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# MATRIX 25

The BSFA Newsletter

August 1979

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Editorial</u>	2
Fans Across the Sea - Rob Jackson	3
<u>News:</u> It's Alright Ma, It's only Science Fiction	7
- Alan Dorey	10
Books, Events, Awards	
- Information from Dave Pringle, Andy Sawyer, Mark Greener, Clive Woodley, Kevin Busby & Martin Easterbrook	
<u>Fan World:</u>	
Life on Mars - Simon Ounsley	13
Dedicated followers of fashion - Alan Dorey	15
<u>Mailbag</u>	18
<u>Miscellany Corner</u>	
Members' Noticeboard	
Competition	

Artwork We'd like to thank Jim Barker for yet another front cover (the printer just loves those black areas Jim) and Harry Bell for the internal illustrations. These illos were those that Harry did for the caption competition at Tyneccn in 1974. Page 21 and The Captive by Jim Barker.

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## COPY DEADLINES

News - 13th September

Articles - 6th September

# EDITORIAL

This BSFA mailing is being distributed at Seacon so those members not attending will get theirs shortly afterwards. Thus, by the time you read this the first Worldcon in Britain for 14 years will either be in full swing or just over. Many will breathe a sigh of relief when the whole thing is finished, none more though than the editors of Matrix. As regular readers will know, Eve and I are heavily involved with Seacon and as the event draws nearer the work is getting more frantic. Just look at the news section of M24 and you will see that Seacon has moved to Glasgow - just shows how confused we're getting! This issue of Matrix will, therefore, unfortunately be even more hastily put together (who said thrown?) than previous ones, so please forgive us if it's not up to our usual high(?) standard.

One thing Seacon is doing is attracting fans to Britain from all over the world and, in particular, the USA. So with a large proportion of attendees being American fans, we thought it useful to include an item by Rob Jackson on fandom across the Atlantic. To compliment this Alan Dorey has produced a guide to fanzines produced in the States, which if you get the chance to read it in time, might help you to select fanzines from the many (there'd better be) on sale in Seacon's fanroom. Otherwise it should be useful for those willing to write to America.

With this issue we are trying out a new idea of providing an index to the complete mailing; it's on the back page of Matrix and includes the major items in each publication. As I write this the index has not been prepared, so I've no idea what it will be like in its finished form - do let us know whether or not you think it is a useful idea, or how you think it could be improved.

Talking about letting me know, I've been toying with the idea of running a questionnaire in Matrix. At first I thought this could be to discover just what you would like to see in Matrix but, inspired by some of the letters we've received, perhaps it could be expanded to cover the whole of the BSFA's activities. This, of course, will have to be discussed in more detail so that it's something for the future. One problem with questionnaires, however, is the notoriously small response they elicit and it occurred to me that we should provide some enticement (bribes!). This will probably be in the form of a prize draw, but I'll be able to say more about it in the next mailing.

M26 should include all the regulars missing from this issue (Seacon appears to be getting to others as well) plus, of course, a Seacon report (or two), if possible. I'll also try to cover fan activities in other parts of the globe to follow on from this "Spotlight on the States" issue.

I hope those who are attending the Worldcon will enjoy it and will come and say hello to Eve and I, we'll be the harrassed ones in the Fan Room.

John Harvey



\*\*\*\*\*  
 \*Rob Jackson has an impressive list of fannish achievements to his credit,\*  
 \*perhaps the best known being his fanzine Maya (a Hugo nominee this year).\*  
 \*With a vast collection of USA fanzines and a trip to the 1977 Worldcon\*  
 \*behind him, Rob is well qualified to enlighten us about.....\*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

# FANS ACROSS THE SEA

John Harvey asked me to tell Matrix readers about American fandom.

"What's it like?" he said.

"There's a lot of it about," I replied without thinking.

"Yes, but what else can you say?"

"It's big. Really big. This huge. Bigger than Brian Burgess's tummy even. So big I don't know where to start."

Actually that's where I will start. If you take a yearly total of the number who attend a convention or read something they think is a fanzine (not just a copy of Locus or Algol they picked up from a bookshop without realising it's a fanzine) it must reach 10,000 now. There were around 4,500 people at Iguanacon, and many active fans didn't attend it. There are many fans active in fanzines or local clubs or local conventions who don't go to the Worldcon unless it's in their area, so I think it's entirely reasonable to guess at a 10,000 total.

Although naturally many if not most of these fans aren't particularly active, what do they all in fact do?

When fandom first began in the nineteen-thirties as an outgrowth from the letter columns of the old SF pulp magazines, fan magazines (a name shortened to fanzines or fmz) sent by post between the widely scattered letter-writers were the main form of activity. Then, as fans increased in number, meetings - either local clubs and discussion groups, or conventions - became increasingly important and fanzines relatively less so. The first SF convention in Britain was in Leeds in 1937; in the States, things had started small, but by 1939 they felt important enough to put on the first World SF Convention in New York, which 200 people attended.

Convention attendances have since grown far faster than fanzine activity - only around 500 Americans, I would guess, play much creative part in fanzine production- the other 95% are mainly meeting-fans of one kind or another. To someone who believes in the communicative power of the written word this is regrettable, but it is a continuing trend and can't be ignored - and like most things American, it's gone further than it has in Britain.

Over 50 conventions a year are listed in Locus, and there are also lots of small one-day (or longer) cons and meetings (whether serious or purely social) that don't even get listed. The biggest so far - the '74 and '78 Worldcons - have topped 4,000 attendees, and quite a few regional cons regularly draw over 2,000.

With all this profusion of activity, there is obviously scope for a bewildering variety of attitudes and special interests, and there's no way I can tell you about all of it in three pages. What I can do is mention briefly some ways in which US fandom differs from Britain's, then list a few parts of the country with interesting fannish activity. (If any Americans who get to read this are miffed because I didn't mention their area: I'm sorry, I either didn't know about you or didn't have room in the article!)

Because of the huge numbers and rapid turnover of fans in the States, with many regarding SF fan activity as an occasional hobby, not many develop an intense enough interest in fandom itself or sustain it for long enough to become fannish. (By "fannish" I mean "aware of and interested in SF fandom as a social group with noteworthy traditions.") Fannish fandom is thus a much smaller minority than in Britain (it's a minority here too, but a larger one). Knowledge of fan traditions is patchy in the States; there are large areas, in the South for example, where fans tend to keep in their own groups and have slightly less contact with the rest of the country, so develop their own traditions partly outside the mainstream of SF fan customs, and traditional fannish fanzine fandom is relatively uncommon.

Because fandom is so large and SF collection is so common in the States, small specialist presses, small prozines, semiprozines and large-circulation fanzines thrive. Specialist publishers of collectors' editions include Gregg Press, Advent, Donald M Grant, Tim Underwood, and many others. Galileo started off as a small proxine but is now in the big league; other small prozines like Whispers, Unearth etc are really only different in degree from magazines like Algol & Locus. These both started off as ordinary fanzines, purely amateur, and became increasingly professional both in expertise and attitude, turning into a professional magazine of SF discussion with heavy advertising and an SF trade journal respectively. The size of this market for SF criticism blurs the boundary between amateur and professional, because it's possible for someone like Dick Geis to make his living publishing his fanzine yet keep its contents those of a true fanzine, without advertising; he is thus eligible for the Hugo and has the best of all possible worlds. SF Review is a true professional fanzine, even though it's sold on bookstores to non-fans in the same way as Locus, Algol and other semiprozines.

There are other large sercon zines trying to fill the gap between these and more typical fanzines- zines such as Thrust, Empire and Knights are worth a look. These, like similar zines over here (the most recent examples of which have been Speculation, Cypher, Zimri and my own Maya) tend to suffer from the Bigger and Better Syndrome. Fanzines tend to be one-person organisations- as a fanzine's circulation grows two things may happen to the editor, either separately or both at once. One is that the amount of work needed to sustain the mailing list - and the amount of money needed to subsidise the free parts of the mailing list - grow to the extent that it's only possible to publish increasingly infrequently; and the other is that an increasing feeling develops that one is at the peak of one's capacity as an editor and can't go any further. Both these things tend to ebb away at the enthusiasm - driving ambition, even - that is necessary to keep a big fanzine going; and there are only two ways past this difficulty if an editor wants his fanzine to be a full-time job. One is a monomaniacal intensity of ambition such as displayed by Dick Geis and Andy Porter; the other to have more than one person work on the fanzine, as Charles and Dena Brown did when Locus was developing, or as big and successful clubzines like Janus and the Rune of Fred Haskell's era - as well, of course, as Vector and Matrix - show. Because of the



5

size of American fandom, this Bigger and Better Barrier is encountered more often there.

For more information on American and Canadian fanzines see Alan Dorey's article.

There are, of course, plenty of specialist fandoms and subfandoms in the States. Star Trek fandom is rather better integrated with SF Fandom there; there isn't the same defensive wariness between the groups as in Britain. (There is some, but not as much.) A largely American phenomenon is the existence of single-author fandoms, or fandoms devoted to single worlds - Middle-Earth, of course; also Amber, Darkover, Cthulhu, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Sime, Pern - you name it, there is probably a fanzine devoted specifically to it. I've noticed surprisingly little overlap between SF and comics fans there; written and televised SF tend to go together more. Though Star Trek fandom isn't totally integrated, its members are still much more likely to graduate to general SF fandom than British Star Trek fans. Other peripheral organisations such as the Society for Creative Anachronism, whose members recreate as accurately as they can the society of feudal times, are also widespread.

In American society as a whole, some as yet incompletely identified malaise has caused a much more aggressive and at times separatist feminist movement to arise than in Britain; this is reflected very accurately by the country's fandom, and some of the States's finest writers and fanzines (e.g. Janus) are closely associated with the feminist movement. There is a higher proportion of women fans in the States; though British fandom is catching up rapidly, British women fans simply don't seem to feel the same need to be aggressive in defence of their rights.

There is a sister organisation to the BSFA in the States, the National Fantasy Fan Federation, which does a similar job and has been doing so virtually since the war; it's much smaller than the BSFA even in absolute terms, though, so it's rather numerically insignificant amongst the vast numbers in American fandom. It was more necessary in the earlier days, when SF and fantasy fandom weren't mushrooming in the same way as now.

Because American fandom is so big, people treat general-circulation fanzines more purely as public forums, and tend not to indulge in personal gossip as much as British fans, especially British fannish fans, do in their zines. This is one reason why US fanzines sometimes seem bland to those brought up on the headier diet of British fannish zines, and conversely why British fannish fanzines scare off some people. To combat this feeling that fanzines are a very public arena, US fanzine fans make extensive use of APA's - amateur press associations, which are groups of up to say 80 people whose fanzines are distributed to each other by a central mailing organiser, and in which people comment extensively in their own fanzines on topics raised in the previous mailing. Because of their limited distribution outside the APA, these fanzines can contain more personal discussion, and because of the continuing nature of the APA a real postal conversation can go on. This hasn't been needed in British fannish fandom recently, partly because British fannish fanzine fandom (that centred on the Rats, Gannets etc) has become a sort of informal APA, in that everybody sends each other their fanzine, knows each other and comments on each other's fanzine and takes relatively little notice of outsiders.

I've just time and space to mention a few specific area fandoms of interest. Let's move from east to west: go and get your atlases!

The North-East SF Association, NESFA, is based in Boston. They are a long-established and very well-organised group; they put on carefully



run conventions, and are unlikely to make too many mistakes with Noreascon II, next year's Worldcon. They are not very active in fanzines.

New York is a hive of multifaceted activity. Its most fannish group, the Fanoclasts, paradoxically has Andy Porter, editor of Algol, as a leading light. (Actually it's not that paradoxical - an awareness of things fannish doesn't preclude continuing interest in SF and in publishing an SF comment magazine.)

Washington DC has various sercon groups near and round it - there is even another BSFA, this one in Baltimore - but Fabulous Falls Church Fandom, with Terry Hughes, this year's TAFF winner, Ted White, former editor of Amazing, Dan Steffan and others, has been most influential in fannish circles in the 70's.

There are many varied groups in the Midwest; they tend to be more radical and intellectual than the rather conservative and technologically-minded South, there are a lot of fannish groups in the Midwest, and one particularly influential feminist group in Madison.

Denver, Colorado has an active group whose best-known member is Don C Thompson, leader of the Denver bid for the '81 Worldcon, whose honesty in personal fanzine writings earned him much respect in an area not too used to reading perceptive self-analysis in fanzines.

Los Angeles houses one of the longest-running - over 30 years - and richest SF societies in the world, LASFS. They have actually bought their own large clubhouse, outgrown it and moved to another. They have meetings of different sorts every night of the week, and so many members that club politicking is rife. They feature the most frequent APA - APA-L, which is distributed weekly. San Francisco's most widely known fan is Charlie Brown, editor of Locus; and Portland, further up the coast, is the eyrie of the reclusive but influential Dick Geis, editor of SF Review. Seattle has two groups; one contains thoughtful peripatetic fannish fans such as Jerry Kaufman and John Berry, who are now as a group running the Pacific Northwest Review of Books, a general literary magazine; and the NWSFS, a more conventional SF group who started the Seattle in '81 bid. A coalition between the two for the bid seems a little wobbly.



I've given you lots of facts and info about American fan groups and institutions, but I haven't really talked much about what they're like as people. Well, I can't. It would either be wild generalisation, or descend to a personal level.... Oh all right, just a little wild generalisation. They are just like the rest of their countrymen, really. They live up, I find, to the American's reputation of being

more instantly friendly and talkative, in general, than British fans; they are perhaps more generous but conversely less careful with money (though maybe that'll change with the dollar's current weakness!). They are more used to travelling long distances; but that's likely to change too with economic circumstances.

American fans are fat and thin, loud and shy, short and tall, randy and prudish, sober and silly, brainy and slow in the uptake, serious-minded and only here for the beer; they're all different, and all about as normal as British fans. All the really interesting things about Americans are about individual people. If you're reading this at Seacon, the thing to do is to put this fanzine down - you can read fanzines any time - and find out for yourself!

Rob Jackson

# News

## IT'S ALRIGHT MA, IT'S ONLY SCIENCE FICTION

Edna O'Brien declared that 'August is a Wicked Month', but wicked or not, it's going to be an interesting and testing time for SF and especially the BSFA. Nobody needs reminding of the World Convention in Brighton, and but for the publishing schedules imposed upon us, all BSFA members would know the full details concerning this major event almost immediately after it has happened. However, but for those amongst our membership who are attending, the rest will have to be satisfied with material written a fortnight or so before and thus of necessity speculative. Seacon provides us with the opportunity to show how forceful the BSFA can be, and in conjunction with the con, several new projects have been set up. With such a concentrated market of SF enthusiasts in one place at one time, this is a chance we cannot allow to slip by. Besides, just think of all the new members we can 'persuade' to join the ever growing band.

However, recruiting new members itself is just not good enough. In the past I have always emphasised the need for the BSFA to be a dynamic, forward looking outfit, and boosting the membership is only a start. A larger membership provides us with a wider market and greater resources and once that has been achieved, great improvements and innovations can be made. At present, we have about 650 fully paid up members; by the end of this year, I hope that this will have increased to 1000. I'm not pretending it's going to be easy, but with Seacon and 3000+ attendees, we stand a very good chance of achieving this not untenable position.

Now comes the bad news. In order to maintain this growth and improvement of services, we have reluctantly decided to increase the membership rates. I could ramble on for pages about all the various reasons for doing this, but that would merely prove to be an extended exercise in flannel. The facts are that VAT has been increased to 15%, which means we are having to pay more for duplicating paper, stencils and printing. In addition, postal rates



are due to go up at any time, and most importantly, despite double figure inflation for most of the previous 2 years, we have successfully managed to hold the membership rate down to only £5. The new rate, coming into force as and from the next mailing, will be £6. However, all those who renew their memberships before September 30th will be able to do so at the old rate... so send those renewal forms off to Keith Freeman as soon as possible. However, you can be assured that the service provided will be made more efficient and tailored to actual demands.

Returning with this mailing is Paperback Parlour, now under the editorship of Joseph Nicholas. You will notice that it is now more than just a brief review guide, and Joe hopes to be including other useful information in succeeding issues. But the most important feature of this mailing, the Special Seacon issue of Vector apart, is the introduction of FOCUS. This major new project, scheduled at present for two issues a year, signifies only the start of a whole host of new ideas that the membership can look forward to in the coming months. Focus is having an initial print run of 1500 copies, and with the expert hands of Rob Holdstock and Chris Evans guiding its course, we anticipate that Focus will become much more than just another BSFA publication. Of course its prime objective will be to cater for the BSFA membership, and members will automatically receive it as part of their mailing, but it will also be made available to non-members through various outlets for 75p. So already you're getting nearly one third of your new membership fee back.

Seacon, we trust, will allow a far better chance for several BSFA projects to get off the ground since as I have explained, there is a captive market. What is going to be the first of a series of specialist publications makes its inaugural appearance at the con. This is a special Typeset anthology of Jim Barker and Chris Evans' much praised Half-Life strips. Not only will the whole series of strips be reproduced in a photo-litho booklet, but there is also an appreciation by Chris Priest (responsible for "The Space Machine," "A Dream of Wessex" and "The Inverted World" amongst others). This publication is bound to be in great demand, but BSFA members will be offered the chance to purchase it at a discount, and for all those who haven't got a complete set of the strips, it is more than just valuable - it'll be a collector's item. Copies will be on sale at Seacon or alternatively write to me at 20, Hermitage Woods Crescent, St John's, Woking, Surrey GU21 1UE enclosing a large stamped sae together with a cheque or postal order for 80p made out to "The British Science Fiction Association Ltd."

Attention was drawn in the last issue of Matrix that this is the 21st anniversary of the BSFA, and that some form of celebration ought to be organised. Apart from the target of reaching 1000 members, thought has been given to a celebration dinner sometime during December, to which we can invite guest speakers. The dinner will probably be held in a London venue, since this will more than likely be most convenient to the majority of the membership. Tickets will be made available to the members for a modest fee, and if there are any problems with overnight accommodation, we shall endeavour to sort those out. However, this is just a reminder at present to keep diary space empty and full details, including date, venue, cost, time and speakers will be announced in the next issue of Matrix. In addition, we hope very much to produce a special commemorative booklet showing the development of the BSFA since those early days back in 1958. This is only a tentative suggestion at present, but if we



have sufficient funds to go ahead with this project, it will be well worth watching out for.

Dave Langford, who joined the BSFA Council at Easter, has been appointed Special Projects Officer and will in future be responsible for, amongst other things, the production of a regular Press Release. This will be distributed to book dealers, publishers, authors and anybody else interested enough to receive one, and should help to alleviate the current problem of poor communicative relationships with those involved in the SF world. Not only will it publicise up-coming BSFA events and publications, along with our advertising requirements, but it will also keep us regularly to the attention of those who might need to make use of the BSFA. (There was recently the Penguin SF catalogue that was mailed out to all members). In conjunction with the new Press Releases and our aim to increase the membership, some posters and handbills have been produced and these will be available from me from 17th September. The posters, A3 in size, are suitable for display in libraries, information offices and other Public Display areas, and anyone feeling that they can make good use of them is urged to write to me without delay. The handbills, to the same design as the poster but only A5 in size, are suitable for sending out with fanzines and other bulk mailings or for passing round at Local SF group meetings. Again, if you can find a use for them, please let me know. In addition, the posters and handbills will be displayed in various SF and specialist bookshops. There is also a small supply of metal BSFA button badges. Approximately one inch in diameter, these will be available at Seacan for a small charge, and those we have left over will be offered to other members and then sent out in their next mailing should they decide to purchase them. Towards the end of the year, we anticipate producing special BSFA Diaries, pens and other merchandise, but full details of these will again be included in the next issue of Matrix.

Plans are already well advanced for the creation of a special fund to finance the purchase of a litho machine to improve the quality of the BSFA's printing. Eventually, this will mean that all publications will be printed to a similar standard as Vector at no extra cost. Indeed, once purchased, the litho machine should enable us to save money which can be ploughed back into various other schemes, so it will be of great benefit. The fund, to be called "The BSFA Litho Fund" is open to any donation that any members may care to make. The sum we need for the purchase of such a machine is some £700; some of this money will come from the profits made from selling the Half-Life anthology, whilst the rest will come from direct donations, fund raising schemes and other indirect sources. No money will be directly transferred from the BSFA's ordinary subscriptions, since it is felt that these should be kept solely for administrative and publication costs. However, we do appeal to everyone to think hard about contributing money to this scheme. A flyer about this will be sent out with this mailing.

And finally, just a few brief details about publications coming up that will be available at Seacan. These haven't been produced by the BSFA, but we hope to negotiate a special discount rate for the benefit of members. Firstly, there is THE EASTERCON SPEECHES of BOB SHAW. This has been illustrated by Jim Barker (some 30 illos), is A5, litho and has 60 pages. The cost will be £1 (\$2) direct from Rob Jackson, or £1.10 (\$2.20) by post from Rob at: 8 Lavender Road, West Ewell, Surrey KT19 9EB. For those who saw the Bob Shaw 'Best



of the Bushel' collection at Yorcon, this should be a worthy and useful purchase. Secondly, there is a Fan Anthology entitled BY BRITISH: A FANTHOLOGY OF THE SEVENTIES. This has been produced by Ian Maule and Joseph Nicholas and runs to some 80 pages. It will be produced in a limited, numbered edition of 250 copies and all profits will pass to the Transatlantic Fan Fund (TAFF) and the Get Up and Over Fan Fund (GUFF). The collection includes articles by such luminary fans as Roy Kettle, Rob Hansen, Dave Langford, John Piggot, John Brosnan, Rob Holdstock, Chris Priest, Andrew Stephenson, Graham Charnock and Kev Smith. With an introduction by Ian Maule and a short history of British fanzines of the 70s by Joseph Nicholas, this should appeal to fan and non-fan alike. Copies will be available from: Ian Maile, 5 Beaconsfield Road, New Malden, Surrey. Eve & John Harvey are producing three special Seacon Fan Room publications to commemorate the Worldcon. Firstly there is a complete edition of the legendary Enchanted Duplicator (complete with footnotes and illustrations by Carol Gregory); secondly they have produced A FANARTIST SCRAPBOOK - a selection of British fan artwork, and finally, a fanthology produced by Kev Smith. Although there might at first sight appear to be some duplication between the latter and BY BRITISH, but in fact there is no overlap at all, they do complement themselves. All three publications are litho, and all profits will go towards financing Seacon Fan Room.

Right that's it. Keep writing to let us know your thoughts on events. This is, after all, the only way we can get to know what you the members think of the service.

Alan Dorey

## BOOKS

Robert Heinlein's new novel is called The Number of the Beast. It has been bought by Fawcett Books in the USA for half a million dollars (an all-time record for an sf novel). Heinlein's usual publisher, Putnam, did not bid. British rights have been bought by New English Library for circa £20,000. The book will probably appear in Spring 1980.

Philip Jose Farmer has an entirely new novel, Dark is the Sun, coming from Del Rey Books (hardcover) in September. His fourth Riverworld book, The Magic Labyrinth, due from Berkley/Putnam, has been put back until early 1980. Dark is the Sun is a quest-epic set 15 billion years in the future.

Roger Zelazny also has a new novel appearing from Del Rey in hardcover (October). It is called Roadmarks, and is a time-travel tale.

Lester del Rey's The World of Science Fiction, 1926-1976: the History of a Subculture is due from (surprise, surprise) Del Rey Books in November (as a trade paperback).

Clifford D Simak's new title, The Visitors, will be done in hardcover by Del Rey in January 1980 (but it should appear as an Analog serial before that). It is about a big black box which plonks itself down in - would you believe? - Lone Pine, Minnesota.



Closer to home, Gollancz's autumn list includes Fritz Leiber's Ship of Shadows (prix-winning short stories and novellas; August); Theodore Sturgeon's Visions and Venturers (stories; September); Ian Watson's God's World (October), described as being about angels, insect-like aliens and "a race living half-way between reality and 'Heaven'"; Robert Silverberg's The Second Trip (November); Terry Carr's Best SF of the Year 8 (November); and Keith Robert's Ladies from Hell (stories; November).

Meanwhile, Jonathan Cape will be publishing Brian Aldiss's New Arrivals, Old Encounters (stories; August); Emma Tennant's Wild Nights (September); Doris Lessing's Shikasta (October; described as being the first of a sequence of novels set on another planet!); J G Ballard's The Unlimited Dream Company (November); which is a fantasy described as having "sprung from some vivid equatorial painting, vibrating with colour and light"; and Kurt Vonnegut's Jailbird (November) - which is not sf, by the sounds of it, but a sort of post-Watergate novel.

Back in America, Frederick Pohl's Beyond the Blue Event Horizon (a sequel to Gateway) will be out from Del Rey in February 1980 (and probably soon after from Gollancz here). Pamela Sargent has sold umpteen novels to Pocket Books, the first of which, Watchstar, will be out early in 1980. A newer writer, Barry Longyear has signed a three-book contract with Berkley; his novel City of Baraboo will come first. A E Van Vogt has a new novel, Cosmic Encounter, coming from Doubleday. Berkley will be publishing loads of old Philip K Dick material, including the first full edition of the Unteleported Man under its proper title of Lies, Inc. They're also doing a new D G Compton novel, Windows, and Ursula Le Guin's Orsinian novel, Malafrena.

Seacon has prompted Granada to produce a whole string of Brian Aldiss reprints. Included in the list are The Dark Light Years, Moment of Eclipse and Hothouse. Out from Corgi is the third in Aldiss's non-sf series entitled A Rude Awakening. The previous two volumes, The Hand Reared Boy and A Soldier Erect, are also being re-issued.

Also out in time for Seacon is an anthology edited by Robert Holdstock and Christopher Priest - Stars of Albion. This collection features twelve stories from the best of British SF.

For horror fans Penguin have a new edition out of the original Dracula by Bram Stoker. From Futura is John Farris's follow-up to The Fury - All Heads Turn When the Hunt Goes By.

Token fans will be interested to know that Picador have published J E A Tyler's The New Tolkien Companion which has been revised to include the Silmarillion.

## EVENTS

The 2nd British Fantasy Film Convention 15/16 September 1979 at Bloomsbury Centre Hotel, Coram St, London W1. Cost - on the door £6.50 (both days) and £3.50 (one day). Supporting membership £1.50. Details from - Fantasy Film Conventions, 52 Roydene Road, Plumstead, London SE18 1QA. Last year's event included an auction, talks by people including Gerry Anderson and Milton Subotsky, an exhibition room in which books and magazines were sold and of course the ever-popular bar. Almost forgot - plenty of films were shown.



The 'Melody Maker' reports that John Keenan of the Leeds Fantasy Club is organizing a large sf music festival called Futurama '79. Over 25 New Wave groups are appearing at the event which takes place at the Queen's Hall, Leeds 8th to 13th September. Amongst those booked to appear are Hawklords and The Mekons. In addition to the 'music' there will be sf films, sideshows, displays and stalls. Tickets cost £5 per day and booking details should be announced shortly.

Mediacon - a one day convention for all SF fans at the Richmond Community Centre, Richmond, Surrey. The date is Saturday 15th September, starting at noon and finishing at 11 pm, the programme features SF Mastermind quiz, surprise guests, fancy dress competition and disco. The usual club and book dealers tables will be present.

Registration is £1 and profits will go towards the purchase of a ventilation machine for a member of the London Plus Group who has to spend 2 nights a week in an iron lung. Further details from Barbara Kitson, 88a Thornton Ave, London W4 1QQ.

Polycon - A "shoestring con" to be held at Hatfield Polytechnic, the cost will be £1.10 and is being held over 5th and 6th October. Contact John Watkinson, The Science Fiction and Fantasy Society, c/o The Students Union, Hatfield Polytechnic, PO Box 109, Hatfield, Herts.

### AWARDS

In Matrix 22 we reported that a convention was being held in Kansas, 31st March to 1st April called Fool-con. At this event a new award for fantasy fiction and publications was being made - the Balrog.

Here are the results of that award:

Best Novelist	- Tom Reamy for <u>Blind Voices</u>
Best Short Fiction	- Patricia Cadigan for "Death from Exposure"
Best Collection/Anthology	- Phyllis Eisenstein's <u>Born to Exile</u>
Best Poet	- Ray Bradbury
Best Artist	- Tim Kirk
Best Amateur Publication	- <u>Shayol</u> eds Patricia Cadigan and Arnold Fenner
Best Professional Publication	- <u>Age of Dreams</u> by Alicia Austin
Outstanding Amateur Achievement	- Paul C Allen for his Fantasy Newsletter and "Of Swords and Sorcery" a bibliography of fantasy literature.
Outstanding Professional Achievement	- <u>Donald McGrant</u> (publisher) and J R R Tolkein

Special writers and artists' panel-presentation to Andre Norton for her "lifetime of contributions to the field".

By the time you receive this, if you are not an attendee of Seacon, the Hugo Awards will have been presented. It was obviously impossible for us to hold up the duplication of Matrix so that we could include the results. Therefore we have included a flyer with the results in your envelope. So if you haven't seen it, go back to the rubbish bin and look again - it's in there.



# FAN WORLD

## LIFE ON MARS

In the early seventies, I was attending university in Manchester and it was during that time that my interest in science fiction began. It was a lonely thing being an sf buff in those days; my friends used to treat my enthusiasm with the conceited scorn they had previously reserved for my predilection for the music of David Bowie. What a shame I endured those three years oblivious to the fact that there were two sf groups operating in the area. Today, of course, things are different for the lonely Manchester fan; there's Samaritans and the LIFE ON MARS column. Last issue, Bill Little exposed the UMIST group so I thought that this time, I'd delve into the back streets of the city and come up with the goods on the more secretive of Manchester's societies.

The Manchester Group were very active in the early seventies and organised the Eastercon in 1976. Since that time, their influence on the fannish world has declined but they're still alive and meeting regularly, as our special correspondent and ex-Mancunian Paul Kincaid discovered. Over to you, Paul.

### All About the Manchester Group

The full name is the Manchester and District Science Fiction Group, or, more appropriately, the MaD Group. The science fiction part of the name, I can only assume, is a figment of somebody's imagination, since it is practically never the topic of conversation. If someone new blunders into one of our meetings then Chuck Partington, or one of the other long-serving members, asks him who his favourite author is. If the answer is Moorcock then he's welcomed in; if he says Dick, then he's tolerated; if he makes the mistake of saying Silverberg, then he's laughed out of town. After that initial inquisition, we rarely bother mentioning sf again until the next newcomer.

Time and place? We meet on the first and third Wednesday of every month. The first arrivals usually turn up around 7.30, but things never really get going until 8.00 at the earliest. The place is the Crown and Anchor, Port Street; which is just off Newton Street, which in turn is off Piccadilly. It's a fairly grotty little back street but the pub isn't too bad, if your taste runs to ill-lit interiors, and nautical odds-and-ends like oars and fishing-nets strung from the ceiling. Corny? Well, drink enough and you may not even notice. Just don't try to disguise it with music from the juke-box - it's the sort of contraption that has Donny and Marie Osmond listed under rock music.

The beer, by the way, if you can call it that, is Whitbread (one of our members works for the brewery). Fortunately I'm a lager drinker, and the place has Stella Artois on draught. The CAMRA members among us seem to get by without too much discomfort drinking the Chesters Special Mild, or Guinness.

Formal programme? Subs? Guest Speakers? Hah bloody hah, what do you think we are? Our meetings are so damned informal that half the time we just sit around staring into our beer. What we talk about depends very



much on who we're with, since the group breaks up pretty quickly into smaller groups. For instance, if you're in the group that includes myself or Steev Higgins, then you'll probably find yourself talking about fandom, or the last time Steev got drunk, or some such. If you're with Chuck Partington or John Mottershead or Biro Robinson (MANCON 5 organisers, and the longest standing members of the group), then the subject could be the revived NEW WORLDS, how great Mike Moorcock is or how lousy Chris Priest is. There are, regrettably, some members of our group who talk about little else but comics and Blake's Seven (one guy even writes for that abortion). Charlotte Bulmer, our CAMRA representative, will bend your ear about good beer anytime. Bernard Earp will regale you with anecdotes about the acting profession. And so it goes. Other than the people I've already mentioned, members include Mike Scatlebury and, from time to time, Gerald 'Boris' Lawrence. I'm not much into fan history, but the group was founded by Lisa Conesa and Pete Presford (Pete still attends when he can get over from North Wales where he now lives); and past members include Paul and Cas Skelton. Membership has always fluctuated. I'd hate to have to put a number on our current membership, since not everyone attends every meeting; however, I would say that the average meeting has, perhaps, 10 or 12 people there. But things can change dramatically, not so long ago we called 5 people a good meeting.

Activities? In fannish terms we're not particularly active. I have produced 2 issues of Tripe Pickers' Journal, but I'm dropping that now to attempt a genzine (A Kink in the Works) which I hope to produce in time for Novacon (I'm not saying which year). Mike Scatlebury, who co-edited the first issue of TPJ, is rumoured to be producing a zine of his own. Steev is the most prolific of us all, since he's producing Perihelion, a personalzine, and a sercon zine. There was also talk of producing a group zine in time for the worldcon, but the last I heard it had fallen through.

In professional terms, however, we are connected with a couple of worthwhile ventures. Several of our members either work for, or are connected with, a bookshop called BOOKCHAIN. This is the shop behind the publishing house Savoy Books. Also, the people at Bookchain, with Chuck Partington, Mike Moorcock, Charles Platt and one or two others, are the people behind the revived New Worlds.

#### All About Paul Kincaid

Thanks Paul. I hope there's no connection but since writing the above report, Paul Kincaid has emigrated to Folkestone. Hopefully, he'll soon be letting us know about the group he hopes to form down there. (Some people will go to any lengths to get into this column!)

#### Where to Write

Don't forget to write in if you want a free advertisement for YOUR sf group. Here's the address again,

13A Cardigan Road, Headingley, Leeds 6.

Keep meeting!

Simon Ounsley



## THE DEDICATED FOLLOWERS OF FASHION

Rob Jackson has already indicated in his piece on American Fandom, that a far greater emphasis seems to be laid on the importance of the Fan Group or SF Group. Whilst Britain does have localised groups, it is not that difficult for members to meet up with other regional counterparts. In the USA, by virtue of its greater size and thus greater geographical distance between groups, this is not always possible unless the dedicated fan possesses vast resources of stamina and has a plentiful money supply. Thus 'group' fanzines tend to be more numerous and the degree of isolation between such fanzines is often greater. Letter columns really start to take on a vital communicative function. However, with Season mere hours away, the chance will arise for British fans to see and acquire Stateside fanzines- so which ones do you select and which ones do you avoid? Does a glossy cover always conceal like contents? Who publishes what? How do you get hold of them? This piece is by no means an exhaustive listing, but it should provide information on a few of the more interesting fanzines. I have resisted the temptation to dissect those not worthy of British eyes, so most of the following should be acceptable.

There are three main 'SF Newspapers', published on a semi-professional basis, and whilst each provides roughly the same information, the individual editorial personalities are very far from being suppressed. Locus is published monthly at a cost of \$1.25 by Charles N Brown, and British subscriptions can be taken out via Peter Weston at 72 Beeches Drive, Erdington, Birmingham 24. Locus provides a wide coverage of news; has a 'Writing Column' by Algis Budrys, letters and an update on all new paperback titles published in the USA. I find it invaluable, and despite the more glossy, slick professional productions of others, Locus pulls no punches with its news, which is invariably ahead of the rest of the field and tends to be more accurate. Whilst sensationalism and scandal can be permitted in fannish fanzines, it should not be entertained in such productions. Starship, formerly known as Algol, has all the looks of a fully fledged pro mag, and yet it falls foul of this lack of accuracy. News sources are quoted, but not always checked up. This aside, it is well laid out, contains a column by Frederik Pohl, letters news and views together with an editorial by editor Andrew Porter. His tone is one of 'Bigger and Better', and tends towards the overbearing and brash, but is nevertheless acceptable since he does produce the goods. Starship costs \$2.25 per issue and is published quarterly, but British subscriptions at £4.75 per year can be taken out from Ethel Lindsay, 69 Barry Road, Carnoustie, Angus DD7 7QQ Scotland (cheques payable to Ethel Lindsay). Finally there is Science Fiction Review edited by Dick Geis. This falls between the two extremes of Locus and Starship in terms of production, and tends to be more quietly competent than sensational. Each issue contains a large number of book reviews, an interview, letters and a column by Darrell Schweitzer. Cartoons lend the magazine a more informal air, and back issues (and current ones for that matter) can be obtained from Ken Slater, Fantast Medway Ltd, 39 West Street, Wisbech, Cambs PE13 2LX. Subscription rate for four issues is the equivalent of \$6 in sterling. For actual value for money, SFR tends to be top of the list, although I still have a preference for Locus. A couple of other such magazines now exist; Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Review (published monthly, containing coverage of all new SF titles, up to date reviews, news and some details of British publications - write: Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Review, PO Box 2845 San Bernardino, California, 92406, USA) and Thrust (PO Box 746, Adelphi, MD 20783).



Onto actual fanzines, and the task becomes nigh impossible with the gamut of productions ranging from truly dreadful to not bad. The most important aspect of American fanzines to bear in mind is that compared to British ones, their standard of reproduction is far greater. But as I've already stated, this doesn't automatically open up into a collection of class fanzines simply because the writing and interest content is so variable. The only way I can suggest to acquaint yourselves with the fanzines is to actually take a good long hard look at them, but failing that, here is a list of just some of the more recent publications that are worthy of more than just a dismissive glance. Please not that this isn't a listing of the only acceptable fanzines, since there are others around, which will no doubt surface at Seacon in one form or another.

#### Rothnium

David Hull, Box 471, Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 5P7, Canada - c\$1.25  
Contains an art folio, printed on fine stock paper and tends towards the fannish end of the spectrum. Seen worse.

#### Lan's Lantern

George Laskowski Jr, 47 Valley Way, Michigan 48013, USA - \$1.00  
Photo-litho, three column lay-out. Conreps, GoH speeches, fandom, interviews, letters. Probable appeal would be to fans who still read sf.

#### Mota

Terry Hughes, 606 N Jefferson St, Arlington, Virginia 22205, USA - \$1.00  
Genuine fannish fanzine; interesting, lively, from 1979 TAFF winner. Enough said.

#### Empire SF

Mark McGarry, Box 967, New Haven CT 06504, USA - \$1.50  
For the more serious minded SF reader. Photo-litho production. Mainly fiction, but some interesting articles to attract the flagging attention.

#### Knights

Mike Bracken, 1810 Ramada Blvd, Collinsville, IL 62234 - \$1.50  
Heavy stock paper but profficiently duplicated. Gen zine; general articles, artwork. Nothing outstanding.



DNQ

Taral, 1812-415 Willowdale Ave, Willowdale Ontario, M2N 5B4, Canada  
Useful and regular newszine. Contains serious news alongside more light-hearted and interesting fannish material. A lot to interest UK readers.

The Whole Fanzine Catalog

Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Rd, No 207 Detroit, Michigan 48219, USA - 3 for \$1 or trade.

Essential fanzine review mag for those wanting to know more about American fanzines. Also reviews UK zines that reach him, but some of his opinions with regard to these are a little suspect.

Yandro

Robert & Juanita Coulson, Route 3, Hartford City, IN 47348, USA. UK agent: Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Rd, Hoddesdon, Herts - £0.40

Book reviews, fanzine reviews, letters. Run of the mill sf orientated fanzine. Lighthearted in parts, but not very stimulating.

Xenolith

Bill Bowers, PO Box 3157, Cincinnati, Ohio 45201, USA - \$1.50

Competantly produced fannish genzine. Interviews occasionally, professional contributions. Not outstanding, but efficient.

Raffles

Stu Shiffman, 880 W 181st, No 4D, New York, NY 10033, USA and

Larry Carmody, PO Box 1091, New Hyde Park, NY 11040, USA - \$1.00

Nice feel to this fannish fanzine. Interesting articles that don't mention sf, reasonable fanzine reviews. Worth taking a look at.

Mad Scientist's Digest

Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Rd, No 207, Detroit, Michigan 48219, USA - \$1.00

Well produced fannish genzine, but does tend to include the odd dull contribution. (Usually fan biographies by Ian Williams). Otherwise, can maintain interest throughout.

Genre Plat

Allyn Cadogan, 251 Ashbury St, No r, San Francisco, CA 94117, USA - \$1.00

Lengthy genzine, but has Grant Canfield artwork as a redeeming feature. Reviews, articles, letters. Sustained Middle-of-the-Road production; okay to show dotting parents and teachers at school.

Of Such Are Legends Made

Joyce Scrivner, Box 1518, North Wales, PA 19454, USA - \$1.50

Originally published in aid of TAFF (Trans Atlantic Fan Fund), but should by now be a regular fanzine (as regular fanzines go). Fannish genzine, with likely appeal in UK.

\*\*\*\*\*

As I've said, not a complete list - and by no means are all these fanzines listed personal favourites, but I've tried to cover as wide a spectrum as possible - but sufficient, one would imagine, to incite a little interest. Don't forget when sending off for them to send money or your own fanzine in trade, and you might like to mention that it was the wonderful BSFA who put you in touch. We might end up with a lawsuit yet.

Alan Dorey



# Mailbag

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Oh, where have all the letter-writers gone? Are you all on vacation  
 \* holiday? Or was the last Matrix so boring that you've all fall-  
 \* en asleep? There's only about a dozen lying in my in-tray com-  
 \* pared with over forty after M24, so let's see what you can do  
 \* for M26. Meanwhile, we'll have a look at what the few had to  
 \* say this time.  
 \* \*\*\*\*\*

PHIL JAMES, 4 Gurnos Road, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan, CF47 9NH  
 Thanks for the latest issue of Matrix, another good issue I thought,  
 even though it continues to retain the same old format; the same  
 editors, the same predictably rectangular pages, the same timeworn  
 formula of numbering the tops of the pages starting at the front and  
 increasing to the back.

Seriously though, I don't see why anyone should consider Matrix too  
 straightjacketed. Admittedly, the point that Matrix is an official  
 publication of the BSFA and so subject to certain constraints is  
 valid, but, even for the most in-groupish of personalzines it is  
 desirable to stick to some formula, to preserve some continuity,  
 apart from the name, from issue to issue, a format that readers can  
 readily identify as being THE MULLIGRUBS BREEDER'S QUARTERLY (or  
 whatever).

SHOCK ANNOUNCEMENT!! Is Glasgow really the centre of the known  
 Fannish Universe?? Three of the four cons, including SEACON, in  
 the Events section seem to be north of the Border. Is this ano-  
 ther of Dave Langford's devious plans to sow confusion throughout  
 fandom? Perhaps it is an attempt to avoid that fate predicted in  
 The End Of All Songs; the bit about the 'grave-pits of Brighton'...

Once again, Dave Lewis has delved deep into his copy of the READER'S  
 DIGEST COMPENDIUM OF 101 NASTY THINGS TO SAY ABOUT THE BSFA and pro-  
 vided more comment-hooks than a letter-hack-Convention cloakroom.  
 I get a mental picture of Dave sitting in the room between the  
 Argument-room and the Insults-room (in the Monty Python sketch)  
 churning out such letters day in, day out (lord help anyone walk-  
 ing into the room.) If he can keep up this rate of flow why not  
 give him a regular column - no-one could ever accuse Matrix of being  
 'too bland' after that! (Not that I'm saying it is now - I like  
 it.)

I can't really comment on Dave's first point, since he, working in  
 the field of organisation management will undoubtedly know more  
 about it than I do, but as for his second point concerning the BSFA  
 becoming a pressure group! What sort of pressure is the BSFA going  
 to exert on politicians in the area(s) of interest - a bombing cam-  
 paign against HMSO shops perhaps, or a daring raid to capture the  
 public-address system of the House of Commons could be mounted fol-  
 lowed by a read-in (sorry) of the PERRY RHODAN series over the  
 Tannoy?

As for the areas of interest; the issue of libraries paying royalties  
 to authors of works loaned is a good one, but why pressure politicians  
 over something like the crediting of artists work on paperback covers?  
 Do we really need an Act of Parliament on such an issue?? This country

is overgoverned as it is.

Like all good things there comes a point at which the thing becomes more of a hindrance than an aid. The growth of the practice of lobbying and the proliferation of interest during the 20th century has got to the point where, in many instances, the proper authority is delayed from making a decision by the groups which in the past were helpful in providing the arguments and data needed to make an informed decision. Now more than ever we need to be able to make hard choices quickly if the world is to survive the next thirty or so years.

I feel that it would be pointless for the BSFA to start championing Author-lib in the strident, fanatical manner of the womens- and gay libbers. I think that the BSFA and the members of the BSFA, should quietly, in their own individual way support any measures that would promote the position of good SF in society (a couple of SF fans as Cabinet ministers is a good place to start!). More good SF being read would probably indicate a healthy trend in society since those that appreciate good sf are usually quite intelligent (and literate like what I am).

Thus, my Master Plan - and none other, I tell you, can do three things; create the conditions for a healthier, more intelligent and SF oriented society - one better able to cope with the problems of the future. Secondly it will swell the size and importance of the BSFA to the level of a multi-national corporation and thirdly, due to the hordes of new fans typing Locs to Matrix, the shares of the TIPPEX Co will rocket out of sight. Ha ha ha, Igor, sell the operating table and rejuvenation vats and get my stockbroker on the line.....

KEVIN TYLER, 42 Mount Pleasant Rd, Bedworth, Nuneaton, Warwickshire

On reading David Lewis's letter in Matrix 24 I had a quiet chuckle to myself. Oh, I can see it now:

BSFA HEADLINES May/June 1984

- \* BSFA Eurocandidate says: "We are the party of the future. Europe is only one step towards the World State. We know how. We read Asimov and Heinlein.
- \* BSFA consulted by scientists. "Have any of your authors solved the fuel crisis?", they ask.
- \* BSFA helps rehouse homeless BEMs in the Leeds area.
- \* Covers & Ups, financial consultants to BSFA, say £140,000 donation was not used to influence Parliament's vote on the science budget.
- \* Authors ask BSFA to renegotiate book contracts.
- \* Management denies rumours of BSFA membership strike over current purge of committee members.

Let's have some perspective. BSFA is not a political pressure group or the Institute of Chartered Fans. It is a small association with various publications and services which cater for the individual reader's need. Certainly expansion is to be encouraged, but Lewis's ideas are, at this stage, science fictional to say the least. We are fans not party members (Science fiction is a literature not a blueprint).



\*\*\*\*\* Onto some more serious comments on the purpose of life, the universe and the BSFA from....

PETER PINTO, 42 Breakspears Road, Brockley, London SE4 1UL

By and large, I find the mailing of less lasting interest than a meringue. The BSFA does give the appearance of existing for perform two basic functions:-

to maintain its existence and  
to produce the mailing as frequently (or otherwise) as the committee sees fit.

While there is nothing reprehensible about either of these, there is nothing particularly exciting, either. The maintenance of the organisations's existence is probably inherently boring (though nonetheless demanding of hard work for that) - and without clear intentions and a willingness to go to the ends of ~~the/earth~~ fandom to drag the sort of articles that fit-out of the people with something to say who can do it in an entertaining or provocative way - on the part of the editors, the publications are bound to present uninspired and bitty facades behind which the occasional item of excellence is not only easily overlooked - but seems positively out of place when finally noticed.

OK that's pretty general, and on only a couple of years' knowledge of fandom. I am prepared to defend it if necessary - but I'd prefer to make some suggestions about Matrix and the fan-side of BSFAdom: that each mailing, there be included a copy of an issue of a fanzine produced by a BSFA member - the size of the repro run to be (?) part-financed out of BSFA funds - the zine having been chosen by the fanzine reviewer and discussed by him/her and its editor/writer at length in Matrix. (The fanzine obviously to be so featured only once.)

(I expect howls of horrified objections to this - but I also think it's the single most effective thing Matrix/the BSFA could relatively easily do to promote fandom. Not all faneds want their labour of lust to reach the great unwashed gennerul public - but is this sufficient reason to forget about this suggestion?)

That all possible steps be taken to increase the value of the Carnell. The BSFA award could easily be elevated to significance beyond its present, after-though like status. I have never seen notice of the award given prominent display in a BSFA zine - in that Vector is the official journal (etc.), if the BSFA all but ignores the winners of its own award by not making a song and dance about the show every year in its pages, it should be no surprise to find that the prozines show no interest either; and if the sf world doesn't, who will? (As a matter of interest, is there a press-release on the Carnell-winner, and the award, - and if so, is it sent out to the prozines? The semi-prozines? The sf publishers? The press?)

One quick step (which Keith Freeman may have sound objections to - overrule him) to increasing the number of people voting for it is to award one free mailing extra in payment. It has worked wonders for the Locus poll.

The single most enjoyable item in M24 is the installment of "the captive" - but for future reference (and neofen who come up against the same problem) please could it be noted that drink is not the solution. It merely exacerbates the problem. Fresh bread (unleavened bread is ok, but chapattis and pappadoms are inadvisable/able) bare of any and all garnishments works best. It absorbs the spices from

the roof, walls, floor and other furnishings of the mouth, and on swallowing removes the irritant chemicals (not to mention monosodium glutamate) which the higher parts of the alimentary system finds unbearable. I must, however, confess to a couple of niggles, 1465 appears atypical in attempting to get out of the con. After all, he's (presumably) paid his registration fee. Most would seem to regard this as sufficient grounds for exploring the seamier sides of the hotel and the programme for hiding places - possibly ending up with an escape disguised as a box of stock being removed from the hucksters' room after the concom and the BSFA goons have concluded their bird has flown. I suspect the safest places to hide would be in the film room, behind the registration desk, or in the permanent floating dungeons and dragons game. Or in the main restaurant once the con com has given its token feed to the GoH & big names who've worked on their behalf.



\*\*\*\*\* Let's hear what more of you feel the function of the BSFA is. Onto things inspired by David Lewis.

KEITH FREEMAN, 269 Wykeham Rd, Reading

To add to Sandy Brown's answer to Dave Lewis - my records aren't set up to record how long a member has been a member. It could be done, but I suspect the work involved, if looked at objectively, would not be justified by the results obtained (and the use to which said results could be put).

Several years ago (when, in fact, I was Vice-Chairman) every member who failed to renew was sent a letter asking him/her WHY. The very few answers were of no practical use. No-one admitted to leaving for any specific reason that the BSFA could have done anything about. Mostly it was something like "...lost interest in sf....", "...too busy now I'm at University....", "...just got married....". I'd ask, if anyone IS leaving the BSFA for any specific reason that he/she thinks could be altered, for them to WRITE (to MA'RIX, to Alan, to VECTOR) and tell the BSFA what it's not doing right! As proof (or illustration) of my answer to David Lewis, or part of it, here's the body of a letter I received:

"Dear Keith,

Thanks for sending the reminder for my subscription. I'm afraid I won't be renewing my subscription for the time being - I'm finding



that I have no time at all to read the mailings, let alone take a more active interest in the BSFA. Seems to be due to a combination of work pressures and extra-curricular activities and interests."

So, David Lewis strikes again. To enable the BSFA Committee to look into your suggestions, Dave, perhaps you could give them the names and addresses of the specialist firms you mention (would be helpful also to have some idea of their charges to see if their minute budgets bears any relationship to the BSFA's minute budget). In your second paragraph, last sentence, I fear you're forgetting TANSTAAFL. If the executive head (I think you've misconstrued the purpose of chairman) got the money Len Murray gets, then we could expect him to pursue the role in a similar way. Whilst volunteers are running the BSFA in their spare time the only way of increasing the amount of work done is for more members to volunteer to do odd (and perhaps boring/dirty) jobs.....

Suggestions Box. This seems to be fulfilling part of the function I was thinking of when I suggested it. Suggestions are flowing in, but there seems to be no further discussion of these ideas. Is this so, or is it that the further comments etc. are being hugged to the bosoms of the Committee?

On Philip Muldowney's suggestion of the full list of officers/services. It is my understanding (perhaps the Committee could tell me if I'm wrong) that the BSFA booklet (probably expanded from its present form when certain technological improvements come within my grasp) will be (a) sent to all new members and (b) sent to each member as they renew (eg each year). Also it will be amended every two months (if necessary) so that, with suitable amendments appearing in Matrix, every member should have an up-to-date record at his/her fingertips.

\*\*\*\*\* Now for some steam being let off.

MARK GREENER, 2 White Hart Close, Buntingford, Herts

I feel that I must write and respond to Alan Marshall's letter in Matrix. YOU REPULSIVE, EVIL-SMELLING, INCOHERENT, BABBLING, PACHYDERM! DR WHO DESERVES A HUGO! Sorry, I got a bit cross!

Seriously, the Dr does deserve some recognition in the world of sf. Implying it is childish is exactly the kind of hostility I came against as a comic and sf fan! All mature Dr Who fans come up against it. The Dr is the longest running sf programme anywhere in the world as well as having the second largest fan movement, (after Star Trek). It seems to me that you haven't sat down and watched a complete series (ie 4 episodes). From this you could deduce that it can be watched on more levels than just the childish level. It can (and does) provoke intellectual arguments (ie is the Dr gay?). But more importantly it promotes interest in sf. I would not have discovered sf if it was not for Dr Who. Okay so it has flaws, but so does any work of art. Anyway, it might win the awards at FFC this year.

JIM DARROCH, 21 Corslet Road, Currie, Midlothian, Scotland

First conventions: I have been very lucky, in that my first con was Faircon 1, which was not organised along overtly fannish lines. By this I mean that Faircon catered for the neofan much more than the typical con (or so I am led to believe). It was run with the

programme occupying a position of prime importance, so that neofans would always be able to find something to interest them, whether it be film, video, panel, etc. Through these events, I got to know a number of people and was grateful for a good programme to focus on. As such, a con like Faircon can be recommended to anyone. Now, if my first con had been this year's Eastercon (Yorcon) it would probably also have been my last. For an event in the year of the dreaded Worldcon, there was a suspicious lack of programme. In fact, the most eagerly awaited event turned out to be the daily opening of the bar. My point is that if I had gone to Yorcon as a total stranger, I would have become extremely bored. Was there a Yorcon programme? At least we can expect Albacon to be rather better, assuming that all you people in remote England make the effort to come to Scotland.

The above brings me to my next point of interest. Apathy, a strange word, used out of context in so many cases. In particular, it is used to describe the non-active membership of the BSFA. You can write off at least 10-20% of the members, because they do not want to become really involved with fandom and are quite content to read and enjoy. Fair enough, that is their privilege, nothing wrong with that. Next, you have a percentage of fans who are, perhaps, scared to write a loc/article for fear of ridicule from the 'establishment'. This seems a pity, but there does not seem to be any way to change the situation. You now come to the portion of fans who do want to contribute locs or whatever, but don't really think that anyone is interested in reading their thoughts on a topic. So perhaps you should stop alienating your non-active membership by such statements that everyone is too bloody lazy to write to Matrix. Instead, why not encourage people and assure them that we do want to hear what they have to say. (I know that you didn't say the above actually: poetic license).

It might be a good idea to make a list in Matrix of the type of article needed. More people may write if they knew exactly what was required of them. For instance, a while back I had a piece in Matrix concerning sf & "classical" music. Does anyone have any other information on this subject? I, for one, would like to hear about it if they do.

ALAN YARWOOD, 61 The Ridge, Marple, Stockport, Cheshire

What the hell are you doing including 'Fantasy Trader' in my BSFA mailing? The sort of stuff advertised in FT is the sort of drivel that gives sf a bad name. While this purely personal view may not be in accord with those of the rest of the members, I find it irritating that I should be subjected to something like this which I have no earthly interest in. If members are interested in FT surely they can take out a subscription to it themselves without using the mailing services of the BSFA.

If it is at all possible, please don't send me any more! Please don't say FT is harmless because it's free. Rubbish is still rubbish even when you don't have to pay for it!

STEEV HIGGINS, 18 St Austell Ave, Tyldesley, Greater Manchester

I quite liked Paul's fanzine reviews, but like the rest of the zine, they weren't provocative enough. I don't think he succeeded in his stated aim either. Fanzine reviews, after all, stem from a point of view which sees fanzines as a thing in themselves, and before you can start making claims for any way of judging them, you have to establish



that. The Matrix column is the chief propaganda tool for that view, and until the future faneds in the BSFA can appreciate that, they aren't going to have any way of judging quality, whatever field they want to work in, sercon, genzine, fannish or personalzine.

There are criteria for approaching fanzines other than how it shapes up beside their favourite prozines. That has to be established before we can go on. Then we can start trying to delineate what the criteria are, and maybe get a bit of useful response on what others might be. I think a lot more thought ought to be put into the aims of the column before the particular fanzines can be put on the dissecting table.

\*\*\*\*\* I'd really like some more contentious material in Matrix and that was my idea of introducing an Opinion column a few issues ago. All I need is the material - hint!

GREG HILLS, 22a Polson Street, Wanganui, New Zealand

Now then. Ooh, goody, blood&guts. Joe Nicholas seems to have the idea that I think (a) every letter received should be printed, and (b) every word of each letter should be printed verbatim and uncut.

I can only assume he is being deliberately awkward. Point (a) I will not argue here (I deny its origin); Point (b) is similarly ridiculous. Let me clarify. An editor's job with letters is twofold (at least): to present interesting items, culled of often irrelevant personal asides and to give letter-writers a chance at being printed. With the ordinary fanzine, this latter is to encourage the loccers to write again (I know people who discourage quickly if they aren't printed) and a faned who does not print letters may be harming their own cause. With a clubzine, the idea is to provide a forum for members. In such a case the editor is not functioning correctly if they act as almighty, ultimate censor on anything and everything. The idea is not to present a short set of coherent and beautifully written arguments, but to reflect the opinions of the members.

I am not arguing that Matrix print all of every letter received (well, well, I'm refuting point (a) as well!). But editing part or all of a person's letter, just because it seemingly or actually repeats an argument provided by someone else in the same column, can give a false impression, both of opinion and of the writer's worth. Editing an incoherent or badly reasoned argument might pass - but it can very easily change into censorship of arguments the editor disagrees with. Once a clubzine editor starts doing that, they are no longer providing a service. Not editors but censors.

I view censors with the same distaste Joe Nicholas views compilers. So to answer Joe's straight question, I will give a straight reply. I favour magazines that edit letters down to interesting and relevant levels - this  $\neq$  stimulating. I do not favour a padded, bloated lettercol; but one that is edited down till only stimulating essentials (his words) remain is dry reading. One can get worked up over items presented in such a column, but one cannot (at least, I cannot) empathise with items presented so baldly. I want something more than opponent-opponent type contact in a lettercol.

As for small type (I note Bill Little has also asked for the return of micro-elite), the difficulty of reading past Matrixes came from two angles: first, the sometimes blotchy nature of the reproduction, and second the typeface chosen. Every example of photoreduced text

I've seen convinces me more that a decently typed piece of ordinary type looks better at micro-elite levels than a fancy type. Such type will survive quite incredible degrees of blurring and blotching.

A look at the steadily swelling WAHF in this Matrix (14 names) convinces me that until something is done to increase the words/column, BSFA members are being subjected to avoidable censorship. I have only suggested small type for the letter column, remember!

\*\*\*\*\* I had thought that M24's lettercolumn would have you jumping for joy. If a letter-writer was WAHF'd it's because whilst I appreciate hearing from him/her, there wasn't anything for Mailbag in the letter. Anybody with anything to say went into M24's Mailbag, believe me!

SANDY BROWN, 18 Gordon Terrace, Blantyre, Scotland

"progris riport 2 from the membirship seketry - 28 July 1979  
Having realised that what I said in Matrix 24 might be construed as meaning that the majority of our members are in the 18 to 20 age group, I'd better set the record straight. The average age of new members is about 24; most of them fall in the age band 20-30; the range is 12-60 years. What I was meaning is that I was conjecturing that it is the younger end of the membership who don't renew - I have no proof of this, as renewals are handled by Keith Freeman, and anyway I don't keep a record of members' ages.

I was assuming that sf fans fall into three categories - (1) those who are fascinated by sf before puberty, and tend to remain lifelong fans (and members); (2) those who are attracted to sf not long after puberty, when sf is only one of a large number of things in which one is interested; and (3) those who encounter sf quite some time after puberty, and to whom it becomes a habit which grows into enthusiasm. I am of the opinion (mind you, it's only an opinion) that group 2 is the one in which the majority of non-renewals occur.

Number of new members since I took over the job at Yorcon - 82  
Number of pieces of mail sent out since Yorcon - 266

To all those new members whose applications I have processed - I take a sort of proprietary interest in seeing your names in the Matrix and Vector lettercolumns - welcome, and I hope you enjoy being a member. Goodby.

R.S. please tel \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* not to be such a grouch when pepul laff at him and he woud have more frends. Its easy to have frends if you let pepul laff at you. Im going to have lots of frends where I go."

ANDY SAWYER, 59 Mallory Road, Tranmere, Birkenhead, Merseyside

At last someone who wants to use the lettercol to discuss SF rather than definitions of it! OK, Phil Rosenblum; there's only one snag... I've read neither Ophiuchi Hotline nor Deus Irae, so I can't really make any worthwhile contribution. I liked most of In The Halls Of The Martian King although, if the stories therein are anything to go by, it seems to me that the fulsome praise John Varley has received from some quarters is due to the fact that, like so many other SF writers, Varley is writing entertaining, slightly offbeat stories which, when you look at them, are firmly in the mainstream of the SF tradition. The difference is that he is doing it well, using imagination and definite storytelling ability. I thought it interesting that Phil



used the word 'competent' to describe Varley's writing. I'd say the same. I can't think offhand of anywhere where he writes badly, but I'm not too sure where he writes particularly well. Like most SF writers, the story he tells takes priority over the way he tells it... which I suppose in many ways is fair enough.

DAN McKEER, 49 Albany Road, Chorlton, Manchester

After you printed UMIST SF Soc's address in an earlier Matrix I was amazed to receive a letter from Poland asking for a copy of Grok?, our magazine. Since then I've been writing to the Polish SF Society's publicity agent cum press officer, Wiktor Bukato, who, as far as I can tell, subscribes to the BSFA. In his latest letter he broaches the problem of obtaining books for their library. Although Pan and Penguin are available, others aren't, he particularly cites NEL and Panther. What he'd like to do is try and arrange an exchange scheme, either British titles for Polish - assuming someone would be interested in Polish language SF, or "something else", about which he is understandably vague. I for one don't know any Polish SF readers (ie Polish language - this could get confusing!) so I wonder if you could print the gist of Wiktor's offer in case somebody's interested. Wiktor's address is PO Box 983, 00-950 Warsaw, Poland. Come to that, anybody with any ideas about how they could obtain English language SF books cheaply could be well received.

\*\*\*\*\* Now back to a second letter from Phil James

PHIL JAMES

I've just seen something which made me so angry I just had to do something I don't normally do; write and complain. To kill two stormtroopers with one laser-blast (if Luke Stywarmer can do it, why can't I?) I thought I'd find out what other BSFA members thought at the same time.

Browsing through the large and wide-ranging collection of SF in my local branch of Smiths, I thought I would look through the editions of the three books of Lord of the Rings. I wanted to check the use of the word 'etten' (used by Sam when talking of being eaten by wolves on page 315 of the 1975 single volume edition). I wondered whether it was an archaic form or just a misprint of 'eaten' but it also appears in the latest edition (the one with the awful still from the 'epic' film by Bakshi. I much preferred Pauline Baynes' cover).

Anyway, just as I was about to leave, I noticed a slim volume next to 'The Hobbit'. It was the FOTONOVEL (sic) OF LORD OF THE RINGS. Now I know that many people do not like TLOTR, personal tastes differ widely, and any book that 'comes alive' for some people is bound to leave a nasty taste in the mouths of others, but they are all bibliophiles and would not like to see any book they liked treated in such a manner. Apart from the format of film-stills and short captions, which I don't normally like, the pictures used ensure that I never want to see the film currently on release. I saw Bakshi's previous cartoon; Wizards - it was rather mediocre and eminently forgettable, and the animation techniques were rather crude. From what I've seen, they haven't improved; Gimli looks like a refugee from a remake of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Legolas looks like a hairdresser and the Nazgul look extremely silly. Words fail me when I try to describe the Hobbits. As for the captions. Obviously, in the chosen format, as few words as possible and as short as possible must be used but it is obvious, at even the short glance that I had - I wouldn't buy it

at £1.5) for a slim volume - that the caption-writer watched the film. Because he certainly hasn't read the book. Did you know, for instance that it was Legolas (and not Glorfindel) who met Strider and the four hobbits as they were making for Rivendell and Legolas acknowledges Elrond as his lord - and not his father, Thranduil! The Ford at which the flood drowns the mounts of the Black Riders is not the Ford of Bruinen, but is across the river Brandywine, (groan)!!

This book has really opened my eyes; I used to think that Merry and Pippin accompanied Frodo into exile for the basest of reasons; a love and friendship for Frodo so deep that they were willing to accompany him into unknown dangers and foreign lands perhaps never to return to the Shire, whereas they were in fact 'only going as far as Bree'.

As I have said, I've only glanced at this book and found quite a few errors on only the couple of pages that I read, so I should think that the rest of the book bears hardly any resemblance to what Tolkein wrote.

Sorry to have gone on at such length but I feel very sad that a good book should be ruined in such commercial productions, and I just had to complain to someone.

WAFF Tom Jone, Andrew Darlington, Clive Woodley and J D Baldwin

## Miscellany Corner

### MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD

Wanted - Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine No 3 (Autumn 77), No 4 (Winter 77) No 5 (Jan/Feb 79) and No 6 (Mar/April). SF Hall of Fame ed Robert Silverberg (Vol 2). Nebula Award Stories Vol 1 & 3 ed. Zelazny and Vol 4 ed. Anderson. They'd Rather be Right (a.k.a. The Forever Machine) by Mark Clifton & Frank Riley.  
Brian Rendell, 10 Brenchley Close, Haysford Park, Bromley, Kent.  
\*\*\*\*\*

Wanted - to buy or borrow a copy of 'Philip K Dick and the Umbrella of Light' by Angus Taylor and/or 'The Cosmic Puppets' by Philip K Dick. Contact John R Palmer, 48 South Hermitage St, Newcastleton Roxburgh, TD9 0QE  
\*\*\*\*\*

Paul Kincaid is hoping to form a new group in the Folkestone area, so anyone interested please contact Paul at: c/o Mrs Kennedy, 45 Brockman Rd, Folkestone, Kent.  
\*\*\*\*\*

Attention people in the Bolton area: a new group is being formed. Meetings every second and fourth Wednesday evenings at the Three Crowns, Deansgate, Bolton, around 8 pm. Steev Higgins tells us, however that there's no admittance unless you're 16, female and wearing suspenders, or bring a sister who is!  
\*\*\*\*\*

A new entrant to the Zine Handicap Stakes - "It Can't Happen" by Mike Deller. Address: 21 Roxeth Hill, Harrow, Middx. 10p stamp e/w could be worth it on this dark horse.  
\*\*\*\*\*



Wanted - Science Fiction Monthly magazines - Volume 1, Nos 1-9 inc.  
 Good condition essential - good price paid. Contact Ian Bell, 87  
 High Street, Chalgrove, Oxford, OX9 7SS, Tel: Oxford 890497.

\*\*\*\*\*

PUBLISHERS PLEASE NOTE Although the present function of the Intershare Society is that of helping members with the multilateral exchange of books and other goods, our aim is "to distribute small-press publications by rapid, selective exchange." Why not help us to help you? Six months' membership costs £1 - or send SAE for details to: J S Cairns, 15 Brinkburn St, Sunderland, SR4 7RG

\*\*\*\*\*

### COMPETITION

Not many entries for the last competition - only four entries but unfortunately, none of those correct. The answers were, in fact:

1. City and the Stars - Arthur C Clarke
2. The Muller-Fokker Effect - John Sladek
3. Of Men and Monsters - William Tenn

Those who did enter were: . . . . . Greg Hills, Steev Higgins and Clive Woodley. Since nobody got it right, no prizes this time.

Because of the obvious difficulty the last competition caused, we thought we'd try something different this time. Go back and look at the front cover of this Matrix and you'll see that Jim Barker's unlikely looking spaceship is made up of a number of 'images' from various sf films, tv series etc. What we'd like you to do is to identify them and a prize goes to the one who gets either them all, or the most. Just to make it difficult, we're not going to tell you how many there are. (Guess who can't find the letter which tells us what the answer is!) Those of you who attended Yorcon will have seen it before, but we bet you can't remember the answer.

\*\*\*\*\*

Well, that's all for now. Once again, we apologise for the lowering of standards in this Matrix - extenuating circumstances sir. Hopefully all should be back to normal by the next issue - unless Eve can't cope with the novel situation of not having to work from the minute she gets in at night till we go to bed. It will be very strange for many people after Seacon - three years in the planning, and it's over in five days!



HI! THIS IS THE CAPTIVE... I'M SORRY  
THERE'S NO COMIC STRIP THIS ISSUE.  
THE "COMMITTEE" HAVE COME UP WITH  
THEIR MOST FIENDISH PLOT; NAMELY  
KEEPING ME SO BUSY WITH ARTWORK  
FOR SEASON THAT I CAN'T EVEN THINK  
OF ESCAPING! BUT I'M NEARLY FINISHED  
AND I'LL BE BACK NEXT ISSUE! IF  
I HAVEN'T GOT AWAY, THAT IS...





AN INDEX TO THE AUGUST 1979 BSFA MAILING

ALDISS, Brian: An Interview with	
by Brian Thurogood	V7
ALDISS, Brian: The Author's Lot	V5
ALDISS, Brian: This World and Nearer Ones	V4
AWARDS, BOOKS (News)	M10
COMPETITION	M28
FANS ACROSS THE SEA - Rob Jackson	M3
FANZINE REVIEWS: Dedicated Followers of Fashion	
by Alan Dorey	M15
FILMBOOKS + Postscripts - John Brady	V19
FOCAL POINT: (Editorial) - Chris Evans and Rob Holdstock	F3
HALF-LIFE - written by Chris Evans	
- drawn by Jim Barker	V23
INFINITY BOX, THE: Book Reviews	V11
IT'S ALRIGHT MA, IT'S ONLY SCIENCE FICTION - Alan Dorey	M7
LANGFORD, DAVID: My Secret Life with David and Charles	
(A Diary of the Selling of <u>War in 2080</u> )	F6
LEIBER BIBLIOGRAPHY, A: compiled by Chris Morgan	V9
LIFE ON MARS (Round the Clubs) - Simon Ounsley	M13
MARKET REPORT	F7
MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD	M27
NOTES AND QUERIES	F22
OUNSLEY, SIMON: The Teeth of the Phoenix (Fiction)	F13
POST, JONATHAN V: Skiing the Methane Snows of Pluto (Fiction)	F10
PRIEST, CHRISTOPHER: Writing a Novel? NO! (P and O selling)	F8
SCIENCE FICTION AND THE CINEMA by Steve Gallagher	V15
STEPHENSON, ANDREW: Searching for the Lost Chord (Research)	F4
TALKING POINTS:	
Writing SF for Children - Douglas Hill	
Who needs an agent? - Maggie Noach	
The problems of Genesis - Ken Bulmer	
Sprechen Sie Starshipese - Garry Kilworth	

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Key V = Vector 94  
F = Focus 1  
M = Matrix 25

Well, that was our first attempt at a comprehensive index to the mailing. Criticisms, comments, advice, etc would be appreciated so that we can improve/review the service. Please let the Matrix editors know.

