

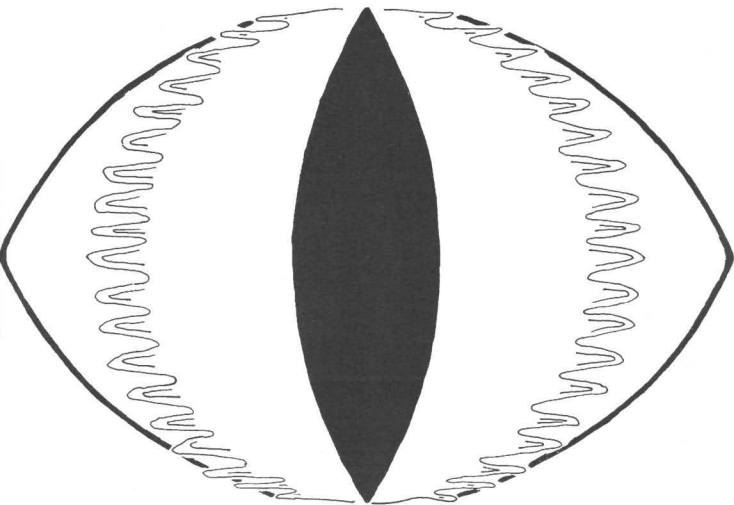
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Pullman pulls two Whitbread Bests

On Tuesday 22 January 2002, at the Whitbread Book Awards presentation ceremony at the Whitbread Brewery in London, Philip Pullman received the Best Book award, as well as the Best Children's Book Award, for *The Amber Spyglass*, the first time the overall Award has gone to a children's author. Pullman will receive £5 000 for winning the children's book of the year and another £25 000 for the overall prize. He was the clear favourite going into the judging - the bookies William Hill closed its book on the competition on the Friday before after a late flurry of heavy bets.

The book was thought the "overwhelming winner" by the judges, who took only two minutes to make up their minds, according to their chairman, Channel 4 news presenter Jon Snow. "Pullman is in a league of his own. We worried about whether the book could be judged on its own, because you never escape the feeling that it is part of a huge work. It is a superlative achievement, head and shoulders above everything else we read."

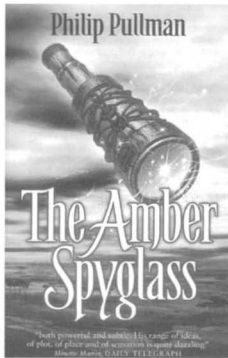
Pullman has also finally eclipsed his great rival J K Rowling and her Harry Potter stories by writing the first children's book to take one of the big two literary awards. His victory is a notable turnaround for a man who refused to have his first books entered in any book prize. Pullman, 55, used to teach at Oxford's

Westminster college but now writes full time in a shed at the bottom of his garden, always taking time off to watch *Neighbours* everyday.

Unfortunately his publisher Scholastic sold out of its stock of *The Amber Spyglass* after Pullman's win but immediately started a print run of another 50 thousand copies of the novel, along with similar quantities of the first two books in the *His Dark Materials* trilogy.

New Line Cinema have apparently acquired the film rights to all the books in the *His Dark Materials* trilogy and are planning at least one film. Scholastic, who negotiated the deal, said that they went with New Line because they were impressed with the film company's track record with *The Lord of the Rings* and their "collaborative approach to the material". Pullman told a Children's BBC webchat session: "They are gradually putting the thing together but it does take a lot of time because films are very expensive things to make."

In a move indicating the increasing importance of children's fantasy for publishers, Bloomsbury Publishing have appointed Sarah Odedina, editorial director for children's books, to its board. Odedina joined Bloomsbury from Watts in January 1997. Since then she has headed up a list publishing among others the Harry Potter series. She will continue with her current responsibilities.



Look out for the winner.

King to quit

As reported just about everywhere the world's best-selling genre novelist Stephen King is thinking of calling it a day and bringing his epic writing career to close. King has indicated in past interviews that if he ever felt that he was simply repeating himself then he would stop publishing his work (if not necessarily stopping writing.) He does have several ongoing projects that he will draw to a close before putting down his pen including finishing the last three volumes of the *Dark Tower* series some time next year. There is also a new short fiction collection due in March and his new novel, *From a Buick Eight* due later in the year, although apparently this is the one that's causing King to think again: "You get to a point where you get to the edges of a room, and you can go back and go where you've been and basically recycle stuff. I've seen it in my own work. People, when they read *Buick Eight*, are going to think *Christine*. It's about a car that's

not normal, OK? You say, 'I've said the things that I have to say, that are new and fresh and interesting to people.' Then you have a choice. You can either continue to go on or say, 'I left when I was still on top of my game. I left when I was still holding the ball, instead of it holding me.' I don't want to finish up like Harold Robbins, [here referring to the pulp writer who started with well-reviewed works but later suffered a crippling stroke and ended his career in steep decline.] That's my nightmare." King very nearly gave up writing before, following the accident where he was struck by a Dodge minivan, but fought back using his writing as therapy to produce some of his most critically acclaimed work for years.

In a career spanning thirty years King has produced more than sixty books including novels (six novels under the pseudonym Richard Bachman), short stories, screenplays and even an episode of the *X-Files*. Twenty of

his tales have been made into films, some of the results have been excellent, such as *Stand By Me*, *Misery* and *The Shawshank Redemption* and some not so good like most of the rest... King once described himself as the literary equivalent of a Big Mac and fries: "If I cannot horrify, I'll go for the gross-out. I'm not proud."

EDITORIAL

CRY HAVOC

Unexpectedly and unplanned, this issue of *Matrix* has developed a warlike theme. In the real world the conflict in Afghanistan stutters to a conclusion (but there are rumours of 'Gulf War II' for later in the year...). The cinemas over Christmas and into the New Year (and for the next Christmases in all likelihood) were dominated by the War of the Ring. In the battle of the fantasy features the boy-wizard was in the end soundly trounced by the ring-bearers - we bring you a review of *Fellowship of the Ring* later in this issue. There is also a look at *Farscape* a science fiction television program that features a fair amount of conflict that has just come to the end of a superb third series. We also have Glenda Pringle on sf in wargaming magazines and Stephen Baxter asked whether Churchill was a sf fan. Plus loads more of the usual. Don't forget to write or enter our comps - now with 'big' prizes.

Next issue I hand over to a very special guest editor...
cheers,
Gary

Don't Miss

The BSFA/Science Fiction Foundation proudly presents the free event 'Signs of Life' on Sat 13th April at Friends House, Euston Road, London. Guests are M John Harrison (in the morning) and Gwyneth Jones (in the afternoon), and there will also be a discussion panel and a BSFA vs SFF quiz, at Friends House, Euston Road, London. 'Thrilling' - Dave Langford in *Ansible*

Clouds over Clarion blow over

Since May of 1999, the original Clarion Science Fiction Workshop held annually at Michigan State University has been under threat. Now, following a review to determine whether it is of value to the University, and many glowing testimonials from ex-graduates and teachers, the workshop has been saved. Amelia Beamer, Assistant to the Director of Clarion, has passed along word that the Workshop is no longer in any danger from funding cuts. In fact, they now have direct support from the MSU Provost's office.

News items by Gary Wilkinson and Janet Barron.

Rowling exchanges rings while books burn

Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling married anaesthetist Dr Neil Murray last Boxing Day in a private ceremony in their house in Perthshire. Rowling's first marriage ended in divorce and she began to write the best-selling *Harry Potter* books as a single mother in Edinburgh while bringing up her daughter Jessica.

Although hugely popular not everyone is pleased about the *Harry Potter* series. Around the world a number of 'Potter' book-burnings have been organised. Typical was the conflagration at a church in suburban Pittsburgh where the congregation burnt *Harry Potter* books, Disney videos including *Pinnocchio* and *Hercules*, Pearl Jam and Black Sabbath CDs and literature from other religions such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, purging their lives of things they felt stood between them and their faith. "Our purpose comes out of the Bible," commented the Rev. George Bender of the Harvest Assembly of God Church in Butler County. "We read in the Bible how people, after they received Jesus Christ as their saviour, took things out of their homes and burned them. We believe that *Harry Potter* promotes sorcery, witchcraft-type things, the paranormal, things that are against God. That is really bad." Judy Corman spokeswoman for Scholastic, the publisher of the books, replied on hearing the news that the books are more about a child who feels powerless in the world understanding that he

can take some control of his life. She said the message sent by burning books is more dangerous than any fable about sorcery could be: "I think burning books is shameful."

Also a 'Harry Potter Hate Line' telephone service has been set up in Austria offering those sick of the boy-wizard a chance to vent their spleen. "Get it off your chest, tell us how much you hate *Harry Potter*," a recorded message tells callers, before asking them to leave their tirades after the tone. The line's founder intends to turn the best messages into a book.

Someone else trying to profit off the Potter name is humorist Michael Gerber who has written *Barry Trotter and the Unauthorized Parody*. The book will be self-published after magazine editors passed on angering Warner Bros, the studio that owns the *Harry Potter* film franchise. A parody in the tradition of *Bored of the Rings*, Barry Trotter is also a comment on commercialism, with a story about efforts to stop a movie, produced by Barry's mortal enemy, He-Who-Smells (the evil Lord Voldemort), about the famed School of Hogswash.

Meanwhile speculation grows over the publication date for the fifth *Harry Potter* book, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. It now looks likely that the new novel will be

delayed from the traditional July publication date until the autumn. "We are not scheduling a publication date until the book has been written," said Rosamund de la Hay, sales and marketing manager for children's books at Bloomsbury. "In a perfect world it would be in July, but we will wait until the manuscript is delivered before deciding on a date." There is no indication when the author will submit the work.

A worrying sign perhaps given the previous, not so critically acclaimed, 'long' *Harry Potter* novel. Even if Rowling has lost it, the book will fly off the shelves as if possessed.

Andromeda goes dark

One of the most prominent independent film bookshops - Birmingham's Andromeda Book Company - has closed. A notice on their website reads "We are closing. After serving our clients for over 30 years we have had to make the decision that we cannot continue and must look to disposing of our business." There is also a plea for someone to buy the business as a going concern. See also Steve Green's *Checkpoint* column on page 21.

FLICKER

Gary Wilkinson rounds up all that's happening in film and TV

EX-Files

The *X-Files* will finish after the end of its ninth series, currently showing in the USA. It is no real surprise given that audience figures have plummeted since the departure of David Duchovny's character and the announcement by Gillian Anderson that she will also be leaving and new stars Annabeth Gish and Michael Patrick have not proved as popular.

Creator Chris Carter commented after a meeting with Fox Network executives to terminate the show: "It's the ninth innings - we wanted to go out strong." The final episodes will be a two-part special to be shown in May on the Fox network in America. Carter claims Duchovny has broken his vow never to return and will appear in the last episode. "David was open to it and now the complication of trying to get it done comes," said Carter. "I just have to make the show as interesting as possible - not just for David but for the fans." The final show will tie up most of the series' loose ends but leave some issues unanswered for another film.

The show began in '93 on Fox and went on to become one of the key programs of the '90s - popular and influential. Along with *The Simpsons* it was one of the new network's first successes. "It put Fox on the map, plain and simple and defined the network," said Chairman Sandy Grashow.

Wheaton in space

Josh Wheaton, the creator of *Buffy the*

Vampire Slayer, is in talks to produce a new 13 part series, *Firefly*. Set 500 years in the future, the show revolves around the lives of the crew of a small spaceship. "It's not about the people who make history - it is about the people who history stepped on," Wheaton said recently. "It's about their lives and their struggles to keep their ship alive - as well as the search for meaning in a very dark place." But no aliens: "They'll be scary-ass humans - I can make people scarier than anything you can put in latex."

Cameron gets wet again

James Cameron, director of *The Abyss* and *Titanic* is going back to the ocean to film *Fathom* based on Michael Turner's comic of the same name featuring Aspen Matthews, a marine biologist who discovers she has water based superpowers.

Country Horror

Shooting had just finished on *The Gathering*, directed by Brian Gilbert and starring Christina Ricci. Set in the West Country the film was actually shot in the Cotswolds, the Isle of Man, and Elstree studios. Plot starts with the discovery of a first century church with an unusual mural. Ricci plays a hitchhiker, stranded after a car accident who begins having terrifying visions. Producer Marc Samuelson is a big fan of the 'horrors' of our countryside: "I've always wanted to make a supernatural thriller set in rural Britain because so many of the most horrific examples come

from Britain: *The Wicker Man*, *The Omen*." *The Gathering* should be in our cinemas later this year.

Russian Remake

Director Steven Soderbergh and actor George Clooney are planning to work together again on another remake after *Ocean's Eleven*. This time it is a new version of Soviet space epic *Solaris*. Originally directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, based on the novel by Stanislaw Lem, a cosmonaut goes to a remote space station to replace a dead colleague. He arrives to find co-workers driven insane by visions and evidence of alien life. Not an obvious choice for multiplex blockbuster, *Solaris* is beloved by 'serious' critics but very slow. However this version is funded by James Cameron's Lightstorm Entertainment with a rumoured hefty budget so expect plenty of special effects and a revved up plot.

DiCaprio and a half

After playing twins in *The Man in the Iron Mask* DiCaprio is to do it again in *Johnny Eck* the biography of one of the stars of the notorious, Tod Browning directed, *Freaks* - a 'horror' film set in a circus freak-show that used professional 'freaks' for some of its roles. Johnny Eck, real name Eckhardt, was born without the bottom half of body. He learned to walk on his hands and went on to have a successful and lucrative career on the freak circuit, managed by his normal twin. The film is being written by Edward Scissorhands scribe,

Locus meta-data shows best books of 2001

Book of the year 2001, according to an informal survey of sources by *Locus Online*, was Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*, which hit the top slot no less than ten times, including placings by data from *Amazon.com*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Washington Post*. Among other books named best-of-the-year by various sources: Jonathan Carroll's *The Wooden Sea*, Stephen King and Peter Straub's *Black House*, Maureen F. McHugh's *Nekropolis*, China Miéville's *Perdido Street Station*, Kage Baker's *The Graveyard Book*, Clive Barker's *Coldheart Canyon*, John M. Ford's *The Last Hot Time*, King's *Dreamcatcher*, Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Other Wind*, Connie Willis' *Passage*, and Terry Pratchett's *The Thief of Time*.

Awards round up

2001 Philip K. Dick Award finalists are:

Compass Reach, Mark W. Tiermann (Meisha Merlin); **Divine Intervention**, Ken Wharton (Ace Books); **The Ghost Sister**, Liz Williams (Bantam Spectra); **In the Company of Others**, Julie E. Czerneda (DAW Books); **Meet Me in the Moon Room**, Ray Vukcevic (Small Beer Press); **Ship of Fools**, Richard Paul Russo (Ace Books)

The results will be announced on March 30, 2002 at Norwescon 25 at the Doubletree Seattle Airport Hotel, SeaTac, Washington.

Golden age sf goes electronic

Author Douglas R. Mason (a.k.a. John Rankine) and his son, John R. Mason, are republishing his back catalogue of novels in e-book format. This consists of about 42 works from the 1960s and 70s (the 'Golden Age' of British Science fiction). See www.goldenapple.u-net.com. The publications will include material never seen before, such as *Forgotten Rocket* (pub. 15th Feb 2002). This was never originally published - being used instead for the *Space 1999* original novel, *Phoenix of Megaron* (John Rankine). While the plot line is basically the same (without the 1999 characters) it was mostly re-written when changed to *Phoenix*. Bufts can make their own comparisons.

The Arthur C Clarke Award finalists are:

Pashazade, Jon Courtenay Grimwood (Earthlight); **Fallen Dragon**, Peter F. Hamilton (Macmillan); **Bold as Love**, Gwyneth Jones (Gollancz); **Secret of Life**, Paul McAuley (Voyager); **Mappa Mundi**, Justina Robson (Macmillan); **Passage**, Connie Willis (Voyager)

The winner will be announced in a ceremony at the Science Museum, London, on Saturday 18 May.

The colour out of space

We now know the true colour of the universe - apparently it's somewhere between "pale turquoise and medium aquamarine". Astronomers at John Hopkins University have found the colour by looking at over 200,000 galaxies. Combining the light gave a spectrum with a peak in the blue part of the spectrum - because of the large number of young stars burning hydrogen - and another in the red - due to the glow of older red giants burning heavier elements. To the unaided human eye, which is not equally sensitive to all wavelengths of light, this combines to a pale green. (Unfortunately *Matrix* can only give you black and white but if you have a computer handy the red-green-blue values you will need are 0.269, 0.388 and 0.342)

Researchers have put their 'colour' to practical use. The spectra of galaxies can be used to reveal their history of star formation. However this is the first time anyone has calculated a spectrum for enough galaxies to be representative of the whole universe. It was thought that star formation in the universe was slow to start with, peaked around six billion years ago, and has tailed off towards the present day. However this would have produced a redder 'colour' than is seen, because more old red stars from the early universe would still be around. Astronomers now believe star formation peaked at one to two million years after the Big Bang. Then the universe was mainly blue, due to the large number of young stars, but it's now 'greening' out and will turn red as stars age over the next five billion years.

Caroline Thompson. No news on a director as yet though Tim Burton would be the obvious choice.

Legendary

Rumours of a remake of *I am Legend* have rumbled on since the early nineties with Tom Cruise, Mel Gibson, Ridley Scott and Arnold Schwarzenegger attached to the project and many script rewrites. Last heard of attached to *The X-Files* movie director Rob Bowman it's now in the hands of Michael Bay and Will Smith. First filmed as *The Omega Man* with Charlton Heston, based on Richard Matheson's novel, *I am Legend* is a bleak drama about the last man on earth who is besieged night after night by vampires. Apparently Bay wants to play it down and not produce a wide-screen booming special effects-riddled monster (like his other films) and words like 'character driven', 'introspective', 'real', 'gritty' have been heard about the project, which apparently revives a dark script by *The Cell*'s writer Mark Protosevich. Bay and Smith are currently pitching to Warner Bros.

Hell!

It looks like Nicolas Cage is possibly finally to play a 'superhero' but he is swapping pandey for a trench coat to star as the eponymous hero of Constantine. The character was originally created by Alan Moore in *Swamp Thing* but the occult magician investigator, John Constantine, went on to star in his own series, *Hellblazer*. However expect Liverpool

born Constantine to be Americanised (or the plot to bare much relation to the long-running comic series). And it does not look good that the project's first director Tarsem Singh (*The Cell*) has just walked for budgetary reasons.

Cage (real name Nicolas Coppola) has been yearning to play a comic character for years, even take his stage name from Marvel Comic's Luke 'Power Man' Cage

Branagh back to school

Kenneth Branagh has been cast as the vain and preening teacher of Defence Against the Dark Arts, Gilderoy Lockhart in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. The rest of the cast have continued on from the first film along with director Chris Columbus.

Double Dredd

Okay, the film was not *that* bad, but *Judge Dredd* sunk like a stone at the box office - not helped by the performance of Sly "I am da law" Stallone. Now Shoreline Entertainment are having another go. They are working closely with 2000AD which has gone from strength to strength after being taken over by computer games company Rebellion. "We are reinventing the franchise by taking it back to the edge and style of the original comic book," Shoreline partner Morris Ruskin commented. They are planning - as with the *Matrix* sequels - to shoot two films back-to-back on a low to mid level budget of £20m for both. *Dredd Reckoning* will see the lawman plagued by self-doubt, both for himself and the system he serves, after being convicted on a false charge

and taken to the prison on Titan. *Possession* sees Judge Death wanting to exterminate the whole population of Megacity One with only Psi Judge Anderson to stop him. The films are not fully scripted yet and there will probably be involvement by Dredd's original creators: writer John Wagner and artists Carlos Ezquerro. However it has been written into all the contracts that Dredd will NOT be taking his helmet off. Possibly follow-ups include a television series and a Strontium Dog film

End in sight?

It's rumoured that where soon be a movie adaptation of Arthur C. Clarke's novel *Childhood's End*. In Clarke's 1953 novel the arrival of a fleet of giant alien spaceships heralds the transformation of mankind into its next stage of evolution. Kimberley Peirce (*Boys Don't Cry*) is said to be in 'final talks' over the adaptation with Universal.

Fourth Jones for Ford.

Whilst being interviewed at the Golden Globes award ceremony Steven Spielberg, Kate Capshaw and Harrison Ford confirmed that there will be a fourth film in the *Indiana Jones* series. Spielberg said that it would become his main priority just as soon as he's finished filming *Catch me if you Can*. The film apparently does have a title, but Spielberg is keeping it under wraps for now. Harrison is returning as Jones, co-starring with Kate Capshaw (who is now Mrs Spielberg) reprising her role of Willie Scott, the night-club singer

Continued on page 6

No Carpenter connections

Ignoring the advice of Andrew M Butler, Adam Roberts' third novel, following on from *Salt and On* will not be *Precinct 13* but *Stone*. (But that still makes S.O.S...) *Stone*, published by Gollancz will appear in July and according to Roberts: "It's a sort of whodunit, set in a far-future interstellar Utopia. The narrator is employed to murder the population of an entire planet, and whilst accepting this commission tries to discover who is behind the request; in other words he is both the whodunit 'murderer' (in that he commits the crime) and the whodunit 'detective' (in that he is trying to uncover who is really behind the crime)." See Roberts web page at www.adamroberts.com for more details.



Robert's Stone

Continued from page 5

who screamed a lot, from *Indiana Jones* and the *Temple of Doom*. Just keep Short Round out of it.

TV Moebius

Celebrated science fiction and fantasy artist Moebius is to write and direct a brand new animated series for France's Channel 2. Moebius is a legend in the comics world, heavily influential, producing much acclaimed work such as *Angel Claw*, and regular contributions to *Heavy Metal* magazine over the years. He also produced one of the segments of the 1981 *Heavy Metal* movie and did concept artwork for various SF film projects, including *Dune*, *Tron* and *Blade Runner*. The new series will be entitled *Arzak Rhapsody* and there will be fourteen episodes, each approximately three and a half minutes long. No news as yet to whether there will be an English language or subtitled version or will appear this side of the channel. Keep your fingers crossed for one of Channel Four's animation seasons.

She's Back

Previously she said no but apparently actress Linda Hamilton will now be returning to as Sarah Connor for the third in *The Terminator* series. The Terminator himself, Arnold Schwarzenegger, recently confirmed that Hamilton would be back to reprise her role as the mother of John Connor, targeted for assassination in the sequel. However it looks like it will not be a starring role. Schwarzenegger commented: "She is coming

Spock's theatre

A 200 seat theatre is being built in honour of Leonard Nimoy, Spock on the original series of *Star Trek*. The underground theatre is part of a three-year construction project at LA's Griffith Observatory. Nimoy and his wife have donated \$1m to the expansion project. "By observing the sky and pondering our place in the universe, people gain a new perspective on life," He commented. The theatre will be used as a lecture room for school groups and for media events. The art deco Griffith observatory was originally built in 1936 and featured in two episodes of *Star Trek: Voyager* and was used as a backdrop in films *Rebel Without a Cause* and *The Terminator*.

"He's dead, Jim"

A working version of a *Star Trek* gadget, as used by Dr 'Bones' McCoy, has been created by scientists at the University of Sussex at Brighton. They have devised a super sensor which can monitor a patient's heartbeat or brain waves from up to three feet away is being acclaimed as a revolution in remote medical testing, a vast improvement on conventional electrocardiographs. Professor Terry Clarke said, "We will be able to produce much better images than have ever been achieved before." However it will not be seen in a British hospital for several years yet. No news yet whether it has big flashing lights as the in the television version.

Tips from Clarke-tipped duo

Between July 29th to Aug 3rd inclusive, The Arvon Foundation, 'Writing Science Fiction' course, will include tips on writing and manuscript promotion from two writers who have both been shortlisted for the Arthur C Clarke Award. Adam Roberts, (*Salt*, and *On*), and Justina Robson, (*Silver Screen* and *Mapa Mundi*) invite participants to attend who want to explore the process of completing a full piece of work from start to finish including the process of agent/editor submissions. The Arvon courses take place over a working week in picturesque surroundings. This workshop is at Lumb Bank in Yorkshire, an 18th century mill owner's house surrounded by countryside. Course fees are £385, and food is included, though participants will share cooking and food preparation of evening meals. For more information contact lbank@arvonfoundation.org, telephone 01422 843714 or see www.arvonfoundation.org.



Lumb Bank

back, but as a past experience, not driving the current story forward. She's in flashbacks. I think director Jonathan Mostow felt like he didn't want to have the exact same cast and be limited in the story. Jonathan was very adamant that he wanted the kid John Conner now to be 22 or 23, the mother has died, and let's move on, let's have him be on his own, let's let him have a girlfriend."

Second Roll of the Dice

A sequel to *Jumanji* looks likely. Producers have optioned *Zathura*, a forth-coming book by original *Jumanji* author Chris Van Allsburg. This time, instead of jungle animals being summoned by a magical game will be alien monsters coming out of the walls. No news if any of the original stars, including Robin Williams and Kirsten Dunst, are interested.

'Cop Comeback

Robocop director Paul Verhoeven has announced plans to bring the cyborg cop back to life. Verhoeven made the original film back in 1987 starring Peter Weller as the metal Judge Dredd. Two sequels by other directors (one not too bad, the other very very bad) and a television series followed. Now the Dutch director wants to bring Weller back for a 'real' sequel. Apparently he has a 95-page petition collected by an internet fan site to help convince MGM to back the project. Verhoeven commented: "About four weeks ago I was having lunch with Ed Neumeier, writer of *Robocop* and *Starship Troopers*, and during our conversation we got into *Robocop* again and we both felt that it would be interesting to do something again, especially that we are

now 15 years later in time. I would not redo the first one, I would probably do a sequel, the first real sequel. I think if you were to do it now you would have to reflect the world we live in now. I would start from scratch and find an innovative story, that would satisfy all the people that are basically longing, like me, for a good sequel."

Wolf

Dog Soldiers (billed as 'Six Soldiers. Full Moon. No Chance.') is a new British movie from Noel Gay, the guy behind the forthcoming *Red Dwarf* film. A group of soldiers led by Sean Pertwee are attacked by a band of werewolves in Scotland. The soldiers are on an exercise with no live ammunition so have to rely on primitive weapons, then they find out they were meant to be attacked... *Dog Soldiers* is directed by first-time producer by Christopher Figg who brought us the *Hellraiser* series and features the work of make-up and effects veteran Bob Keen (who also worked on the *Hellraiser* films) and should be released next year.

Pitstop Starts

With the anticipation for *Scooby Doo* growing, Warner Bros is planning another adaptation of a Hanna Barbera cartoon - *The Perils of Penelope Pitstop*. A spin-off from *Wacky Races*, the eponymous heroine would outsmart her nemesis The Hooded Claw every week. Reese Witherspoon is tipped to take the wheel as Pitstop whilst Brent Spiner, the man-machine from *Star Trek* is tipped as The Claw.

"ONE RING TO RULE THEM ALL..."

Gary Wilkinson *quests for Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*

Right, lets gets this out of the way, *The Fellowship of the Ring* is the greatest film I have ever seen. I have thought long and hard about this, and there are many other films that are its equal or better in other ways, but as a fantasy film, as a sfx extravaganza, as a wide-screen epic – nothing gets close. It's a perfect movie.

We've come a long way since *Jaws* launched the 'event movie', the blockbusters that simultaneously revived cinema but also dumbed it down. All the 'big' films became more juvenile as they sought the new core teenage audience. For how long have we had to accept utter rubbish which cost the GNP of small country? How long has the hype been just empty words? Each recent film in the *Bond* series has been a lame photocopy of the last one. The first *Indiana Jones* film was like a breath of fresh air but the sequels were just rubbish. All of the *Star Wars* films, post *Empire*, are tiresome drivel. And remember 'CGI summer' with *Godzilla*, *Lost in Space*... actually, better not. Even supposedly 'adult' blockbusters like *Titanic* are just kid's films dressed up in baggy grown-up clothes. Dumbed down empty rubbish – all of them. But you keep going, just hoping to be blown away, just once, like when you first saw *Star Wars*. But then one guy on the other side of the world shows how it all can be different.

At first I was worried – dark screen, voice over, then the making of the One Ring: and it's all those cliches you've seen a million times before, the bright yellow flowing molten metal, the beating of hammers on anvils – it's *Conan!* But then the camera sweeps over the first battle scene with about a million characters on screen – the downfall of Sauron and the loss of his ring – and for a while I just stop breathing... this is true cinematic magic. Then we come to Bag End and it's just delightful (well okay you are going to think of the *Tellytubbies*, but only for a second.) And until now I didn't even like *Lord of the Rings* all that much! As a young teenager I found it hard to get through the trilogy – only finishing it on my third serious attempt (although on my penultimate effort I was overtaken by the rather good BBC radio series).

There cannot be many people reading this who don't know the plot, but just in case: Sauron (the bad guy) loses his ring and is, temporarily, defeated. In the prologue the hobbit Bilbo finds the ring and takes it home with him. Years pass and Sauron begins to regain power. The wizard Gandalf persuades Bilbo to give the ring up; it must be destroyed if Sauron is not to become all-powerful. The ring is entrusted to Bilbo's nephew Frodo who, eventually accompanied by a 'fellowship' of representatives of all the good people and races of Middle Earth, has to take it into the heart of the enemy's territory and cast the ring into the volcano of Mount Doom, where it was first forged.

Peter Jackson has risked annoying purists by tinkering with the book. Even at three hours he cannot fit everything in. And compare to *Harry Potter* – good, but perhaps by being too close to its source material meant that it did not quite achieve its potential. *Fellowship* is very much Jackson's own film because thankfully, he's excised most of the twee bits (the folderol songs and T'm B'm'b'd'll) which infest the first volume of the trilogy to produce a film that is more epic in tone like the latter parts of the series. However

there is room for some well-timed humour ("No-one tosses a dwarf!") – but this is real humour, the sort of humorous remarks adults make, not the goofy kid-friendly slapstick that spoils many a blockbuster.

Jackson has always been an inventive director, his career starting with the low-budget horror/comedy *Bad Taste* – one of the finest beer and pizza movies ever made. He went on to make a couple more films in a similar vein (*Muppets* with drugs in *Meet the Feebles* and zombie splatterfest *Braindead*) then surprised everyone with *Heavenly Creatures* – a quirky dark drama about two very close friends and their strange fantasy life. What he managed to achieve in those early films with low budgets has put him in an excellent position for *Fellowship*. Basically this movie raises sfx to a new level. Jackson's camera sweeps wide over the New Zealand landscape then swirls seamlessly over his new creations, through the mines of Moria, over Mordor, around the towering Isangard (then down and down into Saruman's new mines). The huge set-piece battle sequences, were co-ordinated by a new computer system, MASSIVE, that gave each of the CGI orc, elf or human combatants individual intelligence, to attack the nearest enemy in their view with tactics that depend on each species then fall if killed. That's why these scenes look so real (unlike *The Mummy Returns*) and not over-cluttered messes (Lucas take note). As well as the epic Jackson also keeps the drama at a human level. We plunge right into the heart of each battle with swords clashing and arrows zipping past the characters (and our) heads – this is real warfare not the fancy fake duelling of the later *Star Wars* films. The costumes and make-up are brilliant, with the actors apparently not washing their hair when appropriate and likewise the set design creates a lived-in look that make us believe that Middle Earth is real place. The acting is excellent – so many of the actors exactly right for their roles. McKellen basically is Gandalf bringing real humanity to the role. At first I thought Elijah Wood was too fey for Frodo but he later gives real steel to the character as he becomes weighed down by his burden. Ian Holm is a superb Bilbo, happy yet at heart tragic, with his nagging addiction to the ring (watch for his bugging eyes!). Sean Bean is perfect as the determined but flawed Boromir – a complex character that Bean turns into a real person. And Christopher Lee as Saruman... when I first heard he was not to be Gandalf I was disappointed but now I think who else could have played Saruman so brilliantly, bringing the dark charisma to a role that Lee has exploited so many times before? – another career high. I'll single these few out but there is not another role in the movie that is not superbly cast.

And I could go and on – so much of *Fellowship* is just so excellent (the fiery eye of Sauron, the nazgul, the balrog, the wizards duel, the orks...) If only somebody could make a sf film just half as good this one. They were trailing *Attack of the Clones* before *Fellowship* but it will have to be about a billion times better than *Phantom* to even get close. I cannot really see that happening. It might only be January but I think I've already seen my film of the year, I won't say the decade because we've got *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King* coming...

EINE KLEINE NACHTMUSIK

Gary Dalkin watches, and listens to, *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens*

Rapidly following Eurkea's two disc set in January 2001 and Dark Vision's single disc issue last Autumn this is the third UK DVD release of the original 1922 *Nosferatu* (the first, if un-official, film of *Dracula*). I'm not going to review the film itself, as surely everyone here knows about it by now. Suffice to say it is a landmark in cinema history and needs to be seen at least once by anyone who claims to be remotely serious about film.

I have not seen the other two DVD sets, but this version has much to commend it. Principally it is substantially restored and has a new score composed in 1997 by James Bernard, the very talented British composer for whom *Matrix* ran an obituary by David Wishart in issue #152. Bernard was the compositional talent behind Hammer's 1958 *Dracula*, as well as many other horror, fantasy and sf productions from that studio.

Bernard fulfils the promise of the film's sub-title, offering if not 'A Symphony of Horrors', then something akin a very extended symphonic poem. This being a 'silent' film it is of course anything but, and Bernard's music plays continuously. In this form of cinema it is almost entirely incumbent upon the score to provide atmosphere and forge and emotional connection with the audience. Bernard succeeds wonderfully well, crafting a folk-like lyric melody for the heroine and a four note theme following the syllables of her nemesis' name. Which is to say the vampire's theme sings 'Nos-fer-a-tu' in a manner clearly echoing Bernard's triad 'Dra-cu-la' so familiar from the Hammer movies about

this particular Count. While this is obviously deliberate it is also disconcerting on one level. Of course it binds together the whole history of vampire cinema from beginning to present - (in 1998 Bernard scored a feature-length documentary about Universal's classic horror movies, which of course include a *Dracula* cycle) -- but it also inevitably makes us call to mind cinema which when *Nosferatu* was made lay decades in the future. We can not through this score re-create in our living rooms an impression of how the film might have sounded to audiences on its original release, something the addition of a second audio track containing a more "authentic" alternate score could have provided. Nevertheless, Bernard does draw upon aspects of the somewhat middle-of-the-road orchestral film score style of the time, mixing this writing with his more familiar horror textures. Despite these slight reservations it's a fine piece of work.

Several things distinguish this DVD issue. The original tinting has been restored to the print, such that day scenes are brown and night scenes have a blue cast. Essential given the night scenes were shot day-for-night, and so when presented untinted appear to show the vampire count wandering around in broad daylight! This is apparently the first time on any home format that the correct tinting has been restored. Further, the print has been more conventionally restored somewhat, though not fully and there are still numerous evidences of damage such as lines, scratches and variations in brightness. Though this is

nothing more than one would expect of a film of this vintage and the result is perfectly acceptable. Most importantly, around 15 minutes of footage has been reinstated, greatly expanding on the cut American theatrical print usually shown on television. Among the restored material is a whole subplot involving a lynch mob and a wild chase which has been entirely deleted from every version I have previously encountered.

Finally, the disc includes a 23 minute programme in which Christopher Frayling talks in some depth about various aspects of the film. Without the least pretension the writer offers some interesting background and insights. The disc also includes text biographies of Bernard and director Murnau, and a DVD-ROM only essay on the restoration of the print. Highly recommended, though if possible you may wish to examine the two previous DVD issues as well. It's worth noting that the 1979 remake starring Klaus Kinski and Isabelle Adjani has also recently been issued on a 2DVD set containing both the English and German versions of the film.



Who's that coming up the stairs?

ON FLIES THE BIRD...

Mark Greener looks at the recent output of cult rockers **Hawkwind**

Since the 1960s, SF, horror and fantasy have been entangled in an on-off love affair with rock music. For most of that time, one band, more than any other, characterised the state of the affair: Hawkwind. And more than 30 years after Hawkwind first spread its wings, the bird flies on, musically as strong as ever.

For a generation, Hawkwind musically embodied a counter-culture temperament, which pervaded New Wave writers in *New Worlds*, underground comics and performance art. And like many artists from the late 60s and early 70s, Hawkwind drew heavily on SF's and fantasy's images, metaphors and narratives to comment on contemporary society. Indeed, some of their best-known tracks directly derive from SF and related novels: *Steppenwolf*, *Fahrenheit 451* and *Damnation Alley*, for example. They even released two full-length records – *Warrior on the Edge of Time* and *Chronicles of the Black Sword* (the latter in live and studio versions) – based on Moorcock's eternal champion sequence.

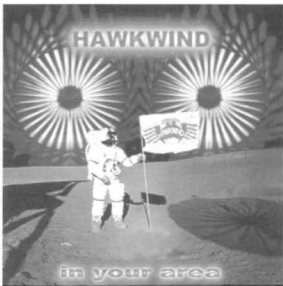
Even today, Hawkwind evoke a passion among their fans that few bands from their generation match. And when you consider that Hawkwind formed over 30 years ago, such sustained passion is remarkable. It's even more remarkable given that Hawkwind's music has evolved considerably since their psychedelic-rock roots. They don't just churn out the same tired versions of *Silver Machine* or the banned single *Urban Guerrilla*. They constantly rework old classics – often radically.

Inevitably, such re-workings could alienate some listeners who want the songs of their youth to remain the same. But it ensures Hawkwind's music remains fresh. One recent release – *In Your Area* (2000) – offers a case in point. The CD opens with a heavy version of the classic *Brainstorm*. But it's intertwined with the reggae-influenced track, *In your Area*, before returning to *Brainstorm*. They take a similar approach with *Love in Space*, interspersing it with *Rat Race*, another heavily reggae-influenced track. And it works – along with some other re-recordings of some older tracks on the CD – spectacularly well.

More recently, *Yule Ritual* (2001) showed that Hawkwind remains a potent live band. Hawkwind are always at their best live. And *Yule Ritual* encapsulates their energy. Again they rework some classic tracks including, *High Rise* (based on the Ballard novel), *Sonic Attack*, *Hurry on Sundown* – originally recorded on their first LP – and *Spirit of the Age*, one of the most telling SF narratives in any media. Hawkwind probably release more live recordings than anyone else. However, *Yule Ritual* is essential listening. And a colossus from the SF world makes a special guest appearance. *Yule Ritual* includes two contributions from Moorcock, live from his home in Texas. Moorcock recites *Warrior at the edge of time* and *Sonic Attack*. The phone-

link is a bit ropy, but you can hear Moorcock enjoying himself.

Music has long been a central theme in Moorcock's oeuvre. So perhaps it was inevitable that, Moorcock, then living in the same part of London as Hawkwind, would collaborate on several records. Indeed, Moorcock's band – The Deep Fix – largely manned by members of Hawkwind and High Tide (another psychedelic rock band) produced, for me, the ultimate SF concept album with 1975's *New World's Fair*. On a collector's item, *New World's Fair* was re-released on CD, with some additional tracks, in 1995. It's a stunning, complex record that still, sends a shiver down the spine, more than two decades after I first heard it. I can't recommend *New World's Fair* too highly.



One small step for a band

Despite Hawkwind's continuing artistic success, some of their best moments came when they worked with the poet, writer and performance artist – he was never just a singer – Bob Calvert. The recent release of *Atomhenge 76* (2000) shows Calvert at close to his best, on tracks like *Steppenwolf*, *Uncle Sam's on Mars* and, again, *Sonic Attack*. (As you've probably guessed, *Sonic Attack*, written by Moorcock, appears on several Hawkwind CDs – and even has one named after it. It's one of their signature songs; more so than the better-known *Silver Machine*. Yet despite numerous reworkings it remains a vibrant and fresh.) In parts, *Atomhenge 76* sounds more like a bootleg than a professional recording. But it captures Hawkwind's live

essence as well as, but differently to, *Yule Ritual*.

Sadly, Calvert died in 1988. A couple of posthumous CDs have been released, most recently *Revenge* (1999) a collection of four demos. However, some of the best Calvert tracks are on a website (www.doremi.co.uk). The site is run by Steve Pond, who played with Calvert and the wonderful Inner City Unit formed by Hawkwind's one-time saxophone player Nik Turner. Pond posted tracks recorded at a gig in Carlisle in November 1986, just after Calvert played the Queen Elizabeth II hall in London (captured on a live CD). In particular, the version of *Quark*, *Strangeness* and *Charm* is the best of any version I've come across. It deserves a professional CD release.

(While you're there, check out the Inner City Unit tracks. It's a crime ICU aren't better known. They sound like a mutation formed between Hawkwind and punk, with a heavy dose of humour. All their tracks are available on www.doremi.co.uk as MP3s. Do yourself a favour and check the site out. ICU's *Punkadelic* remains one of my favourite LPs of all time.)

Over the last 30 or so years, Hawkwind become something of a legend for rock and SF fans alike. And they remain a vital, creative band, still looking, musically, at the stars. For once, the reality lives up to the legend.

"FRELL!"

Gary Wilkinson swears by the third series of *Farscape*

Farscape kind of sneaked up on me. I always thought it was a good program but not the sort, like *Buffy* or *The Sopranos*, where it's a tragedy of major importance if you miss an episode. There were some interesting arc episodes, but far too many were 'monsters of the week' to showcase the efforts of the Henson creature shop. The dialogue was clever with Crichton's Earth reference *non sequiturs* and the alien words that slipped past the 'translator microbes' (Bablefish by another name) like arns for hours and the ubiquitous swearword: 'Frell!'

However halfway through the third season (well actually the episode: 'Scratch 'n' Sniff' - which we'll get back to later) the program seemed to change for the better. Suddenly I realised that this was far more than just a good sf program, this was a fantastic sf program, potentially one of the best ever.

For all its special effects and mad plots *Farscape* is essentially a character-based show. And what characters! Helped by some truly superior acting these are some of the most different and memorable sf characters we have had for years, a long way from the stuffed-shirts of *Star Trek*. Whilst most obviously space operatically heroic, they are also believably flawed and can be petty, affectionate, selfish and giving. They are also commendably consistent, and both bear grudges and remember debts and develop in meaningful ways. Also the directors are not afraid to let the actors improvise and contribute in other ways. (Ben Browder, who plays Crichton, coined the nickname 'Pip' for actress Gigi Edgley which has now carried across to her character, Chiana, in the program).

The third series started off okay, but the 'resurrection' of Aeryn Sun after she died at the end of the last series was not too spectacular. We lost one good character, Zhann played by Virginia Hey, but it must be said that the scriptwriters had not done a great deal with her character recently. We gained another character, Jool who seemed to be good at screaming. But she was no way as irritating as the over-emoting Stark.

There were a couple of strong episodes but then the moment of genius - take a sf television cliché but instead of using it for just one episode, make a series out of it; in this case, take the leading character and split him into two. This allowed the large cast to also split, appearing in alternate episodes and keeping in them all. It also meant that you can kill off your lead (well at least one of them...) With this all the arcs of all the characters seemed to move up a level. Claudia Black as Aeryn excelled herself as her romance with Crichton was played out to the bitter end - if there is any justice Black should become a major star on the back of this performance. Wayne Pygram was simply breath-taking as his Scorpious became one of the greatest villains in all of sf, at turns evil, sympathetic then comical - some of the best scenes have been between him and Bowder that take



Chiana, played by Gigi 'Pip' Edgley

place inside Bowder's characters' own head. How many sf series would even think of doing that, never mind doing it so well?

As well as the strong arcs there were also exceptional one-off episodes. *Farscape* always has a certain oddness about it, with 'Scratch 'n' Sniff' this was off the scale - sex and drugs and a bit of disco, if no rock and roll; no wonder the BBC put it out late instead of *Farscape*'s usual early evening slot. A plot about drug addiction with some aptly strange direction - repeated cutting and stop-start juddering that make the viewer feel as weirded-out as the participants. We also had the once-a-season-appearance-under-heavy-makeup of Francesca Buller (aka Mrs Ben Browder) as the untrustworthy alien with cockney accent, Raxlis. Plus some great humour: it's not often you see the (male) lead of an sf show in fishnet stockings.

Then we had the cartoon episode, 'Revening Angel'. After hitting his head Crichton is forced into battle with Ka D'Argo in a bizarre animated universe. Completely hilarious. This entertaining episode was a loving tribute to Tex Avery with Crichton as Road Runner vs D'Argo as Wile E. Coyote.

There was some spot-on details with the endless supply of bombs and pizzas D'Argo uses to try to get Crichton came not from the usual 'Acme' but from 'Ozme', a nod to the *Farscape*'s Australian origins. Plus we got to see Marilyn Monroe and Jessica Rabbit versions of Areyn Sun. This idea could have failed badly but the show's writers never forget that as well as all the weirdness you have to tell a story, which this episode did and continuously cutting back to events on the real ship gave the short cartoon parts of the episode real impact.

All the arcs came to their end with a truly epic two-part finish to the series set on Scorpius' Command Carrier. Villain turned hero, Crais, gets a glorious send-off as the Peace Keeper ship detonated (but actor Lani John Tupu still has his other role as the voice of Pilot.) *Farscape* has always been reminiscent of *Blake's 7* (if a bit more cheerful) with its band of ex-criminals fighting against an oppressive empire. This resemblance was increased when the finale saw the introduction of a new villain very reminiscent of

Servalan with a hard attitude and low cut dress (though not yet anyway near as camp). Hopefully this is not the end of Scorpius.

Farscape has recently been given two more seasons (the makers want to do one more after that, then onto films). Time will tell, but I think *Farscape* has the potential to become one of the greatest sf series of all time. And to think it was nearly cancelled halfway through its first series when it was forced out of its production facilities to make way for *Star Wars*... Luckily they found other local facilities in Australia as the alternative would have been to go to America which would have been prohibitively expensive. So Jar Jar nearly killed *Farscape*...

As per the other series, the third ended on a massive cliff-hanger in the epilogue episode 'A Dog With Two Bones' and it seems a very long wait for the beginning of the fourth to find out what next for Crichton and the rest.

Frell!!

— RESONANCES —

Stephen Baxter wonders if our most famous PM was 'one of us'.

Was Winston Churchill a science fiction fan?

During his GoH speech at the 2001 Worldcon Greg Bear noted that Harry S Truman, US President during the closing stages of World War II, had been a fan of early pulp sf. And this broader sfnal perspective, so Greg argued, must have played a key role in preparing Truman's mind for the awful dilemma of the atomic bomb.

I immediately wondered if Britain's own wartime leader, Winston Churchill, might similarly have been influenced by sf. Churchill, after all, was renowned for his uncanny vision of the future. In 1901, as a new MP aged 26, he predicted that the future 'wars of peoples will be more terrible than the wars of kings', a prophecy borne out in 1914¹.

And Churchill did enjoy a long and complex relationship with HG Wells.

Wells first met Churchill in the early 1900s at a country house weekend party, and was struck by his 'invincible and irrepressible vitality'². They would develop a turbulent friendship. Wells backed Churchill's Liberal candidacy in a 1908 by-election, which brought Wells much criticism from fellow socialists. Later, Wells and Churchill spent hours arguing over the future at Churchill's London club or at Chartwell; and Churchill would proudly display his set of signed Wells first editions.

So Wells's ideas were familiar to Churchill and clearly influenced him. As a First World War minister Churchill pressed for the development of the tank, and would later testify that the idea had come from Wells's story 'The Land Ironclads' (1903)³.

But later Frederick Lindemann, later Lord Cherwell, became Churchill's 'Personal Adviser ... in Scientific Matters'. It was not on Wells's *The World Set Free* (1914) but on consultation with Lindemann that Churchill based his 1924 article for *Nash's Pall Mall* on a future 'bomb no bigger than an orange' that might 'blast a township at a stroke'.

I suspect it was not sf but a deep understanding of history that fuelled Churchill's powers of prophecy.

Churchill was a historian as well as a statesman. His thinking about history was not simplistic; in 1933 he wrote to a friend that 'you assume the future is a mere extension of

the past whereas I find history full of unexpected turns and retrogressions'⁴. And Churchill did write at least one piece of alternate history – sf's close cousin – an essay called 'If Lee Had Not Won the Battle of Gettysburg' (in *If It Had Happened Otherwise*, ed. JC Squire, 1931), showing that his fertile mind was capable of exploring counterfactual possibilities.

Wells and Churchill differed over the Empire, the Soviet Union, republicanism and class. While in 1940 Wells told American readers that 'it is as though some merciful power has been putting together this most abnormal Englishman for the hour of Britain's utmost need'⁵, by 1944 he was savagely attacking Churchill as 'the present would-be British Fuehrer ... If we do not end Winston, he will end us'.

And yet the two men retained a basic affection and mutual respect. In 1937 Churchill was moved by Wells's dedication to him of *Star Begotten*: 'It gives me real pleasure that my early admiration of thirty-five years ago for your wonderful books should have come to rest in our later times in a harbour of personal friendship'⁶.

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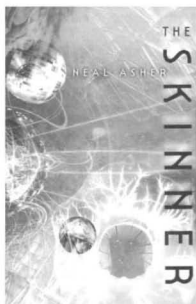
- ¹ Martin Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life* (1991);
- ² HG Wells, 'Churchill, Man of Destiny', *Colliers* Nov 2 1940;
- ³ David C Smith, *HG Wells: Desperately Mortal* (1986);
- ⁴ HG Wells, 'Churchill Must Go', *The Tribune* December 1 5 1944.

Omegatropic, a collection of non-fiction by Stephen Baxter plus two rare short stories is still available from the BSFA, 1 Long Row Close, Everdon, Daventry, Northants, NN11 3BE hardback £20; paperback £8; Postage free for BSFA members, otherwise £1 for the first book and 50p for each additional copy in the UK. Cheques payable to: BSFA Ltd. If ordering in the USA please see the BSFA's website, www.bsfa.co.uk.

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- Neal L. Asher, *The Skinner***, £9.99, Paperback - 480 pages (22 March, 2002), Macmillan; ISBN: 0333903641
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- R Joe Haldeman, *Worlds***, £9.99, Paperback - 240 pages new edition (18 April, 2002), Gollancz; ISBN: 0575073616
- Laurel K. Hamilton, *A Caress of Twilight***, £5.99 Paperback (4 March, 2002), Bantam; ISBN: 0553813846
- N Brian Herbert & Kevin J. Anderson, *Prelude to Dune: House Corrino***, £6.99, Paperback - 608 pages new edition (18 April, 2002), New English Library; ISBN: 0340751800,
- N Robin Hobb, *Fool's Errand***, £11.99, Paperback - 592 pages (4 March, 2002), Voyager; ISBN: 0007110561
- R Tom Holt, *Tom Holt Omnibus 2***, £7.99, Paperback - 576 pages (7 March, 2002), Orbit; ISBN: 1841491330
- Kim Hunter, *Wizard's Funeral***, £9.99, Paperback - 416 pages (7 March, 2002), Orbit; ISBN: 1841490970
- J.V. Jones, *A Fortress of Grey Ice***, £17.99, Hardcover - 720 pages (4 April, 2002), Orbit; ISBN: 1857237706
- Graham Joyce, *The Tooth Fairy***, £6.99, Paperback - 288 pages new edition (14 March, 2002), Gollancz; ISBN: 1857983424
- Fiona Kelleghan, *Classics of Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature***, Hardcover - 640 pages (March 2002), Salem Press Inc; ISBN: 1587650509,
- NF David Langford, *The Wyrdst Link***, £6.99, Paperback - 224 pages (25 April, 2002), Gollancz; ISBN: 0575073195
- Miller Lau, *Dark Thane***, £6.99, Paperback - 608 pages (2 April, 2002), Earthlight; ISBN: 0743404017
- James Lovegrove, *Imagined Slights***, £6.99, Paperback - 288 pages (11 April, 2002), Gollancz; ISBN: 1857988019
- Eric Van Lustbader, *The Veil of One Thousand Tears***, £17.99, Hardcover (2 April, 2002), Voyager; ISBN: 0002247305
- John Marco, *The Eyes of God***, £10.99, Paperback - 576 pages (21 March, 2002), Gollancz; ISBN: 0575073640
- John Marco, *The Eyes of God***, £17.99, Hardcover - 576 pages (21 March, 2002), Gollancz; ISBN: 0575073632
- N John Marco, *The Saints of the Sword***, £7.99, Paperback - 560 pages new edition (14 March, 2002), Gollancz; ISBN: 0575072903
- Juliet Marillier, *Child of the Prophecy***, £10.99, Hardcover - 592 pages (4 March, 2002),



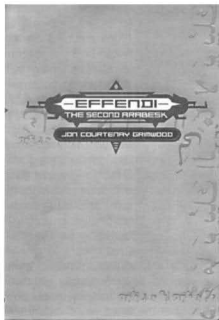
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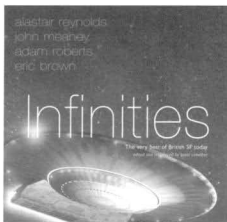
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R Ian McDonald, *Ares Express*, £6.99, Paperback - 352 pages new edition (4 March, 2002), Earthlight; ISBN: 0671037544

China Miéville, *The Scar*, £17.99, Hardcover - 560 pages (26 April, 2002), Macmillan; ISBN: 0333781740

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Kim Stanley Robinson, *Vinland the Dream*, £6.99, Paperback - 368 pages (23 April, 2002), Voyager; ISBN: 0007134045

Sean Russell, *The One Kingdom*, £6.99, Paperback - 704 pages new edition (7 March, 2002), Orbit; ISBN: 1841490881

R.A. Salvatore, *Star Wars - Episode II: Attack of the Clones*, £16.99, Hardcover (24 April, 2002), Century; ISBN: 0712684077

Jan Siegel, *Witch's Honour*, Hardcover - 384 pages (4 March, 2002), Voyager; ISBN: 0002258390,

Robert Silverberg, *The Longest Way Home*, Hardcover - 288 pages (18 April, 2002), Gollancz; ISBN: 0575073519

Robert Silverberg, *The Longest Way Home*, Paperback - 288 pages (18 April, 2002), Gollancz; ISBN: 0575073527

Harry Turtledove, *Through the Darkness*, £6.99, Paperback - 608 pages new edition (2 April, 2002), Earthlight; ISBN: 0671033980

Jack Vance, *Lyonesse: Suldrun's Garden*, £6.99, Paperback - 448 pages (14 March, 2002), Gollancz; ISBN: 0575073748

R Ian Watson, *The Jonah Kit*, £9.99, Paperback - 224 pages new edition (18 April, 2002), Gollancz; ISBN: 0575073896

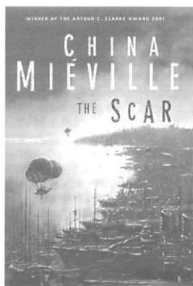
Jane Welch, *The Broken Chalice*, £6.99, Paperback (15 April, 2002), Voyager; ISBN: 0007112505

John Whitbourn *Downsford Doomsday*, £5.99, Paperback, (April, 2002), Earthlight, ISBN 06710 33026

N Tad Williams, *Otherland IV: Sea of Silver Light*, £7.99, Paperback - 1312 pages new edition (1 April, 2002), Orbit; ISBN: 1841490644

R Gene Wolfe, *Peace*, £6.99, Paperback - 272 pages (11 April, 2002), Gollancz; ISBN: 0575073764

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AN IRONING BOARD ON A DUCK POND

PURPLE HAIR AND TRACTOR BEAMS

Martin Sketchley settles down for a science-fiction double feature matinee

It happens every week, right? You go and buy *TV Quick* (if you're in a hurry) or *What's On TV* (if you're practical) or

Radio Times (if you're posh), and you turn to the listing pages to see what delights are on telly the following week – and the pages might as well be blank, right? Even if you've got cable or satellite, you know that if there's nothing on the five main channels, there's unlikely to be anything decent on the other 40-odd. So what are the alternatives if you just want to slob out in the evening and don't feel like reading?

There was a time when I would have listened to some music, but when Rosaleen and I had kids, the CD player seemed to have jammy toast posted into it on an increasingly regular basis, and eventually gave up the ghost. And anyway, I'm not ashamed to admit that I like sitting looking at the telly sipping beer after a hard day in front of the computer. So, when there's nothing on TV, I fall back on the video collection.

In such situations I'm a sucker for the 50s SF classics. *This Island Earth* is a particular favourite, with the evil Brak (Lance Fuller) and the kindly Exeter (Jeff Morrow), the mysterious "acre of canvas" (imagine asking for that in a hardware store; "four candles" wouldn't come close...) and the huge weeds that suddenly appear in the scene when Ruth and Cal (Faith Domergue and Rex Reason) are avoiding the death ray by ducking under the surface of the lake (a simple strategy, but it seems to work). There are some great lines, too. I particularly like the bit when, having been pulled into the spaceship by the tractor beam, Exeter has to try and convince Cal and Ruth that he's not their enemy, and means them no harm. At one point he looks at Ruth and says: "Ruth, don't tell me that, as a woman, you're not curious about our destination." Ruth looks all quizzical, and dash it all if you can't almost see her thinking: "my God, he's right – as a woman I am curious about our destination," after which she says, lips all a-tremble with emotion: "Where are we going?" One can't help wonder if this would have been her reaction if Exeter had said: "Ruth, don't tell me that, as a woman, you're not curious about how much cooking and cleaning there will be for you to do when we reach our destination..."

However, finding websites devoted to *This Island Earth*

is not as easy as you might imagine. Simply typing the phrase into Yahoo offers one site – thisislandearth.com –

which turns out to be devoted to some rock band from New York. So, delving deeper, I try the Science Fiction Matinee site. This offers a great picture of "the mutant" chasing Ruth, who seems to be concentrating on running in a manner suitably representative of all unliberated, downtrodden women of the early 1950s. There are also some reproductions of original posters promoting the film, particularly focussing on the fact that it took two and a half years to make. There's also a link to the Internet Movie Database site, via which you can watch a trailer of the film. This is very cool, and features many of the film's key moments, if in a slightly strange order.

However, other than this there's relatively little available about *This Island Earth*. You can buy a copy, buy images related to it, find out a few facts, but there's

not much real meat. So, my mind wanders to other films I particularly like – and right up there is *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. I recently tried to introduce this movie to Daniel, my four and a half year old son: "It's a great film," I enthused, "with a spaceship and a big robot." This is true, but while there's a lot of action early on, after the initial burst it's slow for quite a long time as themes of US paranoia regarding the Soviet Union are not very discretely discussed. As a result Daniel wasn't interested for long, but having put the film on, I really enjoyed watching it myself.

On the web there's a great site devoted to *The Day the Earth Stood Still* called, quite simply, GORT!. This has links to numerous pages offering a wide variety of information.

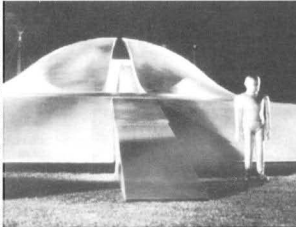
There's one devoted to Lock Martin, the 7' 7" actor who played Gort (he also played "Mutant Serving Intelligence" in the sinister 1953 film *Invaders from Mars*), and many others. One of the most interesting links is to the "sounds" page, featuring... well, what do you think? Hear Klaatu (Michael Rennie) say "Gort! Deglet ovrosco!" (trans: "Gort, stop destroying their primitive weapons!") and "Klaatu borada nikto" (trans: "Klaatu's gone for a Burton.")

There's also a link to the "Dreamer's" site, which offers

all you could want regarding this classic film. A link to cast details, for example, includes one for Hugh Marlowe, who played Tom Stevens, the scheming boyfriend of Helen (Patricia Neal). Like many actors, Marlowe appeared in several SF films, and also starred in the wonderfully cheesy *Earth versus the Flying Saucers*, as one of the key players at Project Skyhook.



They don't poster 'em like this any more! From the *This Island Earth*



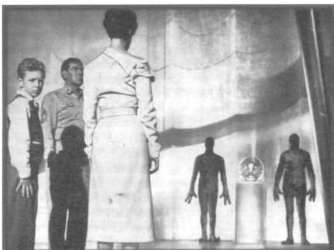
Gort waits patiently. From GORT!

No discussion of classic SF films could ignore *Forbidden Planet*, with Robbie, the monsters from the ID, the wonderful "electronic tonalities" from Louis and Bebe Baron, which lend the film a particularly (and uniquely 50s) SF atmosphere, and the wonderful scale of the Krell's installation. Then of course there's Altaira Morbius (played by Anne Francis). Apart from that, I always have to remind myself that it's Leslie Nielsen who plays Commander Adams, appearing in one of his few early straight roles.

There are many sites devoted to *Forbidden Planet*, but one of the most notable is appropriately, if unimaginatively, called The Unofficial *Forbidden Planet* Home Page. This has all any fan of this great movie could want, including Krell fonts to download, things to buy – the movie in various formats, model kits of Space Cruiser C57-D, numerous variants of Robbie (including model kits, clockwork toys and key rings) – and reproduction posters. All very tempting.

Although not from the 1950s, there are other videos I dust off from time to time. One of these consists of two episodes of Gerry Anderson's early 1970s TV series *UFO*. I was a little boy when I watched this first time round (about the same age my own son is now, as it happens) and absolutely loved it. Watching *UFO* these days, I can see the inconsistencies, the non-essential bits that bog it down, some slightly questionable "special" effects, and the strange themes Anderson seemed to want to discuss – but I still love it. I'm not quite sure what it is about *UFO*, whether it's the vehicles or the clothes, or a combination of many indefinable things, but the programme has a unique quality that sets it apart from its counterparts, and has a definite sense of "otherness": things are sufficiently different for the setting to be like the Earth we know, but with a convincingly futuristic, or perhaps simply alternative, atmosphere.

The *UFO* Series Home Page offers a lot of information about the programme, its history, the second-series-that-never-was and lots more besides, including some facts only the most ardent buff is likely to know. You can even download the rocking *UFO* theme tune (for me, the themes to



Creepy... From the *Invaders from Mars* site

UFO and *Thunderbirds* are two of the most wonderful pieces of television music in history, particularly the latter: just listen to those strings soaring behind the blasting horns – it's drama on an epic scale). The *UFO* Series Home Page is well worth a visit whether you're a fan of Anderson's programmes or just interested in blueprints of SID, information on the *UFO*s themselves or any of the many photos. Coo, you can even listen to the sound of a *UFO* in flight – it makes the hair stand up on the back of your neck it does. Well, mine, anyway. Now where did I leave that purple nylon wig of mine...

URLs:

This Island Earth:

<http://tatoine.fortunecity.com/herbert305/sfm50545.htm>

This Island Earth trailer:

<http://us.imdb.com/Trailers?0047577>

Internet Movie Database:

<http://us.imdb.com/>

GORT!:

<http://members.yourlink.net/jigerard/gort/>

Forbidden Planet:

http://home.kc.rr.com/bobfahey/fp_main.htm

The Unofficial *Forbidden Planet* Home Page:

<http://sfstation.members.easyspace.com/fbhome.htm>

Forbidden Planet:

<http://www.forbidden-planet.org/Robby/>

Invaders from Mars:

<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Hills/3411/>

Lots of SF-related links of all kinds:

<http://sfstation.members.easyspace.com/fbsites.htm>

UFO Series Home Page:

<http://ufoseries.com/>

Spinnerets

Stephen Palmer – author of *Memory Seed* and *Glass*, (1997 and 1998) – has two new print-on-demand novels out in early 2002. In celebration, his web site has been given a facelift, and "includes various new bits and pieces", and "has a radical new look." Why not take a peek.

URL:

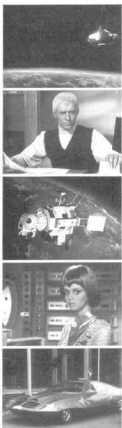
<http://stephenpalmer.net>

If you have any specifically web-related news that might be of interest to *Matrix* readers, or ideas for future articles, please send me an e-mail, and include any relevant URLs.

Martin's own site is:

www.msketchley.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

(As if by magic, this article and links (with added pictures!)) should also be appearing on the bsfa's website: www.bsfa.co.uk soon after *Matrix*'s publication courtesy of webmistress Tanya.)



A strip of pics from the *UFO* series home page. These are actual real people, not puppets, by the way.

Glenda Pringle goes to war

Having bought my hubby the new *Lord of the Rings* board game for Christmas (and having been frustrated by that dastardly Sauron in several attempts!) brought to mind the world of SF/fantasy gaming. Apart from the joys of Runequest II, of which I am a seasoned admirer and partaker, I don't really know much about this area of 'fandom'. I know there is a large and, almost exclusively, young fanatical following for Games Workshop's *Warhammer* series and that there are an awful lot of table top SF/fantasy games going on at wargames conventions (many of the bigger of which are in the Pringle family social calendar – I go to look at the book stalls, honest!). I am also regaled from time to time by our RQ cronies with the joys of past *Paranoia* and *Traveller* scenarios. In any event, I've seen and heard enough to convince me that it is through the medium of these games that many youngsters (and oldsters) develop and sustain an interest in the sf and fantasy genres. With that in mind, I think it only fair to mention a magazine that caters to these eclectic tastes.

It's scary to contemplate, but the UK apparently has more wargamers than anywhere else in the world, including the USA. Nearly every weekend in the year there is either a show or competition meeting somewhere in the UK. The bigger shows attract several hundred (predominantly male) fans of all ages clutching their purchases of little metal figures, terrain and rulebooks as they admire demonstration table-top games displayed by a variety of societies keen to convince others of the joys of their specialities which can range from obscure ancient armies right up to space the final, must-be-fought-over, frontier. In spite of the geeky persona wargaming shares with sf fandom (spotting BFWs – i.e., Big Fat Wargamers – at the shows is a pastime my husband, Chris, and I share), it is nevertheless a fairly prevalent and popular hobby.

Miniature Wargames is the 'bible' of wargamers everywhere. Although it is a British publication, it is available to gamers all over the world through various outlets in 12 countries. As the contents of *MW* suggest, wargaming is serious stuff to its many aficionados. Within the magazine's hallowed pages the relative merits of various rule systems are debated and the joys of particularly good scenarios are shared to the accompaniment of maps and photographs of tiny little exquisitely painted figures and terrain that attempts to be as historically accurate as possible (albeit a bit too plastic looking for my liking). It is also bursting with ads for anything from forthcoming events, rulebooks, terrain, and figures and those who will paint them

for you. At least one article in every issue has a sf slant, for instance, the January issue includes a 'Very Simple SF' rules system which was specifically developed to encourage an interest in wargaming and sf in the young. *MW* is a bright, glossy, 60+ page publication that celebrates in an almost in-your-face sort of way the testosterone-driven joys of boys who may have grown up, but can never quite give up their toy soldiers.

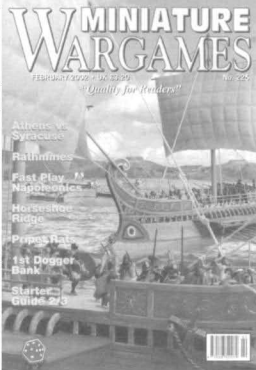
So what has all this got to do with developing an interest in SF? In the past, I have seen table-top games that range from space marines versus that nasty lady the *Alien* queen to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to *Attack of the Green Bug-eyed Monsters* (never let it be said that wargamers don't have a sense of humour). Many, if not most, of the participants in these games are youngsters. In addition, you only have to peer inside your local Games Workshop store as you scuffle past to see yet more youngsters gleefully trouncing each other at *Warhammer 40,000* to realise that this stuff is big business. Moreover, I suspect that these same lads (and the occasional ladette) are also purchasing graphic novels, Terry Pratchett books and the *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* novels, as well as lusting over the curvy female alien crews of the more recent *Star Trek* series on TV (the lads that is) [Or *Farscape* and *Buffy* if they've got any taste - Ed]. Once that begins to happen, it's easy to get them hooked on 'proper' SF, so to speak. I submit in evidence my daughter's boyfriend who, although not a wargamer,

is a fan of all things *Star Wars* – be it book, film or comic – whom I've managed to introduce the joys of Elizabeth Moon and Lois McMaster Bujold. Ha! Today – space opera, tomorrow – hard SF! Look out, Danny, your card is marked!

Miniature Wargames is published monthly and an annual subscription is available for £37.00 from Pireme Publishing Ltd, Suite 10, Wessex House, St Leonard's Road, Bournemouth BH8 8QS. Further information is available on the web at: www.miniawargames.com OR www.wargames.co.uk/Miniwarg/Miniwarg.htm

As mentioned in passing above, wargamers often 'subdivide' into various areas of interest and form societies. Believe it or not, there is a Society of Fantasy and Science Fiction Wargamers (SFSFW) who publish their own journal, *Ragnarok*. Unfortunately, my review copy had not yet arrived at the time I was writing this column so I will save that pleasure for next time. In the meantime, I would draw the attention of those who are interested to SFSFW's website at: www.sfsfw.org

Now, I'll just go and try to see off that peaky Sauron again. Right, who wants to be Frodo?...



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

OBITUARIES

KEITH ALLEN DANIELS 1956 - 2001

Steve Sneyd on an *sf* poet

Keith Allen Daniels, who died recently at the age of 45, was a pillar of the science fiction poetry scene for decades, as writer and producer of the genre. His final achievement – editing and publishing the 243 page science fiction poetry anthology, 2001, including 63 poets representative of the field – was brought to fruition despite terminal illness.

Having left Florida some years ago, he lived with his wife Toni Luna Daniels in Ridgecrest, California, working as a materials engineer by day, writing and editing by night.

His collection *What Rough Book: Dark Poems and Light* won the Fallot Award of the National Association of Independent Publishers Award of the National Association of Independent Publishers in 1992, he was 15 times nominated for the annual Rhysling Award for *sf* poetry, and among the myriad appearances of his poetry since the 1970s were the prozines *Analog SF*, *Asimov's SF Magazine* and *Weird Tales*, and such anthologies as *Narcopolis*, *Once Upon a Midnight* and *Poets of the Fantastic* in the USA and *Star Trek: The Poems* from prestigious mainstream UK publisher Iron Press. Daniels, described by David C. Kopaska-Merkel, editor of a leading genre poetry magazine *Dreams & Nightmares* as "one of the foremost science fiction poets of our time", also read his work at World SF

Conventions.

He was equally at home with free verse and with the strictest of rhymed and metred verse forms. Moreover, in his work he gladly accepted the challenge he set himself when introducing his most recent substantial collection – *Satan is a Mathematician of 1999* – of "a marriage of science and poetry" going beyond co-existence to a mutual stimulation, combining science's elegant clarity with poetry's beauty in ambiguity. Alongside this ability to explore serious ideas in poetry in a way rare today went a love of language itself, including a revelling in puns and wordplay that humanised without undermining. To quote former US Poet Laureate Richard Wilbur, Daniels' poetry is "characterized by breath of vocabulary, by the straddling of lexicons and by an inventive attraction to the uncanny".

Nor will his achievements as editor and book publisher be forgotten: his Anamnesis Press, by publishing the poetry of James Blish and Joe Haldeman, the correspondence of Sir Arthur C. Clarke with C. S. Lewis and Lord Dunsany and much more, reflected his own poetry's breath of vision in the field.

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ART BY DAVID HO

— AND THE WINNER IS ... —

All the news on the BSFA awards from **Tanya Brown**

The shortlists for the four BSFA Awards (Best Novel, Best Short Story, Best Artwork and Best Non-Fiction) were announced on 1st February 2002. The shortlists were compiled from nominations submitted in the year to 31st January 2002 by BSFA members, and the eventual winners will be determined by votes from BSFA and Eastercon members, with the winner announced at this year's Eastercon – Helicon 2, 29th March to 1st April on Jersey. (See below for how to vote).

Last year's BSFA shortlist for best novel resembled the shortlist for the Arthur C Clarke Award (jury-based rather than balloted) quite strongly: three out of the five titles on our shortlist also appeared on the ACCA shortlist. This year the trend continues: *Bold as Love*, *Pashazade* and *The Secret of Life* all appear on the other award's shortlist too. Of course, the BSFA Award isn't limited to science fiction: we can include Neil Gaiman's masterful new mythological fantasy, *American Gods*, without a qualm. Luckily none of the Clarke judges believed the subtitle of *Bold as Love* ... *Interzone*, again, dominates the shortlist for best Short Story. While David Pringle's achievements with the magazine are certainly to be applauded, it's good to see *Spectrum* appearing on the shortlist for the second year running – and sad that so many other British magazines, such as *TTA* and *Scheherazade*, aren't appearing at all. My feeling is that this has more to do with availability than quality: it would be great to see stories from a wider range of publications on next year's shortlist.

The award for best Artwork covers a diverse range of media, from book covers to CD-Rom. We're hoping to make reproductions of some of the shortlisted work available either via the website (www.bsfa.co.uk) or at Eastercon. Our new category, for non-fiction, has garnered a mixed bag of votes – for papers given at the Liverpool conference '2001: A Celebration of British Science Fiction' (unfortunately not eligible until they've been published); for book reviews, and introductions to books; and, slightly embarrassingly, for our own *Omegatropic* publication, a collection of fiction and non-fiction by Stephen Baxter which contains several new pieces. (The cover, by Colin Odell, also garnered a place on the Artwork shortlist). The slimline Pocket Essentials guides were also popular, with two appearing on the shortlist. Perhaps surprisingly, there were hardly any nominations for single pieces of critical analysis, within the BSFA's journals or elsewhere.

How to Vote:

To vote postally, you must be a member of the BSFA. Postal votes – showing your BSFA membership number –

should arrive no later than 23rd March 2002. To vote by email, use the email link on the Awards website – via www.bsfa.co.uk. Again, you should quote your BSFA membership number. Email votes will be accepted until 26th March 2002.

You may vote at Eastercon if you are a member of the convention and have not already voted: the deadline for votes will probably be 6pm on the Saturday, with the winners to be announced on the Sunday evening.

Voting is technically now open for the 2002 awards ...!

2001 BSFA Awards Shortlists

Best Novel:

American Gods - Neil Gaiman (Feature)
Pashazade - Jon Courtenay Grimwood (Earthlight)
Bold as Love - Gwyneth Jones (Gollancz)
The Secret of Life - Paul McAuley (Voyager)
Chasm City - Alastair Reynolds (Gollancz)
Lust - Geoff Ryman (Flamingo)

Best Short Story:

'Under the Saffron Tree' (*Interzone* 166) - Cherith Baldry
 'First to the Moon' (*Spectrum* SF 6) - Stephen Baxter & Simon Bradshaw
 'Children of Winter' (*Interzone* 163) - Eric Brown
 'Myxomatosis' (*Interzone* 165) - Simon Ings
 'Wind Angels' (*Interzone* 171) - Leigh Kennedy
 'Isabel of the Fall' (*Interzone* 169) - Ian MacLeod

Best Artwork:

'Roach Motel' (cover, *Interzone* 166) - Dominic Harman
 Cover of *Omegatropic* (Baxter) - Colin Odell
 Cover of *Gridlinked* (Asher) - Steve Rawlings
 'Heart of Empire' CD-Rom - Bryan Talbot
 Cover of *Pashazade* (Grimwood) - The Whole Hog

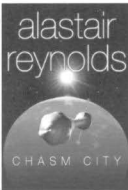
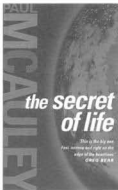
Best Non-Fiction:

Omegatropic - Stephen Baxter (BSFA)
Terry Pratchett - Andrew M Butler (Pocket Essentials)
Tim Burton - Michelle Le Blanc & Colin Odell (Pocket Essentials)
Storming the Bastille - Justina Robson (http://www.thealienonline.com/archive/sections/news/content/lunar_park/)
 'The Best Introduction to the Mountains' - Gene Wolfe (*Interzone* 174)

The shortlisted Best Novels.



PASHAZADE
 JON COURTENAY GRIMWOOD
 EARTHLIGHT



Best Short Story



Elizabeth Billinger on some changes (and a plea)

It's almost ten years since I stuck my head above the parapet and volunteered to be Treasurer for the BSFA. It seemed at the time a smart way of giving something back without having to get involved – I could sit at home and use the same skills I use in my real life to do the BSFA's bookkeeping, write a few cheques and then transform everything into a set of accounts at the end of the year. No problem.

That's more or less what I did for the first couple of years, but then somehow, and despite my firm intentions, I got sucked in. Paul and I were convinced, by various people, that attending the 1995 Worldcon in Glasgow was a really good idea, I was convinced that making a tablecloth with BSFA lettering was a really good idea and after that it was hard to say no. We met all sorts of people in Glasgow, learned that standing behind the BSFA desk

Elizabeth...

at a convention is an excellent way of meeting people, and had the concepts of fanzines and apas explained to us.

The Treasuring itself has been a challenge. In the early days the BSFA was making losses, and juggling the ever-dwindling funds to make sure that the printers were paid became something that kept me awake at night. Slowly, however, as we've taken tighter control over the organisation, introducing the job of Production Manager and cutting back our costs to the absolute minimum, the BSFA has moved back to profitability and the job of Treasurer has become much more routine and much less stressful.

So, having seen the BSFA through this difficult period I've decided it's time to hang up the chequebook and retire from the post of Treasurer. Happily, after much coercion and desperate begging, I've found a replacement: Paul Hood who has been organising the London Meetings for years (selflessly undertaking such tasks as checking out all the pubs in London to find a new venue) has agreed to become the new Treasurer.

Paul Billinger, meanwhile, failed to 'just say no' to the role of Membership Secretary in 1997. It's a time-consuming job and one which requires constant attention. Things are more organised than when he first took over and, thanks to various people, he now has a useful and easy-to-use membership database, but there is always more to do. He'd like to hang up his laser labels and retire

as Membership Secretary, but Paul hasn't been as fortunate as me, and so far hasn't found a replacement.

That's where you come in, yes you – haven't you always felt slightly guilty about the people working behind the scenes to bring you these splendid magazines? Or perhaps you regularly sit there and think that you could do a better job? Well, now's your chance: volunteer today, you know it makes sense.

We've been practising saying no, here in Everdon, really we have, but having made the decision to retire (and spend more time with the cats), Paul and I then made another decision. We've volunteered to jointly take over the role of leading the BSFA and the Committee has accepted our offer.

When Maureen Kincaid Speller retired a couple of years ago, we reviewed the situation and concluded that the BSFA was running pretty smoothly and that a kind of government by committee would be effective. It has worked, but it has become increasingly clear that the organisation needs someone who is

officially in charge – a place where the buck stops, a person that outside organisations recognise as its head. Having, over the years, done much of the work that this entails, Paul and I believe that we should be able to make a good job of taking up the role formally. We deal with the everyday glitches and queries too numerous and trivial to mention, but essential to the smooth running of the BSFA. We've steered the organisation through the production of Stephen Baxter's *Omegatropic*, the biggest project undertaken since I've been involved and we're looking forward to more challenges. (The first challenge was what to call ourselves, Evil Overlord was tempting, but we've settled for Chair.)

So there you have it, after (almost) ten years as Treasurer, I've retired, only to become joint Chair. Paul Hood is now Treasurer as well as organiser of the London meetings and Paul Billinger is a joint Chair desperately seeking a successor as Membership Secretary.



...and Paul. ~~Evil Overlords~~, sorry 'Joint-Chairs'

NEW SHOOTS

In the second of his interstitial reports from Focus, **Simon Morden** does some spring cleaning and looks through the market lists.

Spring is approaching. The evenings are lighter (something my Dad always used to say on December 22nd, every year. Without fail.) and the first green shoots of snowdrops are breaking the barren earth. Of course, you who live down south have probably got daffodils by now, but up here in the frozen north everything tends to happen at a rush around the Spring Equinox.

I've even tidied up my study. I can now see the carpet again, and what once resembled the site of a miss-aimed bomb is now a hive of streamlined efficiency. In this spirit of renewed energy and vigour, let's have a look at novel and short story market lists, and see if we can get something published.

The Writer's Handbook (Macmillan) and *The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook* (Black) come out every year in the major bookshops, are big fat paperbacks, and carry enough information to drown in. As a resource, they're very good -- the major publishing houses, magazines, newspapers, and agents all have listings. There are articles from experts and writers regarding copyright and libel laws, submitting material and advice (should you need it) on tax. In such general works, a lot of the entries will be superfluous to what you want. Many book publishers and agents will say 'no SF' straight out. But as a first step to see what you're letting yourself in for, it's worth getting a copy of either (not both!) and see how much you use it.

Many writers start small and work their way up. *The Small Press Guide* (Writers' Bookshop) is another general list, but details 'small press' magazines that take fiction, poetry and art. Whilst not dedicated to genre writing, there are lots of genre entries -- even *Focus* has its own page -- and is certainly worth a look for UK based magazines. In a similar vein is *Light's List* (Photon Press), compiled by the indefatigable John Light. The 2001 edition gave details of over 1400 independent press magazines from all over the world.

The most notable of the monthly genre-listing magazines are *Scavenger's Newsletter* (available in the UK via BBR), run from the USA by Janet Fox, and *The Fix* (TTA Publishing). 'Scav', as it's affectionately known, passed its 200th edition with nary a delay, and is thoroughly reliable.

Whilst it's more than possible to be a writer and not have access to the internet, it can help dramatically, especially if you're just starting out. With the unfortunate demise of

excellent *Inkspot* and *Darkecho* e-newsletters, some young pretenders are setting up shop. *Jobs in Hell* (editor Kelly Laymon) and *Hellnotes* service the horror community very well indeed, but are subscription-only (that means you have to pay for them...). *Ansible* (Dave Langford) will sometimes announce market news, and carries all that is essential for SF fandom: read it anyway, if only for Thog and his masterclass.

The most impressive market listing site on the internet has to be Ralan Conley's *Webstravaganza*: stuffed to the gills with genre goodness, Ralan's extensive network of spies... er, writers, keep the site updated almost to the minute with new and old markets. Of special note are the 'dead' market announcements.

Kudos (and a free link) go to those who are first with the news.

Of course, one of the best ways of discovering new markets for your work is to buy the products you hope to appear in. This way, you'll not only get a copy of the submission guidelines, but you'll get a feel for what the editor likes and dislikes. All editors are full of

idiosyncrasies and, dare I say, hubris. Tailor your submissions to each magazine, and you're more likely to score a hit.

The Fix: TTA Press, 5 Martins Lane, Witcham, Ely, Cambs CB6 2LB www.ttapress.com

Hellnotes: www.hellnotes.com

Jobs in Hell: <http://home.earthlink.net/~jihadpubs/>

Light's List: Photon Press The Light House, 37 The Meadows, Berwick upon Tweed, Northumberland TD15 1NY photon.press@cwcom.net

Ralan's Webstravaganza: www.ralan.com

Scavenger's newsletter: BBR, PO Box 625, Sheffield S1 3GY www.bbr-online.com

The Small Press Guide: Writers' Bookshop, Remus House, Coltsfoot Drive, Woodston, Peterborough PE2 9JX

Simon's short story collection, *Thy Kingdom Come: a brief history of Armageddon* is due from Lone Wolf Publications in May. His debut novel *Heart* will be published by Razorblade Press in September.



Steve Green brings us news of all things fanfash

It's sometimes rather mind-boggling to be reminded just how much science fiction fandom has changed in the past few decades. I have to hand a copy of the second progress report issued by Eastercon 22, distributed in the autumn of 1970, wherein chair Peter Weston pronounces (under the headline "Britain's Biggest Convention?"): "As membership in the 1971 Eastercon went past the 150-mark a few weeks ago, your committee realised that we really do have a full-scale international convention on our hands. By all appearances so far this will certainly be Britain's biggest-yet national convention, and with seven months or so still to go we are somewhat nervously wondering just *how* big it will finally be!"

Peter's comments date to a time when there was only one major sf event in Britain, although several of his committee would be involved with the launch of Novacon in late 1971 (conceived as a one-off, this complementary event celebrates its thirty-first birthday in November). This side of the millennium, a four-figure turn-out is pretty much *de rigueur* for our national three-ring circus each Easter, whilst even the smallest mediacon aims to attract 150+ fellow travellers for the weekend.

The critical factor was the splintering of fandom, which I observed back in the mid-1970s, as British *Doctor Who* and *Star Trek* fans began to perceive themselves as a distinct social group (much as US Trekkers had evolved a lineage largely ignorant of the sf readership Gene Roddenberry had once been so eager to please). Today, there are conventions pretty much every fortnight, ranging from comics to costuming, fanzines to filking, movies to manga.

Like I say, Eastercon remains the only event to attempt, sometimes perhaps foolishly, to encapsulate all the tribes of fandom. This year, the great gathering has assumed the title of Helicon II and resumed the venue of Jersey's Hotel de France for the weekend 29 March – 1 April. Guests will include British author Brian Stableford, US author Harry Turtledove and, good grief, the aforementioned Peter Weston as fan guest (to mention his landmark 1970s fanzine *Speculation*, administration of the 1979 UK worldcon and doomed attempt to regalanise the 1980s Brum SF Group is but to scratch upon the surface of Peter's legacy). Attending membership's £35.00; details from www.smf.demon.co.uk or 33 Meyrick Drive, Wash Common, Newbury, RG14 6SY.

Eastercons are chosen two years in advance, so we already know that Season 03 has secured the bid for 2003, for Hincley. Most bids these days tend to be last-minute affairs, so it was

quite a surprise to hear that a contender has already materialised for 2004 – and with not one, but two proposed venues. Rather ingeniously, the crew of Concourse has approached both the Radisson Edwardian in London and the Blackpool Wintergardens, with the final choice (assuming no one else comes forward) down to those present in St Helier. Further details can be obtained from their website at www.eastercon.com/concourse.



SFX, the self-proclaimed "world's leading science fiction magazine", tries its own hand at conrunning on 21-23 June, at Blackpool's Norbreck Castle Hotel. Guests so

far confirmed (subject to work commitments) are James Marsters (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*), Andrew Robinson (*Hellraiser* and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*) and Joe Pantoliano (*The Matrix*), with the first 1000 ticket-holders invited to the award ceremony on Saturday evening. Membership for the full weekend costs £75.00; for further details check out www.sfx.co.uk or call their order line on 01225 788 215.

Although widely anticipated, news that Birmingham's Andromeda Science Fiction Bookshop will soon disappear from the retail landscape has still been met with shock and justified concern. The world's longest-established sf emporium (and arguably the best-stocked), its impending demise robs us both of an irreplaceable resource, particularly for the more obscure and rare, and an unique nexus between the fanfash and the commercial (it's impossible to guess how many became entrapped in fandom's web by innocently wandering through its doors). As I write this, the first creditors' meeting is less than a week away; I just wish I could hope to have better news for readers next issue.

There's even more startling news from the other side of the Big Pond, where Ed Kramer, founding force behind Georgia's massive DragonCon, is currently under house arrest, accused of using the events to attract and seduce underage fans. The case was due to open in early February, but has been postponed due to administrative problems affecting local courts. In the meantime, the quagmire of rumour and counter-rumour threatens to shatter relations between the convention's supporters (among them author Nancy Collins, herself accused of framing Kramer in hope of a spin-off book deal). Co-founder Pat Henry, owner of the Titan Comics chain, told creativeloafing.com he still stuck by his partner: "Just because we like to dress up and read science fiction doesn't make us a bunch of perverts or freaks."

Sadly, *Matrix* deadlines mean MicroCon 2002 will be ancient history by the time this column sees print, but that doesn't preclude me plugging the other activities of the Exeter University Science Fiction Society.

The group's president, Jo Foster, tells me: "We meet in Clydesdale House on campus at 8.00pm on Mondays, to discuss all matters of sci-fi, fantasy, horror, cult, weird stuff, etc. Anyone is welcome to come along – they can get in touch with me on j.b.foster@exeter.ac.uk or on my mobile, 07968 398477. It isn't just students who turn up for meetings, but some sci-fi fans from Exeter and the environs, as well as past students and staff of the university."

As mentioned last issue, I'd like to cover more news from local groups and conventions; please forward all snippets, gossip and press releases to sfcheckpoint@yahoo.co.uk. If you want to send along your newsletters, the address is 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, B92 7LQ.

EVENTS

Future conventions and other gatherings

8-10 Mar 02 - McCon V

Senior Common Room, Queen's University of Belfast. Guests announced: Ken MacLeod, Mike Cobley, Ian MacDonald, David Wingrove. £15 reg to 7 Mar 02, then £17. Contact 30 Bendigo St, Belfast BT6 8GD.

29 Mar - 1 Apr 02 - Helicon 2 (Eastercon)

Hotel de France, St Helier, Jersey. Guests of Honour: Brian Stableford, Harry Turtledove & Peter Weston. Membership £35, cheques payable to 'Helicon 2'. Contact: 33 Meyrick Drive, Wash Common, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 6SY; helicon2@smof.demon.co.uk; www.smof.demon.co.uk/helicon2.htm

6-7 Apr 02 - Unconvention 2002 (Fortean)

Commonwealth Inst, S Kensington, London. Contact information at www.forteanimes.com. Featuring 'The World's Most Fortean Object: Rev Lionel Fanthorpe'.

13 Apr 02 - Signs of Life (BSFA/SFF one-off event)

Friends House, Euston Rd, London. Free event 10am-5pm. GoH M. John Harrison, Gwyneth Jones. Including BSFA AGM (pre-lunch) and SF Foundation AGM (end of day). 'Thrilling' - *Anisble*.

3-6 May 02 - Damn Fine Convention (Twin Peaks theme)

Shepperton Moat House Hotel, Shepperton, Surrey. Guests of Honour rumored to be Colin Odell and Mitch Le Blanc. £20 registration until 1st December 2001 (free for Norwegians resident in Norway). Cheques (made payable to 'Damn Fine Convention') to: DFC, 37 Keens Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1AH. Rooms £30ppn twin or double, £40ppn single. Contact: info@damnfineconvention.org.uk; www.damnfineconvention.org.uk

12 May 02 - Fantasy Fair

10th anniversary event Cresset Exhibition Centre, Bretton, Peterborough. Contact 01477 534626

18 May 02 - Arthur C. Clarke Award.

Science Museum, Kensington, London by invitation, from 6:30pm. However, panels etc arranged by Pat Cadigan, 2pm-6pm, admission free to all.

28th - 30th June - Science Fiction Research Association Conference.

New Lanark, Scotland. Guest Authors: Paul McAuley, Pat Cadigan, Ken MacLeod. Keynote Speaker: Andy Sawyer (Science Fiction Collection, University of Liverpool). Booking form: <http://www.sfra.org/sfra2002.htm>

2-7 Aug 02 - Eurocon 2002

Chotebor, Czech Republic. GoH G.R.R. Martin, K. Bulycov, R. Holdstock, A. Sapkowski, others TBA. \$20/\$25 (US dollars) registration. Contact avalcon@avalcon.cz; www.eurocon2002.scifi.cz

9-11 Aug 02 - ConteXXt (Unicon 20)

University of Gloucestershire. Guest of Honour: Keith Brooke. £25 reg, £15 concessions, small children £1. Contact 17 Cow Lane, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 7SZ.

16-19 Aug 02 - Discworld Convention 2002

Hinckley, Leicestershire. Guest of Honour: Terry Pratchett. Guests: Stephen Briggs, Paul Kidby, Dave Langford and more. No memberships after 16/7/02. Contact: SAE to The Discworld Convention 2002, 23 Medora Road, Romford, Essex, RM7 7EP; info@dwcon.org; www.dwcon.org

29 Aug-2 Sep 02 - Conjose (60th Worldcon)

McEnery Convention Center, San José, California. Guests of Honour: Vernor Vinge, David Cherry, Bjo & David Trimble, Ferdinand Feghoot. Toastmaster: Tad Williams. Membership: Now \$180/£125 reg. Contact: PO Box 61363, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-4128, USA, info@conjose.org; www.conjose.org; UK Agents: 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, RG30 2RP; www.sfsf.org/worldcon/

4 - 6 Oct 02 - Conquest (media con)

Essex County Hotel, Southend-On-Sea. £50 reg, £20/day, £32 two days. Contact: 73 Bournemouth Park Road, Southend-On-Sea, Essex, SS2 5JJ. Tel: (01702) 469093.

19-20 Oct 02 - Octocon 2002 (Irish national con)

Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. GoH China Miéville; many other guests. 20 euros Irish cheques to 'Octocon' c/o Yellow Brick Rd, 8 Bachelors Walk, Dublin 1, Ireland; £15 sterling to 'Dave Lally #2 A/C', c/o Dave Lally 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX.

25-28 Oct 02 Cult TV 2002

Southport Theatre and Floral Hall Complex, Merseyside, UK. Various guests, including Terry Jones. Contact PO Box 1701, Peterborough, PE7 1ER.

31 Oct-3 Nov 02 World Fantasy Convention 2002

Hilton Minneapolis and Towers, Minneapolis, MN. Guests of Honour: Dennis Etchison, Jonathan Carroll, Kathe Koja, Stephen Jones, Dave McKean. Membership: \$100 to 4/11/01, then more. Info: World Fantasy Convention, c/o DreamHaven Books, 912 West Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN 55408, wfc@dreamhavenbooks.com, www.dreamhavenbooks/wfc.html

1-3 Nov 02 - Novacon 32

Quality Hotel, Bentley, Walsall (as in 2001). GoH Ian MacDonald. £32 reg to Easter, then £35 to 20 Oct 02, and £40 at door. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

5-6 July 03 - ConStruction (Convention running con)

Cardiff. Info: ConStruction, 37 St Peters Street, Duxford, Cambridgeshire, CB2 4RP, ConStruction@DragonEvents.ltd.uk, www.DragonEvents.ltd.uk

18-21 Apr 03 - Seacon '03 (Eastercon)

Venue confirmed as the Hanover International Hotel, Hinckley, Leics (same as 2001 Easter event). Guests of honour: Chris Baker, Chris Evans, Mary Gentle. Contact 8 The Orchard, Tonwell, Herts, SG12 0HR.

28 Aug-1 Sep 03 - Torcon 3/Worldcon 61

Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Royal York Hotel, Toronto, Canada. Guests of Honour: George R. R. Martin, Frank Kelly Freas, Mike Glyer. Membership: C\$200. Info: Torcon 3, Box 3, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, M5W 1A2, Canada, info@torcon3.on.ca, www.torcon3.on.ca

2-6 Sep 04 - Noreascon 4 (62nd Worldcon)

Boston, Mass. Guest of Honour: Terry Pratchett, William Tenn, (fan) Jack Speer and Peter Weston. \$100 reg to 31 Dec, \$60 for site selection voters, \$35 supp. Mastercard and Visa accepted. Contact PO Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701, USA.

Note

- Always include a stamped self-addressed envelope when contacting conventions by post.
- Please mention *Matrix* when responding.
- We do our best to ensure the accuracy of this information but always check. Never make a journey to a convention without enquiring first.

Please forward updates, corrections and any information on new events to the main editorial address.

GROUPS

Local groups and other gatherings of fans and writers

Belfast Science Fiction Group

Alternate Thursdays, 8:30pm at the Monico Bars, Rosemary Street, Belfast. Contact Eugene Doherty: 02890 208405; tinman@technologist.com; www.terracon3000.org.uk/sfgroup.htm

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 Clarke Lane, Willenhall, W. Midlands WV13 1HX. bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk

Cambridge SF Group

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

Cardiff SF Group

First Tuesday of 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 Street. Contact Des Lewis 01255 812119.

The Croydon SF Group

Second Tuesday of the month, 8pm in The Dog and Bull, Surrey Street (by the market), Croydon, Surrey. We are sometimes upstairs or out in the garden. Contact Robert Newman on 020 8686 6800.

Glasgow SF/F Writers' Circle

Alternate Tuesdays at 8:00pm, The Conference Room, Borders Bookstore, Buchanan Street, Glasgow (actual dates are publicised in Borders' events guide, available in store, or ask at the Information Desk). All genres and standards of proficiency welcome. Contact: Neil Williamson 0141 353 2649, or e-mail: neilwilliamson@btinternet.com

Hull SF Group

Second and Fourth Tuesdays, 8.30 to 10:30pm at The New Clarence, Charles Street, Hull. Contact Carol & Steve on 01482 494045 or Dave and Estelle on 01482 444291. Please note that the pub room is not always available so if you intend to come along, please phone first to check on venue, or see: www.mjckeh.demon.co.uk/hullsff.htm for the current list of events.

London BSFA meetings

Fourth Wednesday of the month (except December) from 7:00pm at the Rising Sun, Cloth Fair (off Long Lane), EC1, Barbican/Farringdon tube. Check *Ansible* for details and guests, or organiser, Paul Hood on 020 8333 6670; paul@auden.demon.co.uk.

London Circle

First Thursday of each month from around 5:00pm at the Florence Nightingale (Dead Nurse), on the Westminster Bridge Road/York Road roundabout. Waterloo/ Westminster tube.

Manchester: FONT

FONT meets on the second and fourth Thursday of the month at The Goose on Piccadilly from about 8.30pm onwards. Contact Mike Don on 0161 2262980.

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.

Norwich Science Fiction Group

Second & fourth Wednesdays from 8:00pm at the Cellar Bar, Ribs of Beef, Fye Bridge, Norwich. Contact 01603 477104; NSFG@cwcom.net

Peterborough SF Group

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

Portsmouth/South Hants SF Group

Second and fourth Tuesdays at the Magpie, Fratton Road, Portsmouth.

Reading SF Group

Now meets every week in the Monk's Retreat, Friar St. Reading. The usual time will be from 9:00pm (probably later in practice), but every third Monday will be from 7:30pm. Some people may decide to meet at the earlier time every week, but this is not official. For details contact: RSFG@onelist.com

Southampton: Solent Green

Every third Thursday, 7:00pm, at The Duke of Wellington, Bugle Street, Contact Matt 01703 577113 werkhaus@tcp.co.uk

Walsall SF Group

First Saturday of every month at 2:00pm in the Meeting Room of Walsall Central Library, Lichfield Street, Walsall. http://members.nbci.com/walsall_sf/ [Link gives a "The page cannot be found" message - could someone from this group get in touch and let us know if they still exist - Ed]

Please forward updates, corrections and any information on new groups and gatherings to the main editorial address.

NOTICES

Notices are free for all BSFA members -- please forward to main editorial address

For sale

Interzone issues #23 (Spring 1988) - #41 (Nov 1990) inclusive. All 19 magazine are in good condition. Will accept £25 the lot. (If buyer is in the UK, I will pay the p & p). Contact: Barbara Davies, 4 Murvagh Close, Cheltenham, Glos. GL53 7QY. (email bhdavies@cheltenham1.demon.co.uk)

Wanted

Reading copies of *The Silent Sky*, *The Angry Espers* and *This Darkening Universe*, all by Lloyd Biggle Jr. Offers, please, to John Ollis, 49 Leighton Road, Corby, NN18 0SD

SIG

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— JO'S TIMEWASTERS —

Competition 154

THE END OF ETERNITY

Noddy creator achieves immortality and Big-Ears rules the Universe

THE ENT OF ETERNITY

More tales of Middle Earth

THE ED OF ETERNITY

Gary Wilkinson's wildest nightmares come true.

Three examples of what's required based on the novel *The End Of Eternity*; the first adds one letter, the second changes one, the third deletes a letter. For each new title add up to 12 words about the contents. Prize to best single title change (the new title should make sense) plus description. Use any title as base such as *Red Mars* (**Red Marsh, Red Mass, Red Mrs**). Entries to John Ollis, 49 Leighton Road, Corby, NN18 0SD, by May 20, please.

[Please note that from now on the prize has been increased to £10, so no excuse not to enter! —Ed]

— MINI - COMPETITION —

What's this?

This mystery picture is loosely related to one of the articles, news stories or reviews in this issue. A prize of a book (from the soon to be famous *Matrix* Pile of Freebies) for the nearest answer and one for the most humours. Answers to the main editorial address



Results of competition 152

And now for something completely different—David Langford did not win: the poor old boy, totally drained by recent efforts, did not even enter. Getting only 10 and 26 wrong, plus some dubious half-answers, the winner is Flick.

1. Noel.
2. A philosopher and writer of *Where God Went Wrong* and other blockbusters.
3. Susan Sheridan (radio); Sandra Dickinson (TV).
4. Tricia McMillan.
5. Paul Neil Milne Johnson (radio); Paula Nancy Millstone Jennings (book).
6. The Amalgamated Union of Philosophers, Sages, Luminaries and other Professional Thinking Persons.
7. Jay Roach
8. Surprise, surprise – the script was late.
9. A small planet in the Betelgeuse region.
10. The audience wouldn't know which speaker the joke was going to come from.
11. The Pan-Galactic Gargle Blaster.
12. True, staged by Ken Campbell.
13. Feeds on brain-wave energy and translates any language into your own if you insert one into your ear.
14. Sue Freestone of Ed Victor Ltd.
15. Sings 'You'll Never Walk Alone'.
16. No Sex, Please, We're Amoeboid Zingularians.
17. Cambridge University Footlights.
18. Fjords.
19. Don't panic.
20. The Sirius Cybernetic Corporation Complaints Division
21. 53 More Things To Do In Zero Gravity
22. 42.
23. Stick your finger down his throat.
24. The Restaurant at the End of the Universe.
25. Griff Rhys-Jones (Noel Edmunds is not a comedian but a clown).
26. Cyber Spice

— LOC AND LOAD —

Letters received. Please forward all comments etc to the main editorial address marked 'For Publication'. Letters may be edited. Best letter will be awarded a prize.

First off is a letter from the BSFA's president **Sir Arthur C. Clarke** commenting on the editorial in *Matrix* #152 that claimed that Tom Clancy might have been a more predictive writer regarding the September 11 tragedy:

I think I beat Clancy - I gave the actual date on p1 of *Rama*, back in 1973.

He also supplied to us the relevant passage from *Rendezvous with Rama*:

"At 0946 GMT on the morning of September 11 in the exceptionally beautiful summer of the year 2077, most of the inhabitants of Europe saw a dazzling fireball appear in the eastern sky. Within seconds it was brighter than the Sun, and as it moved across the heavens - at first in utter silence - it left behind it a churning column of dust and smoke."

We also heard from **Vaughan Stanger** re **Glenda Pringle's** magazine column *PULPutations*:

On page 3, you announce the demise of *Aboriginal Science Fiction*... On page 12, Glenda Pringle gets nostalgic about an elderly copy of *F&SF*... Glenda's article was an enjoyable read, but I'd much rather *PULPutations* was devoted to reviewing current SF magazines. They need all the support they can get. If publishers are not sending review copies to the BSFA, that's short-sighted of them, but I'd like to see *Matrix* take a more pro-active approach. Best wishes for 2002.

Glenda Pringle replies:

Vaughan is right insofar as I **don't** get copies of the latest magazines apart from those I subscribe to and the two exceptions of *Spectrum SF* and *Scherzade* which the editors generously send me gratis. I have requested review copies in the past from various magazines with mixed results usually of the 'ignored' variety. Unfortunately, the number of magazines I can afford to subscribe

to has dropped dramatically in the past couple of years as I now work at home as a freelancer and no longer have a glamorous high-paying (ha!) publishing job. Therefore, I'm the first to admit that I am not in touch with the 'latest' goings-on in the world of SF magazines. But I am also, as I pointed out in the last column, not happy **just** doing reviews.

Fine by us Glenda (unless you think different...) So come on magazine editors send them in if you want to get a review! And that goes for anybody else who wants to send us stuff to look at or to add to the Matrix Pile of Freebies.

Vaughn gets a free copy of Stephen Baxter's Omegatropic for the best letter. See no excuse for not writing - you can even win when you're complaining!