledge of plots. Yes, I can still be delighted by an un-guessed surprise ending to a novel or a story (though since the golden age of SF these are scarce), but I like to have the choice. Should I peek at the end of a book that's going to be so exciting I won't be able to appreciate the writing in my headlong haste - or sit back and enjoy some pleasantly meandering tale with no anticipated sting?

I do have friends on the net, and was fortunately able to ask them exactly what happened at the end of DS9 rather than read a review which might have omitted some fact I particularly wanted to know. However, what I can't find an answer to is this: Why does Sisco plan to leave his family and stay with the Prophets for a year when time has no existence for them? He could spend his subjective year away from Bajor and return home one minute after he left. I do hope someone can enlighten me.

(If anyone wishes, I can be contacted via email on fs@ukgateway.net.)

Sandy Auden, via email

We are looking for sf/fantasy/horror web site surfers to help with our bright, new genre website. We are unable to offer pay at this time but if you already surf the net looking for the latest news and releases, why not get in touch. We need your skills. E-mail me at sandy_auden@hotmail.com

Jo's Timewasters Matrix Competition 141

Another editor for *Matrix* is being sought [actually Jo, we've found one]. Can you provide a suitable CV for a fictitious applicant?

Ho, ho, ho! Guess who can't tell his Orson Quinn Card from his Chelsea Scott Yarbro? Yes, folks, if you'd like to replace the letters S-C-O-T-T by the letters Q-U-I-N-N in Competition 140, you may be able to make up for that wasted time. Sorry about that; must try harder.

A small but select entry for Comp 139 sees a triumph for **Theo Ross** for the following:

Rydra Wong-Babel 17
Bert Smallways—*The War in the Air*
Dave Conway—*The Mind of Mr. Soames*
Richard Bransome—*With a Strange Device*
Isherwood Williams—*Earth Abides*
Spice—*Roofworld*
The Leewit—*The Witches of Karres*
Ghân-buri-Ghân—*The Lord of the Rings*
Lowell Stone—*Space Family Stone*
Arthur Dent—*Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*
Myron Bronowski—*The Gods Themselves*
John Amalfi—*Cities in Flight*

Competition answers to

John Ollis, 49 Leighton Road, Corby, Northants NN18 0SD

Alison Spedding seriously ill

On Dec 8, the Guardian carried an interview with Maureen Raybould, mother of the academic and novelist Alison Spedding who is currently serving a 10 year jail sentence in Bolivia for possession of 2kg of cannabis. Raybould reports that her daughter's condition is deteriorating, with internal bleeding, parasite infections, malnourishment and over-crowded and unsanitary conditions, and that the Bolivian authorities have refused to sanction a series of hospital tests on her condition (see *Matrix* 133). Prisoners Abroad and Spedding's supporters believe that her sentence is largely political in the face of pressure on Bolivia (from the US and others) to clamp down on drugs and that the conditions in which she is being held contravene Article 10 of the UN covenant on civil rights.

(Prisoners Abroad 0171 833 3469)

Mail Order Catalogues

Dreamberry Wine. Mike Don, 233 Maine Road, Manchester M14 7WG
0161 226 2980. mike.don@btinternet.com
Hundreds of s/h hb and pb, magazine and small press titles at very reasonable prices. *DW*, part fanzine part catalogue also carries short reviews, letters and news. A4 16pp

Fantast Medway (Dec 1999)

Ken Slater, PO Box 23, Upwell Wisbech, Cambs PE14 9BU
01945 773576. ken@opfantast.demon.co.uk
New and used ('previously enjoyed') hardbacks and trade and mass market pbs, including a listing of the highly recommended Liverpool University Press series of SF publications (see *Vector* 204 onward for reviews of several of these). A5 20pp.

Andromeda (204, Nov/Dec 99)

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0121 643 1999, fax 0121 643 2001 (what happened to 2000 Rog?)
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New and s/h books, magazines, sf, media, video, CD and now DVD titles, plus a selection of Rog's Reminders from less than 2 quid. A5, 24p, 40p

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Mostly occult, weird fiction and horror, incl. cult and film; some rare/collectable.

Heroes of the Revolution

Thanks as ever to all our news-gatherers and contributors. The BSFA committee, Paul and Elizabeth Billinger, Andrew Butler, Gary Dalkin, Ken Plummer and Claire Brialley, Julie Venner and Carol Ann Kerry-Green, Janet Barron, Yvonne Rowse, Tony Berry, Paul Hood, Chris Hill, Colin Odell and Mitch Le Blanc, Leonard Fell, Dave Langford, Mike Cross, Mike Don, Martin Tudor, Stan Nicholls, Avril Brown, *Ansible*, *The Paper Snarl* and anyone else we missed.

Don't Forget

Letters and responses for the next issue should be addressed to the new *Matrix* Editor, **Andrew Seaman**, at 128 Pickhurst Rise, West Wickham, Kent BR4 0AW, or email: a.seaman@talk21.com