



"I think it's the
B.S.F.A.'s newsletter,
also known as:"

MATRIX 16

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jackson's island

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The Editor extends his grateful thanks to all those who help with the hard work of putting this magazine together, especially Dave Cobbledick who proofread the legible bits, Rosamund who can't understand why she isn't allowed to play with the typewriter, and Mary who has to put up with a hell of a lot of tapping from the back room. And all those stuck with the job of collating!

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ARTWORK

Cover... Andy Elliot; p 18 Derek Harkness
p. 4 Derek Harkness p 22 Tom.
p. 9 Terry Jeeves

So who was I kidding...that 'mad last editorial rush' I referred to on my last sojourn on the Island refused to go away and in fact returned as madly as ever. Much of this Matrix has been typed through the streaming eyes and dripping nose of some particularly nasty type of winter disease. I am feeling down and out. Annoyed. Stuffed up and moping. And I wish it was summer so I could complain about heatwaves.

I missed the TV showing of SILENT RUNNING with an illness so virulent as to make my present indisposition feel like a perfect spring day, but I did catch Dark Star, and have also managed to view BLAKE'S 7, DOCTOR WHO (naturally - when Rosamund's emerging vocabulary consists of words like 'robot dog' and 'spaceship' it would be cruel to do otherwise. For those who wondered whether the introduction of the delectable LEELA into the show would mark a lessening of the programme's attraction to the younger set, let me say - it hasn't! Both of us sit and marvel before the screen, although I will concede that Rosamund at 2 and myself at 25 may marvel at different things....

Even LOGAN'S RUN received a try-out before it joined the hallowed ranks of being one of the very few SF programmes that I have switched off half-way through. But nothing that I saw, nothing that the eagle eyes of the BSFA newshounds brought to my attention, could match the 'play of the week' version of Alan Garner's RED SHIFT.

Those of you who take the Observer (that sounds supercilious, doesn't it? Oh dear, shall we say, if you'd happened to read the Observer's preview you'll have seen it described as "a neighbour of philo - sci-fi". That actually was quite a neat pun. RED SHIFT is a complex work, a contemporary love-story with a bitter ending, set against similar but not identical events acted out in the same locality in different periods of time. The SF connection is tenuous - once we get beyond the obvious trope of 'parallel time-levels' it is more in the region of imagery (the play opens and closes with an image of a galaxy which as we know recedes from other galaxies at a colossal speed, an image which is felt and taken up, first playfully then tragically, by Tom, the central character) than anything else, but it is there, if SF means any more than spaceships and aliens. I can't judge this play objectively - I can only urge you to watch out for any possible repeat and read the book, published in p/b by Armada. I thought RED SHIFT was one of the best plays I've seen in a long while.

And so to #16... This issue we have an interesting article on SF in libraries by Gordon Johnson and, for those who are thinking of going to the next EasterCon, Cyril Simsa recalls the last one and comes to some bizarre and startling conclusions... Not to mention all the letters which I've managed to squeeze into this slim volume - letters which in many ways are MATRIX's reason for being. MATRIX exists as a communication forum for BSFA members, and I welcome all letters, opinions, light articles, cartoons, news items - especially the latter. If you come across an interesting fact or item of SF-related news, why not send it off to me - this is welcome, and especially so if the item concerns yourself. If you've done something interesting - written a novel, formed an SF group, appeared on TV - don't be shy, advertise it!

((Following the publication of the BSFA Information Booklet, I've been asked by Colin Lester to point out that he is no longer associated with the SF Foundation and the BSFA library. As you probably know, the previous Administrator of the Foundation, Peter Nichols, resigned recently and his place has been taken by Malcom Edwards. The following item should also be taken in context with the Information Booklet.))

*** THE BSFA INFORMATION SERVICE ***

In the past this service has not been overused probably because its existence has been little suspected. It appears to be that it needs expansion and better publicity if it is to become another worthwhile service of the BSFA.

The primary function of the Information Service is to provide information on SF stories such as authors, pseudonyms, titles, where first published, where and if in print - in fact everything conceivable that may interest the curious. Secondly the Service provides data on other allied topics - weird, horror, fantasy (even the Loch Ness monster) and factual information pertaining to SF like astronomy and space exploration.

I hope to expand the Information service to include other interests. Often readers are curious about assumptions made in SF, or the accuracy or reliability of scientific information included in stories. As an example consider the US genetic legislation in John Brunner's STAND ON ZANZIBAR. The laws are painted fairly black by the author - but how many people know that they would be almost totally ineffective? Or, as another example, one of our subscribers was asking about time travel and 'hyperspace'. Are they inventions, fantasy, or can they exist? Is there any hint in the scientific literature that they might be possible? Consulting a physicist would have elicited the stock response reserved for children, the criminally insane, and SF readers. Members of the Information Service, however, were prepared to speculate, basing that speculation on sound knowledge of natural laws - thus providing an interesting and stimulating answer.

Also I hope we can provide any information required on fandom and all forms of fannish publications.

Unfortunately all this requires a willing band of experts. So far we have those who track down magazine stories, stories and books by particular authors and experts on astronomy, Soviet SF, 'Old Wave' SF, chemistry, genetics, the Loch Ness Monster, dress, customs, beliefs, cults, military history, UFOlogy, telecommunications engineering, the Tolkien Society, history of the BSFA, fandom, OMPA etc. We do, however, lack anyone who knows about

art, artists and artwork, in particular and almost anything else not mentioned above. Write to me, you experts - everyone has some expertise and it's bound to be useful to someone else. Don't think you'll be called upon so frequently that answering questions will take up far too much of your time; I will always attempt to share the workload equally.

In addition we need half a dozen or so people who have good memories for authors & titles. A great number of questions to the Information Service involve something like "I read a story once that involved someone who invented/travelled to/...etc...and I'd like to know what the story was, who wrote it, and where I can find it". These queries are often very vague and we need a panel of people who, between them, can come up with the correct answer. Finally, would all those who already think they are on the panel write and confirm that fact. I don't wish to press unwilling people.

So put pen to paper....volunteer NOW - and to all you inquirers, don't hesitate to write. The address: Dr. R.I. Gilbert, Dept. of Genetics, University College of Swansea, Singleton Park, Swansea SA2 8PP.

~~~~~

### \*\*\*\*NEIGHBOURS EXTRA\*\*\*\*

The SCIENCE FICTION OPERA COMPANY OF LIVERPOOL presents its first production, THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD, at the Liverpool School of Language, Music, Dream and Pun in Mathew st from Feb 27 to March 18. It is a three act opera by Camilla Saunders based on the novel of the same name by H.P. Lovecraft. The suggestion to write the opera came from Ken Campbell, who directed ILLUMINATUS and who is also directing this show. (taken from Arts Alive Merseyside)

~~~~~

****LETTERS EXTRA****

((just arrived - edited to fit in!))

RICHARD SMITH, c/o Cowan House, Pollock Halls of Residence, 18 Holyrood Park Rd, Edinburgh.

Some good comments on 2000AD, a comic which shows much what is sick about our society. It's OK to show our kids people being shot blown up, brutally murdered etc, but whatever you do nothing about sex, that's dirty and perverted; let them grow up to hate & kill not to love each other.((it's debateable how far the age-group which buys this comic is really into explicit sex, but I take the point.))

Andy Pratt's "Producers just haven't woken up to the fact that the public doesn't want monster-filled space opera" - perhaps someone should have told George Lucas and the millions that have seen STAR WARS. Granted that is a film but it's still relevant. The major problem with TVSF is lack of money and poor to bad scripts.

I've seen the first installment of Blake's 7 and its about time the BBC stopped believing that Terry Nation is THE only script writer of SF in the UK. So he invented the Daleks but since then he has used SF cliché after cliché. Why don't the BBC give some real SF authors a chance at writing the scripts?

THE ADVENTURES OF MCONBASE ALEPH

PART ONE - "BREAKAPART"

by Steev Higgins.

Slowly Commander John Chronich turned round.

"The moon is about to explode," said Proessor Victor Berkman, Bsc, PhD and O-level (failed), with an ice-cool tone.

"Paul," said the Commander, addressing his second in command, Paul Morron, "get down there fast."

"Where, sir?" asked Morron.

"To the nuclear waste dumps."

"Oh - there."

"Well, get on with it."

"Er, no, sir."

Chronich paused dumbfounded. "Why not?"

"I'm...er...on strike, sir."

"You what?" exclaimed Chronich.

"I'm on strike sir. We all are. Aren't we Ob?" He turned to his friend Obligitory Black, a computer

expert.

"Damn," said Chronich, "That means someone else will have to go."

Berkman looked at him with a mixture of surprise and envy. He hadn't realised anyone on Aleph except himself was that clever.

It lay there silent in the vacuum, spread across the bleak grey surface amid the stark landscape. Deep in its heart strange forces ebbed and flowed. New and incredible compounds were formed and destroyed. The power that drove quasars, that was reflected in the tiniest proportions in supernovae, that had created the universe from the primordial blob, was about to be released on an unsuspecting Earth...

Worry piled on worry for Chronich when his chief medical officer, Dr. Helena Bustle, came into his office.

"What now?" asked the Commander.

The deadly radiation splurging out from the fields is filled with terrible zamma rays, only recently discovered by Professor Tsodislov in Moscow. It is now known that these particles cause DNA and RNA spirals in human cells to twist and turn, writhing, as it were, in agony. Externally that means that your fingers grow to a length of two and a half feet, you start speaking Mandarin Chinese, and I velly solly san but I think I haf got it as werr..." After that her language became incomprehensible, as it

IT'S TOO LATE,
HE SAW SPACE
1999!



usually is on shows like this.

Only one thing to do, Chronich thought, to avert the impending catastrophe. Only one man stands between Earth and a tremendous holocaust - Alan Carter, chief pilot of Aleph's Budge squadron.

"Hello - Akan?" said Chronich into the intercom.

"Sod off."

"Alan? Alan!"

A voice came through vaguely: "Now where were we ..."

At that moment the telephone rang.

"Hello," said a hysterical west-country voice. This is the Flat Earth & Cornish Pasty Appreciation Societies (Amalgamated) here, and I must warn you that an invasion force of little green men in white suits armed with catapults firing mini-black holes is on its way to take you over."

At that moment one of them walked through the door wearing, as well as its white suit, a bowler hat and pin-stripe suit, carrying a brolly and briefcase. A prior survey had indicated that this was the style of dress worn by the majority of human beings.

"GET OUT!!!" screamed Chronich exasperatedly. At this the alien turned and left, self-destructing on the way as is recommended in the First Contact Inc. Co. Ltd Employees manual, section 57-A, sub-section 3-n-5, Para 9 Line 3, upon failing to succeed.

Chronich turned to his intercom again.

At that moment the moon blew up.

FORTUNATELY, that very second Aleph passed through a forth-dimensional inter-space-time-warp which just happened to be there.

"Uurrrrrrghhhlydeblepepodinkflurrrpsquib," said Berkman, pressed helplessly to the floor, and writhing excruciatingly.

"Pardon?" said Chronich disinterestedly.

"We...must," gasped the scientist, "be travelling ...at fan...tastic...speed. Don't...think...I can...stand...any...more. It must...be...all...of...one G."*

"Oh," said Chronich, but then he had long ago given up caring.

Part three of this thrilling series continues next time - due to a clerical error.

* Speed in space is measured in 'Gravities' or 'Gs' -

WE BUY BOOKS - WITH YOUR MONEY!

by Gordon Johnson

In Britain, as in many other countries, there are several markets for publishers wanting to sell books. Basically, these are the general public, the education authorities (from primary school to university) and the libraries.

When considering all publications, the market probably is a neck-and-neck race between the public library system and the general public, with the library market leading in hardback books, and the public in paperbacks. The education market is fairly specialised, and will be ignored for the purposes of this article.

In the library field, the biggest buyers of books are the public libraries - those supported by the ratepayer, willing or not (but usually willingly). Other libraries include institutions, private firms, government bodies, and nationalised industries, but their purchases are geared to limited interests and seldom include fiction. In fact, many of these libraries concentrate on periodicals instead of books, as their users normally require up-to-date facts and the latest information on events in their sphere of interest. Books can be six months to a year out of date by the time they are published, as any author is willing to tell you.

So for consideration of SF bookbuying in the national context, we may regard sales as being split between the bookbuying public, and the public library authorities. Split how?

Therein lies the problem. One cannot simply say "SF" and get a figure. It all depends on the total sales of any book, as the library authorities are a fairly consistent market on which the publishers know they can rely.

This does not mean that libraries automatically buy a set number of SF. It is a statistical fact of the national situation, similar to a statement that the two major political parties will each gain about 45% of the national vote in a general election. People's choices may vary, but they tend to average out.

As a result, the public library percentage varies according to the books or authors popularity. From surveys made some years back, it has been shown that a first novel (SF or mainstream) by an unknown author (i.e. not by a TV personality or a politician) will sell about 3,000 copies. Of that total, approximately 2,700 copies are bought by public libraries. By simple subtraction, that means that a new novelist sells about 300 copies to individuals in the whole of the UK.

Sales of novels by known and popular authors, whose books get publicity from the publishers, get progressively larger if the author's work strikes a chord on the

public's purse strings. With more public interest, sales to libraries increase, but not dramatically, while appearance in paperback becomes the mass market for the public.

Publishers remain conscious of their public library market, which is why most new novels by unknowns come out in hardback first. The library market is a base and a showcase, and valuable to publishers who will seldom lose much money on what would otherwise be a risk.

This of course is one argument against a public lending right system of charging libraries for lending books. If the libraries have to cut back, it will be the new and untried authors who will suffer; they may remain unpublished if a sure market is no longer available.

I am digressing, but the gist is that for popular authors, the library market is a fleabite but for the newcomer it is his bread and butter.

Having thus set the scene, we can have a look at the process of library purchasing, with particular reference to SF. Although I will generalise to give a national picture as far as possible, I will use my present authority, North East of Scotland Library Service, for most examples.

Library purchasing varies according to the budget available. The smaller the budget, the fewer the people involved in the book selection. The larger systems usually have a book selection meeting once a week, or fortnightly. Since local government reorganisation, all the miniscule burgh libraries where the chief librarian did the choosing have been taken over by larger authorities with less individual bias but perhaps less attention to individual readers' needs. It is an important administrative task to ensure that awareness of readers' needs at every service point is achieved and maintained.

One method is through readers' requests for particular books. This gives the library staff a view of what is being looked for at each service point, so that an increasing number of requests for SF books can influence future stock additions. The book selection group will take such an increased show of interest as warranting spending a bit more of the available cash on SF. The purchase of books of any one type or genre will not fall below a level decided on by the librarians as a basic stock, but a higher proportion depends on how well the existing stock is being used.

In their purchasing policy, public libraries have a professional duty to maintain a well-balanced range of stock so that any user should be able to find something in the library on his subject or genre interest. The size of the service point will determine the actual number of titles held.

So don't expect a small sub-branch or mobile library to carry hundreds of SF books. There will only be a few on the shelves. If you want to see others, you have to ask. Make your needs known by telling the staff, or by filling

up a request form for the book you want to read. This may cost you anything from nothing to tenpence or more per title; ask at your library. Our own service is primarily a rural one with many small branches and mobile libraries (26 branches and 7 mobiles to be exact), so we recognise the reduced choice and make no charge for requests. City libraries are more likely to make a charge, as a wide choice is available on the spot.

Apart from requests, and advice on subject demand, from librarians at the service points, professional experience and expertise has a great deal of influence on which new books are bought and in what quantity. Local interest will be taken into account (e.g. author with local connections, or book set in local context), and the likely demand from the type of population: SF is much more popular in towns and cities, particularly industrial areas rather than rural areas. Reading interests of people seem to be a busman's holiday, as farmers want books on rural life, and fisherfolk want sea stories. However, they all read adventure stories, romances and westerns, regardless of the type of community. War books too are consistent.

SF is one of the exceptions, and consequently less easy to budget for unless an accurate idea of local demand is obtained. If your local library seems to be lacking in adequate response to reader interest, then it may be time for a brief letter to the chief librarian commenting on the situation. Insults will get you nowhere (you may be writing to me!) and a polite letter should bring an encouraging reply or a reasonable explanation (budget cuts across the board!)

You will discover that some of the SF titles you have heard about are not to be found in the library. These will most likely be either foreign books not generally available in this country (libraries don't normally deal with special interest bookshops: it is much less cumbersome to deal with library suppliers and a few local bookshops) or books only available at the moment in paperback. Public libraries are now buying paperbacks, but this is a new development. It is still the general case that paperbacks are seldom bought, so one can find that, of Savarin's trilogy "Lemmus", the first volume came out in hardback but didn't sell too well. The other two volumes, plus the first, are now out in paperback, and it is unlikely that these two will ever be out in hardback in the UK. So your library may have volume 1, but not 2 & 3. If so, that's why.

However, the situation is rapidly changing. Libraries can now buy their paperbacks in a plasticised cover with additional endpapers and better glue, so they will take a succession of readings and not fall apart when the second reader borrows it! An important encouragement is the financial one, for when reduced amounts of cash are available, and hardback prices at the £4.00 and £5.00 stage for fiction, suitable paper-

backs can help maintain the number of titles purchased, and sometimes improve the range in stock.

In the case of NESLS, we have a small number of SF readers, but they are voracious, as you will understand. They want more titles, not extra copies of popular titles. As a result, our SF policy is to buy very few copies of SF books, but to buy the largest number of titles possible. With so much SF now published in paperback only, we are test-buying many SF paperbacks for our readers. We will have to get reader reaction to these, and calculate the amount of use they get before they have to be thrown out. Compared with SF hardbacks, we will then be able to say whether the cost per issue is lower or higher with paperbacks. If they fall apart before long, it may prove more expensive, but I am hopeful of good results from the experiment. If it is both cost-effective and is at least not badly received by our readers, it will become a permanent part of our system.

Incidentally, as libraries naturally have large numbers of books for disposal every year, you may be interested in a recent development. •

Past practice was to sell withdrawn books as waste paper, but that outlet has collapsed - the firm will charge us for taking them away now! The major reason for that practice was the impossibility of selling them as books, due to the Net Book Agreement. This provides for libraries to buy books from specified retailers at advantageous prices, but as part of the agreement, the Publishers' Association would not allow libraries to resell these books later - they didn't want to subsidise competition.

However, they have now changed their minds, and as long as libraries adhere to various restrictions on what is being sold, public libraries can now hold sales of withdrawn books. This means that old, poor condition books, or out of date textbooks, etc. or surplus copies of a no-longer popular book will be on sale at not much more than coppers. This may be a way for some SF addicts to get hold of copies of otherwise unobtainable titles.

Sales have already been held in some parts of Scotland. We'll be starting our own later this year. Your own librarian should be able to tell you what the policy is in your locality.

A final point. I'm sometimes asked why libraries buy the 'rubbish' SF published regularly by a certain firm. The answer is twofold: lack of enough good novels to satisfy demand for new ones, and secondly, they get well read, perhaps because they are easy to read. The clientele for SF in libraries is by no means restricted to true fans. They are in fact in the minority!

((This article was first published in GET FOKT NO. 4. Grateful thanks to Gordon & the friends of KT))

THE

INFERNO

A NEW - WAVE
EASTER CON REPORT

By Cyril Simsa.

It almost seems normal

For a while, it almost seemed normal - given that no fan is truly sane in any but the most rudimentary fashion. I think that those early hours, before the true horror began to sink in, could even be regarded simply as a pleasant social occasion. But, by Saturday evening, the more sinister aspects were impossible to ignore, and their culmination in that one, horrible, climatic night of Sheer Terror is one I am unlikely to forget until my dying day.

the gods smirk up their sleeves at him

(Though God knows what I was doing up their sleeves). Forgive me, dear reader, if I digress from the main point of this piece to tell you about those simple pleasures of the convention, those that I naively enjoyed whilst the gods etc etc etc (see ref. above):

The pleasant "hamburger in freshly toasted bun" that I ate at the modestly-priced Terrace Room.

The Saturday morning Bob Shaw talk that dwelt on a myriad things, and even mentioned the subject under discussion, albeit briefly.

:and how we learned from him about the unfortunate people of old that died to provide us with fish and chip mines, and the unfortunate inventor who, no matter how he tried, couldn't get his perpetual motion machine to stop:

Harry Harrison running amok at the fancy dress parade, and (earlier) trying to auction books under assumed titles such as "Sex at Sea" (with a special mention of dolphins on p. 39).

:and even later there were occasional moments that afforded great pleasure - as when, during the banquet, Brian Aldiss threw a piece of bun (alas, not freshly

toasted) at Ken Slater...and missed, hitting me instead. (Imagine! A piece of bun from no less a person than Brian Aldiss!)

little does he know

Those were happy times - but little did I know what evil subtly disguised itself in those oh-so-innocent pastimes. Not even when I met my room-mate, late on Friday evening, did I suspect...

I was unprepared for what confronted me as I came in from the Book Room, to find a portly gentleman (who confessed he did not remember my name - little wonder, I had not met him before) standing there, surrounded by numerous suitcases. In one large, white suitcase he had the complete hardback edition of NEW WRITINGS IN SF on the off-chance that he might pick up some autographs. The cupboard was full of milk. And his second suitcase lay open on the table... it was full of - pork pies!

Unsuspecting neo that I was, I had not realised what the De Vere hotel had meant when they wrote to me saying that I'd be sharing a room with "Mr Burgess."

they came in search of paradise

Saturday - night of room parties - saw a quest through the hotel for that magick anointment, Booze. From one distant room to another we strode, bearing our trusty tankards aloft, and many were the strange things we came across.

'Pon one occasion, we found the inmates phoning reception and asking the whereabouts of Gil Hamilton - and the receptionist directed them to a room on the seventh floor!

'Pon another, we found ourselves pursued by Brian Burgess, bearing aloft a briefcaseful of pork pies, and wishing not to partake of what little sustenance those peculiar alien artifacts might offer, we directed him to a room party where Peters Weston and Roberts were trying to drink Jim Beam without letting anybody else know, so as to have more for themselves.

...and found cosmic harmony

As the morning drew on, we tripped over D. West at a corridor party (or, more accurately, on the stairs near a corridor party) where he was practicing cosmic harmony in the lying stance. He offered to sell us a badge.

drinking coffee, early of a morn

And the next morning, everybody came to breakfast, and drank coffee. And they were aquiver.

wimpycon '77 - the birth of wimpy fandom

At 22.30 hrs. on Sunday night, it finally dawned on me. I was sitting round a table in the bar with Dave Wingrove, Jim Barker, Andrew Muir and Alex Hill when someone mentioned the word 'wimpy'. Why, I wondered, would

anyone in their right minds sit in the bar discussing wimpies whilst the heavenly tones of the Burlingtons were sounding up above?

time considered as a hell of semi-precious wimpies

Once started, the idea went round and round, like that unstoppable perpetual motion machine of Bob Shaw's. Time seemed to have no meaning anymore.

The wimpies just went on and on into infinity.

the wimpy at the threshold

Came a-lurking at 00.30 - just about the time that Dave Wingrove began to sit quietly in a corner, smiling contentedly, and not participating in anything in particular - in the form of Bob Shaw (the other one).

I fled the bar for the lounge, only to find a paper-dart fight raging. And Brian Burgess was selling pork pies (illegally, since biological warfare had been banned).

the divine comedy: one for me, one for you

Meanwhile, in the bar, they'd started singing "Ten Green Wimpies". Several different groups were independently composing wimpy songs and seeing who could sing them loudest.

A choice of purgatories.

I could almost hear the gods sharing out the wimpies: one for me, one for you...

Was it possible that this was merely the result of an idea of the Friends of Kilgore Trout that caught on due to the generally inebriated state of the people present? There was a certain appeal in the simplicity of this explanation. In fact, any sane, rational person would accept this sane, rational explanation. But we know better...so, closer examination of the indisputable facts revealed to me that this was just too simple an explanation - obviously, someone wanted us to believe it. Why would anyone want us to believe such a preposterous notion? - why, because it was a cover for some fiendish scheme by the packaged food industry to immanentize the eschaton! And they were hoping to take over organised (disorganised?) fandom as a tool to this means!

one man's wimpy is another man's fertiliser

Maybe you'll think I'm deranged, but Burgess was clearly their agent - he himself confessed to me (in a momentary lapse of control by his masters?) that he had started selling the pork pies one convention, long ago, so as to undersell Harry Harrison (who was also selling them - @ 1/6). I need scarcely point out that Harry Harrison was also at Eastercon!

The attentive reader will have noticed that at no stage in the proceedings did Harrison have close



Jeeves

Do you have a puncture repair outfit I could borrow?

dealings with either a wimpy or a pork pie - this is extremely significant: a transparent piece of double-bluff. On reflection, it becomes obvious that Harrison was connected with the conspiracy - and that he had to be controlled by his masters except for that momentary lapse of control at the fancy dress where his overloaded brain caused that eccentric behaviour.

But where did his witticisms come from? They were sent to him! I'd always thought they were too good for a mere mortal to create them all - and now, we know that they are; they are written by the gods...by committee! And who else makes similar witticisms? Bob Shaw! And he was at Eastercon, advocating fish and chips - another packaged food!

all the world's a wimpy...

When the Cambridge SF Group began quoting Shakespeare, I realised that the Bard, too, was implicated. Could he honestly say that he had never tried a purest beef beefburger, or its Shakespearean equivalent? I would point out that his plays were performed in pork-pie shaped theatres. In fact, the influence of wimpies throughout history is phenomenal - just consider how similar a word "Burgess" is to "Burgers"! That proves I must be right! And the traditional UFO shape - a flying wimpy! That giant meteoric explosion over Siberia was an alien, wimpy-shaped space chariot that became unstable due to a critical mass of grease!

things to come

And then I recalled Burgess' plans for SEACON '79. The bidding committee must be warned! The takeover bid is scheduled for SEACON '79 - it just has to be!

not.
THE
END
but
a
frightening
NEW BEGINNING
!

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11 11
11 OPINION... 11
11 11
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by Dave Cobbledick

To be or not to be?....

....that is the question. Whether tis nobler to...

"What's this?" you ask. Has Andy taken leave of his senses by introducing an article about Shakespeare into the realm of Matrix?

No, Andy hasn't taken leave of his senses and this isn't an article about old Willy Shakespeare. It is an article about SF. You disbelieve? Then read on and be surprised....

When man first moved out of his cave dwellings of yesteryear, little did he realise that he was to become a pestilence and a burden to the world

about him. One of the first thoughts of man, as he left his former existence, was to bring about civilization, but to do so an education system had to be developed. And it came to pass that man did bring about education and so civilization.

Now as we all know, education is made up of the basics of singular definition of the many wondrous things that are around us. There is but one small problem. Everything that man has defined he has also destroyed, even indirectly; lands, oceans, the atmosphere; even himself. All these and many more, man has defined and destroyed. 'Man the definer is man the destroyer.'

No doubt you will think me natty (or something of that nature), but to create any impression on you regarding the content of this article, the definition of Man had to precede. Here is where I begin....

You may have already gathered what this article is about by the single word 'definition'. To ease your minds, this is not another of those crazy attempts to define SF, but it is an attempt to give SF some kind of category or classification. I must stress, in the strongest sense, that this is not a definition and any person taking it as such will be totally wrong in their assumption.

For years now, many people have sat down and thought most carefully on how they may be able to define SF. Attempts have been submitted by the hundred and not one has achieved recognition. All have been cast aside by SF fans as being ridiculous, ineffective, or totally absurd. The two following examples are typical of the attempts (the latter being by own ignorant attempt);

'Fiction used to express an imaginative response to the facts and speculations of science.'

'SF is what the author makes it and what the reader makes of it.'

Are either of them true? They are, most certainly, untrue. There is many an SF novel which contains not a smattering of factual science in the content of the story and to say that it is fiction used to express an imaginative response to science and its many wonders is not so. You don't imagine facts, you experience them and you can only imagine what is classed as invention. To elaborate:

Science is: Systematic and formalised knowledge used in the pursuit of any such branch of knowledge, relating to the regulations and principles of the pursuit of moral, natural and pure truths.

Fiction is: invention. Invented statement or narrative conventionally accepted as being false.

Science and Fiction, the two basic ingredients which go to make up SF? No, not so. In broad terms, yes, as there are many novels which contain scientific facts which are

factual in their contexts. To say that SF is systematic and formulated knowledge which is false is an untruth, but to say that all SF is factual science is also an untruth, as told before. Confusing? If you keep regarding SF as has been said, but look at it like this...

Question: why do you read SF? The answer is simple. You read SF because you enjoy reading it.

Question: what does reading SF do for you? The answer here is not so simple. It really depends on the individual concerned. A few of the general things that it does for most fans are: it stimulates you, it excites you, it entertains you and it presents a sense of unreality for you to drift into at your leisure. It can affect many people in a multitude of ways as not everyone sees the same things in the same light. It all boils down to being an individualistic choice. There must be a level of agreement though, otherwise the world would be in a constant upheaval (is it not so now? I wonder...)

Question: what average effect does the reading of SF have on the average fan? There again, it comes down to being an individual choice, but one such effect that I believe it has, is that of complacency. I ask you, what fan has not felt in a complacent mood after reading and drifting through the pages of a novel written by a favourite writer? No true fan could contend that this is untrue and still remain a true fan.

Now take all the facts and put them together. What does this present us with? SF is not purely science, it is not what the author makes it and what the reader makes of it as it can only be what it is intended to be. It is not pure fantasy by way of being entirely fictional in terms of scientific fact. It is enjoyable to read, it is entertaining, exciting, stimulating, and it is an individual's own making of what it is.

So what is it? The \$64,000 question. I, after many hours of brain racing, am led to believe that SF is simply pure, unadulterated, undaunted and unmistakable 'pleasure.'

"Define pleasure and you'll define SF," someone shouts from the back. Well, pleasure can't be defined except by the individuals who are actually experiencing what they determine to be pleasure. It can be defined in very broad terms, i.e. 'Satisfaction', 'delight', etc. Pleasure means many different things to many different people as does SF. SF is a confusing ideological expression to define, it is both factual and false and neither. It is entertaining and enjoyable, individualistically pleasurable. It can't be defined, but it can be classified. The classification that SF can be placed into is that of pleasure, and as it can't be defined in anything

but the broadest of terms, it can only be classified as being a part of the science fiction and delights an individual.

Man can't destroy SF in as much as he can't destroy pleasure. It can be taken away, it can be concealed, but it can't be destroyed. So, there you have it SF classified not defined. I've presented the facts to you, it's now up to you whether you accept them or not. I'll leave you with this saying; life is what you make it and the biggest part of life is the pleasures you experience. To be or not to be?... It's now entirely up to you.

* PROZINE PERUSALS *

THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION

Nov. - Dec. 1977..... reviewed by David Strahan.

Charles L. Harness' new novel, WOLFHEAD, is divided between these two issues, and is the main subject of this review. Before I discuss it, I will deal with the other material in each issue.

The novelle in the November issue, George Alec Effinger's FROM DOWNTOWN AT THE BUZZER, has quite an amusing ending. It starts off a thought train which asks what would happen if the earth was invaded by a powerful alien force which was sympathetic to a repressed faction of society.

The short stories in this issue range from indifferent to irritating. At the irritating end of the scale is L. Sprague deCamp's SPIDER LOVE, which is about a knight who goes off to slay a giant spider, but doesn't because of a point of knightly conduct. With phrases like "Aye, certes, thou hast right" popping up all over the place, it makes tedious reading.

At the other end of the scale is Edward Wellen's FURTHER DEPONENT SAYETH NOT. It is a story concerning a court reporter who does some private investigating and finds she has enough ESP to be of interest to the U.S. government. It failed to grip.

The other stories, though a cut above SPIDER LOVE, are none of them distinguished.

The novelette in December's issue is Michael Coney's SPARKLEBUGS, HOLLY AND LOVE which is a sensitive tale of the inhabitants of the Peninsula. Having read another story set on the Peninsula (CATAPULT TO THE STARS), it strikes me that it, in spirit, resembles J.G. Ballard's 'Vermillion Sands': that is, no one ever seems to do much work. The piece contains many fading celebrities, and everyone is always going to parties.

ASSASSAINS, by Ron Goulart, starts off well by painting an amusing but grim picture of the future, when literature means books like 'Perry Rhoden' or worse. Ultimately, the story falls through its weak ending.

The other short story worthy of mention is Updy Allen's THE KUGELMASS EPISODE. It is a very funny story about Kugelmass, who can't stand his wife. He gets in touch with a man who owns a remarkable cabinet; anyone who gets into this cabinet with a book, finds himself immediately transported into that book's world. He uses the cabinet with Flaubert's 'Madame Bovary', but finds all the copies of the book contain a new character called Kugelmass! He ends up trapped in an old textbook called 'Remedial Spanish', being chased by a large, hairy, spindly-legged irregular verb.

WOLFHEAD is set about three thousand years in the future post nuclear holocaust. Two societies exist on the east coast of America. One is above ground; its inhabitants' ancestors moved there three hundred years previously, when the radiation had decreased to an acceptable level. The other is an underground city called Dis, and its inhabitants are the descendants of the United States Government, who sheltered there during the 'Desolation'.

The undergrounders, as they are known, kidnap Jeremy Wolfhead's wife, Beatra, and shoot Wolfhead himself. He is saved by the Brothers and it is found that his head wound has awakened strong psi powers in him. Wolfhead is determined to rescue his wife. Because, over 3,000 years, the Undergrounders eyes have adapted to the dark they use no light, and for Wolfhead to use a light would be to announce his presence to them. A piece of his brain tissue is inserted into the brain of a dire wolf, which has good night vision, and Wolfhead's psi powers enable him and the wolf to talk mentally, and him to use the wolf's eyes. Wolfhead's journey into Dis isn't simply the story of his attempt to rescue Beatra but is surrounded by a number of prophecies by the Brothers and involves the inevitable destruction of one or other of the two societies.

WOLFHEAD is an exciting - dare I say it? - adventure story, with a fairly complex but nevertheless fast-moving plot. It is also very neat; everything fits into place, and there are no obvious inconsistencies. Not only is WOLFHEAD an enjoyable novel, it is also original. The only thing that is a bit cliched is the Brothers, but they are handled well enough not to glare.

The novel is well-written (of course) and is worth your money (well, mine certainly) whether you buy the two magazines or wait until it comes out in early '78 in book form, from Berkeley.

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A UFO fanatic named Rod
Never speaks of this incident odd:
As he surveyed the sky
These words he did spy;
"I wasn't an astronaut - God."

CONTENTS....

FANTASTIC STORIES: December 1977.

NOVELETTES: "We Hold These Truths To Be Self Evident" (Charles Sheffield); "A Trick Of The Tail" (Michael F.X. Milhaus)

SHORT STORIES: "Priapus" (L. Sprague de Camp); "Knock & See What Enters" (C.L. Grant); "Top Hat" (David Bischoff); "The Pillars Of Hell" (Lin Carter); "Jackson" (James Sallis); "Visitors" (Jack Dann); "Hark! Was That The Squeal Of An Angry Throat?" (Avram Davidson); "The End-Of-The-World Rag" (Jack C. Haldeman II)

ANALOG: December 1977.

SERIAL (Conclusion): "Of Future Fears" (Nick Reynolds)

NOVELETTES: "Dark Age" (Stanley Schmidt); "Then And Now" (Raymond Z. Gallun)

SHORT STORIES: "Now You See Her" (Sam Nicholson); "Antithiotimeline" (Topi H. Barr)

FEATURES: "Flying The Space Shuttle" (Al Ragsdale); "Biolog: (Stanley Schmidt)" (Jay Kay Klein); "The Reference Library" (Lester del Rey); "Experimentalism (Guest editorial)" (Richard Rosa)

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BLAKE'S 7....viewed by Alison Lowe.

((I've extracted Alison's comments on episode 2 of "Blakes's 7" from the main body of her letter to run separately as I wanted a review of this series which, if you've been busy watching STAR WARS, is written by Terry Nation, responsible for "Survivors" - the novel of which, coincidentally, I've just finished reading having thoroughly enjoyed it - the Daleks and other episodes of "Dr. Who", not to mention REBECCA'S WORLD, an interesting and excellent children's SF novel.))

Blake is a political dissident who has false charges brought against him by the government who then ship him off to a convict planet - Alpha Cygnus - with a load of other prisoners. Rumour has it that the ships never actually reach their destination, but instead, when the crew get into deep space they simply dump the prisoners out of the airlock. Naturally Blake tries to take over the ship, and with the help of some others (notably a computer expert and a spaceship pilot, who happens to be female) he nearly succeeds.

The ruthless mate, however, soon puts a stop to this by killing one of the other prisoners every 30 seconds unless they come out of the computer room, which they have taken. Naturally, this works, but I found it rather predictable, and guessed what would happen when the mate asks the captain to be allowed to take any action he feels necessary. Meanwhile the convict ship seems to have -12-

accidentally blundered into the middle of an alien space battle, and ends up beside an alien spaceship, drifting but lifeless, obviously a casualty of the battle. The alien ship is intact, and it is decided to board her, as such a ship would apparently be very valuable back on earth. (However, no mention is made of whether the humans know of any other space-going race apart from theirs, or if this is their first encounter with other races. If it is, I think they take it rather calmly.)

Anyway, two men are sent, via a transfer tube, to investigate the alien ship. Now here was where they really fell down. The two spacemen who went over wore no oxygen masks or respirators, although they didn't know what kind of atmosphere, if any, existed on the other side of the alien hatch. After all, it was only apparently intact, and could easily have been holed on the battle. When the two men get to the other side of the hatch, however, inside the alien ship, they report that the atmosphere is indeed breathable. Lucky for them!

These two, however, are doomed to die, and so is a third who is sent in after them. They apparently hear 'voices' or 'whisperings' in their heads, scream, then die. The Captain is all for leaving the ship where it is and continuing to Alpha Cygnus, but the mate suggests they use Blake and his two friends to investigate further. Can you see where it's leading? Needless to say, Blake overcomes the danger - a strange alien mind-weapon, left, they think, as a defence when the aliens abandoned ship - and actually steal the spaceship. The girl is able to understand the alien controls in a minute, and the mate gets his just desserts as we see him half-way down the transfer tube when the ship disconnects and flies off.

Although rather predictable and cliched - Blake says he will never be happy until the earth is made free for thinking and honest men - I rather enjoyed it, even if it doesn't sound that way. There were a couple of silly mistakes, and I couldn't make up my mind whether it was 'Dr. Who' or '1990' standard, or what age group it was aimed at. However, with a bit of luck, it should shape up into something worth continuing to watch.

((The novelization of BLAKE'S 7 by Trevor Hoyle is now available from Sphere.))

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And now for....

NEWSHOUDS OF THE BSFANEWSHOUDS OF THE BSFANEWSHOUDS OF
BUT FIRST: Have YOU more money than sense?
or, to put it another way:

"Can you imagine the excitement of two suns at dawn?
The gentle murmur of crystal streams
Wandering through rose-carpeted valleys...
The fragrance of the mist on emerald mountains;
The mystery of multiple eclipses;
The celestial grandeur of sapphire skies
in a double sunset..."

THEN why not send \$6.95 for a claim certificate for 100 acres of land on Alpha Centauri. That's right - "Alpha Centauri is much closer than you think"...according to famous, amazing and astounding scientific discoveries, this is where people may, sometime, in the future, possibly, be able to go "to get away from the perils of pollution, overpopulation, nuclear holocaust, star wars ((or Star Wars??)), and other possible disasters." The claim doesn't actually entitle you to anything legally, but you do get a free T-shirt as well.

FORTHCOMING/NEW BOOKS:

From Orbit: (23rd, Feb.) DINOSAUR PLANET (Anne McCaffrey); PERRY RHODAN 31; THE BEST OF EDMOND HAMILTON; THE BEST OF LEIGH BRACKETT; THE BEST OF ROBERT BLOCH.

From Grabada: (16th March) - THE PUPPIES OF TERRA (Thomas Disch); FANTASMS AND MAGICS (Jack Vance); (6th April) PLANETS FOR SALE (A.E. Van Vogt); (27th April) THE MARTIAN INCA (Ian Watson); (23rd Feb) SLAPSTICK (Kurt Vonnegut); KEEP THE GIRAFFE BURNING (John Sladek).

From Pan - (10th March) - THE CUSTODIANS (Richard Cowper); THE SHAPE OF SEX TO COME (ed. Douglas Hill); VISUAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SF (ed. Brian Ash).

From Coronet: (6th March) - A SONG FOR LYA (George R.R. Martin); (31st March) SLAVES OF HEAVEN (Edmund Cooper); (8th May) THE WORLD SHUFFLER (Keith Laumer).

From Methuen (23rd Feb) - SO BRIGHT THE VISION (Clifford D. Simak).

From Arrow: (20th March): THE SPELL SWORD & DARK-
OVER LANDFALL (Marion Zimmer Bradley)

From Sphere: (23rd March); CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND (S. Spielberg & P. Mann); 1990 BOOKS 1 & 2 (Wilfred Greatorex); NAKED TO THE STARS (Gordon R. Dickson); SPACE VIKING (H. Beam Piper); A BOOK OF CONTEMPORARY NIGHTMARES (ed. Giles Gordon); VELIKOVSKY REDISCOVERED (the editors of 'Pensee'); 27th April, A FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE (Michael Bishop); THE POWER OF BLACKNESS (Jack Williamson); SHOCK! (Richard Matheson)

From Gollancz: (23rd Feb.) DYING OF THE LIGHT (George R.R. Martin); (6th April) ROADSIDE PICNIC by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky - their PRISONERS OF POWER is scheduled for 'later this summer' - (11th May) ROGUE MOON (Algis Budrys) - first British hardback version - FOUR GREAT SF NOVELS (Arthur C. Clarke - omnibus edition at £5.95 containing 'The City & the Stars'; 'The Deep Range'; 'A Fall of Moondust'; and 'Rendezvous with Rama'. 4-colour jacket by Chris Foss & a world book selection.)

Also currently available from Gollancz are THE VIEW FROM SERENDIP (Arthur C. Clarke - 'a first approximation to an autobiography') and the hardback version of 1990 by Wilfred Greatorex. This of course is based on the TV series which is scheduled for repeat in March.

From Mitchell Beazley: reissue of THE NEW CHALLENGE OF THE STARS ('a science fact look at science fiction' by Patrick Moore) and LONE SLOAN & DELERIUS ('a future cult book for SF fans' illustrated by Philippe Druillet)

From NEL: (Feb 9th) THE SORCERER (Eric Ericson); THE INCREDIBLE MELTING MAN (Phil Smith - the film, by Columbia Pictures is due for a major UK release in early 1978); LAND UNDER ENGLAND (SF Master series: introduction by Anthony Storr). ((soory! author of that last one is of course Joseph O'Neill.)) (March 3rd) CHILDREN OF DUNE (Frank Herbert) at last sees p/b publication.

Also from NEL: Hardback reissue of STAR BEAST (R. A. Heinlein) and (April) SNOWMAN (Norman Bogner - 'a riveting novel about the legendary Abominable Snowman'); (May) AMUSEMENT PARK (Robert Stuart Nathan - a futuristic park which offers people a giant stage on which to play out their fantasies); (June) THIN AIR (George E. Simpson & Neal R Burger - a tale of participants in the Philadelphia Experiment in which the US Navy discovered instantaneous spatial transference) and THE BURROUGHS BESTIARY (David Day, illustrated by Eric Howley - the first illustrated bestiary of Edgar Rice Burrough's imaginary beings.

More info on THE NEW CHALLENGE OF THE STARS (above): the Observer Colour Supplement (5th Feb) ran a feature on the excellent illustrations by DAVID HARDY - colour plates of such phenomena as a star being sucked into a black hole.

Two interesting booklets from H.M.S.O. in the 'exploring' series: MAN ON THE MOON and THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

Fontana's EXPLORATIONS OF THE MARVELLOUS is a collection of essays edited by Peter Nichols.

More new paperbacks: Brian Aldiss THE MALACIA TAPESTRY (Panther); Richard Kirk RAVEN: SWORDMISTRESS OF CHAOS (Corgi); Terry Patchett THE DARK SIDE OF THE SUN (NEL).

John W. Campbell Award for the best novel of 1976 was presented in October last year; 1st, THE ALTERATION (Kingsley Amis); 2nd, MAN PLUS (Frederik Pohl); 3rd WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG (Kate Wilhelm). Also recommended: THE SPACE MACHINE (Chris Priest); SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE (Robert Silverberg); BEASTS (John Crowley); ROADSIDE PICNIC AND THE TALE OF THE TROIKA (Arkady & Boris Strugatsky)

SF seems to have done quite well in the Christmas / New Year viewing programmes: BBC gave us a FLASH GORDON serial, THE WIZARD OF OZ ((Don't say you don't know who the Tin Man REALLY is!)); OUT OF THIS WORLD (a documentary on people who claim to have encountered UFOs); SILENT RUNNING; DARK STAR; and we now have the new TERRY Nation series BLAKE'S 7. ITV scraped the barrel with repeats of VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA and various episodes of SIX MILL-

ION DOLLAR MAN, THE BIONIC WOMAN, SPACE 1999, and THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS. But the classic cartoon of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA was also shown. Round the various regions were ROBINSON CRUSOE ON MARS (HTV); THE CHRISTMAS MARTIAN (Scottish TV); VALL-
 EY OF THE DINOSAURS (Yorkshire TV); KING KONG v. GODZILLA (Tyne-Tees). Recently (Feb. 4th) Granada showed THE MIND OF MR SCAMER, and LOGAN'S RUN is also currently being shown on Granada (& elsewhere?) at 5.15 on Saturdays.

EVENTS:

The PAPERBACK BOOKSHOP in Oxford are having their Spring Sale from 11 - 18th March and have bought in a whole load of Panther SF. Be there!

The second DOCTOR WHO APPRECIATION SOCIETY CONVENTION is to be held at Imperial College, London, over the weekend 12/13th August. Registration costs £5, supporting Membership £1. The Con is strictly members only, but this restriction "can easily be remedied". Accommodation is available at the Imperial College campus, consisting of single rooms at £7.13 per night (inc. VAT & breakfast.) Most of the events are yet to be finalised, but will be announced in newsletters at a later date. Plans include: appearances by Tom Baker, Jon Pertwee, and Patrick Troughton; films; a panel discussion with production staff from the series, books for sale; a special effects lecture by Mat Irvine, and, as last year, the BFI ten minute clip from the TV story DALEK INVASION OF EARTH. It is also hoped to show, for the first time ever outside of BBC transmission, a Doctor Who series, probably one of the early William Hartness stories. This is the reason (copyright restrictions) for the strict adherence to 'members only'. Further information is available from the Convention Organiser, Keith Barnfeather, 49, Hillier Road, Battersea London SW11 6AX.

((I've just been passed a programme of films shown by the SF FILM SOCIETY at the Other Cinema, 25 Tottenham Street, London W1. Unfortunately it only goes up to the end of January, but there seem to have been some excellent films, including some intriguing shorts, such as 'Flatland' and 'Matrix'. There were also discussions and seminars on various aspects of SF. A full 1978 programme is available for SAE from the SF film Soc. Contact David Tomlinson 27 Colindale St, London SE10 9HA.))

GALILEO magazine have an annual award for the best work of fiction under 3000 words recieved between January 1st and December 31st. First prize, \$300, second prize \$200, 3rd prize, \$100. MSS to GALILEO, 339 Newbury St Boston MA 02115, USA.

Another story competition is that sponsored by the paperback book programme READ ALL ABOUT IT. Stories

are invited in any of three categories, one of which is SF. Entry forms & further details from Short Story Competition, Read All About It, BBC TV, London W12 6QT. Recently Ursula Le Guin's THE WIND'S TWELVE QUARTERS was featured on the programme, chosen by PATRICIA FINNEY. Albert Finney found it hard going but quite enjoyed it, while Mary McCarthy couldn't read it.

Featured on THE BOOK PROGRAMME on Feb. 4th ((what a day for SF that was!)) was J.G. Ballard, interviewed by Christopher Evans. Extracts from THE DROWNED WORLD, CRASH, HIGH RISE and THE TERMINAL BEACH were read.

Just about every magazine you pick up has an article about STAR WARS; a recent issue of ELECTRONICS TOMORROW had a piece on the technology behind SW; while in the Jan. issue of PSYCHOLOGY TODAY appears an article on Why STAR WARS is a smash hit. In the same issue is another article entitled "The Secret Masochists". I believe there is no connection between the two.

GOOD READING, a recently-launched magazine devoted to paperback reviews contains in the Dec.1977 issue, a feature on Bram Stokes and "Dark They Were and Golden-Eyed" as well as 3 pages of SF reviews.

STARBURST1 (Jan.1978) is a poster mag heavily slanted to STAR WARS and the like but also contains a Jeff Hawke strip by Sydney Jordan and story by Harry Harrison, which suggests that there is room for development into something more positive when the SW hooah dies down - if the publishers can be bothered.((A mini-review by Yr Ed after having skimmed through it in a bookshop the other day - any further comments anyone?))

Alan Garner's RED SHIFT shown as Play of the Week on BBC1 on Tuesday 17th Jan and none of you newshounds mentioned it.

BANANAS 9 contains a long story by J.G. Ballard, a fantasy by Angela Carter, (The Erl-King) and a verry funny Sladek piece. Selections from the magazine have been published by Quartet, featuring stories by Angela Carter, Ballard, Sladek, Hilary Bailey, etc. from the first 7 issues.

The film of Robert Graves' story THE SHOUT, about a man who can kill with his voice, opens in London this month, starring Alan Bates. Penguin are reissuing THE SHOUT & OTHER STORIES as a tie-in with the film.

Diana Ross starring in Sidney Lumet's version of 'The Wizard of Oz' entitled THE WIZ. This is reported to take 'great liberties' with the original story.

BIONIC WOMAN is heading further into SF and she is scheduled to 'challenge visitors from deep space along with flying saucers, mysterious prehistoric civilizations and unearthly messages from galactic voids. One episode 'Star Man', involving a man who comes to earth which is destined to be destroyed, is apparently hoped to be a spinoff for another

Ray Bradbury is writing a two-hour TV special based on ^{the}THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES.

Just published by Dell in the US is VONNEGUT IN AMERICA, a book of critical essays edited by Jerome Klinkowitz and Donald L. Lawler.

Production costs for the first 13 episodes of LOGAN'S RUN were \$7,000,000, due to the cost of the futuristic sets. The show hasn't been getting the ratings it was expected to, although CBS has renewed it for a second season.

PROJECT UFO is the title of a new NBC series beginning in February, based on the US Air Force 'Blue Book' files of UFO sightings.

THOUGHTS ON "THE HOBBIT"(recently broadcast on US TV.)

Some of the interpretations were not too good, especially the hobbit - whom I felt looked too child-like, and the wood-elves (rather like so many Peter Pans). Gandalf was OK. The backgrounds were excellent, some of them very Rackham-like, I thought, and others very delicate in a Tolkien watercolour sort of way. The music was OK, quite effective, though not so good as that done for the BBC radio serial of the book. The recurring song THE GREATEST ADVENTURE (sung by Glen Yarborough), jarred a bit, though the tune, etc, were pleasant enough. Elrond astonished me with his wing collar and star-halo and Spock ears! Of course, these are only personal opinions...the biggest failure and also in one way the biggest success was the interpretation of Gollum. They did not make it sufficiently clear that there was hobbit in Gollum, or rather that he was once a hobbit too, thus underlining the desperate 'sadness' of the character. The drawing of him looked like a sort of froglike person with round ears and he was really too big compared to Bilbo. But the interpretation of his desperate loneliness and isolation and pathetic existence were very good, I thought. Although I had been reluctant to watch it at first, in the end I was glad to have seen it. I expect there will be much discussion of its merits and demerits, but it did a passable job considering the stuff to be compacted into 90 minutes.

(Mary Long)

Kirk Alyn, the original 'Superman' in the Columbia serials from 1948 - 1950, now signed for a movie called THE SKID ROW SLASHER.

Michael Moorcock was interviewed in the Jan. issue of the political monthly 'The Leveler': Moorcock won (barely) over the extremely silly format of the interview.

Going out on BBC World Service at 11a.m. GMT

on Feb. 4th: LIFE ON OTHER WORLDS; Feb 11th: LIVING IN SPACE; Feb 18th: SOMETHING UP THERE; Feb 25th: THE INFLUENTIAL MOON.

5th Annual Awards of Academy of SF, Fantasy and Horror films were awarded in Los Angeles on Jan. 14th. Among the awards:

Special Effects....STAR WARS
Supporting Actress.....Susan Tereille of BAD
Supporting Actor....Alec Guinness of STAR WARS
Makeup..... STAR WARS
Costumes... STAR WARS
Writer.... George Lucas for STAR WARS ((this is getting monotonous.
Director...tie between Lucas and Spielberg (CLOSE ENCOUNTERS
Actress...Jodie Foster for LITTLE GIRL WHO LIVES DOWN THE LANE
Actor...Geo Burns for OH, GOD
Music... John T. Williams for STAR WARS & CLOSE ENCOUNTERS
Best Fantasy Film.... OH, GOD
Best Horror film.... LITTLE GIRL WHO LIVES DOWN THE LANE
Best SF Film.... STAR WARS.

United Artists are remaking INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS.

Two spacecraft will be launched this year to explore Venus; one will take radar pictures of the surface and the other will probe the atmosphere.

If you thought 100 acres of land on Alpha Centauri worth lusting after, how about a 'pyramid hat' made of 16 gauge copper in the precise proportion of the Great Pyramid of Egypt? Among the benefits you may get from this are "increased sensitivity in lovemaking" and "relief from headaches".

A Californian electronics engineer has invented a record-player which uses a thin beam of laser light instead of a needle. This provides higher fidelity and ignores scratches.

Pseudoscience is coming under attack from the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal; which has recently attacked the NBC television network for presenting a series of documentary-like programmes on pseudo-scientific topics and treating them as if they either were genuine fact or mysteries confounding science. One member of the committee is James Randi, the magician who campaigns against Uri Geller.

President Jimmy Carter is supposed to have asked for a White House showing of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND; Carter himself saw a UFO during his term as Governor of Georgia.

Spin-offs from the Space Programme include: a specially developed rubber which is being used by Goodyear to make better winter tyres for cars; a paint-like coating which when exposed to fire, releases water and sulphur dioxide to extinguish the flames; an improved heart pacemaker for cardiac patients; and computer link-ups for the police force and the FBI.

A Soviet research team sent to investigate the Bermuda Triangle found... 'nothing supernatural'.

METEOR, starring Sean Connery and Natalie Wood, is about a group of American and Russian scientists attempting to stave off collision between Earth and a giant meteor

New editions of Frank Herbert's THE HEAVEN MAKERS and Robert Heinlein's BETWEEN PLANETS are due from NEL on March 3rd. Also on that date is the 3rd vol. of Michael Ashley's HISTORY OF THE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE. Reissues of Michael Moorcock's CITY OF THE BEAST and Brian Aldiss's EQUATOR are also due.

The new SPACE QUEST magazine apparently has a total sciencefictional content of a STAR WARS feature and a Pan Books advert.

A rumour (nothing stronger as yet) that there is to be a new British prozine on the way. There is, of course, a new mag devoted to heroic fantasy due out this year; AIRGEDLAMH is the name... ((try asking for it at Smith's))

Andromeda has folded. NEW WRITINGS is also suspended although Ken Bulmer has hopes of a revival. A new British anthology series is due out Real Soon - it is edited by George Hay and called PULSAR.

Among the awards at the 15th Trieste SF Film Festival were THE RAT SAVIOUR which won the Golden Asteroind, and the British short, Anthony Trafford's THE WOP REACTION which won a Silver Asteroind - also won by Canada's THE UGLY LITTLE BOY based on a short story by Isaac Asimov. Russia won the soundtrack trophy for Isaac Shvarz's THE FLIGHT OF MR MAKKINLEY.

WIZARDS has been nominated for the first ever "Best animated suspense feature" award of the International Animated Film Society.

Rod Sterling has had his final script PENDER'S PEOPLE put to film - an inventor makes a replica of himself which continues to reproduce.

Robert Bloch's THE DAYS OF THE COMET to be another Paramount TV mini-series.

In preparation: THE RETURN OF THE TIME MACHINE, a sequel to the 1960 TIME MACHINE.

MAD 191 out Feb. 27th features STAR ROARS, an epic starring Princess Laidup and the nasty Zaider.

Clerihew dedicated to Leia Organa

Luke Skywalker
Was nothing but a talker
So Darth Vader
Made her.

MORE CONTENTS :

GALAXY: NOV. 1977

SERIAL (part 1 of 3): "THE COURTS OF CHAOS" (Roger Zelazny)

NOVELLETTES: "THE HOLY TEMPLE" (Herbert Gerjuoy); "THE LONG CHANCE" (Charles Sheffield); "THE TIMELESS SPY" (Glen T Wilson)

SHORT STORIES: "JOGGING UP MAIN STREET" (Thomas Wyld); "MY FRIEND'S LAST SHOW" (Rex Anderson)

FEATURES: "EDITORIAL" (John J Pierce); "BOOKS" (Paul Walker); "A STEP FURTHER OUT" (Jerry Pournelle)

AMAZING SCIENCE FICTION Jan 1978

SHORT NOVEL: "A FORBIDDEN WORLD" (Dave Bischoff & Ted White)

SHORT STORIES: "THE SLEEPING BEAST" (A. Bertram Chandler); "A HOUSEHOLD PRIMER" (Christopher Anvil); "THE KING IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE QUEEN!" (Stephen Tall); "THE SPACE ROC" (Robert F. Young); "THE LOOKING-GLASS OF THE LAW" (Kevin O'Donnell)

FEATURES: "THE AMAZING INTERVIEW" (Edmond Hamilton & Leigh Brackett, conducted by Darrell Schweitzer)

ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE: Jan/Feb 1978

NOVELETTES: "THE BARBIE MURDERS" (John Varley); "THE WITCHES OF MANHATTAN" (L Sprague de Camp)

SHORT STORIES: "TRUE LOVE" (Isaac Asimov); "There will be a sign" (John M. Ford); "PANIC" (Stanley Schmidt); "BIRTHDAY PARTY" (Keith Laumer); "A MOTHER'S HEART" (Lisa Tuttle); "A DELICATE SHADE OF KIPNEY" (Nancy Kress); "THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME" (Cam Thornley); "AFRICAN BLUES" (Paula Smith); "THE THRILL OF VICTORY" (Jack C Haldeman II)

FEATURES: "THE CASE OF THE DEFECTIVE DOYLES" (Mathematical puzzle: Martin Gardner); "IVORY TOWER MEETS MIDDLE AMERICA" (Tony Rothman); "SF CONVENTIONAL CALENDAR" (Erwin S Strauss); "ON BOOKS" (Charles N. Brown);

FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION : Jan 1978

NOVELETTES: "INSECTS IN AMBER" (Tom Reamy); "SEA STATE ZERO" (Jeffrey A Carver); "KINGDOM COME" (Gary Jennings)

SHORT STORIES: "TIME LORD" (Herbie Brennan); "SHAN" (Kit Reed); "IN ANSWER TO YOUR CALL" (Phyllis Eisenstein)

FEATURES: "BOOKS" (John Clute); SCIENCE (Isaac

Asimov); "FILMS" (Baird Searles); "COMPETITION"

ANALOG: Jan 1973

NOVELETES: "ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER" (Sam Nicholson)
"DEVIL YOU DON'T KNOW" (Dean Ing); "THE PROMISED
LAND" (Stanley Schmidt)

SHORT STORIES: "REACTION TIME" (L.E. Wodesitt, jr)
"THE TANK & ITS WIFE" (Arsen Darnay); "THE GIFT OF
PROMETHEUS" (Kevin O'Donnell jr.)

FEATURES: "THE ISLAND OF STABILITY" (Superheavy ele-
ments: Margaret L. Silbar); BIOLOG (Alex Schomburg
by Jay Kay Klein); "THE REFERENCE LIBRARY" (Lester
del Rey)

GALILEO 5

SERIAL (part 1): "MASTERS OF SOLITUDE" (Parke God-
win & Marvin Kaye)

NOVELETTE: "SLAVE TO CHAOS" (Jack Williamson);

SHORT STORIES: "GENUINE OLD MASTER" (Marion Zimmer
Bradley); "TINKER'S DAMN" (Lewis Shiner); "THE OAK
& THE ASH" (John Alfred Taylor)

FEATURES: "INTERVIEW" (GORDON R. Dickson conducted
by Brian M. Fraser); "SSOAR" A COLONY IN SPACE (Earth/
Space Inc.); "THE END OF THE GHETTO?" (Alexi &
Cory Panshin); "POETRY" (Peter Dillingham); "PRO-
FILE" (The Contributors); "BOOK REVIEWS"; "THE
ALEPH" (Advance book news) "ENCYCLOPEDIA GALACT-
ICA" (Science short)

(compiled by Roger Waddington)

Newshounds for this issue: Phil Stephensen-Payne,
Tom Jones, Richard Hancock, John Fraser, Mary Long,
Cyril Simsa, Dave Wingrove, and, without whom we
would remain in eternal ignorance, The Media in all
its glory.

~~~~~

((Since typing Alison's report on BLAKE'S 7 I re-  
ceived the following illuminating impression from  
Cyril Simsa...))

#### BLAKE'S TENTATIVE WAR - A MARGINAL SEVEN

Do not despise Blake for having a brainwash, for  
who is to say he will not turn into a tactician? So,  
too, may six just persons (and one computer) become  
an army.

Nearly 1000 years hence, in the time of the Gal-  
actic Federation, there was a cruel and corrupt gov-  
ernment...

These persons teleporting are outlaws, bandits,

heroes living in the alien space ship of Teh-rhi Nai-  
shun's new TV SF series.

Our story starts in cliché even then, for it is said  
that Blake is the soul reborn of an earlier counterin-  
doctrinated revolutionary.

\*\*\*

And this week, the Lian Shan Po of the spaceways has  
a new and even eviller machination of the yet eviller  
still Kao Chiu (who is suffering from a touch of the  
Darth Vaders) to out-machinate. Blake succeeds in hoist-  
ing vile Travis by his own petard, but Kao Chiu escapes  
to machinate against Lin Chung's space machine another  
day.

For truly have the sages written: Hu-san Jennan may  
not be able to act, but she certainly is prettier to  
look at than any of the other heroes.

\*\*\*

(Freely adapted by Cyril Simsa from the episode SEEK -  
LOCATE - DESTROY by Terry Nation.)

\*\*\*\*\*  
FAREWELL, FANTASTIC FREEMAN...  
\*\*\*\*\*

Keith Freeman has decided to drop the FF column as he  
feels that with the extra duplicating work he is doing  
for the BSFA he is getting busier than he would like.  
He also thinks that he is getting stale; as for that,  
he could be wrong (remember, he's allible), but the  
first reason is undoubtedly valid and it is with great  
regret that I accept Keith's resignation from the post  
of Matrix Resident Fanzine Critic. Does this mean that  
all those editors who sent him fanzines to be (not) re-  
viewed in Matrix will miss his incisive reports on their  
brainchildren? I'm sure that the Matrix readers will miss  
you, Keith.

I hope to continue fanzine reports in Matrix, but  
the format will be different. Editors of forthcoming  
fanzines are of course welcome to mention their zines  
in the Members' noticeboard - that is, supposing they  
are members!

On with the Final Fallible Freeman...

Fanzine Fanatique 26+ 27/28 - Aug/Dec 77: Keith Walker,  
2 Daisey Bank,  
Quernmore Rd, Lancaster, Lancs. 15p a copy, 1rreg. These  
3 issues catch up on hundreds of capsulated fnz reviews  
(Keith's speciality). Of some interest if (when) you  
fight your way through the very poor reproduction (Keith's  
other speciality).

Negative Overdrive Nov 77: Michael J Evis, 23 Quantock  
Rd, Bridgewater, Somerset TA6  
7EG. 5p. This is a prototype - Overdrive 1 is promised



# LIFE AS A FANZINE REVIEWER ISN'T ALL EGO BOO



soon. A first issue, in my book, with most of a first issue's faults. I got tired of being told this was a prelude to bigger and better things. Let's wait and find out for ourselves.

Aston 1 - Winter 77: Steve Green, 33 Scott Rd, Olton Solihull, Warwicks. B92 7LQ. 15p

Qtly. A beautiful Brian Lewis cover leads us to the following contents: A column on comix and fandom (editor), some news on Star Trek, "Whither Comix" and book reviews. Fairly thin but a good base, as a first issue, to build on.

Small Friendly Dog 14 -Feb 77: Gas + Skej Skelton, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton

Stockport, Cheshire. Qtly. No money - locs treads, etc. only. Letters (mostly on TV programmes) and almost all from the USA broken up with Skel's thoughts. Only get this if you're prepared to enter into things by responding - but there are a number of things herein that you can respond to!

A Bit of the Other One 1 - 777: Brian Parker, 28 Ascot Cres., Pin Green, Stevenage. Irreg.

loc, trade, etc. only. A personalzine that, to me, read like a good editorial (touching lightly on the 77 Con, SF Art, scientists images (and scientific 'fanz')). My only complaint being that this was all there was.

Karass 30 - May 77: Linda E Bushyager, 1614 Evans Ave, Prospect Park, Pa 19076, USA. Qtly? Sample 50¢

50p, 5 for £2. Fannish new & editorial from Linda (6 p.) Fnz reviews (9½pp), con listings and a page from the American John D. Berry on NY Times book reviews. Always interesting and friendly.

NABU 2 -?: Ian Maule, 18 Hillside, 163 Carshalton Rd, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4NG. Irreg. 20p per issue. Ian has an editorial/column (4pp) then Kevin Smith explains why accountants aren't boring ver well in 3pp. Lastly there are 3p. of letters. Slim zine but has a very relaxed manner.

Dot 3 - Dec 77: Kevin Smith, 26 Hawks Rd, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 3EG. Irreg. No price - try asking (with SAE). Personal zine - 12 quarto pages. Letters plus Kevin on them and NovaCon. Light, frothy, and entertaining. Damn it, with so many good personalzines I might grow not to hate them.

Twil-Ddb 10 - Dec 77: Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave, Redding RG2 7PW. Irreg. no price. You could get a sample by sending a n SAE. No coincide ence being next to 'Dot'. They were both handed to me at the same time. Only 8pp (bmt A4) in TD10. Dave also mentions NovaCon - also Milford Writers Conference and other things. Arguably the best personalzine around and well worth trying.

Erg 61 - Jan 78: Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Rd, Sheffield S11 9FE. Qytl. 5 for £1. It says quarterlt and it is - and has been going for 19 years (happy birthday Erg). Terry, in his editorial, announces that first fandom (via Lou Tabakow) are raising a fund to get Terry to the 78 Phoenix WorldCon. On this side of the Atlantic I'm collecting monies for the same purpose \*\*note I'm not a member of first fandom (didn't learn to read in time) but the collection (here) is being done under the auspices of the Order of St Fantasy\*\*. Get Erg (with its articles by Terry, Don Malcolm, and Michael Banks, its reviews and letters) and you'll see why Lou will collant enough money to get Terry to Phoenix....we've got to collect enough to get him back!

Fledgeling Dec 77: Andy Firth, 185 Jsborn Rd, Jesmond Newcastle-upon-Tyne. No price, no threat of nest issue. 48pp of forced humour - pseudo news items, startrek sendup, pseudo book revies, fiction, even pseudo letters. A little bit is funny...bbp p 10 I was bored. One item, however, was interesting - the 6pp devoted to the role(s) of robots in SF. Sorry, Andy, but try writing for other fnz; a page or 2 of your humour would be very good mixed into a more serious fanzine.

Cidereal Times 3 - Nov 77: Allen Boyd-Newton, 42 Church Lane, Bicknoller, via Taunton, Somerset. Irreg. 15p. Beginning to settle down with a steady format. This issue has editorial, survey

of the prozines (4pp), an article by Brian Aldiss wherein he reminisces about a book from his childhood, reviews of films & books. Keith Seddon tells all (in 3½pp) about Vortex and Marjorie Brunner makes a welcome appearance with a con report about Metz 77. Finishes with 2pp of letters and 2 of 'club news'. Improving.

The Mystery Trader 16 - Dec 77: Ethel Lindsay, 6 Langley Ave, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 6QL. ½ yearly. 50p. A fnz for readers (and collectors) of mysteries. Also has a certain amount of advertising of (mystery) books Ethel has for sale. Articles cover 'comics', TV Detectives, the books of Francis Ryck and a "Guess who it is from this blog." Finishes with reviews, letters and a 'list of magazines booklists - catalogues.' For those who're mystery as well as SF fans.

Checkpoint 85 - Winter 77: Peter Roberts, 38 Oakland Drive, Dawlish, Devon. 5 for 50. A newszine is only as good as the news it carries and how quickly it carries it. MATRIX (bi-monthly) has complaints levelled at it that the news it mentions is old. So, with the slack schedule Checkpoint is now on, it's falling to be a newszine.

Jabberwocky 2 - Late 77: Jean frost, 113 Abbey Rd, Erdington, Birmingham B23 7QQ. Irreg. No price. Editorial, Hunt Saboteurs, Pete Presford on a Days Week, letters and a reprint (from VOID 1961). Issue 1 was quite good and 2 is definitely improved - well worth trying.

London SF 1 - Autumn 77: Alan & Elke Stewart, 81 Albert Rd, Walthamstow, London E17 7PT. Qtly? 50p. Not really a first issue but a change of name. A very good genzine, nice mixture of columns, book & film reviews, articles, news, artwork, locs & fiction (well, every rose has its thorn) 70pp (format like 'old' VECTOR) of good value. As a purely personal opinion, LSF struck me as what Vector should be (without the fiction and news items) - or what I'd like in Vector.... Some of the letters were dated (due to the long gap between the last issue of TTCCH and LSF) and the arguments therein (obscene words, fiction in fnz, etc.) can't be called original. One of the best fnz I've recieved recently all the same.

Nova Con 8 PR1 - This years NovaCon (to be held at Holiday Inn, Brum). Supporting membership (£1.50) to D.J.R. Holmes, 1222 Warwick Rd, Acocks Green, Birmingham B26 6PL.

Arena 6 - Aug 77: Geoff Rippington, 15 Queens Ave, Canterbury, Kent CT 8AY. ? 40p, 3 for £4. Editorial, interview with Robert Sheckley, an Enquiry into the work of Robert Sheckley (David WIngrove), Is SF Childish? (Andy Sawyer) and letters. Fairly sercon fnz, but there's no harm in that!

Black Hole 11 - Dec 77: Alan Dorey, LUU SF Society, Leeds University Union, Leeds 2. 3/year. 75p/3. A clubzine, but it seems to be getting more and more outside contributors. Editorial, A Birthday Party, letters, news, reviews, a visit to the One Tun, Heinlein bibliography, Moorcock, artwork and (\*sigh\*) fiction (though not as much as usual).

One-off 4 - David E Bridges, 130 Valley Rd, Meersbrook, Sheffield S8 9GA. Irreg. No price. BEB's humour, on what's



been happening to him and his "Super Hero Strip" followed by locs and his comments. A year between issues is a little long - or perhaps David feels we need a year to get over one of his fnz? Notice he had to move after his last issue too - perhaps that'll indicate to you the "qualities" of O -O?

Munich Round-up 145 - Dec 77: Waldemar Kunning, Herzogspitalstrasse 5, D-8000 München 2, W. Germany. DM2 for 1, DM7.50 for 4. 14pp English summary (for morons like me) and the rest is German. Worth getting for the wrap around cover collage of photos covering Cons and (naturally) Star Wars.

A for Antares 4 - Aug 77: Ian Garbutt, Brenachioile Lodge, Loch Katrine, By Callander, Perthshire, Scotland. Irreg. 20p. Don't know why I should put his name and address when he doesn't in the whole of the fnz! 8 photocopy pages (the only fnz instantly recognisable by its smell?) First Contact stories (David Wingrove), Publishers (Tom Jones) Record Review (David Bedford). Very short comments (extracted from locs) on 3. Very slim for the asking price.

Amor 16 - Dec 77: Susan Wood, 2236 Allison Rd, Vancouver, Canada V6T 1T6. Irreg. No price. Chatty 'letter-substitute' that has an interesting slant on many items; learning, music, friends. Enjoyable.

Gegenschein 31 - July 77: Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Ave, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Irreg. No price. Another personalzine; I nearly passed it over thinking it was another copy of ERG - that is it has a typical Terry Jeeves rocket cover and no name. A look inside at the micro-elite typeface and I didn't surface until I'd finished the last page. So, what was in it? Some reviews, some personal jottings, and many letters. Sounds little? Don't forget that small print A lot of all three is packed in.

Quibble 1 - ? : David E Kirkbride, 42 Green Lane, Belle Vue, Carlisle, Cumbria. David is an artist (signing his work 'Shep') so its no surprise to find this litho fnz lavishly illustrated. Editorial, fiction, record review, Sci-Fi to an outsider, fandom, pseudo ads (shows what can be done when you work for a printer!) In his editorial Shep says this is his 'thank-you' to all the editors who've sent him fnz. A very nice thank you, maybe now he's dabbled his toes in publishing a fnz he'll try some more?

SF Commentary 52 - June 77: Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne Victoria 3001, Australia. \$A5 for 5. The novels of DG Compton, the 1977 Writers Workshop, long in-depth reviews of DHALGREN & THE SPACE MACHINE, shorter reviews of other recent books, letters

and Bruce's editorial make up a sturdy issue. A little too serious for my liking, but one of the 'quality' fnz.

Requiem 18 - Dec 77: Norbert Spahner, 1085 St Jean, Longueuil, P.Q., Canada, J4H 2Z3. \$1 per issue (sample), 6 for \$5. Bi-monthly, beautifully produced, but in French (again I plead ignorance)

People's Computers V6 No2 - Oct 77: UK agent Vincent Coen LP Enterprises, 313

Kingston Rd, Ilford IG1 1PJ. Bi-monthly, \$13 for 6 (though check with Vincent on actual £££required.) What's this doing here, you may ask...many fans ARE computer freaks computers are now becoming cheap enough (in kit form especially) for personal ones to be bought - which brings us to this magazine (64pp) - where you'll find info, tips, games etc. etc.

Pozitron 77/1: Kozp Tudományos Fantaszitus Klu, H-1428 Budapest 8, pt 15 Hungary. No price or periodicity (that I can understand). I guess its just what all you Hungarian speaking fans have been waiting for. Me, I can't understand more than a dozen words - but the appearance is very sercon, 107 typed pages (no artwork to break it up). The editor can't sub to any non-Hungarian fans (if there are any others) but would like to receive copies...pretty-please editors?

Spang Blah 15 - Autumn 77: Jan Howard Finder, PO Box 2038 Fort Riley, KS 66442, USA. Qtly 75¢. Several pp of news, then articles ranging from "A scholarly appraisal of SF in late 77", Interstellar Warfare pt 2, reprint of Bermondsey Triangle Mystery (must be one of Bob Shaw's most popular pieces (with good reason)) This latest bunch of fnz seems to have more than its fair share of very good ones. This is one of the fnz I can recommend very highly.

Spanish Inquisition 10 - Aug 77: Suzanne Tomkins, 606 15th St E, Seattle, WA 98112, USA. Irreg ? 50¢. Suzanne's editorial, Loren MacGregor with a column, "Another Charlotte" R.N. MacAvoy, Jon Singer, Sandra Miesel, Ginjer Buchanan, Mae Strelkov, letters, Jerry Kaufman...thick enjoyable reading. Can I say more?

Seldon's Plan 41 - Sep 77: Wayne Third Foundation, Box 102 SCB, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan 48202, USA. Qtly. \$1. Broken into 2 parts, "Sexism in fandom" and "On SF". Sexism is a series of articles (and a strip cartoon), the other half is a collection of articles (Aldis interviewed by Goddard, book reviews, Doris Lessing, editorial and letters), A not-quite-so-sercon sercon fnz.

Spacequest 1 - Jan 78: Space Centerprises, PO Box 400, Kings Langley, Herts. Bi-monthly. 60p. Seems to be a professional magazine with a print order of 10,000. Quoted as being "for the space enthusiast covering cosmology, Astronomy, Space Travel, UFOs, CETI, SF, Science Fact, and the mysteries of Time & Space". The articles range from "How to Talk to Spaceman" through Star Wars review to the Bermuda Triangle (Bermondsey one



is much more entertaining and factual! ) and UFOs.  
Not for me.

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### FUTUREWORLDS FESTIVAL SHORT-STORY COMPETITION

This summer the city of Newcastle upon Tyne is the venue for the FUTUREWORLDS FESTIVAL, a comprehensive look at the future through the eyes of professional futurologists, SF writers, film-makers, and key personalities known for their thoughts about what might come to be reality.

As part of the festival, we have included a short story competition which gives YOU the chance to think about the future and express your ideas in fictional form. Now read on:-

#### Rules:

- 1) The competition is open to anyone who wishes to enter it. There will be no prejudice on grounds of age, previous success, or any other criteria excepting the quality of the story in the opinion of the judges.
- 2) Stories should be no longer than 5,000 words preferably typewritten, though this is not essential if the alternative is legible.
- 3) The closing date is April 25th 1978; all entries must have arrived by that date to be considered.
- 4) Entries should be sent to: Rob Carter,  
78 Bewick Court  
Newcastle upon Tyne.
- 5) Stories will be judged solely on the grounds of quality of writing, that is; prose, structure, style, adherence to the spirit of the theme.
- 6) The theme is simply: A future. Any interpretation is acceptable though we would stress that gadget stories or pseudo-mediaeval fantasies are hardly appropriate.
- 7) The winner will receive a cash prize of £15 and be guaranteed publication of the winning story in TANGENT, the BSFA fiction magazine; a Newcastle publication; and possibly a local evening newspaper, or the festival booklet.
- 8) Entrants may use pseudonyms, but their real identity must be on the script along with a contact address. The competition will NOT return scripts unless accompanied by return -21-

postage.

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MEMBERS NOTICEBOARD  
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BEN BURR, 7 Egerton Drive, Greenwich, London SE10 8Js, will shortly be producing a fanzine. Contents of the first issue will range from an article by Pete Presford concerning SF & motoring to an article about punk rock by Ben's brother, an abstract puzzle, etc. Print run is 200 copies and you can ensure yours by sending an SAE to Ben. Trades will be welcome, as would contributions for future issues.

PAUL FRASER, 51 Ivanhoe Rd, Aberdeen AB1 7HA, wants to buy NEW WORLDS 164 & 170 and SCIENCE FANTASY 76.

ANDY RICHARDS, 175 Northumberland Cres, Beofont, Feltham, Middx, wants to buy back issues (pre 24) of ALGOL; FOUNDATION Nos. 1,3,5,6; and SF STUDIES no 5 (The Philip K Dick issue). He is willing to pay up to £5 for the latter.

COLIN BATEMAN, 3 Ballymacormick Ave, Bangor, Co. Down, N. Ireland, needs copies of SF IMPULSE and '60s ANALOGS/ASTROFOUNDINGS. Please state price.

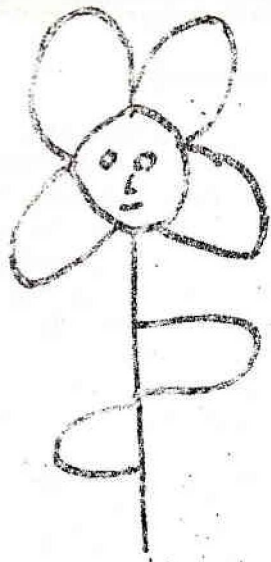
DAVID STRAHAN, Cox Farm, Boxford, Nr. Colchester, Essex, has his fanzine GANFMEDE, with contributions from David Wingrove, Raj Rattan, Andy Darlington, etc, available, & would welcome contributions for the second issue.

All secretaries, chairpersons of local SF clubs are invited to get in touch with the BSFA's new Club Liaison officer, BILL LITTLE, 183 John St, Biddulph, Stoke on Trent, Staffs.

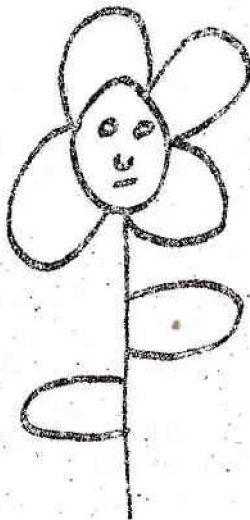
I'd also like to use the member's noticeboard to plug members who have some interesting news of themselves - not only those who are bringing out fanzines, but those who, for example, are having some professional success or who have spread the word to the media by means of interview with the Press, etc. SIMON R. GREEN, for example, has sold two stories to a forthcoming fantasy magazine (see his letter) while Richard BANCROFT, as well as sending me a whole host of news items ranging from the one about the local guy who has painted his car with reproductions of SF/comic strip heroes to...well, look at the Newshounds section, has got together the Ribblesdale SF Group meeting once a month in local taverns at Sunday lunchtime. (Contact Richard at 7, Woone Lane, Clitheroe, Lancs.) Richard also had an illustration printed in a recent issue of ZOOOAD, winning star prize in their weekly competition for the best drawing/letter of the week.

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PHILOSOPHICAL KANT.....by David V Barrett. 16/11/75

There was once a mixed up solipsist  
Who said "I'm not sure I exist."  
When I'm sober I'm aware  
That I think that I'm there  
But I'm not quite so sure when I'm pissed.



SO WHAT'S  
A LOCCOL  
WHEN IT'S AT  
HOME?



DUNNO, BUT  
THERE'S ONE  
DOWN THERE...

## MATRIX READERS' LETTERS

BILL LITTLE, 183 John Street, Biddulph, Stoke on Trent  
Staffs ST8 6HP.

Congrats on producing an excellent issue; the cover was very tasteful, even though I don't normally like 'seasonal' covers. Cheers to Jim Barker... After a naturally mixed start with Matrix 14, you seem to have already stamped a certain character about the zine. It was lively, varied, and informal; in fact, I infinitely prefer Matrix to Vector, though I know they have different roles to fulfill.

Can I take up Steev Higgins over "Voyage of the Space Beagle"? I think by taking the book and breaking it down into the separate stories that make up the whole he is missing the point. Now I'm no Van Vogt freak, in fact, I find most of his later writings unintelligible, but from constant re-readings of "Voyage" the thing that strikes me is that the writer is writing essentially about Nexialism and Grosvenor's struggle to get it recognised as a

valid and useful science. Viewed in this way the whole book hangs together reasonably well. The various alien encounters are the backdrop against which the science of nexialism can be seen to come into its own. Above all, the sheer pace of the book and the inventiveness, considering the period when the stories were written, must mark it as the definitive space opera, and a classic of our field. I have a number of friends who are fringe SF fans, and many of them also regard "Voyage" as the best SF novel ever written. I think they may have gone overboard a little with such a description, but I don't think that they are too far short of the mark.

The "Who gets What Where" item was I suppose quite useful to those who have a mathematical bent to the way their minds work. Me, I get put off by all those figures... A very lively lettercol, excellent, Andy, long may it continue. I get extremely hot under the collar with Dave Cobbledick's remarks about politics. I've written to him 'bout this before, I think. Dave, old son, you have a weird view of our political set-up. Surely we only vote for the party which most represents one's own feelings, and you find that out by reading the manifestoes before the election. Agreed they don't always stick to the programme once they get into power, but that, as I see it, is where pressure groups come in. If you don't agree with what the government is doing, then join a pressure group and start agitating for change. As RAH says in "Time Enough for Love" (page 363, second para, Excerpts from the notebooks of Lazarus Long)... "there may be no candidates and measures you want to vote for... but there are certain to be ones you want to vote against. In case of doubt, vote against..." In this, for "vote" you can read a whole range of active participative words. Lots of folk cop out of responsibility by using your arguments. If you think you're being dictated to, then scream bloody murder. If you think legislation is a waste of time, then let them know why, because politicians think legislation is the be-all and end-all of their responsibility. In this respect, Dave Lewis is right: most of them are divorced from the real world, or at least insulated, and we should bellow loud and clear until we get through that insulation (usually called civil servants, and I should know, being one.) Andy's right, we should all respond strongly to social attitudes, whether they are expressed in books or the real world...

COLIN BATEMAN, 3 Ballymacormick Ave., Bangor, Co.  
Down, N. Ireland.

Immediately struck by the seasonal front cover, which was a relief from the line drawings of recent issues. Keep a grip on Jim Barker.

Has anyone noticed the up-surge of SF on TV lately, though doubtless it has a lot to do with the rise to fame of "Star Wars". "Silent Running" was an enjoyable/thought-provoking experience, but it lacked a

vital ingredient plotwise, the plot itself just was not strong enough... Dark Star was one of the few humorous SF films I have ever had the pleasure to watch, though the special effects left something to be desired. (The end, when one of the astronauts was riding his cosmic surfboard just didn't look real.) "Blake's Seven", on the other hand was about the best SF on the video. It was entertaining, reasonably intelligent and the special effects were as good as could be expected from the BBC.

"The Voyage of the Space Beagle" was not the type of critique I enjoy reading, anyone could take any book apart if they wanted to. It's sad to say that it was quite well done...

"The Fruit Machine" by Andrew Muir was not suited to Matrix... don't ask me why.

"Adam the Antigen" was great, a suitable light story which might perhaps have been used to liven up Tangent.. Matrix floats on... congrats Cyril Simsa.

I never read record reviews unless I have the records as I detest so-called SF music almost as much as I detest Perry Rhodan.

"SF in Canada" would have been better presented all at once, instead of over two issues; it wasn't that long... Results of the questionnaire were slightly stunning for me: 72 new paperbacks read a year, not to mention the second hand, hardbacks and books borrowed... I'd be happy if I read half that amount. As I have never bought a hardback in my life it looks as if I'll have to wait until 1982 to read the Silmarillion. ((The questionnaire was biased in favour of people who read an exceptionally large number of books, I strongly suspect. Don't feel inadequate if you don't measure up to the standards of the mythical average BSFA member... but there will be a little test later on to get you slackers up to the mark...))

Allen J BOYD-NEWTON, 42 Church Lane, Bicknoller, Via Taunton, Somerset.

Keep it up, a nice fat Christmas edition too! Whatever next ((a nervous breakdown?)) Very nice Jim Barker cover - interior art improving too. I enjoyed it.

However the main reason for writing is not to praise Matrix, though it deserves it. I wish to speak on the "Vortex Fiasco". Keith Warwick knows not whereof he speaks; roughly translated - he talks a lot of cock. Simon Green was more reasonable, though not well informed. If Keith Seddon had been allowed more control Vortex would still be in existence today, it might even be flourishing! Inept management, who knew nothing of SF, and didn't care either, was the reason. For the full story (it's plug time folks) Matrix readers should look to either CIDERREAL TIMES 3 (YES, AVAILABLE FROM ME AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS FOR 30p) or to a substantially similar interview contained in ERG 61, from Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannardale Rd, Sheffield S11 9FE.

DAVID STRAHAN, Cox Farm, Boxford, Colchester, Essex.

Mr Fraser's attitude in his letter in Matrix 15 seemed to be: "I liked the story THE MARS SHIP in June 1976's F&SF and that Strahan gave it a bad review. Who the hell does he think he is, disagreeing with me?" Mr Fraser seems to think that because I disagree with him my ability to judge SF is at fault. How's that for an inflated ego?

I never said that because it had no plot, THE MARS SHIP was boring; far from it, I said it had no plot and it was boring. I was not implying that all plotless stories are necessarily bad; Mr Fraser read that into my piece.

Perhaps I didn't articulate this point too well, but it wasn't through laziness or lack of time that I didn't finish THE MARS SHIP; I simply couldn't finish it. If you think a book is bad or boring you don't go on with it: you close it and start on another. You draw your conclusions from what you've read of the book, bearing in mind that you couldn't finish it. If you go on reading a book you can't stand, you must be a bit of a masochist. If you can't finish a book or a story, it is a very telling fact. Since a review is simply a reviewer's opinion on paper, I carried out what I consider to be natural reading habits and recorded impressions. One of these impressions was that THE MARS SHIP was mundane in the extreme.

Mr Fraser was angry at my making unsupported statements, and this is partially justified. In the case of THE MARS SHIP I couldn't give any quotes because there were no specifically bad sections. I would have had to quote the whole story to prove my point - that it dragged on and on and that the writing was not particularly bad but presented a false whole. It was not the content of the cover but the artistic execution that I objected to. This was crude in the extreme; the "metallic/organic spaceship" had less detail than a turd. Now don't go thinking that I'm saying all art with little detail is crude, Mr Fraser, I'm not; it's just that the artwork is supposed to complement the story, which it didn't.

Mr. Fraser asks what 'type' of SF I 'prefer'. I can't categorize or put SF into types because this means virtually citing stereotypes - "I like stories in which such and such happens, I don't like stories in which the other happens." It's too narrow-minded for words.

I agree with Phil Rosenblum that if an SF writer wants to use phrases such as fuck, cunt, shit and the likes, and thinks them appropriate there should be nothing to make him hesitate. But I think that if Mr Fraser can't write a critical letter without using such phrases as "fucking useless", "piece of shit", "cocksuckers" and the like, it shows a serious lack of ability and vocabulary on his part.



RICHARD BANCROFT, 7, Woone Lane, Clitheroe, Lancs.

TVSF - for attn. Dave Gobblediskype (the original frothy man). It does appear to be the norm for TVSF to obtain the Imperial thumbs down generally for story line, plot, purpose, etc. but not for visual content. Turn down the sound next SF spot and see for yourself. There seem to be three main themes: 1) Space Opera 2) Foliage Filled planet bound situation and 3) The Aquatic. e.g.-

Early Days - 1) FIREBALL XLS, 2) SUPERCAR, 3) STRINGRAY. With an all-round mixer THUNDERBIRDS.

Infancy - 1) STAR TREK, 2) DR WHO, 3) VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA. The mix being THE INVADERS.

Adolescence - 1) SPACE 1999 2) SURVIVORS, 3) MAN FROM ATLANTIS. The mix being THE FANTASTIC JOURNEY.

The probable future - if unchanged - 1) STAR WARS ripoff, 2) TIMESEAD, 3) WAR UNDER THE SEA.

To prevent the latter happening a new situation must be devised - a new dimension. Perhaps a semi-permanent world/plane with large % alien cast (few humans) I believe we slap ourselves on the back too well. (Got to be careful here or we end up with PLANET OF THE APES.) A locally changing environment not human static and security. ((I think that there could be some interesting dramatic possibilities in a series in which Men are the 'token' race - and it would give the special effects people a chance to dream up some new wizardry, too))

I feel there is little wrong with TVSF because we see in it at least that someone is trying hard but perhaps know they lack that extra quality that will bring TVSF into the post-adolescent era. Fans who would like TVSF tailored to their innermost needs would probably be found down at the boozer on opening night. The more the merrier say I. TVSF may spawn many a BSFA member one fine day. New series category 4) Kitchen sink Space Opera? Title CORONATION ST INVADES THE MEN OF MARS. ((Now it's funny you should say that; I was just thinking of this great idea for a new series. There's this space station, you see, on the main hyperspace route between Earth and Aldebaran and it's a sort of interstellar motel...))

I reckon Andy the electric stapler is nowt but the old un plugged in with the fuse taken out.

Phil Rosenblum - you don't seem to approve of D.W. Wilson's apparent religious idiocy (I'm a religious idocrist - Christian and Spiritualist too boot - deem yourself opposed.) You say Science Fiction is not a formalised institution. Then you

go on - and on - to say SF is not following the dogma of founding fathers. SF has been following its founding fathers for age upon age. You say SF is gregarious in its inclination to express all aspects of man (but so does religion) and his universe in whatever manner it chooses. (WRONG, at least the last bit - it's God's universe and He probably lets man think it's his in the manner he chooses) I for one dislike objectional language, tolerating it between characters in books, no option, but hating it if it is aimed at the reader.

The poetry in Matrix is refreshing, more please.

"Adam the Antigen" left me anaemic with mirth - a good infusion of fun - I'll give it OB. Rh.Pos, that's approx. 9 out of 10 - next time scrap the Epilogue. ((But don't you think that with those few words the story fell into place as the wildly comic yet deeply tragic comment on the essential surrealism of the Human Condition that it undoubtedly was?)) I feel transfused. What's next? (Well scheduled for future appearance is a tale by a certain Kilgore Herovitz III which is about...that, sa the saying goes, would be telling@))

How about showing members a photo of the physical BSFA award? Here are some name suggestions - 'The Flaming Star' 'Comet', or the name of a comet, 'Halley' for example or the name of a comet prominent during the year when the BSFA was formed. The 'Herschel' award doesn't sound bad either.

TOM JONES, 39 Ripplesmere, Bracknell Berks RG12 3QA.

#### A Close Encounter of the Unpleasant Kind

There I was at the BSFA committee meeting waiting whilst the ritual of 'swapping the goodies and doing the post office out of stamp money' took place when I was contacted by an alien. I was not surprised, I'd always figured the BSFA would be the point of contact for though we're not nuts about them like UFOlogists neither are we overly sceptical. The alien was vaguely humanoid with large bulging shoulders giving him a triangular appearance. His face was purple and steam came from the area of his ears. I knew communication would be difficult as he appeared to use a series of spluttered expressions, silent mouthings, and the waving of a piece of paper with his right hand. I smiled to show friendship, took one step backwards to show caution and reached behind me onto the table to show fear.

Finally an English word became clear from the splutterings.... "Jim Barker!" All was clear; this was not an alien, this was Keith Freeman and he'd just received the Christmas Matrix cover by Jim Barker. "It's all black, just like last year! I had to slip sheet everyone last year..."

Now having once been BSFA Treasurer, Keith treats BSFA money like his own but for once he argued we should have the cover lithced. So it came to pass and we marked down the 3rd piece of cover art we intend to enter for the art award at Eastercon.

## Notes on Matrix

I'm surprised how after only two issues your personality is permeating the zine in such a way that there has been no violent schism just a gentle drift. I know this sounds as though I'm laying the praise on a bit thick ((don't worry about that)) but I as past editor could not have wished for anyone to take on the job in any better way.

I saw SILENT RUNNING on the box and was very impressed. As you say there were one or two scenes reminiscent of 2001 (especially the Saturn's rings part) but in no way was it overly derivative. The "who the hell cares" attitude of the 3 crew members (and presumably the majority of the Earth's population) is one I can see easily occurring if the extinction of disease and a well fed world population is offered in exchange. (To put it emotively, would you save a tree or a baby?) Unfortunately as you say the film ignored this and was on the whole a visual extravaganza but it was a hell of a lot of fun.

Adam the Antigen is beautiful.

I think you're right to cut out the magazine (pro-zine) reviews and list most of them, reviewing only the important ones.

SIMON R. GREEN, 37 St. Laurence Rd., Bradford on Avon, Wilts.

Many thanks for the Christmas BSFA mailing, the finest stocking-filler I can think of, next to Farrah Fawcett-Majors. I enjoyed the usual collection of odds and sods, though I still say I'd like to see more (and longer) reviews of the prozines themselves.

To start off with, a few words on the BBC's new epic series, BLAKE'S 7. After two episodes, I grant it a hesitant not bad. Visually, it's quite impressive; some of the scenes remind me irresistably of 'Planet Stories' illustrations, but to my mind Blake isn't coming across as powerfully as he needs to. I think the weakness in this series can be traced to the dialogue. It tends to be very slow and bland, with the more weighty statements always being preceeded and followed by a lengthy pause to make sure we've got the point. To be blunt, I would have preferred to see the first two episodes rolled into one, but it does show a great deal of promise for the future. It may be space opera but a good deal of time is being allocated to character and logical progression of events. Come to think of it, maybe that last point isn't that good after all. A little more action and excitement might be just what the series needs to pep it up. Certainly it's more entertaining than SURVIVORS has been of late, and unlike SPACE 1999, I can watch it without wincing all the time.

Overall, I'd sum up by saying that all BLAKE'S 7 needs is a little more romance and a little less grit, and it

could be our answer to STAR WARS. (If we decide it needs one.)

I'd like to carry on with the discussion on SF in comics, if I may, with reference to the American super-hero comics and their interface with SF. I grew up on them, both DC and Marvel, and am still interested in some of the Marvel titles. Your comments on censorship are quite right; I'm not saying that kids shouldn't be allowed to read them, just that they're giving both the kids and their parents the wrong impression of what SF is. Anti-SF critics have done enough damage to the SF image by comparing it with the gentle, innocuous Flash Gordon strips. If they start using 2000AD as a base for their attacks, we can only suffer.

I'm not against the use of violence in comics as such, but I still feel there's enough blood and guts dripping over the cinema screens without it seeping into the kids' comics as well. I prefer Marvel's attitude to violence. If you look at some of their heroes of late, such as Deathlok, Death Machine for hire (a cyborg killer); Wolverine, a mutant with psychopathic tendencies, a Werewolf; Conan (REH didn't name him Conan the throat-slitter for nothing,); Morbius the living Vampire; and Frankenstein's monster, you might be forgiven for feeling that the contents must be a bloodbath. But in all the magazines, though violence is never shied away from, it is not presented as a solution to all problems. It is presented in a realistic (though not necessarily graphic) manner and shown to be what it is; a possible short-term solution for some problems, best entered into with your eyes open. Everyone has their own little soapbox; that's one of mine - the use and place of violence in comics and. I suppose, SF. ((This is a complicated subject and there are no easy answers that I can see. In the comic in question I dislike not so much the violence as the brutal way in which it is presented. It can be argued that to present it any other way is dishonest, and there's no doubt a lot of truth in that. Someone I know who works for IPC tells me that they have a team of psychologists on call who have looked at the comics they produce and tell them that this is what kids enjoy and is essentially harmless...))

You say that it's a pity that Britain can't support an SF prozine. Maybe STAR WARS will help to change that, but I have to say that this is one of the few occasions where fantasy is better off than SF. The new (semi?)prozine Fantasy Tales is alive and well and producing some excellent fiction. And there's a new magazine due out early this year, AIRGEDLAMH, edited by Dave McFerran in Ireland, which will be devoted to heroic fantasy, with art by Fabian, Pits, Nicholson and others, and stories by Adrian Cole and Karl Edward Wagner. It can only be a winner. The fact that I've sold two stories to the magazine is of course beside the point.

As to Jackson's Island; hm. Any relation to Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer; I seem to vaguely recall that featured something about a private island. ((Pause for a fanfare! The title I give to the editorial refers of course to the island to which Tom, Huck Finn and Joe Harper ran away to and returned only to appear dramatically at their funeral service. Having been nicknamed 'Tom' for many years I couldn't help a reference to the works of Mark Twain who in any case is one of the great, and I mean Great if not GREAT American writers.))

DAVID LANGFORD, 22 Northumberland Ave, Reading, Berks RG2 7PW.

I see the BSFA is taking an active interest in the 1979 Eastercon bidding: I mean the BSFA Council rather than the membership at large, of course. "The BSFA after all is about 500 people..." (A. Sawyer), and a pretty diverse lot, too, many of whom were not consulted. Mumble, mumble. I've no personal axe to grind - being unconnected with any '79 bid - though I'd be less ready than Tom Jones to equate the need for a good Eastercon '79 with a need for grandiose (his word) and completely novel experimentation. A strong case could as well be made for an inexpensive, low-key convention which would leave fans' bank-balances closer to the dizzy levels required for Seacon later in the year! I intend to listen carefully and critically to the case presented by each bidding committee (at Skycon) before making my own choice; and I urge other BSFA members to do the same. As is apparent from the Matrix letter-column, the BSFA does not speak with one voice; we're such a horde of variegated oddballs that the Council can hardly expect us to!

KEITH FREEMAN, 269 Wykeham Rd, Reading, RG6 1PL.

Cover had to be lithoed to do justice to the art... if Jim Barker wasn't so big I'd kill him next time I saw him...the very thought of running that cover through the duplicator gave me palpitations!!

I would suggest the prozine contents (if you're going to continue with them) could be printed in a lot more compact form which will leave more space...please don't fill it with poetry!!!

Typoes abound...some are enjoyable - some are difficult to understand and some are impossible - Ethel LIND-SAY produces SCOTTISCHE...who's Ethel MURRAY?? ((Oh dear me...I wonder how that could have happened. Most of my typos are mine and I cherish them dearly - that one I'd better disown and apologise for!))

Good mix of letters this time... it is a compliment when I say MATRIX (now) is as good as when it was under Tom.

To Dave Lewis - all I can say is I'll mention all fanzines sent to me - I agree they tend to be repeated every few months but that's because the ones repeated are produced regularly (and sent to me). It is surely

worth mentioning them as potential readers can then see it's worthwhile writing to that editor for future copies!

ALISON LOWE, 146 Alexandra Rd., Mutley Plain, Plymouth, Devon.

I agree with your comments on SILENT RUNNING - I saw it for the first time over the Christmas period and enjoyed it very much, even if, as you say, the plot was basically simplistic. I really liked the robots, they ended up with definite personalities, despite the fact that they never spoke, and were not human-shaped. We'll just have to wait and see if the Star Wars robots are as appealing.

I'm afraid I didn't like ADAM THE ANTIGEN very much, but it was, well, different, I think that's the kindest thing I can say about it. I'll also be steering clear of 'Flash Fearless vs. the Zorgwomen', thanks for the review David, I'll steer well clear of it. On the other hand 'The King of Elfland's Daughter' sounded like an lp I would like to buy. I must admit I find the record reviews very helpful, and hope you'll continue to feature them.

I enjoyed the piece about SF in Canada, I didn't realise so many authors lived there. If we could get more such articles, from other countries, it would make a good regular article, but would rely on the co-operation of SF enthusiasts in those countries. ((Exactly...so come on, all ye fans in distant climes - I'm waiting for you.))

It's a pity that the 'Who Gets What Where' results were so long in coming out, the prices of the books were a little unrealistic, and I'm sure the higher price of paperbacks would have affected the results. For instance there are probably less bought nowadays, more borrowed from friends and public libraries. I know I rely more on the books I can lend from the other members of our SF group than I used to. ((Same here.))

Every time I read reports of SF groups "doing things" I feel incredibly guilty and lazy. Our group is small, has no official name and is simply a group of friends getting together once a fortnight to swap books and talk over SF. We can't afford to produce a fanzine, but then we're all happy with the arrangement and don't want an official club as such, charging entrance fees etc. I don't know if it's because we are all incredibly lazy down here in Devon or what, but I must say I was very impressed with all that the NORwich group has so far achieved. I hope they go from strength to strength, but if they think they're at the end of the world, they should try living in Plymouth!

Newshounds was rather out of date, although I can understand why. Like many other members, however, Matrix is my sole source of SF news, so topicality would be appreciated.

As regards the 'bad language' debate, surely most



people accept that swearing is a part of everyday life, and, as such, must be a part of SF where necessary. I'm not condoning the use of bad language for its own sake, but if a character in a story or a fan in a letter swears to emphasise a point then this should be accepted for what it is, not pointed to in horror. After all, it's an exceptional person who does not use some form of expletive when he bashes his fingers with a hammer, for instance. You should hear my flatmate when she gets behind the wheel of her car!

STEVEN BRIDGE, Flat 5, 183 Bedford Hill, London SW12

The BBC made a special effort over the Xmas period and actually showed, not one, but two SF films (influenced perhaps by the growing spectre of 'Star Wars') so we all had an opportunity to see 'Silent Running'. Well I must say I was disappointed: the plot was weak and unconvincing, Bruce Dern was unable to give a powerful enough performance to sustain interest for such a long period on his own, the robots not up to the task of providing a foil to Dern's acting talents. The implausibility of the story made it impossible to feel too deeply about the conservationist message supported by it. The argument was so one sided as to make it unnecessary for the audience to even consider the actual issues being raised. On a personal level the character played by Bruce Dern was without any depth, the only other characters as such being the two robots who were amusing but being dumb about as conversationally interesting as Lassie and Rin-Tin-Tin, their filmic predecessors.

'Dark Star' more than made up for my disappointment in 'Silent Running', with its very funny portrayal of the disintegration of the crew of a spacecraft who have been on their mission a little too long for their own good. It was nice to see some real human beings in space at last, with gratefully no laymans' guide to space travel or astronomy, and no gimmicky futuristic hardware for us to admire. The story, with its hilarious observations on the problems encountered in a never-ending space mission, was excellently thought out, and ends superbly, against all odds, on a wildly optimistic note. It's amazing and heartening to learn that 'Dark Star' cost as little to make as \$6,000; for comparison, 'Silent Running' cost \$1,300,000 to make. ((I still admit to having found SR enjoyable although I agree it does little for the ecology lobby! I missed seeing it a second time round as when it was shown on TV I was having a whole lot of nasty things happening in my insides - fortunately I saw DS which was excellent even though a couple of episodes have been driving me nuts trying to remember where I've seen them or read them before!))

I expect Charles Brenchley will be even more annoyed now that he learns that the SF film season at the NFT which he missed in September actually took place in December. I saw 6 of the films in the season, but

the film which I found most enjoyable was one which wasn't even advertised. It was 'La Jetee' (The Pier) and played as a support to Cronenberg's 'Crimes of the Future'. It was written and directed by Chris Marker and made in France in 1962, and is a perfect rendering of a time paradox story. It is presented as a series of still photos, with a narration, which instils the film with a haunting quality which stays with you a long time afterwards, while posing questions about the nature of time and our conceptions of reality echoing the concerns of the narrative.

On Dec. 12th, there was also a forum on SF films with Peter Nicholls, Philip Strick (the author of 'Science Fiction Movies', the best book on SF films I've seen), Nigel Kneale (probably best known for his Quatermass scripts), and Robert Shekley. Although Mr. Nicholls' intention of having a serious discussion about the different aspects of SF cinema proved impossible to bring about, mainly because of the difficulties entailed in involving such a large audience and the desire to allow all four on the 'panel' to participate equally, we were suitably entertained by accounts of writing scripts for kids' space opera serials by Shekley, the problems encountered in trying to film Stonehenge by Kneale, and the expression of wary anticipation of future 'Star Wars' rip-offs, amongst other things.

After having seen 'The Death of Grass' in this NFT season I must disagree with Tom Jones' opinion of it. I came away desperately trying to think of some redeeming feature but without any success. Perhaps it comes off better on TV; on the big screen the style appeared crude and purely functional, the characters two-dimensional, the attitude authoritarian and ecological message condescending.

T.W. Francis, you are not alone, I also remember beginning to read 'The Time Machine' with great excitement. The book was old, unlike the books I had been used to reading, and was not a children's book, another difference. I, too, found it unreadable but am surprised to find that I remember the almost magical fascination it held for me; this as much caused by the chance it gave me to be addressed as an equal by an adult as by its science fictional content.

I am continually disturbed by the number of correspondents who express extreme distaste at any mention of politics; perhaps this is only to be expected when the usual reaction is to equate politics solely with the activities of the people we call politicians (amongst other things). I agree with what you said in Matrix 14, Andy, that politics is about how we live together, and to ignore this is to ignore most of life. But then SF is only for fun....?

DAVE COBBLEDICK, 245, Rosalind St., Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9AZ.

Good grief, I was appalled to see such expletive words printed in Matrix 15. I'm not against any form of language taking place in novels, as you can fold the pages if it disturbs you, but to have it placed upon view with little or no thought for discretion (i.e. f\*c\*, c\*n\*, etc) whereby certain members would take offence. I'd like to stress

that I, personally, take no offence at this divulgence, but a percentage of members (those in the 40 onwards bracket) could be most offended and even to the extent of terminating membership (I've got facts to back me up). About 20% of our members (approx. one fifth) are in a above bracket and I feel that some form of consideration should be implemented to them as regards this subject of foul language.

I don't use the words described above in everyday life (my job just forbids their use) as Phil Rosenblum would have it. Perhaps those people with little brains and limited vocabulary use them to express feelings, but I find that feelings can be described in far greater detail by using the English language to its fullest extent. 'Real' people, of any standing, are beneath such expletives when in control of a situation and an author is in full control of his writings. The use of such expletives, so I believe, is initiated because of the mental factor of the new generation of illiterate readers who only understand words of two syllables and four letters. It gives a thrill to the reader to see such lavish language used in an area which is thought to be dominated by intellectuals. I think that the use of such language, in a careless and thoughtless manner, degrades SF and any literature. If no other definition of a word or feeling can be used, then use it, but in moderation and for good reason (such as in Joe Haldeman's "Forever War").

As I said, I can take it or leave it, because I'm not disturbed by its use WHEN NECESSARY and I write this for those who are offended by such use. Moderation is the key word and if the continued use in such a manner, of such expletives continues in the works of SF I shall curl up with the classics that I now read. Such use is unnecessary, in my opinion, so long as there is a thousand different options in the English language.

((I do not want to offend anyone unnecessarily but if people think that their feelings on a topic warrant the use of 'taboo words' then, within reason, that is fair enough. I think a letter which consisted no little but hysterical swearing would speak for itself as to the credibility of its author. You are not the only one to comment on this issue and the general opinion would seem to be that the odd 'swearword' is acceptable but outright offensiveness is not. I must admit that the printing of 'taboo words' with half the letters replaced by asterisks is as annoying to me as the full word may be to others. One may insult their taste - the other certainly insults their intelligence.))

Oh Jeezus, why is everyone nattering on about SF being taught in schools? You can't teach SF as

there is nothing to teach. What are you going to teach kids about SF? Who are the best authors, what an FTL drive is, how to write it, etc? The basic ingredients of SF are a knowledge of literature and science, as well as imagination. Those 3 subjects are already initiated in schools by the lessons they take now; ENGLISH....SCIENCE.... and story writing (use of the imagination to create fictional contexts, etc.) I suppose the people who want it taught in schools wish it to be so on an academic level. If that's so then they might as well forget it. SF for the majority, is a form of entertainment and escapism and to present any further image of it other than that, to kids, will inevitably turn them against it in later life, being something to do with work, education, rather than fun. I say keep it what it is; a form of entertaining (and educational, as far as the sciences go) escapism. ((I know of no case where SF is 'taught' as a 'subject' in schools. What people who use SF in schools are doing, as far as I can gather, is merely using SF to illuminate other subjects (i.e. 'hard' SF can illustrate scientific questions, writers like John Brunner and Ursula LeGuin can be read as showing possible models for developments in our society, or alternative social systems.) Or in English, people can be shown that some works of SF are just as worthy of reading as more conventional books on the syllabus. The idea is not to teach people to like SF but starts from the point of view that they already do like SF. It's just that entertaining fiction can illuminate fact; as an example when I was studying A level history I read a lot of historical novels which made the characters involved seem more like real people and less like pages in a textbook. Consequently, because I was interested in a topic I'd just read a good novel about, I had more incentive to learn more about it.))

Is Dave Lewis anti-BSFA or is it his normal nature to knock the happenings of the ideals, aims, and people of SF? His last letter hinted (slightly) of a certain dissatisfaction with the BSFA and its people.

Ghu, here we have one faction defending the use of offensive language in SF, and another deploring the violence depicted in a kids comic (2000AD). This is just too much; we either present SF in the form of no expletives deleted and full of violence, or namby pamby good guys vs. bad guys type-cast roles. Either way, we will have factions for and against such types of SF. Has it never occurred to any of you that other publications (even true to life news and newspapers) breed more of the contemptuous things you are waffling about? Violence is depicted around us day by day in many forms and kids know more expletives than most of us. The thing which is so shocking is the way it shocks us. Kids take no notice of the violence portrayed, they are more concerned as to whether their heroes are going to survive until the next issue (and he/she usually does. Look back to your own comic days, they were filled with just as much violence and it hasn't had any adverse effects upon you; has it? ((As I said in the last issue, I'll smash the face of anyone who says comics have made me violent...I must admit that I do find it interesting (to use no stronger term) that violence is much more socially acceptable than sexuality. But as for the comic in question, on reflection I think that my distaste for such productions probably arises from the fact that there is never any alternative to violence presented. And on a wider



level, while one comic, or book, or film, may not matter very much in the long run (which is why I always tend to think censorship an essentially unfair activity - I dislike the fact that the forces which encourage mindless violence are always so much greater than those which discourage it. BGT...to the vast majority of its readers 2000AD is just a plaything. Despite my pacifist-leaning views I have bought my 2-year old daughter a gun - she charges round the house pointing it at me and shouting 'bang!' and would no doubt be the first to complain if she blew a hole through me; it's just a game, on an individual level, fine: I can present alternatives to her and my main annoyance is that IPC will not.))

Andy Pratt must be a nut. How can anyone deplore a medium of SF which reaches so many who are not directly involved with it; I refer, of course, to TVSF. As I've said many times before, if it isn't to your liking then either ignore it (and keep your gob shut) or do something constructive to better it. I want to better it, but at the same time I don't dislike it to the extent of saying "This is not SF and is just bloody rubbish." When I've compiled the TVSF questionnaire/census I'll come back to you and see if you want to help with its dissemination. And on that subject, where are all the people who've been complaining about it? Are they afraid to offer their assistance in the improving of a vast and extensive medium of advertising the beauty of SF? Come on, guys and gals, let me hear a multitudinous shout of "Aye, we're here, lets get this thing called TVSF straightened out." I don't ask a lot, other than for a few suggestions for questions (I don't want it all penned by myself as that would give a biased level of questioning) and some people to give up a couple of hours of their time to spread it around.... Is that too much to ask in the name of SF?

Paul Fraser; I've written this before, but Andy edited it out (the swine, ahem, sorry Andy, I didn't know you were listening). So on to VORTEX. I did a review of that mag some time ago and I, in a personal way took it to shreds and said that it would have a limited future (if I didn't say that exactly, then I thought it.) But, to K.M. Warwick's comments; in truth, the contents of VORTEX were poorish (keeping on a personal view and that's all a reviewer's remarks are), the use of standard pulp could have reduced the cost (making the mag more attractive to the media)- although colour work takes better on glossy paper the amount of colour work in VORTEX didn't warrant its use throughout. The first and foremost reason as to why VORTEX folded was its lack of variety. If a person wants to read a story he/she can pick up a novel or compilation of shorts for double the quantity of reading at roughly the same price. What the SF fan wants is a magazine which is going to provide him/her with news, views, reviews and a little extra in the form of an interview, posters, competitions and a place to air your own personal views....a media MATRIX if you like. VORTEX attempted to follow the American style mag, but failed because of its naive attitude as regards the fans' needs. (The Americans don't need to flog their

mags over here as they have strong following in their own country, as that is practically how SF started up over there and has continued since.)

I think that Seve Higgins picked me up wrongly last issue. I want to know where the people are who enjoy the vocal wordings in HEAVY METAL rock music, besides all the synthesised rubbish we are subjected to. The music itself cannot be defined as SF because the title suggests it, but the story being told by the vocalist is. For example, Black Sabbath in their tales of the future 'Into the Void'... 'Iron Man'... 'War Pigs', etc., and they are only one of a multitude of groups which explore these realms. I dislike Pink Floyd, Camel, etc. (including Hawkfart) simply because they fail to impress upon me a feeling of awe, wonder, dread, etc. with the musical abilities that they have. I like the music to be in line with the vocals, as with Black Sabbath; their number 'War Pigs' is about the merchants of war and as war is symphonic with noise and terror, the music displayed with the vocals is sympathetic to those feelings.

Well all that and not a word about MATRIX; I loved it Andy, as I always do. Editorial was interestingly filled with words of wisdom, Vicechairman's report was very interesting, far more detailed than BSFA news of days gone by, Noticeboard is a good idea...articles were well balanced and suitably flavoured(((??))) poetry was good, but the lettercol is still too short for my liking. I look forward to the next M with vigorous ecstasy.

PAUL FRASER 51 Ivanhoe Rd, Aberdeen AB1 7HA

The cover was very good. This is the kind of standard that should be met with every issue, but I've got a feeling we'll revert to the scribbles that have offended the cover in previous issues. Why can we not have two staples? No, forget that. If I ask you why we can't have two staples I'll probably get a perfectly good reason. I don't want a perfectly good reason, I want 2 staples.

The 'Opinion' piece did nothing for me, although that's probably because I haven't read the book mentioned. But then I thought of the book reviews and features in most of the pro magazines and remembered that there were quite a few that I enjoyed even though I had not read the book/seen the film. Perhaps the best piece I have ever read was Mike Ashley's piece on Keith Roberts in SFM (Vol 2 no. 10, I think) to the point that when I read some of Keith Roberts' work the result was a let-down. (That's his MACHINES AND MEN collection not PAVANNE. The latter proved Ashley's point. It's unreasonable to expect professional standard in MATRIX (or is it?) and rereading the article I think that probably his main fault was assuming that the reader knew as much as he thought.

"The Fruit Machine" was a piece of shit. I refuse to believe that playing one of these machines is the experience he makes it. I will admit that when I've had a bit to drink then I frequently feel a pretentiously maudlin mood come over me, but at least I don't write



poetry about it and inflict it on other people.

Cyril Sims ought to be shot! Anybody who can incorporate as many cliches as that into a story and bind it together with such horrible prose is a danger to the well-being of SF and ought to be disposed of. "Marvellous. Probably the best bit in the magazine."

The two record reviews are well done useful things just about the right length.

Dan Farr's article didn't contain all that much that was new to me, although there were one or two interesting points. However, there were a couple of things I didn't like. He said that Jeanna Robinson's first story got the 'Analog' cover and if it is the story I am thinking of then this is misleading. The story he is referring to (I hope) is "Stardance" which was written by Spider and Jeanne Robinson. The other thing was what he thought of 'Stardust', somehow this sounds like a Canadian version of 'Unearth' on which my views are not, well....pleasant, let's say.

Now about this questionnaire. 7% of the membership replied so that could only be about 40 at the most. It would have been more to the point if you had used the space to curse, swear and moan about everybody being an apathetic sod.

'Round the Clubs', I feel, must be pretty useless as anybody who has found out enough to join the BSFA (we are a pretty obscure lot) would probably have found their local SF club. ((I'd suspect that many local SF groups are even more obscure than the BSFA. And I think the articles may show people what other groups are doing. Not all clubs are in contact with every other club...))

Roger Waddington is definitely taking magazine reviewing in MATRIX a step in the right direction. I probably wouldn't agree with him on a few points but he makes his review enjoyable reading and also points out faults, virtues, etc. which is a lot more than previous reviewers. Good.

I disagree with David Strachan (again) and his review of F&SF. I didn't find the Brunner story 'excellent', but merely professional, predictable, and unoriginal. I did find Tiptree's "Time-sharing Angel" excellent and I bet it'll be a Hugo winner. Mr. Strachan obviously thought it was "a bore to read" as he never mentioned it. Never mind, though. At least he seems to have read it all this time...

You've heard my arguments about the contents lists before, but I'll go through them again:

1) They give no idea of quality and it is possible for someone unknown to turn out a good story and for pros to revert to mediocrity.

2) Lengths of novellas, shorts, serials etc. all vary from mag to mag so the reader doesn't know how much wordage he's getting and thus the relative worth of each magazine.

3) Even if the reader does see a story by someone he likes I doubt he'll lash out 90p to get it. (Unless he's a regular buyer anyway - like myself.)

4) I don't like contents lists; I'd rather the space was used for reviews - good ones.

In the letters section you finish your reply to my letter by saying 'It's a pity the UK can't support a regular magazine.' You pushed one of my buttons saying that and started me cursing and swearing about all the wasted chances there've been.

The UK could support a regular mag. It could probably support three - say an SF mag, fantasy & SF mag, and a horror and S&S mag, but the only way you're going to do this and turn out an excellent stable of mags is by doing certain things.

First you mustn't have some pretentiously obscure drum to beat like New Worlds (and Vortex to a point) that most average, intelligent receptive readers will be repelled by.

Second, you have to be prepared to spend money on advertising your magazine and getting advertising - not just publishers' but science-related adverts and fringe SF and LPs, etc. You also have to pay well for fiction - then you have your pick of British and American writers.

Third, you need an editor who just won't take any shit from anybody. an editor who will command original ideas, good real characterization, well-resolved and unexpected (not contrived) endings. (Dick Geis's 'One Immortal Man' in Andromeda 2 is a good example of this.)

He or she will also be quite prepared to bounce stories by 'names' that are no good. (The worst example of this is a so-called 'story' by Isaac Asimov called "Friday the 13th" which appeared in a 1976 F&SF and would have been bounced if submitted by anyone else.) He/she must have the ability to refuse compromise and accept only the best, most entertaining fiction. As far as I am concerned fiction - entertainment and academe can go screw themselves.

((Yes, you are right - you have to be prepared to spend money and that's where I think the problem lies - who is going to finance such a venture which will undoubtedly lose a great deal in the early stages? SF is far less of a minority interest than many topics which have thriving magazines devoted to them, but you usually find that they have a great deal of advertising to support them. Often, they are really 'advertising mags' for a particular trade - I'm not sure that you can operate a magazine devoted to fiction on this basis - it seems you may have more adverts than fiction before it's viable. I would love to be proved wrong.))

Why isn't the BSFA award given to other lengths of fiction, i.e. novella, novelette and short story?

In fact this is part of a proposition I have concerning the BSFA award. First of all, I think it should be renamed; something short and snappy like NOVA or STAR. Secondly I propose that we award it in the four categories I have listed above (be as well using the SFWA category/word lengths for this to get some uniformity, if nothing else). The only fiction eligible for this would be, as it is just now, that published in paperback (first appearance) in the UK. This is obviously a matter for discussion, though. A UK SF mag would be eligible of course, but would the USA mags be eligible? If you let the American magazines become eligible then you would probably get a duplication of the HUGO's (which already duplicate the NEBULAs most of the time.) This is against the main reasons for my suggestion of the four categories, which is that UK writers have done very badly when it comes to receiving awards and if we had four categories then not only would the younger British writers become encouraged but a few of the more established writers would have something to show for years of writing and let's face it, there are more than one or two British writers that should have awards that don't.

OK, sometimes there won't be any stories worth winning an award and you can allow for that by having a 'NO AWARD' vote that from over a certain percentage - no award. I hope other members feel the same about this idea because there are some stories that I have really liked (and others have, too) that won't win awards because they were published in Britain and not the States, e.g.:

Geis' 'One Immortal Man' in Andromeda 2  
Bayley's 'The Seed of Evil' in NWISF 23  
Priest's 'An Infinite Summer' in Andromeda 1  
Greenhough's 'A Gift of Time' in Vortex 1/5.

BEN BURR, 7, Egerton Drive, Greenwich, London SE10, 8JS.

Agh, your clue gives it away this time. Jackson's Island, is it the island that Huck and Tom retreat to in Tom Sawyer? ((So Simon Green is not the only one with his wits about him...thanks, Ben; I'd have felt a right berk if no-one had got it this time.))

A good issue, I think you're doing a fine job, and it will probably get better as you get the hang of the ropes. I liked Cyril Simsa's 'Adam the Antigen', it was quite amusing but unfortunately reminded me of something similar that I've read recently elsewhere. The piece on Canadian Sf was informative, but I must say that it wouldn't be very useful to me and probably most other readers. Still, why should everything have to be useful?

Politics boring? This depends entirely upon the

aspects you are viewing. I must agree that the everyday aspects of parliament, in general, are. But when it comes to things that effect, or potentially effect, one in some way or another, then they should be watched. I mean things like the rise of the National Front barstards, wage controls, special police infiltration of left-wing organisations, etc. As Bakunin said, "Liberty without socialism is exploitation; socialism without liberty is tyranny." (Quote of the day.)

In a way Dave Cobbledick is right in saying that Politics is the way we are dictated, but unless you watch and act you will continually be dictated to. You can't ignore it, not for a second.

And now to a sore point of mine. I don't see how anyone could ever consider Heinlein to be an Anarchist. This is a grave insult to all true anarchists (myself included). An anarchist is the only true opposite to a fascist, and thus the term 'anarchist/fascist' is a totally contradictory statement. Heinlein often seems to follow the school of Benjamin Tucker. All this school of so-called individualists accept, at one time or another, the necessity of a police force, hence for government, and an a priori definition of anarchism is no government. Thus Heinlein can't be considered an anarchist. Ever. And I hope no-one balls him one again.

I think James Corley is right. A 50p intro pack is about the figure I had in mind when I suggested the idea.

((Aha...some interesting & controversial comments there! A lot of what you say takes us deeper into in the realms of political theory that is perhaps right for MATRIX, but two things come to me... first, it is hard to find true 'opposites' in political ideas, and second, anarchism considered purely as a theory of doing away with government can be associated as much with the right as the left. In his fiction Heinlein has expressed opinions which relate to those of 'right anarchists'; also in one book TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE, I think, he writes that an anarchist should not accept any of the benefits of living in a state if he condemns the evil aspects of the state - i.e. if he rejects the police he deserves no protection from them if he is the victim of a crime (or words to that effect) All of which shows that it is hard to pin an author down to opinions his fictional characters voice. If Heinlein has to be labelled, I suspect your label is better than most; I suspect also that we share similar opinions, so I shall say no more.))

PHIL STEPHENSEN-PAYNE, "Lindon", 1 Lewell Ave, Old Marston Oxford OX 3 0RL.

Nearly killed myself reading the BSFA news in M14 - "Chris has been an unobtrusive editor being interested in producing a good journal rather than any self-aggrandisement and he has established a firm base to work from." What a load of utter crap! Chris was unobtrusive only because he was illiterate as regards editing ability - in the last few issues when he has been adding comments on his own he has certainly been far from unobtrusive, and has lost us a

few members through his unnecessary bullying. If we are forced to stoop to the level of lying to our members so they don't get the nasty idea that we might not all agree with each other, then what's the point of it all?

I So to M15. I was glad to see the piece about the Paperback Shop - they're a good place on the whole & will certainly try hard to get things. I had wondered when I saw their prize as any 3 paperbacks if they really meant that or would restrict it to current stock - obviously they meant it.

Not only did you tell us very little about yourself in your inaugural editorial, you told us even less in your second one. Unless we find out some more facts about the real Andy Sawyer ((I'm looking for him myself)) we'll have to believe the rumours that Tom has just adopted a pseudonym.

Glad to hear you're planning to cut down on magazine reviews - how about cutting them out altogether? By all means list the contents, but reviews seem a waste of space.

The Vice-Chairman's report amused me. He sits down apologising profusely for our one issue (as it was then) drop in 'production standards' (I, at least, thought the duplicated VECTOR pretty good) and then completely puts his foot in it by saying "don't worry, this won't affect production standards" - an unnecessary comment committing us to future litho vectors which we will not, at the moment, be able to meet. As for the support for the 79 Eastercon bid, I do wish he had waited until that was settled. Tom seems determined to persuade the members that we are busy doing things & doesn't care if they see as a result that we're falling flat on our faces.

My, my, a review of "Voyage of the Space Beagle" what a surprise. And I can't say a pleasant one either - what's the point of such in Matrix, Andy? If you're that short of material it would seem a 32 page Matrix is a waste of BSFA funds. Mind you I suppose you can always fill your pages with crud like "The Fruit Machine" - easy to type and can be churned out by the mile by any illiterate child of 12 (not that Andy Muir's an illiterate child of 12 - he's a very competent editor, but he ain't no poet).

Still I suppose it was to make everything else look good by comparison that you put "Adam the Antigen" in - compared to that, Tangent looks almost passable. Then Daniel Farr managing to prove conclusively that there is no SF in Canada. Let's see who's the main SF author - "Spider Robinson who... uses a light, flip style which gained him immediate popularity". Oh, yeah, with whom - only a couple of Galaxy diehards. On the whole Robinson's impact has been less than that of a soggy flapjack. Then we have

top writer(!) Judy Merrill and Mike Coney, the only one I'll agree with. Following which, having claimed for Canada all those who have moved to Canada, he then goes on to claim all those who moved away as well!

The 'Who gets What Where' was vaguely interesting, but I fear you summed it up yourself by saying "Conclusions are hard to draw because of the low response rate" and "I don't know the first thing about statistics." I think you should have presented the results (preferably legibly and only to 1 or at most 2 decimal places and then left well alone.

Dave C good as always - I hope the pressure of memsec doesn't stop his column.

And so to your closing comments - "If I think something is worth printing, I'll print it," Fair enough - If it was your own mag, but it isn't. Surely your aim should be to print what the members want, not just what you want - they're paying for it. ("Worth printing" = "what I think BSFA members will like". That comment of mine referred to the question of should I print poetry and was designed to suggest that there is no reason why I shouldn't, as letters which say 'no poetry at any price' are in a minority. I could be wrong but the only way I can tell what people want is if they tell me; otherwise, like it or not, I have to use a certain amount of my own judgement.)

I imagine I've sounded somewhat pissed off with M in this letter - which is probably because I am pissed off with M, 2/3 of which I think is probably a waste of time. I think, with the material in M15, you could have produced a fairly good 16-side magazine. Are we really trying to keep the members by persuading them they get a lot for their money (110k guys, a special 34 page Matrix!)? If so, should we be?

As a brief summary of M15 I would say:

JACKSON'S ISLAND (somewhat contentless); VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (OK we need this); MEMBER'S NOTICEBOARD (ditto); FUTUWOLDS (good in theory but not in 2 successive issues); OPINION (reject from Vector, forget it); THE FRUIT MACHINE (reject from Tangent, ditto); ADAM THE ANTIGEN (ditto); RECORD REVIEWS (OK); SF IN CANADA (OK in theory, but waste of space in practice); WHO GETS WHAT WHERE (summary good, discussion useless); ROUND THE CLUBS (good); NEWS- HOUNDS (much of it irrelevant); PROZINE PERUSALS (rubbish); CONTENTS (OK if you must) FF (Do people read it, I don't but others might); LETTERS (far too much repetition)

(( Your letter really needs a response equal to its own text in length; fortunately (because to answer your letter fully in the way it deserves I would need to enter into a proper debate, which I don't have space for) I can't risk annoying people with my verbosity in giving one. It may be significant that most of your dismissals refer to items other members have praised - nevertheless your approach is a helpful one. In fact, I suspect strongly that we agree on approach but are fated to disagree in matters of interpretation! ))