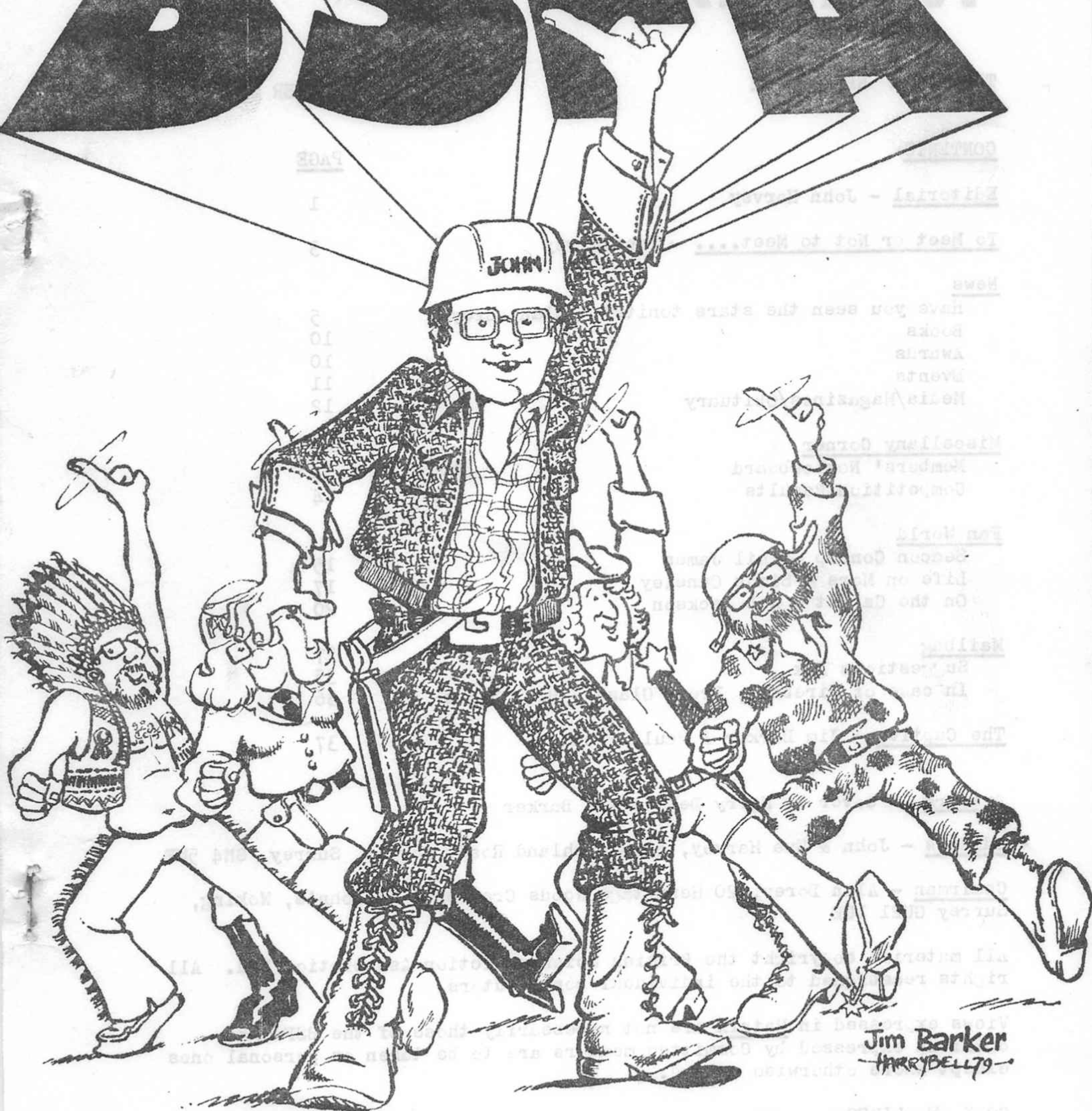


It's Fun To Be In The

BSFA



Jim Barker
HARRYBELL79

MATRIX

26

ISSN 0307 3335

OCTOBER 1979

MATRIX 26

THE BSFA NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 1979

CONTENTS

PAGE

<u>Editorial</u> - John Harvey	1
<u>To Meet or Not to Meet....</u> - Eve Harvey	3
<u>News</u>	
Have you seen the stars tonite? - Alan Dorey	5
Books	10
Awards	10
Events	11
Media/Magazines/Obituary	12
<u>Miscellany Corner</u>	
Members' Noticeboard	13
Competition Results	14
<u>Fan World</u>	
Seacon Conrep - Phil James	15
Life on Mars - Simon Ounsley	17
On the Carpet - Rob Jackson	20
<u>Mailbag</u>	
Suggestions Box	27
In case of Fireball, Break Glass - Bill Bains	35
	36
<u>The Captive</u> - Jim Barker & Paul Kincaid	37
<u>Artwork</u> - cover by Harry Bell & Jim Barker	
<u>Editors</u> - John & Eve Harvey, 55 Blanchland Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5NE	
<u>Chairman</u> - Alan Dorey, 20 Hermitage Woods Crescent, St John's, Woking, Surrey GU21 1UE	
All material copyright the British Science Fiction Association Ltd. All rights reserved to the individual contributors.	
Views expressed in <u>Matrix</u> are not necessarily those of the BSFA and opinions expressed by Committee members are to be taken as personal ones except where otherwise stated.	
<u>COPY DEADLINES</u>	
News & Letters	- December 20th (it's early because we're actually having a New Year holiday!)
Articles	- December 13th

EDITORIAL

Phew! Thank goodness that's over - Seacon I mean. To say it was rather tiring would be the understatement of the year. But I won't go into details here of the trials and tribulations of organising something that size - just ask the people who merely had to survive it as attendees. There's plenty more about Seacon already in this issue of Matrix. What I am more concerned about is the aftermath. For one thing it delayed the last BSFA mailing, and as a consequence, this one. Well, no-one felt up to a weekend thrusting Vector, Matrix & Focus into envelopes etc. So we apologise to you all, particularly those who wrote enquiring if it had got lost; it's good to know there're some people out there who actually miss us when we don't appear. The ripple-effects spread even wider, however, because the next mailing will also be a little later than scheduled - see Alan's article in the News Section. The copy deadlines we give each issue become rather nonsensical in cases like this, it makes me wonder why I bother giving them! We'll carry on though, you never know, one day they actually may be real. If you want to send us something, however, don't let the copy deadlines put you off - especially for news; it is more than likely that if it's not much more than a week later, we'll still be able to fit it in.

This lack of enthusiasm seems to be quite widespread - it's amazing. We thought Seacon would be a boost to fandom with special publications, fanzines, etc coming out both before and after the convention. This is Britain's chance to get a really lively, stimulating fandom on its feet, we thought. Oh, how wrong - true, there was a spate of fanzines etc before the convention - but the whole affair seems to have drained people so that there has been virtually nothing happening since except talk. Hopefully Novacon will give us the opportunity to get ourselves together again.

Another spin-off from Seacon has been the extensive media coverage of SF. Whether a mere coincidence, or prompted by Seacon, we have had a Radio 4 series on SF writers/writing; thanks to the persuasive powers of Malcolm Edwards and David Pringle of the SF Foundation, Radio 4 also broadcast J G Ballard's 'Drowned World' as a Book at Bedtime. As if this wasn't enough, there have been numerous programmes on local radio: Radio Brighton obviously had quite a lot of coverage; Capital Radio had several interviews; Radio Picadilly in Manchester also had some coverage. I'm sure there must have been numerous other instances that we don't know about. I have had one enquiry about the possibility of getting copies of tapes of these programmes, and this prompted me to think that it might be a good idea to open up a "SwapShop" type column - if you taped any radio programme and would be willing to make copies of it for people, could you let us know and we'll send on the names of people who have written saying they would like a copy.

That hasn't been the only media coverage by any means. BBC2's Time out of Mind was an excellent series and, whilst not liking the choice of authors (personal bias showing through), the series presented an attractive picture of SF and its authors. Particularly good was the all-Seacon programme.

OK it was badly put together with not enough explanation of the pictures, but they didn't laugh at us and mention UFO's and little green men too often. They actually took us seriously which is quite amazing really, because when Eve met them one day at the end of filming, they were suffering a little from culture-shock. One guy in particular kept on saying "I've never seen anything like it.... I've never seen anything like it....." Eve said it was an amazing feeling to see her fan room on the TV - makes you kinda proud you know. Let's hope the BBC live up to their reputation and repeat them soon (anybody with a video recorder?)

Still on TV, Robert Robinson never cracks much ice with me, but at least he gave an honest hearing to Ian Watson, Douglas Adams, Harry Harrison & Peter Nicholls in his Book Programme on Wednesday, 17th. Is SF losing its little green men/BEM/Flying saucer image at long last? I do hope so.

Now onto more mundane subjects. Last issue we mentioned a questionnaire. This will be going out with the next mailing, but we need some help and advice from the membership first. The questionnaire will, in fact, be in two parts. Alan Dorey is toying with the idea of getting "outside" (i.e. non-sf) advertising into Vector and Focus (?) both to boost our income and to broaden the base of our publications. To do this we have to give potential advertisers a 'consumer profile' so that they can decide whether their products are likely to appeal to you, and how to word the advertisements. Paul Kincaid (he has to get into each issue somehow) used to work for an advertising agency, so he has given us an idea of the sort of general information advertisers would want: age, spending power, geographical distribution, other interests etc. So the first part of the questionnaire will be concerned with these questions. The second part is about the BSFA and how well we are doing our jobs. We want to find out what people were expecting when they joined, and how well we live up to/surpass those expectations. That is easy to ascertain, where we need your help is in the area of what we can do to improve. To get some statistically viable figures we should like to suggest various alternatives, especially for Matrix, so how about dropping us a line on your views of the possible changes in Matrix and the other publications. We can then see if some ideas have a reasonably widespread acceptance and include them in the questionnaire.

Please do bother with this - a widely answered questionnaire is the only way we can find out how we are succeeding with Matrix and the BSFA in general; I know we get letters, but just because two or three people think one thing, doesn't mean it's widespread. To try and entice a larger response, we intend numbering all completed and returned questionnaires and will hold a lucky draw - so you may be in line for a prize if you take the trouble to return the questionnaire!

Well, that's enough from my weary pen (or should I say, Eve's weary typing fingers), hope you like this issue, and please keep up the LoCs, the response on the last issue was excellent - it really makes things worthwhile when a large, literate and interesting response is generated.

See you next year (unless you will be at Novacon).

John Harvey

TO MEET OR NOT TO MEET.....

Authors ought to be banned from attending conventions! Or at least they ought to be vetted first....

Perhaps I ought to explain that opening statement.

One of the perks, I thought, of helping to organise something like Seacon, was the opportunity to meet all my favourite authors. I was really looking forward to Seacon for that reason. Yes, before you all ask, I do read a lot of SF - even me, a fannish fan. In fact you'll find most fannish fans read or have read vast quantities of sf - so much so that they often get a rather jaundiced view of what's coming out today, plus the fact that they most probably know all the British authors, and have discussed with people who do know most of the overseas authors, and this will taint their enjoyment... but that's the main theme of this article, so more later.

Back to Seacon, as I was saying, I was really looking forward to it. I had my first incling that something might be wrong when the committee received a letter from Jerry Pournelle outlining the SFWA's (Science Fiction Writers of America)'demands' for their private suite. It appears that at American worldcons a private suite is provided for members of the SFWA (anyone who has published a book in the States and who is 'acceptable' to the present membership) so that they can retire from their adoring public occasionally. The demands went further than this, though; not only did they want a suite free, but also free hospitality - free booze and food. Now that's going a bit too far! So we gave them the suite, but nothing else - let them buy their own booze like the rest of us.

At Seacon I didn't get to see much of the programme - only three items apart from the opening and closing ceremonies in fact. That meant I didn't see anything of my heroes and heroines because they didn't come up to the fan room (with a few notable exceptions). Fandom was not what they were interested in. Not until the Hugo ceremony did I realise how many big names were there, when, like deathwatch beetle, they crawled out of the woodwork of the SFWA suite. John was even chucked out of that heart of hearts when he was searching for our missing games machine; "Where's your invitation" was his polite greeting and I'm pleased to say he retaliated in like style "I'm just checking that you haven't pinched our games machine!" - that showed them! Oh, I did see one famous author, when Arthur C Clarke heard that the TV cameras were in the fanroom he appeared faster than Joe Nicholas when someone's buying a round.

OK, I know how difficult it is when you're a big name. Robert Silverberg was chatting to me in the fanroom one day and was saying how difficult it is to have a conversation in private when 10-15 people interrupt to get his autograph. Yes, it is difficult and fans can be very inconsiderate. British authors don't seem to have so much trouble though, especially those who "mingle" during a convention and act just like us 'plebs'... Brian Aldiss, Bob Shaw, Chris Priest, Rob Holdstock etc. OK, so they're not quite as famous and we British fans are more reserved and considerate than the Americans, but there's more to it than that. Because these authors are seen to be around all the time, I'm sure they're not mobbed because fans don't feel they have to get in right away while they have the chance. They can wait until the author in question is not deep in conversation because they know they'll see them again during the con.

The American authors come out of hiding so infrequently that every opportunity must be seized, no matter the inconvenience.

They've made their bed and they've got to lie in it.

What infuriated me even more, is Jerry Pournelle's attitude. Instead of feeling the authors owe anything to their public, he feels that if it wasn't for he and his comrades, we wouldn't have conventions and therefore we owe them. Yes, there's some truth there, but how bloody pig-headed can you get!

Now if it ended there, I could quite easily carry on enjoying myself and say stuff you to those authors who have such high-minded attitudes. But unfortunately it doesn't. I find that my enjoyment or otherwise of my reading matter is affected if I know the author. His personality definitely taints my enjoyment. There are now quite a few books that I will not want to read because of the author's attitude. In fact, I can't enjoy John Brunner books for that very reason.

There is also the other side of the coin - I'm sure I enjoy books by authors I like more than I would if I were judging them completely objectively - Bob Shaw and Brian Stapleford for instance. I used to have this same problem as a teacher, but like most others in the profession, I found it easy to overcome because the subject matter is of prime importance there and either they got all the facts down or they didn't.

Maybe it's just me; I don't think so. So what can we do about it? Luckily it's not quite so disastrous for we British since most of our authors are very nice people too, but if we ever have another major international convention I think some thought ought to be given to the matter.

I wonder what the SFMA would do if the convention organisers took as strong a stance as they themselves do. What would their reaction be if they were told 'mingle or else - a convention only works if all the attendees work at it'.

What do you think? I've had my say.

Eve Harvey

NEWS

Have you seen the stars tonite?

If it's a quiet tranquil afternoon that turns you on, then Charing Cross Road on a Saturday afternoon is not the place to be. Okay, so it's not as overcrowded and depressing as Oxford Street with its banks of production line stores and hordes of milling shoppers, wondering whether it's the end of the world or not and whether they're heading in the right direction for the last bus to salvation, but it is - to put it mildly - like trying to squeeze yourself into a pound jar of jam 99% full. But it does have book shops, and that is sufficient to force myself along there once in a while. This always supposes that I have enough money to buy books and vast reserves of willpower not to go into Our Price Records and buy up that album 'I'd been meaning to get for months'. For certain folk amongst the SF fraternity, Charing Cross Road is like Mecca, only you don't get Eric Morley reading the BSFA awards in reverse order. Apart from Poole's, which has a fair selection of second-hand SF, there is Forbidden Planet in Denmark Street, which is opposite Foyle's, a veritable paradise for SF enthusiasts. Of course I don't actually descend to the level of reading SF, but I do buy the occasional book or magazine to see how things are going on. As BSFA chairman, I feel that this is the least I can do. One has to keep a proper sense of proportion about such matters and observe how the other half lives.

Okay, so I do buy Fantasy & Science Fiction each month, one of the more liberal of SF magazines. And yes, I will admit to buying Ad Astra. Oh, all right, I did read an SF novel - but only once. And I did get one of my books autographed by some SF luminary - Carl Blacksen or somesuch; anyway, you're sure to have heard of him. Still, on the latest occasion I was in Forbidden Planet (taking copious notes about the way in which SF enthusiasts talk and their mannerisms so that the next time I'm questioned at a Convention by someone who is there under the mis-apprehension that they're all about Science Fiction, I'll know how to behave so as not to arouse suspicion) I stumbled across a J G Ballard signing session. Suddenly, life seemed worth living again. Well, it did until I overheard a couple of people talking in between clearing the shop of the Collected Works of Perry Rhodan and R L Fanthorpe. "Signing session huh?" said one, carefully articulating each word so that his comrade could let this earth-shattering statement sink in to the far depths of his subconscious. "Uhhh...yeahhh. J G Ballard says the notice." The other looked at the publicity posters, and then at J G Ballard calmly sitting and signing just a few feet away. "J G Ballard...never heard of him. Do you know him?" There was then a pause of fully five seconds. "Nahh...must be one of these Mainstream writers they keep talking about." I controlled my intense anger and let the 'conversation' progress. "Yeahhh...I guess so. He certainly ain't a good SF writer like the stuff we read. These people don't know what they're missing. Perhaps they'll all come back next week when Alan Dean Foster's signing and meet a real sci-fi writer." Needless to say, they were obviously dedicated SF readers, but couldn't be bothered to look beyond the unusually large blinkers they were wearing.

Okay, so that example might be dismissed, but it happened, and happens too often. So, now's the opportunity for you to vote for your favourite SF novel of 1979 as once more the BSFA Award swings into operation. Full details have been announced in the latest issue of Vector, which as is customary, nobody has read yet. Well, go back to it and do so now - nominations have to be in by the end of this year, and with the revised rules now in force, we hope for a larger than usual participation. For the price of an 8p stamp, every member can make his or her valuable contribution.

Staying with Vector for a while - that wonderful journal read by millions - you'll notice a new format. In actual fact it's a return to the old-size Vector in the days when Malcolm Edwards was editor, remembered fondly by many of our older members. We have a new editor in Mike Dickinson, whose real enthusiasm for the use of different and varied material should elevate it to the peer position that it deserves. Assisting him in this bold task as Reviews Editor is Joseph Nicholas. Since he has already taken over Paperback Parlour, the magazine about which Gladstone once said "It's a hit!" (although there is some dispute as to whether or not he was quoted correctly), we now have one person responsible for receiving and distributing review copies of books.

Vector 95 has opted for the smaller size because we feel that it is far more manageable in this format. The great wealth of text that used to appear on every page has been broken up by the smaller page size, and there will be the opportunity to use more full-page illustrations with effect from Vector 96. There is also a new approach to the layout, which had better meet with approval or else we'll start serialising the True Life Story of Arth Pudor, denizen of the spaceways and the Betting shop Down the Road. (Which, if you remember those guys I saw in Forbidden Planet, should meet with some form of approval from somewhere). Mike Dickinson has already several major items lined up for future issues, but should you feel the desire to write something, don't hesitate to contact him to see what his requirements are.

News Updates

The BSFA litho fund has got off to a lively start and stands at £78 as at October 20th. A list is given below of those who have generously contributed. We're well on the way, but we do need a continued effort, and further contributions would be more than welcomed. A further coupon is included with this mailing. Any ideas for fund-raising schemes would be appreciated too. The sooner we reach our target, the sooner we can start passing on the benefits that can be derived from owning our own table-top litho.

Samuel Johnson	John Stewart	Michael Gould
Robert Earnshaw	J H Nevin	R G A Wilkinson
Victor Collanez Ltd	David Swinden	B K Norris
Nicholas Howard	Patrick Inglis-Taylor	E R James
Ieuan Baynham	J. A Connor	T P Williams
C I Naylor	Peter Holdsworth	R T Bean
Rich Philpott	Bernard Earp	Roger Waddington
William Gondall	Jacqueline Comben	Paul Griffith
V A Oleram	Alan Dorey	Eve & John Harvey

The first BSFA Press Release of 1979 has been prepared and distributed by Dave Langford, who has now been elected to the BSFA committee. A further PR will be sent out soon after Novacon as part of the BSFA's current programme for increased publicity. If any interested members

would like a copy (for genuine use only please) they are available from Dave at: 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks, RG2 7PW. Please send him a stamped s.a.e. and help the BSFA to reduce its costs.

Future collating dates for BSFA publications have been arranged as follows:

5/6 January 1980 (December 1979 mailing)
 1/2 March 1980 (February Mailing)
 26/27 April (April mailing)
 28/29 June 1980
 30/31 August 1980
 25/26 October 1980
 13/14 December 1980

Advertising copy dates will be one calendar month in advance of these dates, and mailings will usually be received by members within a week to ten days of the collating sessions. Changes to the dates might arise later if circumstances change, but it is hoped that they will act as a useful, if rough, guide.

Malcolm Edwards of the SF Founcaion has been elected to the BSFA committee to act as Foundation Liaison Officer. Dave Pringle, who held this post until recently has taken up work with Virgin Books but will retain his seat on the Council since he will be of invaluable help to us in this new position.

Hesitation Blues

Reaction to Focus, the new magazine the BSFA launched this summer, has been very favourable, although we do have several copies left over. If anybody requires additional copies or knows of anybody who would like a copy, they are available from me, price 75p plus 10p post and packing. Rob Holdstock and Chris Evans, the editors, are already hard at work on the second issue, which promises to be bigger and even more interesting, and should be available in February 1980. Rob Holdstock has recently moved house, and his new address is as follows:

38, Peters Avenue, London Colney, St Albans, Herts AL2 1NQ

The editorial address remains:

32 Balfern Grove, Chiswick, London W4 2JX

Moving on Down The Line - The Future of the BSFA

At present the BSFA is in a very healthy position. We have taken over 100 new members since Seacon, and morale seems to be at quite a buoyant level. The magazines are gradually improving and various projects are starting to get off the ground. But I am not happy.

The major problem with the BSFA is that it is a self-perpetuating organisation. It appears to exist solely to produce six mailings a year and maintain a membership level of around 700. And this is not healthy. I am absolutely convinced that for the service provided by the BSFA to improve and expand, we have got to expand our ideas as to what the BSFA should be. It is all very well talking in glowing terms about raising the membership to 2000 or so - no impracticality as far as we're concerned - but when the facilities for providing such a large membership with mailings on a regular basis simply do not exist, then the BSFA is going to continue revolving in ever decreasing circles.

One outstanding constraint prevents us from pushing membership much beyond 1,000 without having to resort to different methods of operation, and that is simply the production of Matrix and Paperback Parlour. Because they are duplicated magazines, we have to put all the pages together ourselves; they have to be stapled; they have to be stuffed into envelopes together with the rest of a BSFA mailing. All the envelopes have to be addressed; they have to be weighed; postage rates have to be worked out; they have to be delivered to a post office. In addition, accurate records have to be maintained as to which members are due for renewal, and which members are to receive only part of a mailing etc. This is very labour intensive and time-consuming, and to try and push up the membership, will cause a complete breakdown of this system. But, we must not be content to sit around treating the whole effort as a hobby. There is only so much that each committee member can be expected to do, and to force them to do more will simply be a recipe for disaster. So what do we do?

There are a few answers available, but all of them call for radical approaches to the way in which the BSFA is run. Firstly, to enable us to provide a proper service, the membership has got to be increased to a much higher level. The economies of scale should then be felt - that is to say, once initial costs of magazines etc have been paid, each additional copy produced costs proportionately less. With a swift increase in membership, we can possibly pay a suitable person for getting the production of magazines and mailings co-ordinated. Obviously this will be a financial burden, but it may prove to be the only way in which we can push the BSFA firmly into the 1980's. It must be forward looking. Paid assistance has been mentioned before, and unfortunately been scorned by several people. But if one is realistic about the situation there is little choice.

Of course, we could just leave the BSFA as it is, happily ticking over, neither being tremendously stunning or inovative, but surviving as a quiet backwater sustained solely by the momentum of its membership. If this were to be so, many opportunities to revitalise SF in this country would be lost. Is the BSFA award really representative of the reading tastes of everyone in the UK? With less than 100 people voting last time, I should think the answer is patently obvious. We should try and lift ourselves into apposition whereby we can influence the course of future events. I do not intend turning the BSFA into a pressure group, as has been suggested by one correspondent recently, but we should at least be a type of consultative body. Our relationships with publishers should be far more than just accepting review copies and begging ads to off-set costs of our magazines. If the BBC or Independent TV companies intend producing an SF orientated programme (such as the recent Time out of Mind series), shouldn't we be available to take matters further should viewers write in requesting further information?

Eventually, I should like to see the BSFA providing a form of clearing house for news of SF projects, books, films, TV, radio, conferences and conventions. Con committees could use us to push their publicity; contacts should be established regularly with the regional Arts Associations, with major regional libraries, the Bookshops, as well as the provincial newspapers. This will all take time to pull together, but unless we make a real start soon, the SF boom is going to die down, and any enthusiasm amongst the membership could die out almost overnight. The theory of what the BSFA should be doing sounds perfect; the practice will be much harder, and I do not neglect this important fact. We have got to have the right people to do the job. We need people who have a positive approach; people who are prepared to contribute to a whole;

people who will accept an element of professionalism; people who have the initiative to come up with new ideas and then put them into operation.

This all sounds very nice on paper, but we have to be realistic. We have survived for over 20 years through the concerted efforts of a dedicated crowd of people. We will no doubt continue whatever happens, but there must come a time - a time in the very near future - when some of the possible courses of action I've outlined have got to come into operation, by necessity. The BSFA was originally created to revitalise fandom - to save it, if you prefer - but that function is no longer necessary. Many people think that the BSFA should have nothing to do with the so-called irresponsible groups of fans who inhabit hotels two or three times a year for the ostensible purpose of getting drunk; yet they forget that it was fandom that spawned the BSFA, and the BSFA should never forget that. No longer should the BSFA be the Establishment (as indeed many now see us), but we should be forward looking and an essential part of things Science fictional. Fandom is a large ill-defined body, and the BSFA is only part of it, a fact that should not be ignored.

These thoughts I must stress are personal, and should not be taken as being the policy of the present committee or council, but facts have to be faced, and changes will ensue whether we like it or not. I only think that it is fair to put forward my views and see what sort of comments arise from you, the members, without whom, we would be totally sunk. Please do not hesitate to write and let me know. I hope to run a forum of opinion in the next issue of Matrix, and with luck, enough ideas will condense out of that to enable us to really get down to planning the future.

Alan Dorey

A SPECIAL OFFER TO ALL BSFA MEMBERS! FOR BSFA MEMBERS ONLY!

THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR by Bob Shaw and Walt Willis
was 70p to BSFA members 50p

MOOD 70 ed Kevin Smith
was £1.20, to BSFA members £1.00

FANARTIST SCRAPBOOK ed Eve Harvey
was £1.20, to BSFA members £1.00

For reviews of these books, see Rob Jackson's article in Fan World section.

Postage & Packaging - 30p for 1 item, 40p for 2 or 3

Available from: Eve Harvey, 55 Blanchland Road, Morden, Surrey.

Please make all cheques payable to SEACON '79

BOOKS

We start this section with an apology. Our main source of information in the past was Dave Pringle of the Science Fiction Foundation, but since he has moved on from that organisation back to Leeds, we are having to find alternative sources, and this takes time. With his hoped return to the Metropolis working for Virgin Books (a new publishing house to be set up by the Virgin Records Company) the stream of news will increase again.

Soon it should be easier to buy books published by American companies, without having to pay exorbitant import prices. Until recently publishers have had an unwritten agreement that they would not poach on each other's territory - American publishers would only publish in the Americas and British, Britain. This situation was taken to the Supreme Court in the States which found that this 'consent decree' (as the 'understanding' is called) was against the Anti-Trust (Monopoly) Laws and should not be continued. Thus any publishing house should be able to publish anywhere in the world. Hopefully they will take up this opportunity, and British firms penetrate the large American market in return.

Alfred Bester's new novel, GOLLUM 100, is to be published in the US in Spring 1980, and hopefully in Britain shortly afterward.

Out this month in the States is Ursula LeGuin's mainstream-marketed novel, MALAFRENA from Putnam, and next month should see the publication by Daw of Jack Vance's fourth Demon Prince novel, THE FACE.

Still on news from across the seas, Frederick Pohl has finished BEYOND THE BLUE EVENT HORIZON, sequel to GATEWAY and Ballantine/Del Rey will be publishing it in hardback early in 1980. With some luck, the demise of the 'consent decree' may mean these books will appear in Britain earlier than has been usual.

Delany's TIDES OF LUST and Ellison's STRANGE WINE are to be published in the near future by Savoy Books. It is rumoured that Ellison wants Savoy to have the paperback rights for all his books in the UK in future.

Stephen Donaldson fans will be pleased to note that Fontana will be releasing CHRONICLES OF THOMAS COVENANT THE UNBELIEVER in a one-volume edition in time for Christmas - remember it for your requests to Santa Claus.

If any of you were watching Robert Robinson's Book Programme on Wednesday 17th October, you will already know that Granada have now released Peter Nicholls's ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION. This is the latest in a seemingly never-ending stream of SF-orientated 'encyclopedias', although it is the first to reach true encyclopaedic standards, rather than the glossy 'coffee table' books.

AWARDS

Michael Moorcock was named as this year's winner of the John W Campbell Memorial Award for GLORIANA. The Campbell award, one of the three most prestigious awards for science fiction writing, is bestowed by a seven-member award committee chaired by James Gunn, University of Kansas. The award was presented at a recent science fiction conference at Kansas by Frederik Pohl, who won the award last year for GATEWAY.

The Noreascon II (Worldcon 1980) committee will administer the voting for the John W Campbell Award for Best New Writer and the Gandalf Award for Grand Master of Fantasy. It has been decided not to administer the Gandalf Award for Best Book-Length Fantasy because of its conflict with the Hugo Best Novel Award, which is for both science fiction and fantasy. Don't forget that if you're a supporting or attending member of the convention, you have the right to vote for these awards, as well as the Hugos. With the new Hitchhikers series due out soon and running into the new year, it will be eligible next year for a Hugo, and the old series, plus record and book, should have been available in the US by then. So let's have another go, eh?

Each year Locus, a wide-circulation American newszine, carries out a poll of its readership for their favourite sf anthology, single author collection and artist. Below are the first three in the 1979 poll.

Best Anthology:

- (1) THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION OF THE YEAR NO. 7, Terry Carr, ed. (Del Rey)
- (2) THE 1978 ANNUAL WORLD'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION, Donald A Wollheim, ed. (Daw)
- (3) UNIVERSE 8, Terry Carr, ed. (Doubleday)

Best Single Author Collection:

- (1) THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION, John Varley (Dial)
- (2) STRANGE WINE (Harper & Row), Harlan Ellison
- (3) STILL I PERSIST IN WONDERING, Edgar Pangborn (Dell)

Best Artist:

- (1) Boris Vallejo
- (2) Michael Whelan
- (3) Stephen Fabian

Another set of American awards - the FAAN AWARDS, were presented at Seacon.

Best Fan Editor: Jeanne Gomoll and Janice Bogstad

Best Fan Writer: (our very own) Bob Shaw

Best Humorous Artist: Alexis Gilliland

Best Serious Artist: Joan Hanke-Woods

Best LoC (Letter of Comment) Writer: Harry Warner Jr

Best Single Issue: Mythologies 14 (D'Amassa)

EVENTS

- 4-7 April 1980 - Albacon 80, The Albany Hotel, Glasgow. Current membership rates: £5 full, £2 supporting until 1st December 1979. Hotel prices £11.70 per person per night although the committee will find cheaper alternatives. Membership secretary Gerry Gillin, 9 Dunnottar Street, Ruchazie, Glasgow G33. Rumours are that the Albacon Committee are anticipating this convention will be the first Eastercon to top 1,000 total membership.
- 29 August - Noreascon II - Boston, USA (Worldcon). GoH Damon Knight, Kate Wilhelm. Registration: \$8 supporting at all times, \$30 attending to 7/1/80. For further information write to their British Agent: Andrew Stephenson, 19 Du Pre Walk, High Wycombe, Bucks
- 1 September 1980
- 2-7 September 1981 Denver 81 (Worldcon). GoH C L Moore, Clifford Simak and Edward Bryant. British Agent: Graham England, 1 Fleetway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8BZ

Saturday, 24th November 1979 - Science Fiction Foundation are holding a one-day sf film seminar, hosted by Philip Strick. Attendance limited to approximately 100. For further details write to Malcolm Edwards, Science Fiction Foundation, North East London Polytechnic, Longbridge Road, Dagenham, Essex RM8 2AS. Another, similar, one-day event is planned for Saturday, 15th March.

MEDIA

Fritz Leiber has sold film rights on "Four Ghosts in Hamlet" to an Australian company. The Fafhrd/Mouser stories have been optioned by Wizard Productions.

BBC and NPR will be collaborating on a 13 episode radio series based on the Star Wars novel and SPLINTER OF THE MIND'S EYE. From the BBC will be John Tydeman as director and co-producer, and Bill Morrison who will be preparing the scripts.

Anne McCaffrey and Jon Anderson (of YES) are collaborating with their 'Dragon' music, although it has not been decided whether the final product will be a single or double album. It will tell the story, in music, of DRAGONFLIGHT plus some extra. Those dragons seem to get everywhere!

MAGAZINES

Ted White is to take over the editorship of Heavy Metal. He plans a number of changes in the magazine to increase the reading density, but he also plans to drop the fiction element.

OBITUARY

Dr Christopher Evans died on 10th October. He was 48. By profession a psychologist and computer scientist, he had a long-standing interest in science fiction. He edited two anthologies of psychological sf/horror stories, Mind at Bay and Mind in Chains; was on the masthead of NEW WORLDS as science editor for issues 175-194 (and also published articles and 'computer fiction' in the magazine); and was a contributing editor to OMNI. His books include CULTS OF UNREASON - an entertaining and perceptive study of scientology and other pseudoscience - and the recently-published THE MIGHT MICRO, on the likely impact of the microprocessor revolution. A six-part TV series written and presented by him, based on THE MIGHTY MICRO, was to have been broadcast starting in early September, but has been delayed by the ITV strike; presumably it will still appear. He contributed sf-related material to PENTHOUSE - including interviews with Asimov, Ballard and Bova - and appeared quite regularly on TV and radio in this country. He was a member of the Science Fiction Foundation.

He had been seriously ill earlier this year, but had appeared to be recovering at Seacon, where he gave a talk on machine intelligence; it proved to be almost his last public appearance. He became ill again on 8th October, and evidently deteriorated very rapidly; the suddenness of his death seems to have been a shock to everyone around him.

Those are the cold facts. What should be added is that he was a friendly, unpretentious, enthusiastic and extremely intelligent man.

Well, that's the news for this issue, we'd like to thank Malcolm Edwards of the Science Fiction Foundation for his news. Other sources: Paul Kincaid, Rob Jackson, DNQ, Locus, File 770, Noumenon.

MISCELLANY

CORNER

MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD

Harry Andruschak, 6933 N Rosemead Blvd, No 31, San Gabriel, California CA 91775, USA, announces that he is the new editor of South of the Moon the index of amateur publishing associations, and is looking for information on non-US apa's. Harry is also Official Editor of FAPA, the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, "fandom's greatest organisation" (his words). Anyone interested in providing 60 copies of his/her fanzine for distribution and receiving 60 different fanzines in return should write to him for further details.

Wanted - Galileo Nos 1 to 5 and 8. Good price paid. Contact Joe M Nevin 37 Victorial House, Durham Ave, Gidea Park, Romford, Essex RM2 6JL. Tel: Hornchurch 51575.

Is there anyone in the Poole/Bournemouth area who knows of an established SF group, or who would be interested in forming one? If so, please contact Alison Lowe, 23 Cromer Road, Branksome, Poole, Dorset.

((Perhaps Alison might like to check Mary Gentle's address in this issue's Mailbag? Ed.))

Wanted in good condition - copies of US edition Astounding SF 1930-41; US ed. Unknown; Authentic SF May & June '55, August '57; Impulse No 11; Nebula SF '53:12, '56:1, '58:1; New Worlds nos 1, 2, 3, 11, 150 and Science Fantasy nos 3, 4, 5, 10, 22, 28, 44, 61. Please contact Oliver Featherstone, Hamilton Lodge, South Hill Ave, Blackrock, Co Dublin, Ireland.

Wanted - to complete set of works by Charles Eric Maine - "Escapement", "The Isotope Man" and "Never Let Up". Good, complete condition essential. Contact Nic Howard, 5 Grays Lane, Downley, High Wycombe, Bucks.

Wanted - copies of the following books: The Dark Mind by Colin Kapp; The Chaos Weapon by Colin Kapp; any books by Adrian Cole. Paperbacks only English or American editions. Reasonable prices paid for reasonable copies. Contact Chris Hall, Janus, 141 Allerton Rd, Trentham, Stoke on Trent.

Bookshops

Just one entry this issue from Alison Lowe.

"Anyone in the Poole/Bournemouth area who wants to sell their old SF books should take them along to "Moonraker's", 5 Grand Parade, High Street, Poole, where they will get good rates for them. Good selection of SF art books also stocked. Open Mon-Sat 9-5.

COMPETITION

Thanks for the numerous entries for last issues competition - you seemed to like it. Sorry we can't do something similar this time but we'll bear it in mind for when Jim Barker owes us a favour! The correct answers are: (from top of picture downwards)

Vulcan salute,	Hand from Logans Run
Tardis	R2D2
Dalek Head	Submarine pod from Stingray
Name of planet from Forbidden Planet	Phaser
Supercar	Space 1999 laser
Imperial battlecruiser	Head of Robby the Robot (Forbidden Planet)
Cabin of Eagle spacecraft	Millenium Falcon
Fireball XL5	Thunderbird 1
Enterprise engine	Thunderbird 2
X wing	Angel interceptor (Captain Scarlet)
Klingon cruiser	Stingray engine
Startrek shuttlecraft	Thunderbird 5
Hal 9000	Orion clipper (2001)
Romulan cruiser	Enterprise registration
Spectrum symbol (Captain Scarlet)	Seaview (Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea)
Stormtrooper headgear (Star Wars)	FAB 1 bonnet (Thunderbirds)
Anastasia (Dan Dare)	Dalek gun
Pod from 2001	Luke Skywalker landspeeder
Cloudbase (Captain Scarlet)	Thunderbird 4
Thunderbird 3	Cyberman head
Robot head from Lost In Space	Enterprise bridge
Darth Vader ship	Steve Zodiac ray gun (Fireball XL5)
Cylon raider	Space City Tower (")
Batmobile	TIE Fighter
Chris Foss trademark?	

The thingy under Thunderbird 4 is a red herring, the product of a deranged imagination.....

Well, you can imagine the difficulty of counting the winners here, still we think we've got it right, and the winner is:

Bob Wilkinson, 72 Prestbury Drive, Warminster, Wilts BA12 9LE.

I'm afraid there's no competition this time, but we promise a crossword for the next issue. So get your thinking caps on and your pencils sharpened!

 *Phil James was a name known to Eve and I through his *
 *Locs to Matrix, but not until we met him at Seacon did *
 we link the name to the face we had seen at the One Tun
 *and other conventions. He is a soft-spoken welshman *
 *who has had the sense to come to the metropolis. Here *
 *are his thoughts on Seacon - I wonder if his account *
 *bears any relationship to yours, if you attended that *
 *'amazing' gathering. Read it and find out. *

Seacon Conrep

Warning: Any resemblance between
 events recorded in this report and
 SEACON '79 is a surprise to me too.

SEACON '79, held at the Metropole in Brighton over the August Bank Holiday was the first Worldcon held in Britain since 1965. It was also my first Worldcon and like many others I was slightly apprehensive. Would it be too big? Would there be too many American fans there swamping British fandom?

At first, as at other cons, I had to make the adjustment between living in the Land of Mundane for 361 days of the year and Fandom for the next five; a strange transition. I suppose if I were mechanically minded, I'd use the metaphor of a gear-change sans synchromesh - but that's all double-declutch to me.

I roamed the lobby looking for people I knew, collecting the autographs of famous authors as I went; Brian Aldiss (British Guest of Honour), Alexei Panshin (looking like Mike Moorcock, Economy Size), Bob Silverberg, Joe Nicholas. Joe Nicholas? Well, I mistook him for Chris Priest, shoulder bag and all. I said it was a strange transition!

I eventually found some faces I knew in the Fanroom, which was huge, almost an aircraft hangar. Greg Pickersgill, Simone Walsh, Kev Smith and others were in charge of the Amazing Expanding Fanzine Stall and I met John and Eve with Alan Dorey at the BSFA desk. In addition there were representatives of various groups and con-bidding committees, including a Yugoslavian contingent present. There were exhibits of artwork and photographs of fans in compromising situations. There was even the unprecedented sight of thirsty fans forming an Orderly British Queue to get to the bar! And of course there were the usual games machines (on which a few famous fen met their dooms for want of the tactical skills that can be gleaned from any Perry Rhodan novel).

For some obscure, patriotic reason, I attended the opening ceremony with two American fans; Cathy and Mark Ball who were equally bemused by the proceedings. To the strains of the 'Albanian National Anthem' the logo's of the last nine or so Worldcons appeared on a screen, finally as the music rose to a crescendo a huge banner lit by spotlights and bearing the SEACON logo shot into the air above Peter Weston, the Chairman. Disbelieving cheers from the audience. Five Brighton Bathing Belles in Victorian costumes welcomed the Guests of Honour on the stage as a small bagpipe band did their cultural thing for the benefit of the colonials.

The programme was full and quite varied; often there would be three or four programme items running concurrently. There were some excellent films; Dark Star, Eraserhead, Superman and others, and previews of the Empire Strikes Back and Alien, there were discussion panels and signing sessions and, of course, GoH speeches by Brian Aldiss and Fritz Lieber. Fan Guest of Honour, Harry Bell, was interviewed in the Fanroom and a Mr Shaw gave a serious and sober lecture on Cloning (followed by the practical, a clone of Peter Weston!). Enjoyment of the film programme was marred occasionally by projector breakdowns, though whenever problems with the sound occurred, Filthy Pierre was usually quick to play a rather reedy alternative sound track, much to the amusement of the audience.

And of course there were the room (and corridor) parties and, after a slight hassle with hotel security, even a Ladies Powder-room party on the Saturday morning. There were Americans, Joyce Scrivner handing out post-memberships to Minneapolis in '73 (they enjoyed the bidding parties so much they thought they'd continue), Terry (TAFF) Hughes, Bob Tucker pretending to be Jules Verne (his badge gave him away) and token Canadian Mike Glicksohn in kaftan, chestwig and nothing else. Many fans had come from the continent and some from Down Under and there were more authors than fleas on a Wookie.

Sunday's highpoint was the Hugo Awards Ceremony. Everybody seemed pleased that our Toastmaster, Bob Shaw, had won the Best Fan Writer Hugo, and even Christopher Reeve acknowledged the tremendous support for HitchHikers' Guide To The Galaxy when he received the Hugo for Superman. Nobody seemed to want the Best Fanzine Hugo. The winning editor, Richard Geis, was not at the convention and neither, it seemed, was anyone else willing to accept it on his behalf. Rather reluctantly Fred Pohl accepted it, saying of Geis, "For many years I have respected this man, but not very much!" Leaving the stage he dumped it in Robert Silverberg's lap (who lives on the West Coast closer to Geis).

For me, SEACON '79 ended about 3 a.m. on Tuesday morning as I crawled away to my room from the dead-dog party which had ended up on the Promenade by the West Pier. (Cabaret courtesy of the Brighton & Hove Police Force.) Despite the problems that cropped up occasionally, I found it a thoroughly enjoyable convention. My congratulations to the committee... when's the next British Worldcon going to be fellas?

((When someone else decides to organise one - most of us would like a few years' respite - although it would be nice to do it again, and hopefully get it right next time!))

SPECIAL OFFER FOR BSFA MEMBERS.....

The Best of Elmer T Hack by Jim Barker & Chris Evans

- only 60p + 20p postage & packing from Alan Dorey
cheques and postal orders to be made payable to "BSFA"

LIFE ON MARSOCTOBER

The air with which I and the rest of the Leeds Group swaggered into the foyer of the Metropole Hotel, Brighton the other Wednesday might have masqueraded, I suppose, as drunken irresponsibility; the loud though rather slurred tones in which we demanded to register for the convention immediately, though the desk was closed, might have been taken for vulgarity; while the forthright manner in which we thrust copies of our latest fanzines into the arms of astonished bystanders might have been thought a little forward.

Nevertheless, deep beneath my misleadingly brash exterior, there lay a heavy sense of duty. Everyone I spoke to, everyone I handed a fanzine to, everyone whose feet I tripped over, seemed to invoke a small voice in some long-neglected area of my brain. "Do these people belong to local groups?" This small voice asked, "where do they meet?", "what do they talk about?" and "what are their names and addresses?"

Gazing through hazy eyes at the swiftly assembling ranks of SEACON, I began dimly to appreciate the possibilities for this column. "There must be people from HUNDREDS of groups here" I mused, "I can gather information for five years' worth of columns, type them up, send them off to MATRIX and retire". I fumbled in my pockets, searching for pen and paper, yet for some reason I could only find pen OR paper, never both together. I would find a handy envelope, for instance, and put it down somewhere while I searched for a pen. I would then find some blunted pencil stub, only to discover that I had misplaced the envelope etc etc. Feeling rather discouraged, I decided that some light refreshment might remedy the situation and, for some reason, it was not until an hour or so after the bar had closed that I returned to the task in hand.

I found myself sitting in the foyer next to a grinning apparition who was telling me how he'd stopped up to watch the sun rise at YORCON. When questioned, the grinning apparition revealed that he was a member of THE STAFFEN GROUP and, through the medium of a beer mat which happened to be handy, I am able to impart the following information -

THE STAFFEN GROUP meet on the second Monday of every month at the Peacock pub, Hatfield Road, St Albans. Details can be obtained from Mic Rogers at 22, Campbell Road, St Albans, Herts.

So far, so good. And there was more to come: hardly was the ink of the beer-mat dry than I was introduced to the be-cloaked figure of Chris Barlow, El Supremo of the HULL UNIVERSITY GROUP, who is going to write me an in-depth report on his organisation (aren't you, Chris? (please)). In the meantime, please contact Chris for details via the students union.

Having gleaned the above information, I was able to call it a day and wend my way contentedly to bed. The rest of the week, however, brought further revelations. On Thursday, for instance, I found out about the group which gets this issue's EXTRA SPECIAL MENTION for the most unusual name. It's a group in the Staines area called THE INSTITUTE FOR IMPURE SCIENCE, which can be reached c/o Royal Holloway College, Egham Hill, Egham, Surrey, TW20 OEX. Though the name might suggest that the group is some kind of rival to the Astral League or the Penge UFO Society, my informant Aardi Inston (who also promised me an in-depth report, hint, hint) was able to allay such

fears. The IFIS are, it seems, a fairly amiable bunch of fans who have even been known to take the occasional drink.

Please Note - if YOUR group has an unusual name, you will also qualify for an EXTRA SPECIAL MENTION, so what are you waiting for, why not write in?

While I was doing my Friday morning stint at the BSFA desk, a guy called Nigel Clark came up and asked for information on university groups. Nigel, it seems, is going to university next year and intends to choose the seat of learning with the best sf group. Or so he claims. Even when I pointed out the intrinsic folly, and indeed, illogic of such a course of action, he was still adamant. I suspect that, quite understandably, he merely wants the fame and ego-boo which invariably comes to those who get their name in this column. So here goes,

Nigel Clark would like info on university groups, wherever you are. Please write to him at 44, Shelly Rd, Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire. When you get the information, Nigel, perhaps you'll write and tell ME.

For obvious reasons, university groups change their personnel so quickly that a strong group one year can be a weak one the next. A university with a particularly active society at the present time might have nothing at all by the time that Nigel gets there. This is the major flaw in Nigel's reasoning. Besides which, as everyone knows, the main factors involved in picking a university are the male/female ratio and the price of beer in the union bar. You also want to avoid the ones which close down at the weekends. And then, as a minor consideration, there's the matter of courses....

Anyway, some of you may have just arrived at the kind of university or college which Nigel is trying to avoid i.e. one without an sf group, in which case all you have to do, of course, is to start one. Even if you don't know anyone else who is into sf, the large number of healthy university groups whose members I encountered at the con seems to indicate that you won't have any difficulty getting enough people if you advertise. The union grant system makes a university or college an ideal place to start a society, so go ahead. You may never have a better chance.

One particularly enthusiastic group at present seems to be KEELE UNIVERSITY, who are thinking of holding their own convention next year. The group meet every Thursday night in the union bar. For details, contact Phil Wain c/o the students union.

As the days of SEACON passed, so the distinction between them began to blur, so that I can't say for certain which evening it was when I stumbled on the party which had been organised by the Oxford and Cambridge University groups. I'd originally mistaken the affair for an American Convention-Bidding party, until the presence of a guy dressed as a viking or some other, possibly mythological, barbarian hinted that the party might be run by the Scandinavian bidders. Only when I discovered that the only alcohol in the room was a bottle of Selfridges Whiskey which was already surrounded by three prospective consumers, did I begin to suspect that my hosts might be people of lesser means.

I'm sure that I must have come at a bad point in the proceedings as far as alcohol was concerned. After all, judging by my conversations with the CAMBRIDGE GROUP, they seem to be people with imaginative palates. Those who attend their meetings may be introduced to the Aardvark and the Super Nova, cocktails which sound fit to rival the Photon Torpedo, the concoction so

beloved of that rare creature, the drinking Star Trek fan. I'm particularly intrigued by a third cocktail, whose name I didn't catch, which was described as 'green lager with polo mints'. Those who wish to be initiated into these delights (?) or to talk about other subjects only remotely connected with sf should come along to the Cambridge Group meetings at the Horse & Crown, King Street, on Thursday evenings or contact the Membership Secretary, Mike Abbot, at Pembroke College.

The OXFORD GROUP's president, Hugh Mascetti from Jesus College, seemed more soberly inclined, our conversation turning to books rather than cocktails, possibly because the group boast a mammoth 3,000-volume library. This is open to borrowers every Sunday evening, after which diversion the group retires to the Bulldog Bar, St Aldgates, where they can be found from about 8.15. New members are welcome. Though this weekly Sunday meeting is informal, there is also a sercon gathering every other Thursday at 8.30 p.m. at the same venue. At least one Thursday meeting per term is blessed with a guest lecturer. Last term's visitor was Harry Harrison, while in the forthcoming term, Brian Stableford will be talking.

The last group I encountered at Seacon was the one which is just starting up in EDINBURGH and to whose president I was introduced on the last day of the convention. My mind and body being in a rather tender state at that juncture, I neglected to ask for his name but he promised to write something on the group, so I hope to feature them in the next issue.

A QUICK COMMERCIAL - if you're toying with the idea of attending a convention for the first time, I really recommend joining a local group first in order to affect the most painless introduction. A first convention can be quite a struggle if you don't know anyone, whereas attending as part of a local group helps to reduce the danger of being over-awed by the vast numbers of unknown beings.

For many of the local group members I talked to, SEACON was their first convention, yet they seemed perfectly at home and enjoying the fun. If you want to find out if there's a group in your area (or want a plug for your own club) then write to me at 13A Cardigan Road, Headingley, LEEDS 6. If I don't know of a group, then I'll feature your name in the column as an interested party.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT - In case you were wondering, all of the university/college societies I've mentioned above are open to outsiders i.e. non-students.

STOP PRESS

I've just received a couple of letters. One is from a colleague of Chris Barlow's at HULL UNIVERSITY: namely Dave Harbud who is the group's acting Club Liaison Officer. He mentions that the Hull Group would like to get in touch with other groups in the North of England with a view to organising joint events. Will anybody interested please contact him at 36 Middleton Street, Springbank, HULL.

I've also heard from Jon Wallace, who represents the new sf society in DUNDEE, which is called '42' (wonder where the name comes from?). New members and visitors are welcome. If you're interested, contact Jon at 2= Charleston Street, DUNDEE (Tel: DUNDEE 646563).

And that's all for this issue. Hope to hear from some of you soon. In-depth reports are particularly encouraged!

Simon Ounsley

 In the past, Matrix has featured 'in-depth' fanzine reviews plus my own
 round-up of current titles. Taking over the job of fanzine surveyor is
 Rob Jackson (who sees far more fanzines than I ever did) with this, the
 *first of his regular columns. The in-depth reviews have been squeezed *
 out for this issue, but they should return in M27.

On The Carpet

One of the commoner complaints about SF fandom is that it's difficult to get into. Reams have been written about getting into the social side of SF fandom, and I don't want to add to them here. (I don't think it is difficult if you go about it the right way.) But getting into fanzines... that's easy. Or should be - if you know what fanzines are available and how to get them, and what sort of reading material to expect when they arrive.

That's why a buyer's guide like the one I'm going to be writing regularly in Matrix can help the potential fanzine fan a good deal. Let me know what you think of this column; and, of course, if you want your fanzine mentioned send it to me, Rob Jackson, at 8 Lavender Rd, West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT19 9EB.

Abbreviations and symbols used in the guide are as follows:

The Usual: means that the fanzine is available for trade with other fanzines, letter of comment on the previous issue, or contribution of written or artistic material. If a fanzine is also available for subscription or if single sample copies can be bought, the prices are then given. If no price is given, write and say you're interested; you should either get a letter telling you how much to send, or you'll be sent a copy.

Page Sizes: FC (foolscap): 3" x 8". A4: 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". USQ (U.S. quarto): 11" x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Q (quarto): 10" x 8". A5: 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ ".

Printing methods: D: duplicated (US=mimeographed). L: photolithographed. X: Xeroxed (photocopied). R: reduced typesize (giving more words per page).

AUGUST 1979

SMALL PRESS PUBLICATIONS

The Best of Elmer T Hack (by Jim Barker & Chris Evans; published by BSFA/Hack Press (Jim Barker), 113 Windsor Rd, Falkirk, Central Scotland FK1 5DB. 80p per copy; A5 RL; 60pp) As well as 34 "Half-Life" cartoons (as published in Vector, plus some new ones), this superb collection includes an interview with Elmer T Hack, the series' antihero, as well as a day in his life and a beautifully pseudo-intellectual review of one of his books by Chris Priest - all infected by the same awful sense of humour. Ribtickles alternate with groans - superb stuff. Get it.

By British (A Fanthology of the Seventies) (published by Ian Maule, 5 Beaconsfield Rd, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3HY. £1.5 $\frac{1}{4}$ incl. post; profits to TAFF; A4 D; 86pp). A true collection of the best - the funniest, most

relevant and most illuminating - writing from British fanzines this decade. Mainly lighthearted, about both SF and the writers' own lives. Superbly produced, too. Features Shaw, Stephenson, Holdstock, Langford, Kettle, Brosnan, you name them... and as a bonus a good potted history of British fandom this decade by Joseph Nicholas.

The Eastercon Speeches (by Bob Shaw; published by Rob Jackson, 8 Lavender Rd, West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT19 9EB; £1.00 incl. post, profits to TAFF etc.; A5 RL; 52pp) Illustrated by Jim Barker.

((This is a very well produced selection of Bob Shaw's famous 'serious, scientific talks' given at various past Eastercons. Illustrated by Jim Barker, it is an excellent record of the wit of Mr Shaw and is well worth the expenditure. Buy it. John Harvey))

The Enchanted Duplicator (by Bob Shaw & Walt Willis; published by Eve Harvey for Seacon '79, 55 Blanchland Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5NE; (see advert in this issue of Matrix for special price for BSFA members); A4 L; 48pp). Illustrated by Carol Gregory. The classic allegorical story of Jophan, the journey of one SF fan into & through the land of Fandom. One of the fans he meets is Perfexion, who is so fussy about his fanzine he virtually never gets it finished; unfortunately the publishers were so overworked just before Seacon that they went the other way and this shows signs of being a rush job. To compensate, they reduced the price; so you can now have a good read more cheaply.

Fanartist Scrapbook (published by Eve Harvey for Seacon '79, see above; A4 L; 56pp) A showcase of black-and-white artwork by British SF fan artists put together to commemorate Seacon. Well printed, with good examples of work by such as Harry Bell, Jim Barker, Kevin Clark, Dave Higgins, Angus McKie, and Andrew Stephenson. Mostly top quality art in widely varied styles. Worth it.

Foundation 17 (edited by Malcolm Edwards for the Science Fiction Foundation, NE London Polytechnic, Longbridge Rd, Dagenham, Essex RM8 2AS; £3.00 for 3 issues till 31.12.79; A5 RL; 112pp). This was the most readable and clearheaded of the "academic" journals of SF criticism under Peter Nicholls, and Malcolm Edwards makes it plain he's going to go on like that. This is a special Seacon '79 issue, with new material by Aldiss, Leiber, Dick, Compton, and others on their writing, and reviews by many of our best and most readable critics. If you're at all interested in SF as more than passing enjoyment, you'll get something out of Foundation.

Locus 223 (published by Charles N Brown, Box 3938, San Francisco, CA 94119 USA; UK agent Chris Atkinson, 28 Duckett Rd, London Nr EBN; £9.55 for 12 issues or £17.73 for 24 issues airmail; USQ RL; 20pp) The magazine of American professional SF news. If you want to know who's just sold which novel to which publisher, which markets are opening up for short story sales, which books are best-sellers or have won awards, here's your chance. Also lists of forthcoming books and conventions. Plenty of adverts from publishers plus small ads - it's a trade magazine now.

Mood 70 (edited by Kevin Smith; published by Eve Harvey for Seacon '79 see above; A4 L; 64pp) The second major collection of the best British fan writing currently available. It's the neatest of the three Seacon '79 Fanroom publications, though not quite as good-looking as By British, and unillustrated; but its contents are of virtually the same brilliant quality and fannish feel with almost no duplication of material. Features among others Langford, Pickersgill, Holdstock, Charnock and Peter Nicholls at Seacon '75: "One of the two French beauties said, 'You are, how do you say, trying to drag yourself a chicken?'" An unintended Good Line.

Cluck cluck.

TSAR (The Seacon Abstractor & Recorder) 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (published by Graham England for Seacon '79, 1 Fleetway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8BZ; free at Seacon '79; for details of current availability write to the editor as above enclosing a stamped s.a.e.; 2, 5, 4, 4, 6 & 4pp) This was the Worldcon's daily newsletter. For someone with no previous experience of producing a duplicated fanzine, let alone a convention newsletter, Graham did a quite brilliant job of putting together a team of helpers and producing with them a newszine with a circulation of up to 1,500. There were occasional inaccuracies, but really very few; and the announcements were all there and the zine appeared on time despite technical hitches. That's by no means universal, even for Worldcons. I hope you collected the set if you were there.

FANZINES

Great Britain

Ansible 1 (Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave, Reading, Berks RG2 7PW; 4 for 50p in UK & Europe, or 3 for \$1 from USA; Q D; 4pp) This is the preliminary issue of Dave's replacement for Checkpoint containing snippets of fannish news, some of them of enormous inconsequence, but all wittily presented. I hope Dave's sense of humour survives the drudgery of editing a newszine; I expect it will, somehow. This is annexed to The Northern Guffblower 5 - the final report on the success of GUFF, the Get Up-and-over Fan Fund to bring an Aussie to Seacon, with an article on GUFF's inception by Chris Priest. (John Foyster won)

Checkpoint 97, 98 (Peter Roberts, 18 Westwood, Cofton, Starcross, Nr Exeter, Devon; write to enquire of availability of back issues; Q D; 6pp each) Unfortunately, this always interesting newszine has folded after issue 100 (see September's reviews). It reported mainly fannish news and personalities with Peter's gentle sarcasm. Thankfully, Dave Langford will be continuing the service with Ansible (see above). Subs to Checkpoint carry over to Ansible, which is convenient.

Deadloss 2 (Christopher Priest, 1 Ortygia House, 6 Lower Rd, Harrow, Middlesex HA2 ODA; avail on editorial whim only; A4 D; 50pp) One of the largest British fanzines so far this year, and about the best. Wide-ranging collection of both fannish and critical material by Dave Langford, Joe Nicholas, Elmer T Hack, and others linked by candid editorial pieces into a superbly integrated whole. If you got it, you're lucky; if you produce a fanzine, send it to Chris and you might get the next issue.

Dot 7 (Kevin Smith, 7 Fasset Rd, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2TD; the usual; Q D; 11pp) Another fannish fanzine, mostly editor-written. Low-key but with barbs, as in the major piece this issue, which is mildly paranoid fan-fiction about feminists on the rampage at Seacon (which didn't happen, of course). Sensible letter-column: "There are no barriers to fandom unless you are determined to find them."

Drilkjis 4 (Dave Langford, 22 Northmuberland Ave, Reading, Berks RG2 7PW & Kevin Smith, as above; 50p or the usual ((trades with both editors)); A4 RL/D; 26pp) Coedited fanzine of SF discussion, including Dave's megagenocide talk as read both at Yorcon and Seacon. Individualistic, witty and intelligent. Here's Dave explaining why much SF is crud: "Excellence is rarer in sf than in the 'mainstream' because the sf

category hasn't been around for so long; because the bad image of sf since Gernsback repels good writers who don't care for the ghetto feeling; and because of the well-known process whereby the sf element in Good Stuff like 1984 is ignored and the work treated as solely allegorical, not at all speculative." Food for thought.

Ego Sextarius (Paul & Cas Skelton & Mike & Pat Meara, 61 Borrowash Rd, Spendon, Derby DE2 7QH; 50p in aid of TLF; QD; 20pp) A one-shot fanzine with entertaining articles by such as Mike Glickson, Terry Hughes, Ian Maule and the editors, ostensibly as a guide for foreign fans arriving in England for Seacon. The American view is put by Terry Hughes: "What we call soccer, they call football, what we call football they call boring, and what we call Pittsburgh they call Liverpool." Entertaining Harry Bell cover too. Well worth it.

Fanzine Fanatique 35 (Keith Walker, 2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore Rd, Lancaster, Lancs; the usual; A4 D; 12pp) A fanzine of briefer fanzine listings than this. Its cramped layout and near-illigibility because of poor duplicating and typos are an unchanging legend, as are Keith's notoriously idiosyncratic and sometimes capricious opinions. Lists of lots of fanzines though, some from outside the SF field; that's its main virtue.

A Fine Mess (Colin Fine, 9 Frithwood Ave, Northwood, Middx HA6 3LY; free at Seacon; A4 D; 2pp) A brief report on Faircon '79; enjoyable, apparently.

For a Few Fanzines More (John Collick, The Goosewell Gallery, Westbourne Drive, Menston, Ilkley, Yorks; the usual; Q D; 18pp) Fannish fanzine with more hot-blooded agonising over the current reportedly parlous state of British fanzines; a few confused letters which could well have been left out are given prominence here. If the contributors still care enough to rant like this, things can't be all bad, though.

Gross Encounters 6 (Alan Dorey, 20 Hermitage Woods Cres, St John's, Woking, Surrey GU21 1UE; the usual; A4 D; 30pp) A huge, lively and varied personalzine, the most unusual part being the funny fannish pastiche of a 17th century writer's journal. The zine's still obviously written too quickly, though. Alan criticises Joe Nicholas for "a lack of brevity and clarity" in fanzine reviewing, then says of Kev Smith: "He uses the words and ideas to pull people apart, rather than the emotion and determination created with charismatic insults." Now possibly I'm being thick, but I'm not sure what that sentence is supposed to mean, and I'd have liked to know. The best writers make themselves understood more clearly. It's still a very fine zine, though.

Inca 1 (Rob Jackson, 8 Lavender Rd, West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT19 9EB; 50p or the usual; A4 D; 34pp)

((When Rob joined the ranks of those struggling to support a mortgage, something had to go, and the victim was Maya, Rob's glossy genzine that was nominated for a Hugo. Inca has taken its place, but I feel that Rob's standards of perfection should give way to more concern about contents rather than production. A good fanzine, interesting, but lacking spark))

Nabu 8 (Ian Maule, 5 Beaconsfield Rd, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3HY; the usual or 2 International Reply Coupons ((in UK, I assume 25p in stamps would do)); Q D; 36pp) Fannish fanzine which gets more interesting with every issue. Includes a good report by Alan Dorey on running a convention and having a good time too, and an amusing Dave Langford piece on ways of killing people: "Ultimate Weapons: Always carry two in case you miss with the first one" - but for me the meat is in the letters, with heated continuing discussion on the differences between US and UK fanzines.

Seamonsters 4 (Simone Walsh, 13 Ferme Park Rd, Finsbury Park, London N4; the

usual; Q D; 32pp) Lively British genzine, the best of its kind at the moment. Levelheaded editorial comments on the approach of Seacon and in reply to the letters; the contents were slightly thinner this issue than last, but David Pringle proves he can write wuperior fannish pieces (though, as common with some types of fannish writing, you need to know the people he's writing about).

Stomach-Pump 1 (Steev Higgins, 18 St Austell Ave, Tyldesley, Greater Manchester M29 7FY; editorial whim only; A4 D; 8pp) A small-circulation fannish personal-zine in the Neo-Bombastic Iconoclastic style recently adopted by Joe Nicholas and Alan Dorey (though pioneered by Greg Pickersgill). He makes a good point when pleading for fannish fans to get less worked up about each other and to externalise their anger more - "why not rant and rave about the boss?"

Twll-Ddu 16 (Dave Langford, see Drilkjis for address; 50p ((profits to GUFF)) or the usual; A4 RL/D; 14pp) If you've read all the way through this column you'll know by now that I'm a sucker for literate, witty silliness; this brilliant fanzine epitomises those qualities for me. No-one else but Dave could reduce me to utterly helpless hysteria by describing the loss of a crummet down the side of the washing-machine one morning when he was half-asleep and half-naked - I still get the giggles, and I've read it five times. This fanzine thoroughly deserves its Hugo nomination.

North America & Canada

The Diagonal Relationship 10 (Arthur D Hlavaty, 250 Coligni Ave, New Rochelle, NY 1081, USA; \$1 or the usual; USQ RL; 14pp) Intellectual yet readable fannish fanzine. Contemplative but not inward-looking, for example in an alphabet's-worth of brief comments and epigrams; "X is for Xenophobia, which may be defined as a failure to realise that one's neighbours are also barbarians."

DNQ 20, 21; Typo 6 (Victoria Vayne, PO Box 156, Stn D, Toronto, Ontario M6P 3J8 and Taral, 1812-415 Willowdale Ave, Willowdale, Ont M2N 5B4, Canada; 5 issues for US\$2, or 2 issues for copies of 1 issue of your fanzine to both editors; USQ D; 6pp, 12pp, 6pp) Fannish newszine with interest in British fannish affairs as well as US and Canadian. You don't get so many of the Big Burning Issues in here so much, so it's generally more fun, especially with such items as Dave Langford's magnificently nasty Ian Williams lampoon in no. 20. Typo contains letters, some of which are silly too. No. 21 contains more of the same, with some personal ramblings and some of Taral's generally sensible fanzine reviews. (DNQ = Do Not Quote)

File 770 14 (Mike Glyer, 14974 Osceola St, Sylmar, CA 91342, USA; US\$2 for 4 issues, with extra issues for news or contributions; USQ D; 20pp) Regular newszine (every 4-6 weeks) with mainly US fan news. This particular issue I found rather thin; it had rather a lot of legalistic stuff about arguments between and within various US convention-organising groups, which is of some macabre interest if you know of the conventions involved, but not to the British fan in the street. (I suppose some British fanzines must look like this to outsiders - but not so portentously legalistic.) File 770 is usually better than this.

Kratophany 12 (Eli Cohen, 2236 Allison Rd, Vancouver, BC V6T 1T6, Canada; \$1 or the usual; USQ D; 32pp) Accurately described in the title page as "an irregularly published journal of linguistics, whimsy, and bad puns", this is also an unpretentious, friendly fanzine by a practised and relaxed editor.

Mota 29 (Terry Hughes, 606 N Jefferson St, Arlington, VA 22205, USA; the usual, or for "pieces of Skylab that have been turned into boomerangs"; USQ D; 20pp) A typical issue of a friendly, funny fanzine full of polished fannish writing; this issue features a poignant Bob Shaw piece, "The Passing of Tredenham", and a Dan Steffan quote on the back cover: "Vote for Teddy, he can swim." Unlike

some fannish fanzines, Mota remembers to laugh at the rest of the world too.

The Ruptured Roo 1 (Mark R Sharpe, US Navy Public Affairs Office, FPO, San Francisco, CA 96680, USA; the usual; USQ X; 8pp) Small fannish genzine marking the editor's return from a period of forced inactivity. Best is Jessica Amanda Salmonson's evocation of a mad San Franciscan theatrical satire group.

Scientifriktion 11 (Mike Glycer, for address see File 770; US\$1 or the usual; USQ D; 58pp) A good example of the large American genzine, with a hotchpotch of contents including an article accurately ripping apart a shoddy academic SF anthology, and a funny Dave Locke piece. Scientifriktion is what you get when you rub two totally dissimilar articles together, add other bits, and mix with rambling editorials on fanpolitics and memories.

Space Junk 2 (Rich Coad, c/o 2422 Mckinley Apt H, Berkeley, CA 94723, USA; the usual, no money; USQ D; 26pp) Genial, mildly stoned fannish fanzine, like its editor.

Under the Influence 1 (Cathy Ball, 1812 Vine, Norman, OK 73069, USA; editorial whim; USQ X; 12pp) Honest and genial personalzine on being an Oklahoma fan yet introduced to fannish fandom in Britain. She has an interesting bifocal view of the two fandoms. As an artist she's not exactly Jim Barker, though.

Yandro 247/8 (Robert & Juanita Coulson, Route 3, Hartford City, IN 47348, USA; in UK 35p per issue ((70p this double issue)), 5 for £1.50 or 10 for £2.50 from Alan Dodd, 77 Stansted Rd, Hoddesdon, Herts, or some of the usual; USQ D; 74pp) Very reliable large genzine; they've perfected the routine of publishing this long ago. Editorials on their current writing and other topics; lots of little book reviews, like Terry Jeeves's but more literate; old-fashioned handcut art; some big-name articles; a dull fanzine at first glance, but it'll grow on you like Crossroads if you let it.

Other Countries

Chunder! vol 3, no 6 (John Foyster, GPO Box 4039, Melbourne, Vic 3001, Australia; 10 issues for Aus\$ 2, or the usual, particularly news or contributions; A4 D; 20pp) The top Australian fannish newszine, on chunder-coloured yellow paper. Lively and often sharply witty, but with serious bits on SF workshops, Worldcon bidding and so on as well.

DNL 1 (Ahrvid Engholm, Vanadisvägen 13, S-113 46 Stockholm, Sweden; the usual; A4 D; 4pp) 'Fannish but rather muddled first effort in equally muddled English. Lots of room for improvement, but has the virtue of cheerfulness. (DNL = Do Not Laugh)

Fandhome 1 (Anders Bellis, Vanadisvägen 13, S-113 46 Stockholm, Sweden; the usual; A4 D; 4pp) This is in slightly better English than DNL 1, but is equally muddled. It tells us that "Irish fandom was the first faanish (sic) fandom ever to appear." Various American groups would dispute that...

Gegenschein 38 (Eric Lindsay, c/o 6 Hillcrest Ave, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia; the usual; Q D; 44pp) "A personal journal. Containing pseudophilosophical discourse, raillery at political impertinences, heretical pronouncements, together with notes on science fiction..." the cover says. It's right. There's some interesting coloured art, though.

Giant Wombo 2 (Leigh Edmonds & Valma Brown, PO Box 103, Brunswick, Vic 3056, Australia; 50¢(Aus) per copy, or the usual; A4 D; 20pp) Well-written medium-size genzine reflecting the catholicity of the editors' interests - generally fannish, but there's a long article on feminist SF.

The Mentor 24 (Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Rd, Faulconbridge, NSW, Australia; the usual, or AUS\$ 1.50 for 2; Q D; 16pp) If you like four-page poems by Australian Analog authors (Jack Wodhams) and spoof articles on "The Role of Men in Science Fiction", then this is for you.

I was going to cover September this issue as well; but I've only half as many for September, and only eight fanzines so far for October - and it's already the 19th as I write. So next issue I'll catch up by covering September, October and November's fanzines received. (And after that, people will have discovered, I hope, that this column exists, and will start sending me more fanzines... good; it'll keep me out of mischief.)

Rob Jackson

STOPPRESSSTOPPRESSSTOPPRESSSTOPPRESSSTOPPRESSSTOPPRESSSTOPPRESS

Malcolm Edwards has been in touch recently on two matters concerning the BSFA library held at the Science Fiction Founcaction.

- (1) Due to a recent spate of new BSFA members requesting library catalogues, the supply has now been exhausted. Thus, he requests that if you have a catalogue that you don't use very often, could you please return it to him. Until a new supply can be prepared, he is afraid that new members will simply have to 'shoot in the dark', if they wish to borrow books.
- (2) Please remember that the library is housed in a Polytechnic which closes over the normal educational holidays. This does not cause too many problems over Christmas and Easter, since the vacations are only short, but during the long summer vacation, there will be a considerable delay. Please try to avoid sending in requests between July and September, therefore, or be willing to wait until the Polytechnic opens again.

Address: North East London Polytechnic, Longbridge Road, Dagenham RM8 2AS

And now a message from our venerable Membership Secretary:

BSFA BADGES BSFA BADGES BSFA BADGES BSFA BADGES BSFA BADGES BSFA
As mentioned in the Chairman's News Column in Matrix 25, we have BSFA badges for sale. These are 1" diameter metal lapel badges, with pin, in 4 colours with a surround reading "British Science Fiction Association". If you would like one sent to you in your next mailing, send you name, address, and membership number to Keith Freeman, 269 Wykeham Road, Reading, RG6 1PL, enclosing 15 pence. If you can't wait until the next mailing, send your name, address, and membership number to Sandy Brown, 18 Gordon Terrace, Blantyre G72 9NA, Scotland, enclosing 23 pence. Don't forget to make cheques etc. out to "BSFA", or you can send stamps to the appropriate value. Overseas members can get them with their mailing only, via Keith, in which case you should send two International Reply coupons.

MESSAGE ENDS MESSAGE ENDS MESSAGE ENDS MESSAGE ENDS MESSAGE ENDS

MAILBAG

After M25's rather depleted letter column, we are back to something like a reasonable sized Mailbag for this issue. There's plenty of comment on the BSFA and fandom, but first in at the deep end with a reply to Mark Greener's letter of last issue from:

ALAN MARSHALL, 51 Windsor Crescent, Oakworth, Keighley, W Yorks

I love it! Love it! A nasty response to my first letter. I'm willing to take on the entire Dr Who fan club! Your answer Mark was very predictable, citing all the usual neutral arguments like, "But it's the longest running SF prog in the world" (Yawn!). In fact, I saw the very first Dr Who prog and watched it avidly as a kid, but still preferred 'Stingray' et al (oh the nostalgia (sic)!). From watching it (yes I watched the new one, 'Destiny of the Daleks') while eating my tea I realised the only time it DOES WORK is when IT DOESN'T TAKE ITSELF SERIOUSLY. In fact, if Dr Who was used as pure parody (say somewhere between 'Stainless Steel Rat' and 'Backstage Lensman') I would be its greatest fan. Point in fact, in episode one of 'DOTD' the doctor after rescuing his associate, hotly pursued by daleks uttering 4-word syllables, peers down out of a shaft the dalek cannot traverse and says (with that beautifully idiotic Harpo Marx look on his face) "If you are supposed to be the ultimate master race of the galaxy, why don't you try climbing up after me?" At moments like that it shines and there is then room for some moral question or whatever is appropriate. At the moment it can hardly be said to contain any material for intellectual argument, only self-contained pseudo-intellectual argument within its own fandom who can't see the wood for its trees. Such staggeringly provocative arguments like "is the doctor gay?" can easily be put down to the BBC being conservative minded (especially in children's hour) about the doc having it off with his assistants in front of the children, especially when they aren't married (the doctor and his assistant, that is). Such defences of media SF are usually very trite and didactic; fans posing important questions like "Does Captain Kirk change his socks regularly?" or "Where are the toilets on the Enterprise?"

Analyzing Dr Who and most other TV SF is akin to what Spiker Robinson said: "A book was published where leading critics and learned men attempted to explain Pooh Bear and his adventures in an intellectual manner. That book of essays is the funniest I have ever read." Trouble is Dr Who isn't even funny - it's embarrassing. The reason I wouldn't have wanted Dr Who to win any award, especially in the SF field is that awards should be given firstly as a means of bettering the field and secondly as an incentive (in that order). This doesn't always work, especially in the HUGOs, when something much weaker than the other nominations wins, but I suppose we're all welcome to our own opinions.

In view of past awards, giving Dr Who one would be a step backward, or maybe even sideways, CERTAINLY NOT FORWARD.

*****Right that should wind up a few Dr Who fans! Staying with the visual side of sf and fantasy, here's some further reaction to the Lord of the Rings film.

MARY GENTLE, 2 Winston Gardens, Branksome, Poole, Dorset
J R R TOLKIEIN'S DOING HANDSPRINGS IN HIS GRAVE!

...but Bakshi's LOTR goes marching on. Inspired by Phil James's letter in M25, I spring to the typewriter to give you the Full and Awful Details on Bakshi's film version of Lord of the Rings - which bears the same relation to the original as 'Camelot' does to the Morte D'Arthur.

Is it really that bad? you ask, if you've been lucky enough to miss it. Oh, yes. Phil James mentions the appalling Fotonovel. The impact of the whole film is horrific. The character-animation is plain silly. The story is cut beyond belief, and has no conclusion; leaving it at the point where Gandalf brings the Rohirrim to Helm's Deep, and stranding Frodo and Sam in the marshes with Gollum. (Strange - reading the text, I never suspected Gollum was Jewish. We learn.) The hobbits are twee. Samwise's accent has vanished into deepest Mummerset. Merry and Pippin look and act like three year olds, though Frodo attains a slightly higher level - say, a five year old. On an off day.

I agree with Phil James, the dwarfs have strayed in from Snow White. Boromir, I think, is AWOL from Asgard. The Elves are angular, cross-eyed, and camp. There is no awe about Elrond, or even Galadriel. Gandalf is portrayed as a hand-waving wizard bogeyman, and he's no different when he returns as the White Rider. Half the book has gone missing. I mention Glorfindel, Tom Bombadil and Goldberry, Old Man Willow, the Barrowdowns, most of the events at Bree and on the road; after that I lost count.

Coming to Tolkien's particular creations, I wince. The Balrog - oh lord - would you credit plastic wings? You might believe a man can fly. You won't believe it when the Balrog does. The orcs are scruffy rather than intimidating. The Rohirrim all bear a startling resemblance to Bjorn Borg on horseback. The Ent -

I won't discuss the ent. I can't. Nor shall I dwell on the Black Riders, who - as half the plot is missing - act without rhyme or reason. And ride pterodactyls. (No, Tolkien never specified.)

I saw the film in mixed company. One reader of LOTR, one part-time SF fan, and one person who'd never heard of it - she spent the film in dazed bewilderment. If you haven't read the book, you'll have no idea of what's going on. (If you have read it, you won't be much wiser.) Those of us who'd read the book spent a lot of time crying and hiding under the cinema seats. One friend inquired of me who Tolkien was, and when told, asked why people read the book if it was such rubbish?

I heard the remarks as I left. There were many people in that cinema who, now they've seen that film, will never try to read the book. They've been put off it for good. Considered that way, it's not just a bad film, it's dangerous. I only hope the film is such an abysmal flop that it discourages Bakshi from attempting a sequel.

*****Surely somebody enjoyed the LOTR film? I cannot comment as I've not seen it (nor am I likely to!). Still with the visual arts is:

STEVE INCE, 5 Otterburn St, Hessle Rd, Hull

When is an artist not an artist? When he's an illustrator.

I saw Ken Russel's brilliant film: "Savage Messiah" on the telly and a few days later read John Fowle's equally brilliant book: The Collector. The combination of the two left a very deep impression upon my mind (I often rest my pen there). I have since formed the opinion that anything that appears on a book cover cannot be described as art but is simply an illustration. I know that there are a number of covers that represent the innards not at all (more notably Foss). I tend not to like those anyway.

Now we get onto whether the illustrations are good. As in most things, it is a matter of taste. I like some of the book covers and even think some are very good (wow! gosh! etc). But that is only once I accept them as illustrations. True art has to come from the artist and even if he were not getting a solitary penny from it, he should still feel the need to do it. This cannot apply to all book covers. In the first instance it is a commercial venture. In the second, it is more often than not sparked off by the novel and there is no originality at all.

There is a lot of good art that I can appreciate as good art, but that I would not put on my wall. I think that it is good art because it instills feelings in me - be they good or bad feelings. Illustration does not do this.

*****Now, onto matters concerning life, the universe, and why is the BSFA here at all?

HUGH DAVIES, 7 Burlington Rise, East Barnet, Herts

As an ardent reader and collector of science fiction for many years, I have just returned to the BSFA after an absence of three years. Keith Freeman (who prompted my return after reading a letter of mine in Computing which, by the way, contains an article about Arthur C Clarke (August 2nd issue)) asked me why I left, and why I returned. As this question seems to interest not only Keith, but other BSFA members (Dave Lewis, M23?) I thought I would give my reasons:-

- (a) The unprofessional way in which the BSFA was run. I realise that all those concerned give their efforts voluntarily, but nonetheless, some of these efforts were not especially efficient. It would seem that a new wave of enthusiasm has recently encompassed the BSFA Committee, so this reason for leaving would now seem to have conveniently become a reason for returning.
- (b) The pathetic and juvenile bickering over such "earth-shattering" questions as "what is science fiction", from the letters of M24, still a favourite. Does it really matter? I personally do not care what anyone else's definition of science fiction is. I read anything that is entertaining, stimulating, instructive or thought-provoking. As a lot of SF is some or all of these I read SF. I also read books in many other categories, and what the

Sorry folks, the photo-reduction facility is no longer available to us for this issue, so there'll have to be a change of typeface. How do you like the reduced format for the letters? It has been suggested before to save space so we thought we'd give it a try. Any comments?

publisher and/or the library put on the spine has never really bothered me. My third reason for leaving is that I feel the BSFA should be doing its utmost to counter the derogatory attitudes of the general public and spread the word. Instead, everyone I know who has heard of it, did so from a friend, and how many members are there? 611! And how many SF

books are sold per year? 10,000? 100,000? Surely something, somewhere is seriously wrong. I do my best (612 now!), but what are we doing wrong?

- (c) I personally found the world of fandom and its unnecessary and ugly jargon a very depressing, clique-ridden and slightly ridiculous one. As to the jargon, as a biochemist turned computer programmer I have experience of two areas where jargon serves a useful function - DDCMP is much easier than "Digital Data Communications Message Protocol". This does not apply to SF terms except in the most contrived fashion. As to SF fans themselves, their activities seem to have precious little to do with SF, a subject which some of them seem to know little about. If one wants boozing partners, no discussions about football, why not join a suitable organisation?

My reasons for rejoining the BSFA are more difficult to discern and not as clear-cut. Firstly, despite all its faults, the BSFA is the only organisation for those who wish to read, discuss and dissect the more outre subjects that fall under the heading of SF. Also, not all fans are as cliquish and intellectually ungifted as I have implied. Many of them make fascinating and stimulating company. Secondly, in very few places can one obtain the kind of discussion about more serious topics as occurs in these pages. Finally, it is a nice feeling to be able to talk to people who, usually, understand what you are talking about when you discuss SF. I must admit that I still have misgivings about an organisation whose "critical journal" produced only quarterly, runs to only 16 pages and costs 75p, but it is the only show in town and despite everything, I am glad to be back!

*****Well, I hope you don't become disillusioned again too quickly. One thing the present committee appreciates is the need for a professional approach. Debates on the definition of SF are quite popular (judging by the volume of mail generated) so one has to give some space to it, still, I hope I didn't let it go on too long. Jargon, ah, another thorny problem; personally I'm not that keen on fan jargon but at least when you know what an acronym like LoC stands for it makes sense - the words that DDCMP stand for strike me as little more than meaningless buzz words!

Whilst on the subject of BSFA mags, here're some more thoughts from:

PETER CROWTHER, Bridgewood, 22 South Drive, Harrogate

Firstly, I must congratulate whoever is responsible for the improved appearance of the mags in the latest mailing. Vector in particular is an extremely handsome and professional-looking magazine but I wonder whether the apparent sophistication and only better-than-average contents justify the cover price of 75p; I think not! Similarly Focus, whilst being instantly impressive on the outside, does nothing to earn its 75p tag. It troubles me that the association's magazines seem only like fairly well produced fanzines. Your magazine is the worst to look at, but is invariably entertaining on the inside; everything is relative though and I doubt that the publication would appear as rosey if it didn't drop through the mailbox with the other trivia.

Paperback Parlour I usually find most rewarding. Reviews in the past have been generally fair and lacking insults but this Joseph Nicholas fellow is a pain! Okay, so he didn't like Varley's 'Titan', but his review even so was not constructive. The same goes for Ben Bova's 'Colony' which he pulled apart; I agree that the choice of year for setting the novel (2008) does strain the credibility factor somewhat but his closing statement insulting Hugo voters - no matter how well the statement was disguised - does not make enjoyable reading. I could continue citing his reference to Del Rey and Scithers in his editorial but suffice to say that I am not impressed with his style, though I'm sure he couldn't give a damn.

Now onto Seacon. And what a superbly enjoyable few days it was!

Congratulations and my heartfelt thanks go to all responsible for making the convention the success it was. But...

- (1) Though the Metropole Hotel itself was an excellent choice of venue, the prices at the bar and in the cafeteria were very silly. I mean, 70p for a pint of lager!
- (2) The organisation of the Hugo presentation was a total shambles. At first no allowance had been made for those people attending the banquet to have seats reserved for the Hugo ceremony which was going to take place in a separate room. So, there would be me and about six hundred others sat guzzling whiles the other 2500/3000 sat patiently in the best seats of the Hugo hall until we joined them - wherever we could fit - for the presentation. I managed to persuade Rob Jackson to do something about this and about 400 seats were roped off. Bob Shaw made the announcement at the banquet that diners need not rush for seats: they didn't and the 600 diners poured into the 400 seats with the result that, amongst others, Jerry Pournelle and his wife had to stand at the rear of the room throughout the presentation!

And...

- (3) I saw the odd sign at the convention saying "Britain for more in '84", a sentiment which I agree with totally: and I was thinking... we have a huge conference centre in Harrogate (which is the centre of England!), beautiful countryside, nice town etc and it would be nice to see a big con come North for a change. I'm prepared to put in a hell of a lot of work/help if anyone thinks that it's a good idea. Well?

*****Anybody else with thoughts on Seacon? About the work - Eve says take the amount of work you think it will involve, multiply by a factor of 10 and you get near the amount of work if everything goes well!

KEITH FREEMAN, 269 Wykeham Road, Reading

I was very disappointed in Paperback Parlour. The place for long, dreary, 'clever' reviews is the wastepaper basket; I want short 'capsule' reviews in PP with, perhaps, a reference to Vector for the longer 'in-depth' review. Joe tells us he doesn't like 'Titan' but it's going to be a Hugo contender (even possibly winner) in 1980... maybe this just shows up that his ideas/yardsticks on SF aren't the same as those of the majority of SF readers/fans? There's nothing wrong with that, but should the BSFA be paying for Joe to ride his hobby-horse....?

Peter Pinto makes an interesting suggestion about sending out copies of fanzines with each mailing... although not disagreeing with the idea, there are some problems, mainly about timing. By the time the 'reviewer' has reviewed a fanzine in Matrix it will be 6-8 weeks old. A further 8 week delay before the next mailing - which editor will run off 750-800 extra copies and who will hold them for the requisite length of time? Who wants to read a fanzine that's at least three months old? Alternatively, which fnz editor will keep the stencils/masters or whatever for the time before the BSFA asks for a reprinting?

Buying a litho machine sounds a very good idea at first. Trouble is that in the near future John & Eve will get fed up with producing Matrix/Vector/PP/Special booklets etc. Will the next person be as reliable/trustworthy as John & Eve? What about the one after that?? Eventually I suspect the litho machine will go the way of various other pieces of equipment the BSFA has had (typewriters, duplicators etc) and will 'disappear'.

Alan Yarwood brings up Fantasy Trader... other people, previously, have expressed a requirement NOT to get PP etc. As one of the stuffers-of-envelopes may I point out that singling out individuals who don't get something is very tedious and time-consuming. If the majority want something then those in the minority should be magnanimous and simply transfer unwanted items straight from the packet to the wastepaper bin. Of course they should also let the committee know of the items they don't want... If they then become the majority, such items can be dropped (and, again as an envelope stuffer - hooray).

*****The litho point is another thorny problem and one which requires much thought, any ideas fans? Back to the BSFA and somebody who seems to find some good in it.

GWYNFOR JONES, 34 Bryn Gwynt, Amlwch Port, Anglesey, Gwynedd, N Wales
I am rather sick of the continual barrage of criticism being levelled at the BSFA "system" of running its affairs by critical elements in fandom. The vogue for character assassination (which I thought could be quite funny at times, despite its rather petty nature) has passed and now it's the turn of the empire builders or rather the empire to receive a thrashing. Well, I don't wish to enter into a political wrangle, especially since I am basically a fan of SF rather than fandom, but it has appeared to me that the BSFA has and is doing a very good job in providing for the reader information with and articles on authors, books and music in the genre. What the hell else do they expect? I'm not sure who first coined the phrase of "if it works well leave it alone" but this must surely apply to the BSFA. It's the function of the association to keep the reader informed and it's doing just that! I don't think that the present working of the BSFA needs radical restructuring - it's at the present a smooth running communication machine, providing excellent value for money for those wanting concise information rather than gallons of ineffectual drivel.

Couldn't we just for once have a mailbag of people who are actually satisfied with the running of the association rather than a bunch of professional moaners who seem to creep into the mailbag with incessant regularity.

DAVE LEWIS, 1 Hornbeam Road, Stowupland, Stowmarket, Suffolk
Once again several loccers from the unknown Phil James to the steadfast Keith Freeman have essentially missed the main thrusts of the points I have been repeatedly making. They are quite simply shorn of all fat:
(a) Although the BSFA is an amateur organisation there is no reason why it should not be run to the highest professional standards.
&
(b) The BSFA should be the organisation in the SF world looked to with respect & for guidance on the burning SF issues at hand.

Having got over the nasties first I can see that at least Alan Dorey senses this and is determined to drag the BSFA screaming from the morass of apathy and negative thinking. Bravo.

- Press Releases. Great Idea
- Special Projects. Even Better
- Even the 'ole argument about the cost of litho is solved in an elegantly simple manner. Buy a bloody machine.
- Finances are to be boosted in several commonsense ways.
- 21st. Anniversary is to be celebrated. Better & Better.

All I can say is I'm right behind you boss all the way. Also by hook or by crook I shall try to get the odd pound or two off to Alan for that m/c. I hope other members will try to do the same. Forgo the odd pinta or try to pick up the odd bargain book at Woollies remainder

counter & secondhand bookstalls and mail off the difference in actual price to him. I really do believe in Alan the BSFA have a dedicated, positive and very valuable chairman.

*****Thanks for the vote of confidence David.

BILL BAINS, Crowland Lodge, 100 Galley Lane, Arkley, Barnet

Distributing the mailing at Seacon was a great idea for economy, lousy for Matrix. Alan Dorey's piece should be read before the con, so what does Rob Jackson very wisely advise us to do 10 pages earlier? Stop reading Matrix and go mingle. Sensible man: I never started reading this mailing until Seacon was long gone, and then find it full of information vital to the survival of the human race, also convention goers.

Loccol, ah, yes. We are, as they say, all guilty. Of course Matrix is straightjacketed, but only within the confines of a widely read clubzine. It cannot poach on the preserve of Vector or the amazing new Focus, cannot become too in-group or fannish, must provide items of some interest to most of the membership, cannot be vastly expensive to produce. Call it a straightjacket if you want: I agree with Phil James and call it editorial policy.

Focus: The editorial states it will publish amateur SF if it thinks suitable. What will it do with what it does not consider suitable? Will it send a curt 'This material is not suitable for our current requirements', a long diatribe of the sort 'You worm, how dare you foist such absolute garbage on a zine trying to be at least marginally readable?' or will it encourage up and coming Perry Rhodan writers with kind words of wisdom like 'don't'? If the latter, to what extent are the editors or their minions willing to look at anything that is sent to them and give a helpful critical appraisal of where the author has gone wrong and how to put it right in the future? One asks because one is aware that among one's 600 fellow members there are about 580 aspiring writers (the remaining 20 having already got there). Most of these have not the slightest idea whether they are likely to be much good at it. Obviously you cannot turn Focus into a free 'teach yourself to write' correspondence school. How far, possibly with the aid of BSFA members who already do write or publish professionally, are you willing to go in this direction?

*****The answer to your question lies with the editors of Focus and what the membership want, so let's hear from you. We will pass on your letter Bill to Rob & Chris, together with any more we receive and get them to write an article for the next issue of Matrix.

HELEN MCNABB, 24 Failand Close, Cross Inn, Hautrisaut, Mid Glamorgan

As a new member of the BSFA I found Jim Darroch's letter in M25 interesting. I suppose my reaction must be fairly common in reading through the items sent to me as a "new member" - it's one of alienation. There is much cheery badinage between old friends in your pages, much of it incomprehensible to the uninitiated (ie me). After 3 mailings I am beginning to get the gist of some of it, but there is little to make me feel I have anything in common with most of the writers except having read some of the same books.

I had hoped to overcome this by attending Seacon but was otherwise engaged in having a baby (luckily her timing is improving) so I still am a spectator on the sidelines. I don't know what can be done to improve matters, but I feel some people must leave the BSFA because they feel outside the 'in-around' and commitments to work, family etc forbid travelling to cons and such like. They, like me, are interested, willing to participate, but do not know how, and finally, perhaps, give up. Cri de coeur - is there a local SF club in the Cardiff/Bridgend area?? This letter is not written in complaint, but rather as an explanation.

*****Firstly, congratulations Helen on the baby. Now, I'm sure you are not the only person who feels 'outside' and that is my perennial headache in editing Matrix - how to strike the happy medium between those who know and participate in fandom and those who don't. As to a local group in your area, Rob Hansen lives in Newport and he put a plea out a couple of issues ago for people to start up a club. If you didn't receive that issue, we'll give him your name and address and hope something can be arranged.

Now for someone who was lucky enough to be able to attend conventions and is making his way into fandom...

ANDY HOBBS, Riverlyn House, Hoveringham, Notts

Jim Darroch's letter was very interesting - but only as a basis for a loc. Unfortunately I was unable to attend Faircon 1 so Yorcon was my first convention. Like Jim I found that my first con was a very interesting and enjoyable affair, at which I met some very interesting people. Like Jim I also found my first con had a stimulating programme, diversified and a good selection for a neo. Therefore, I cannot accept his assumption that a neofan going to Yorcon would also be going to his last because of the brevity and lack of scope of the programme. Yorcon was (and it didn't take me all night to figure this out) a science fiction convention, which meant that everybody there had a common interest. This enabled people to start conversations knowing that they had some common denominator with the complete stranger they were talking to.

A large programme at a con does not mean that a neofan has an easier ride at his first con, surrounded by people he has never met before. He's there because of a genuine interest in SF, and just because he saw all the speeches, panels, films etc doesn't mean he will rush up to people and hug them bellowing salutations at the top of his voice. I would go as far as to say that a large programme could put off a neo. Take Seacon - the variety of the various programmes would mean that a neo could spend all his time just watching and listening to people talking from a stage without ever getting involved with any other attendee's socially. I think, basically, the ability to survive at your first con and then to go to more depends upon your nature: shy? gregarious? extrovert? - that will determine his success.

Is greg Hills real? or just a name used by unscrupulous members of the BSFA? What does he want? A strict code of editorial practice is the only answer I can come up with. "No editor shall: chop more than X% of words out of a letter; have a WHF column of more than Y names; indulge in character assassination by printing a letter that does not exactly coincide with the writer's views; eh. Christ, nobody can dictate to an editor of a fanzine what can/cannot be included in such detail. If the editor fucks (balls) (mucks?!!) it up then he will be told so; and if he edits a clubzine he will be ousted. The editor of a clubzine does his best to fulfil the needs of the club in the pages of his zine. He needs to give a balanced letter-col from the letters received, that gives an airing to all the views expressed; and to use a discerning eye to eradicate the nonsense and irrelevancies from a letter. I will agree that he has certain limitations placed upon him that would be absent from other types of zine, but they should be loose and changeable depending on readership response, not fixed and unchangeable.

JOHN CONNOR, HMS Chrichton, BFPO Ships, London

Whilst perusing Matrix, I came across what must undoubtedly be a close contender for 'WHIMP OF THE ISSUE'. I refer to Phillip Muldowney. Firstly, he says that Matrix is/seems straightjacketed. Sure but don't you need at least one stable reference point to expand from? Matrix gives you straight information from which you can expand your ideas/thoughts/opinions, and know that what you're given to think about isn't

just a load of gumph used just to pad out the zine.

Strike Two! You talk of Mr Pickersgill, bitching as bad as he does, then say what about a resident fanzine reviewer. Yes, I did read the bit about getting to know his prejudices, but look at it this way, what about the new fan? The person who reads the reviews for the first time. Does he know reviewer X has a down for a certain style? New fans, like babies, are born every minute so have at least some consideration for them!

*****Now some thoughts on Matrix itself.

Graham Ashley, 86 St James Road, Mitcham, Surrey

You express surprise in Matrix 25 that there are so few letter-writers, and indeed those you have printed would tend to bear this out. There doesn't appear to be one exciting or memorable idea amongst the, as though you really were scraping the bottom of the barrel just to produce this small number. But where does the problem lie? Well, I think you are already aware of what is going wrong: "Or was the last Matrix so boring that you've all fallen asleep?" It would be extreme to say that M has become boring, and indeed it would be unfair, as this would belittle the large amount of hard work you have put into it. You have provided a tremendous raising of standards since Andy Sawyer's days (as he himself has acknowledged), and I for one am very grateful for this. However, it must be said that the contents has become somewhat predictable, even to the point where it is bland.

Obviously you have attempted to inject new blood into the zine, and it's good to see fan writers such as Joseph Nicholas, Kevin Smith and Rob Jackson producing articles, but you seem to suffer from the same problem as Simone Walsh's Seamonsters which Kevin Smith described thus: "Nothing in either one stimulates you to put pen to paper and write to the editor." The articles so far have all been good pieces, but have nothing within them which illicit response; nothing which excites, or infuriates, or makes one nod in agreement; nothing to make a person feel as if they really must write. Perhaps this is because the famous fans feel rather inhibited and somewhat tongue-tied in front of the entire audience of the BSFA. Obviously a great deal rests upon their shoulders, what with the unspoken antagonism which seems to exist between the two groups. Only Joseph Nicholas of your recent fan reviewers dares to make no compromises, but then one can only write the "shit-kicking" type of fanzine review so many times before it becomes tamely repetitive.

Equally though, I feel that many BSFA members who used to write to Matrix, even on an irregular basis, also feel intimidated and suppressed by the 'Big Name Fans'. Perhaps they think that their ideas and thoughts are no longer valid for the newstyle Matrix, and whereas before they could safely hide away in the dark corners of Andy Sawyer's patchy layout, now they are brought out into the crisp light of day.

Your job as editors must be to assure these two groups of their usefulness and then to integrate them within the pages of Matrix. From your comments in Matrix 23 it would appear that you have a plentiful supply of articles from members other than already well-known fans. So why are you not using this material? Where is the review section that you hoped would start in M24? I feel that in your recent Matrixs you have tended to overly stress the fannish side of life, which is okay by me, but probably doesn't appeal to the more diehard science fiction afficianadoes within the BSFA. After all it is their magazine and I think that if they have something to say, and say it well enough, it should be included.

*****Well, I feel that Matrix should be pretty fannish and most SF discussion (but not all) be in Vector. I hope that under its new editor Vector might be less of a formal journal and fulfill the need for SF discussion that members want.

CYRIL SIMSA, 18 Muswell Ave, London

Hello, and thank you for what probably was the best Matrix I have ever read in something over three years' BSFA membership: although its mixture is (perhaps intentionally) pretty bland, the quality of writing in your latest issue is conspicuous.

You wonder what has happened to the loccol? Well, there hasn't really been much in Matrix recently of even lukewarmly acerbic nature: Matrix has become a pretty basic and straightforward information-zine for neo-fen. In its own way this is commendable, but it does not exactly stimulate heated response. How can one argue with Paul Kincaid telling us there is an SF group in Manchester? And whilst no doubt some people would bitch vehemently at, say, Joseph Nicholas's comments about fanzines a few issues back, I'd reckon the majority of those people at whom Matrix is aimed will not have read (or even heard of?) the subjects under discussion: how, then, can they comment on what Joseph Nicholas has said?

It strikes me that a lot of newer members might find it extremely useful if an issue of a fanzine was distributed/dissected with each mailing, as Peter Pinto suggests (indeed, I think even a lot of older members like myself could benefit); the only snag that I can see is finding a fan-editor with a sufficient tendency to masochism.

*****Preventing stagnation in Matrix is one of my major problems, so ideas from members on items they'd like to see are always welcome. As to the fact that it appears to be aimed at neos, it seems that we have satisfied neither group - on the one hand a neo says it's taken her three issues to know what the hell is going on, and on the other you say we're too bland! Oh well, if it was perfect then we'd have to give up because everything else we did would only be second best.

WAHF

We should like to thank everyone who wrote to us, including:

Paul Dembina, 29 Howcroft Crescent, Finchley, London
and

Roger Nicholls, 10 Sinedun Road, Didcot, Oxon.

Well, that should satisfy Greg Hills. You see, when we get letters that are well-written and interesting, then we do print them and hang the page count. It is surprising that, out of an issue that we did not feel was extremely good (Seacon preparation and all that), we get the best batch of letters. Life's a funny thing. Keep on writing.

SUGGESTIONS BOX

Kevin Busby, 39 Westfield Rd, Eastbourne, Sussex

I appreciate your efforts in compiling a regular index to the BSFA's fanzines, but I think that what would really be useful is a list of publications included in each mailing. Because the exact contents vary from mailing to mailing, it isn't always easy to tell whether or not anything is missing (and mistakes can be made - for instance, I didn't receive the Litho Fund flyer mentioned in Matrix). An example: there was no 'Science Fiction Media News' in the August mailing yet there was no explanation

(or if there was, it must have been carefully hidden!)

Ideally, a sheet listing the included publications would be sent with each mailing, with notes relevant to any changes. The bottom half of the sheet could be used for any amendments to the BSFA booklet. The sheet could be kept inside/stapled to the booklet. I think this would be more convenient than ploughing through old Matrixes for information (which might be necessary with Keith Freeman's suggestion in Matrix 25).

By the way, what did Mr Freeman mean by 'TANSTAAFL' in his letter (excuse my ignorance)?

*****Your wish is my command, but the thought of stuffing yet another sheet in the envelopes was too much of a horror, so I've met you half-way and included the listing at the back of Matrix. Hope that satisfies you Kevin.

Don't worry about your ignorance, I had to ask Keith what 'TANSTAAFL' meant - There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch. Keith was amazed that I didn't know and threatened to have me drummed out of the Robert Heinlein appreciation society - but I wasn't a member anyway, that's Eve's department and she didn't know either!

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.....

In Case of Fireball, Break Class

Fen with colonial ambitions have frequently said that SF was the first medium to warn of the horrors of Total War. Not so! The defense departments of the western world have long known all about massive retaliation, and are well prepared to deal with the Main War when it arrives as is shown by the following extract from "Medical Manual of Defence Against Chemical Agents" (MOD JSP 312 A/24/GEN/4392) first published about the same time as Astounding but recently updated. I find it most reassuring to know that all is taken care of in the event of the Ruskies dropping the megatons on us.

"Immediate Action and Decontamination Drills

(1) General. It must be emphasised that individual action on attack must be without hesitation and entirely automatic. All the actions listed in the following paragraphs may be necessary when a suspected NBC attack occurs.

(2) Immediate Action Drill.

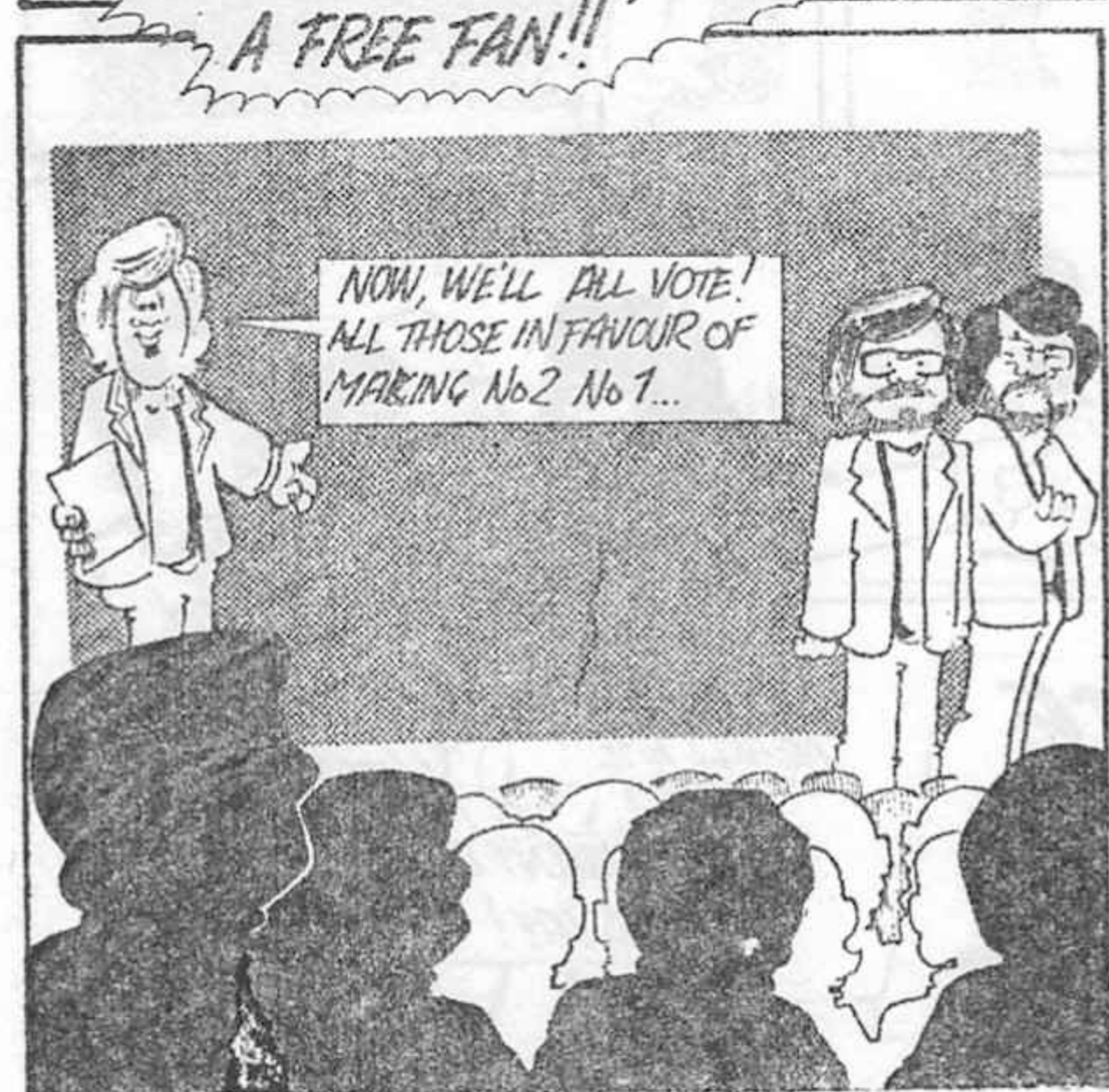
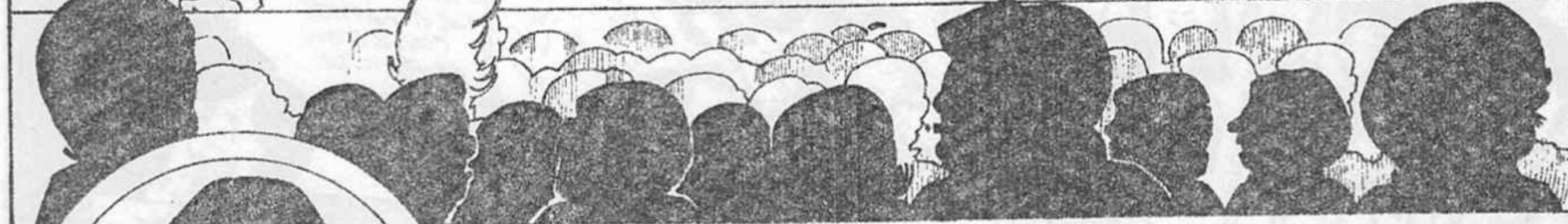
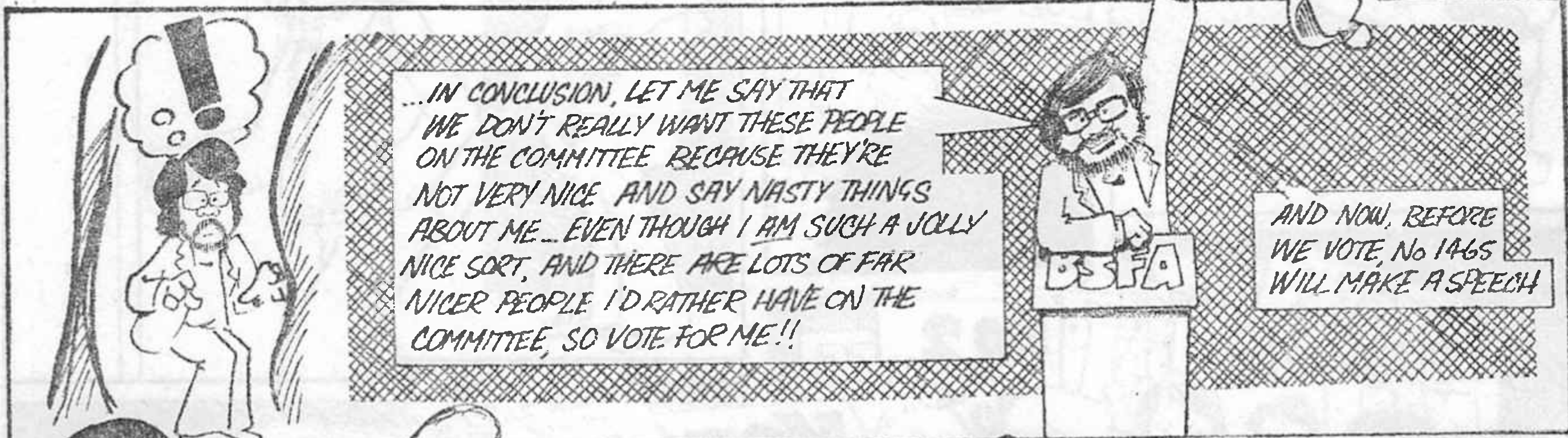
(a) Stop Breathing."

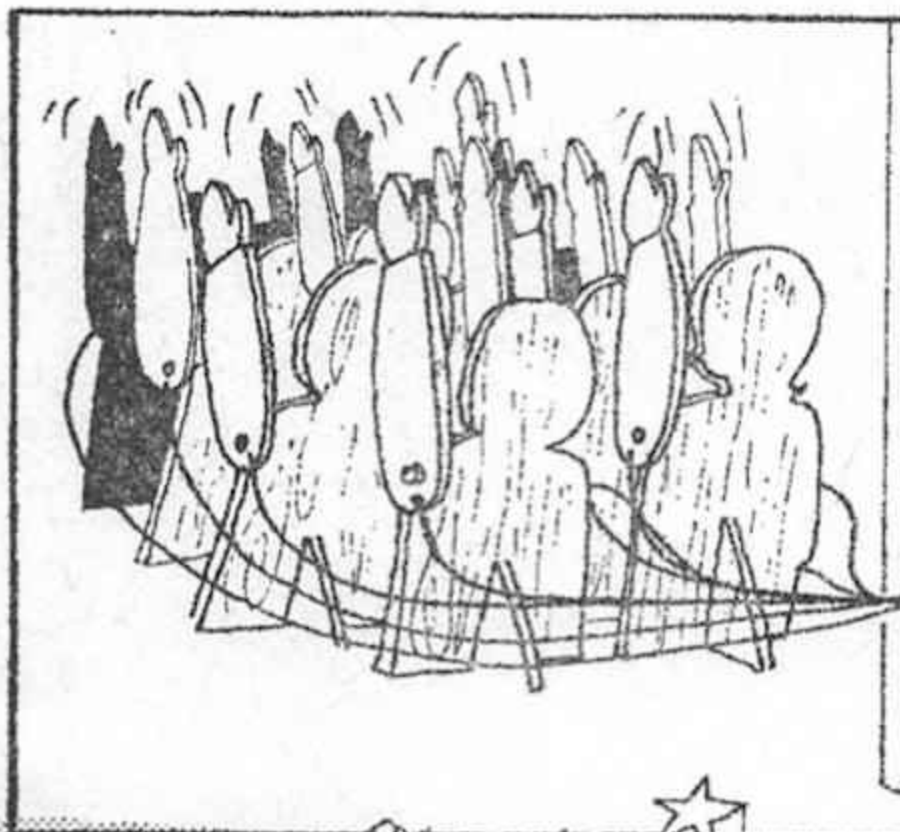
The Captive

TRAPPED IN THE "CONVENTION"
THE CAPTIVE CONTINUES
HIS EFFORTS TO ESCAPE
WITHOUT REVEALING WHY
HE RESIGNED FROM
THE B.S.F.A....



PAUL KINCAID & JIM BARKER





IN THIS MAILING

Matrix 26
Vector 95
Paperback Parlour Volume 3, No. 2
BSFA Award Nomination Form / Litho Fund

Index to the BSFA Mailing October/November 1979

Title and Author

Page

Aliens: A Personal View - Paul Kincaid	V95, P.17
Books and Awards	M26, P.10
The BSFA Award	V95, P.26
The Captive - Jim Barker and Chris Evans	M26, P.37
Editorial	M26, P.1
Genocide For Fun and Profit - Dave Langford	V95, P.5
Have You Seen the Stars Tonite? - Alan Dorey	M26, P.5
Life on Mars - Simon Ounsley	M26, P.17
A Little More off The Top (An Editorial) - Mike Dickinson	V95, P.3
	M26, P.13
Mailbag	M26, P.14
Miscellany Corner	M26, P.20
On the Carpet - Rob Jackson	V95, P.27
Reviews	
Romance and Hardening Arteries: A Reappraisal of the SF of Jack Vance - Mike Dickinson	V95, P.22
	M26, P.15
Seacon Conrep - Phil James	PP, P.11
Sleeve Notes - Rob Hansen	V95, P.14
SF In The '80s - Roz Kaveney	M26, P.3
To Meet or Not To Meet - Eve Harvey	

APOLOGIES -

For the abysmal reproduction of Vector 95. Our printer, a man known for his incredible efficiency, gave your Chairman a call just one week before this mailing was due to be sent out saying that the quote he'd given for printing Vector was wrong and that it would now cost substantially more. With just a few days to get the copies back from the printer and a desperate attempt to find a new one, we decided to let him continue. And V95 was how he repaid us. Needless to say we shall not be availing ourselves of his services in the near future.

Paperback Parlour page numbering - this is entirely due to Keith Freeman's desire to change the whole mathematical system as we know it today. He assures us that next time he will get it right.
