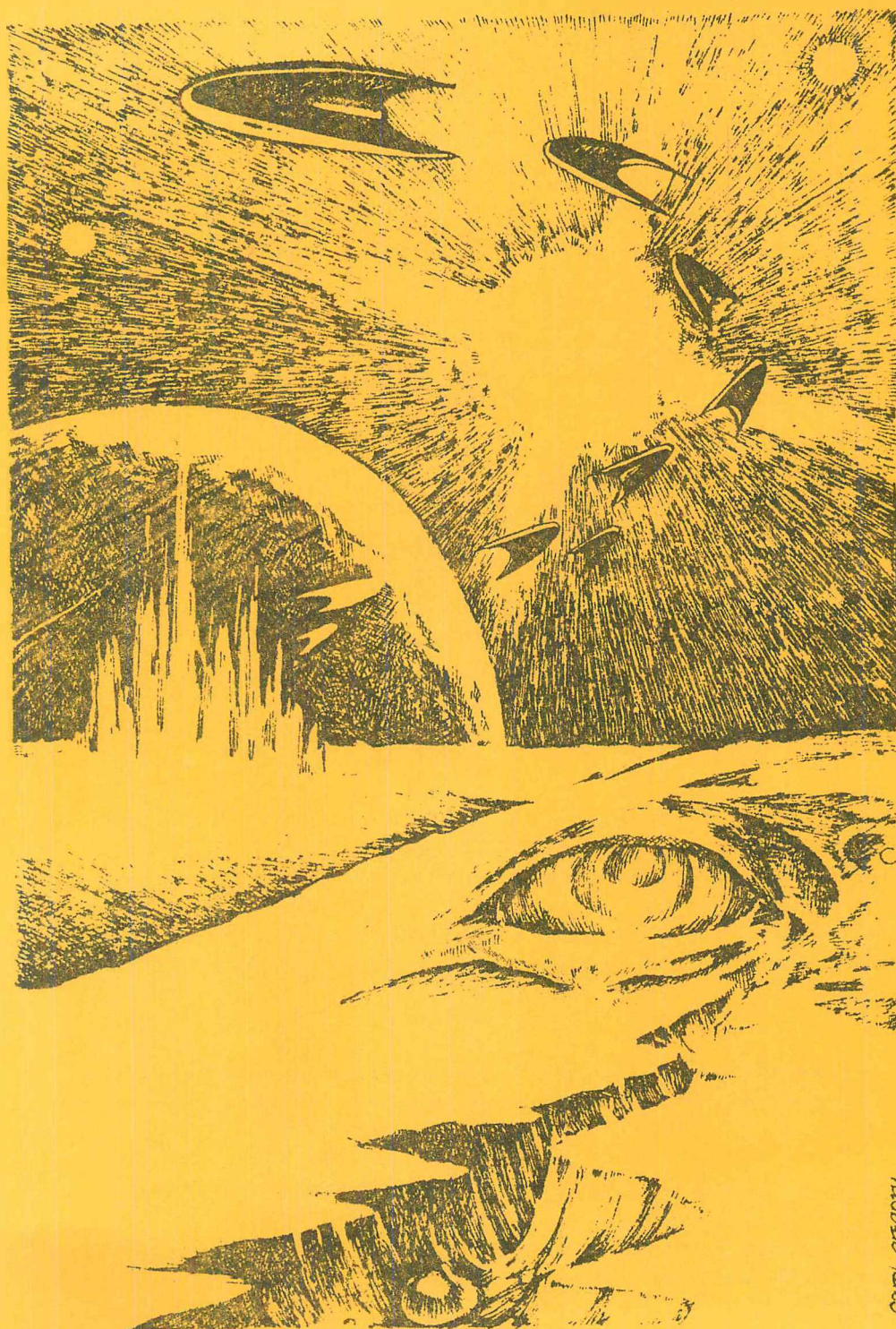


# MATRIX 28

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carol gregory

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# MATRIX 28

MARCH 1980

THE BSFA NEWSLETTER

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## Copy Deadlines

All contributions to be received by Friday, 18th April 1980 AT THE LATEST.

Next mailing is scheduled for Saturday/Sunday 26/27 April - anyone wishing to lend a hand is more than welcome. Please contact either Alan or John & Eve for details.



# Editorial



four years ago one of the most disorganized cons ever was almost upon us - Mancon 5. In the year running up to Easter 76 the Mancon committee had churned out three rather poor P.R.'s (they craftily claimed a pre-bid flyer as PR1 after the event thus making 4!). Now the signs were there for that to be a poor Eastercon so what is Albacon looking like?

A provisional programme list has come into my hands. Now I expect it to be rather vague at present but some of the items do look out of place. For instance there are three separate items on microprocessors planned - but I thought we were going to a Science Fiction convention, not an electronics/computing conference!

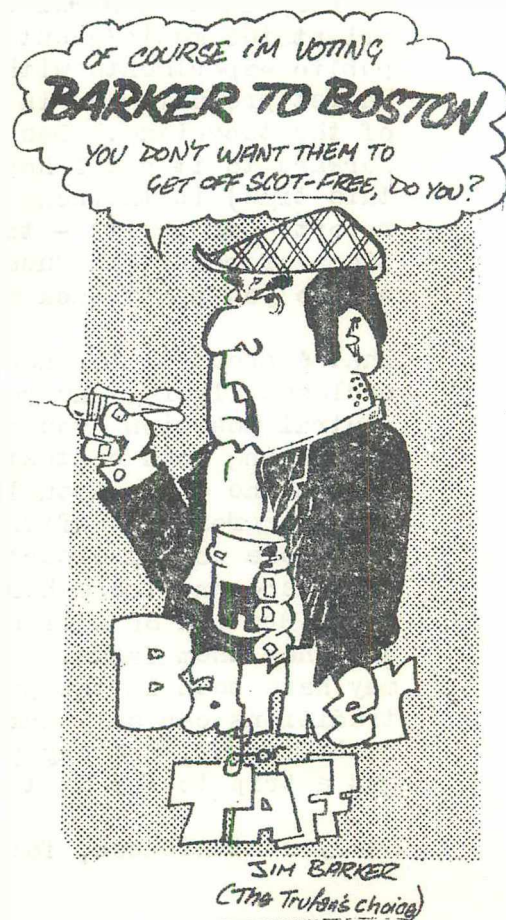
The reason I'm getting irate about the apparent mismanagement of this forthcoming event is not that I want to pour scorn on their efforts. I am not one of those parochial British fans who feel

"This issue I am going to use my "position of power" to sound off about something that has been niggling me for some time. What's been annoying me? Albacon, that's what!

It's an unwritten rule of Eastercons (in fact none of the rules are written) that the organising committee produce four progress reports during the year to their event. Now a P.R. every 3 months may appear a little frequent but there is much to be done on the path to a successful Eastercon and a regular P.R. serves a number of functions. They help to maintain the cohesion of the committee, inspire confidence in the members and act as publicity for new members.

So how does this affect Albacon? Well, as I write, March is beginning and there are under 2 months to Easter. So how many Albacon progress reports have I seen - one! And it was not much of a P.R. anyway. I have heard rumours that number two has been published but I've not seen any sign of it. In fact the only thing I've seen in over six months is a tiny slip of paper saying that my hotel deposit has been received (and that's more than some people). The only reason I know the event is still on are noises on the grapevine.

What makes the situation worse is that



Glasgow is too far away to go for a convention. In over 40 years this is the first time Eastercon has been held outside the boundaries of England and I personally welcome that. But if they make a fiasco of the affair then the name of Albacon and Scotland is going to be mud for years to come; thus fulfilling the prophecies of doom that have been flying around. So come on you Albacon committee members, please organise yourselves and prove all the doubting Thomases wrong by making it a good Eastercon.

Right, let's change the subject altogether. I'm looking for an answer to a question. How do you stop TV SF programmes being cliched? In other words, what advice can we, who are the "experts" in that most demanding field of SF appreciation, give to the writers and producers of the manifestations of our favourite art form on the little (or large, depending on your socio-economic grouping) box? One of the functions of the BSFA, according to some people, should be to attempt to influence what we see on the TV. But to do this we need informed, positive recommendations. So let's see what you feel, say, on the recent Dr Who series, have they been too flippant? How else could they have been portrayed and still maintained a certain amount of credibility? What is it that makes a good TV SF series? Why are most of the series that have been produced met with scorn from the majority of the SF world? In other words, if you were in a room with someone who is intending to write a new TV SF series, how would you explain to him what makes a good or bad SF programme? Finally, for that matter, do we want to try and change things?

The observant amongst you (or those naughty people who read magazines backwards) will have noticed that the Matrix Review Section has at last arrived. In order to keep it as a regular feature I need contributors, so reviews of any SF orientated media/event would be appreciated. You will also notice my first public experiments with the reproduction of photographs on a duplicator. Whilst producing an interesting effect, they do illustrate the limitations of the technique. Despite my misgivings about Albacon, I'm quite looking forward to it and I hope to include a couple of pages of photographs (lithoed this time) in the next issue of Matrix. Plus, of course, the usual convention report - or is it? - this time it's from Jim Barker on the trials and tribulations of being Fan Guest of Honour (FGoH). There you are Jim, it's in print now so you can't back down!

That's about it for now, except to remind you all to support TAFF (see the enclosed flyer). As you may have noticed, Matrix is upholding it's usual neutral position (you don't realize how uncomfortable it is to sit on a fence) by backing both contestants - thus ensuring we can say we backed the right one in the end! Actually, it's not impartiality, it's just that I'm backing Dave Langford (no offence Jim) and Eve's backing Jim (well, after Shazfan, what more do you expect?). So as editor I plug my protege, and as typist she adds here and there her plugs. So watch out for the hair flying! Whoever wins, British SF will have a worthy and deserving ambassador to send to Boston and show them Yanks. But just because the lobbying isn't as vitriolic as it may have been in the past, don't let this lull you into inactivity - these traditions can only survive with the active support of the grass roots, and don't forget, one day you may be a Big Name Fan, and it might be your turn to get a trip to the States, so isn't it worth putting yourself out and voting?

See you at Albacon, for those who are going.

John Harvey



\*\*\*\*\*  
\*As you will have noticed by now, this year's TAFF race is at present in \*  
\*full swing. (If you've just said "What's TAFF?", have a look for the \*  
\*flier in this mailing which should explain all.) Since one of the condi-\*  
\*dates is, as usual, bringing up the rear of this issue of Matrix, we \*  
\*thought we'd let the other start off. \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

#### 4004 AND ALL THAT

"If (says Arago) this question were simply proposed to me, Is the Sun inhabited? I should reply, that I know nothing about the matter. But let any one ask of me if the sun can be inhabited by beings organized in a manner analogous to those which people our globe, and I hesitate not to reply in the affirmative. The existence in the sun of a central obscure nucleus, enveloped in an opaque atmosphere far beyond which the luminous atmosphere exists, is by no means opposed, in effect, to such a conception.

"Sir William Herschel thought the sun to be inhabited..."  
(John Timbs, Things Not Generally Known, 1857)

While researching a couple of more or less scientific books - one on future warfare, one on past UFOs\*- I was inspired by many eminent scientists whose opinions proved to be just as rooted in eternal truth as those of Arago and Herschel above. It goes a long way back: Aristotle, without recourse to actual sordid experiment ("No man can practise virtue who is living the life of a mechanic or labourer," he said), recorded such interesting facts as that all women have fewer teeth and blacker blood than men. And it still goes on. This century has seen such joys as the Astronomer Royal who growled that the possibility of spaceflight was "utter bilge" and the US general who made similar noises about heavier-than-air flight of any kind - unfortunately he made his remarks some three years after the Wrights first got off the ground. Likewise, it was after Henry Ford's cars hit the road that another US prophet wailed that with the way traffic was increasing, by 1920 the New York street would be two feet deep in horse manure.

In 1939 Churchill predicted "Atomic energy might be as good as our present day explosives, but it is unlikely to produce anything very much more dangerous." Rutherford put it more strongly in 1933: "Anyone who looks for a source of power in the transformation of the atom is talking moonshine." (A view held by Friends of the Earth to this day.) Having discovered the atomic nucleus which caused all the trouble, Rutherford should perhaps have known better... Not only atomics, but warfare in general are a rich source of material: did you know that on the news of mobilization for World War I, the first task of UK armourers was to sharpen the officers' swords for battle? That a civil service job created in 1803 - for a watchman who stood on the Cliffs of Dover looking out for Napoleon - was abolished only in 1945? That Churchill wanted icebergs towed from the Arctic to use as floating airstrips during the European assault?

All this does have relevance to the literary arts so beloved of BSFA members. (Other arts too: "Colour and stereoscopy will make the cinema into the greatest art in the world. Bad films will be impossible." - John Betjeman, 1935.) These mispredictions are an artform in themselves; it's like watching a morality play, as with the inexorable unrolling of time the pompous prophets are deflated. Laser as a missile defence are "pure nonsense", said Prof Hans Thirring after lengthy calculations in the 60s; and lo! in 1978 a laser was seen to destroy an anti-tank missile at a range of one kilometre. But especially it has its relevance to that curious

cesspit of literature containing the collected works of D Langford.  
("Possibly the greatest advance in writing since the discovery of the  
vowel!" - D Glandorf.)

Publishers, you see, are always out for blood. You can be on the phone to one, merrily quipping about the spokesman for Daimler Benz who explained that the European automobile market was limited to about 1,000 (that being the maximum number of chauffeurs available) - and suddenly the publisher's eyes light up with that strange nonhuman gleam which you can detect along 150 miles of telephone cable. "Do a collection of these silly predictions," says the publisher evilly.

"But," I ripose swiftly, "to place a man in a multistage rocket and project him into the controlling gravitational field of the moon, where the passenger can make scientific observations, perhaps land alive, and then return to Earth - all that constitutes a wild dream worthy of Jules Verne! Or so Lee DeForest, sometimes called the 'father of electronics', remarked in 1957."

"You would love to do this book. You wish nothing more than to spend the next year ferretting out such little quotations."

"June of 1957, to be precise," I quaver, hoping to change the subject.

"All right, swine of an author. I'll even pay for it."

"On the other hand, in 1897 the state legislature of Indiana came within a single vote of declaring that pi should be de jure 3.2..."

"An advance in double figures, even!"

"But I think I am right in saying that the Bible quite clearly declares that pi is equal to 3."

"In cash!"

"Done."

So here I am with orders to unearth countless suitable quotations for a work tentatively titled THE EARTH WAS CREATED IN 4004 BC ON THE TWENTY-SIXTH OF OCTOBER AT 9.00 IN THE MORNING, in memory of Bishop Ussher's immortal calculation. (Which reminds me that students of the Great Pyramid have infallibly predicted the end of the world as occurring in 1874, 1881, 1911, 1914 (nice one), 1920 (horse manure year - see above), 1925, 1928, 1936 and 1953, among other dates. This may be correct. I haven't checked. Meanwhile, 1999 and 2000 are popular dates for the next end of the world.) As the US Congressional Record put it in 1875, whilst contemplating the fearful power of internal combustion, my task "involves forces of a nature too dangerous to fit into any of our usual concepts." So this is a sneaky appeal for help: does anyone out there know of items suitable for the ridiculous and absurd book? Send them to me at 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks, RG2 7PW: contributors of material actually used will have their names balzoned on the acknowledgements page, thus achieveing undying fame without loss of amateur status. Or for a small extra fee we can keep your name out of the whole sordid business....

Dave Langford



# News

## THE SERMON FROM THE MOUNT

The BSFA hasn't yet been listed in THE TIMES' top ten companies of 1979, but with a small bribe, plenty of luck and access to 750 gallons of tippex, there might yet be a chance.

We haven't yet been nominated for the Queen's Award for Export Achievement, but with a few words in the right places, we should at least be allowed to mail copies of Vector and Matrix to Buckingham Palace:

"Dear BSFA, My husband and I are eternally grateful for your new product. The corgis find your magazines eminently suitable for bedding down on at night."

And, there is still plenty of opportunity to branch out into politics, protection rackets, recording top ten hits and setting up registered charities to tide us over any financial problems.

But, despite our lack of success in these areas, we have pushed onward in the last year, and now stand at the start of a fresh assault on turning the BSFA into something more than just a paper-producing machine. Memberships are coming in all the time; the posters have been distributed (copies are still available from me); handbills have been sent to shops, local groups and societies; the second Press Release has been sent out (already attracting interest from BBC Radio 4's 'Kaleidoscope', Thames TV's 'Whitelight', quite apart from positive reactions from many publishers and dealers); the Matrix poll has attracted a phenomenal response- the litho fund is increasy at a healthy rate; many advertising swaps and deals have been arranged with conventions; our book reviewers now receive practically all current UK output; articles are being received from many sources for Vector and Focus; the information service has been overhauled- the tape library has been re-started; the club information service has grown from strength to strength; more and more members are lending hands at getting things done, and overall, enthusiasm is at a high level.

However, these positive areas have got to be balanced against the things that remain to be done; the things that haven't been done. Viewing the scene as I do from a central position, I can see communications breakdowns all the time, and it is this aspect of the BSFA - the essential liaising between committee and council and the members as a whole that has got to be overhauled. Whilst individual committee members may want things to be done, and are very good at carrying out such actions, there has got to be a much higher level of interaction between everybody. Only in this manner can we keep the BSFA not just ticking over, but pushing forwards into new areas. And your chance to lend a hand, or make valuable suggestions, will come sooner than you think.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

at the Albany Hotel, Glasgow, Sunday April 6th 1980 at 10:00

As previously announced, the AGM will take place as usual at the annual Eastercon, this time being held in Glasgow. All BSFA members are invited to attend and make their contribution to the future of the Association; especial invitations are extended to those who will be going to Albacon -

don't just sit back, pretending you're recovering from the night before (most of the committee will be), come in and see what is going on - if only to know who is doing what and who the committee members are. ALL items for the Agenda must be received by me at 20 Hermitage Woods Crescent, St John's, Woking, Surrey, GU21 1UE by March 31st at the very latest.

Positions coming up for renewal are:

Business Manager (currently Trevor Briggs)  
Treasurer (currently Chris Umpleby)

Council members up for re-election at the AGM are:

Bob Shaw	James White	Kevin Smith	Chris Umpleby
Trevor Briggs	Les Flood		

Nominations are invited for these posts, provided that they are proposed and seconded by bone fide BSFA members. You may of course nominate yourself, but you cannot propose or second yourself, and it would be of value if nominations could be in as early as possible for consideration by the council.

The Agenda for the AGM will be posted at ALBACON, together with the audited accounts for 1978, together with the unaudited accounts for 1979. The AGM minutes for 1979 will be presented by the company secretary, Kevin Smith, and the minutes for this AGM (subject to ratification) will be distributed to all members with the mailing due at the end of APRIL.

#### BSFA AWARD 1980

Nominations have now closed for the Award and ballot sheets have been sent out with this mailing. Separate notification has also been sent to publishers and the News Media for their information, and I STRONGLY URGE YOU TO CAST YOUR VOTE NOW! This is the only annual science fiction award in the United Kingdom, and the more people that vote for it, the greater the value that will be derived from it. I'd remind all members that if they should be going to ALBACON, they can vote there (as indeed can any members of ALBACON) and save themselves 10 or 12p in postage. The result of the Award will be announced at the Banquet on Sunday night at ALBACON, and a suitable presentation will be made at a later date to the winner.

#### BSFA LITHO FUND

Again, this is still gathering momentum, and I list below those members who have parted with vast sums of money in aid of a good cause:

B Westwood	Paul Griffith	Jon Rees	Phil James
Steve Byfield	R T Hill	Chris Lewis	James White
P M Williams	Mark Kent	John Steward	Neil Talbot
John Rench	Michael Curtis	R G A Wilkinson	Martin Tee
Dave Langford			

Fund now stands at £228.50

At ALBACON, an auction is to be held with the Litho Fund in mind. Many items have already been received, and I'd like to thank George Ellis for his exceptionally kind donations of books and magazines, Mr D Gray of Bournemouth for the donation of several rare books and everyone else who has sent material for auction. Any further items will be gladly received by myself, and I hope that everyone at ALBACON will dig deep and buy many of the items offered.

These include:

First editions of E E Doc Smith's Lensman and Skylark series



Several reasonable copies of Astounding, dating from 1946-1955  
Assorted paperbacks and hardcover books from 1945 to the present day  
Many old - and not so old - fanzines.

Material left over after ALBACON will be offered for sale through the pages of Matrix, and all proceeds (after postal and other expenses) will go to the Litho Fund.

A plea from Sandy Brown - and indeed several committee members - with regard to enquiries. These are now coming in at a very healthy rate, but in order to reduce our costs and increase our efficiency, could you please try to include a stamped sae if a reply is required. I'm sorry to have to make an announcement like this, but with two postal increases in the last year, we just cannot continue making the vast number of mailings that we do.

#### OPINIONS

As you are all aware, postal increases last February have hit us hard again, and the rates were much higher than expected - especially since they were hard on the heels of those of last year. The membership rate - currently at £6 p.a. - will be retained for as long as is economically possible, but as the year progresses with ever mounting printing and paper costs, we might have to resort to one of three alternatives:

- (1) Retain current membership rates; either reduce the amount of material sent out in a mailing, or only make a mailing on a quarterly basis.
- (2) Increase the membership rate to a far more realistic figure such as £10. To offset this, special family, group and juvenile rates would be introduced, and the additional income derived on top of fixed and variable costs would be channeled into fund-raising projects, specialist publications, placing adverts with large circulation magazines and most importantly, towards establishing some kind of permanent venue in central London. This latter project is not as far fetched as it seems, and anybody having thoughts or ideas on this matter are urged to contact me at the address already given or on 04-867-3886 (evenings) 01-902 8876 ext. 269 (daytime), as I am currently investigating this in some depth.
- (3) Increase the membership by a sufficient increment to cover additional costs, effectively putting us back in the position immediately prior to this latest price rise.

There is no prize for guessing which solution I would vote for; even at £10 p.a. each mailing is only costing you £1.66 made up of 44p for postage and £1.26 for Matrix, Paperback Parlour, Vector and the services.

#### ALBACON BSFA DESK

As usual, we are opening a desk at the Easter convention so that members can buy BSFA publications, take out subscriptions, renew their subscriptions and generally find out more about our operations. This will be manned by members of the BSFA committee who will be present at ALBACON, including myself, John & Eve Harvey, Dave Langford, Kevin Smith, Joseph Nicholas (on the council), Sandy Brown and Simon Ounsley. However, since several of us will be involved in other activities on the programme at times, any volunteers to help man the desk (which will be open from 09:00 to 18:00 each day) will be more than welcomed. Please contact me if you can be of assistance.

With any luck, the new BSFA Information booklet will be available with this mailing; I've just got to get around to typing up the final copy. This will contain details of all our services; useful BSFA addresses and information vital to your continued existence. It might even suggest that certain committee members get around to reading - SF - books every now and again.

Next mailing (due out at the end of April) will see the return of Vector, with leading articles by John Brunner and Christopher Priest; Mike Dickinson, Vector editor will be announcing an important new competition; Paperback Parlour become Paperback Inferno; the results of the BSFA AWARD are announced; the AGM minutes are distributed, and we'll be just three issues away from the extra special 100th issue of Vector - WATCH FOR DETAILS.

Alan Dorey

## NEWS OF THE SF WORLD

### BOOKS

- From Granada (Panther) in March: Poul Anderson's The Winter of the World  
Brian Aldiss's Enemies of the System  
Samuel R Delany's Driftglass (short story coll.)
- in April: Chris Boyce's Brainfix (original pb novel)
- From Sphere in April: L Sprague de Camp's & Fletcher Pratt's The Enchanger Completed (this is not a typo)  
(two Harold Shea novellas)  
Octavia E Butler's Mind of My Mind
- From David & Charles in March: Chris Morgan's Future Man: Scenarios For Tomorrow (non-fiction concerning possible future evolution of mankind)
- From Weidenfeld & Nicholson in March: Brian Aldiss's Life in the West (mainstream)
- From Sidgwick & Jackson on March 27: Charles Sheffield's Sight of Proteus  
F Paul Wilson's Wheels Within Wheels  
Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's Time of the Fourth Horseman
- From Gollancz in March: Richard Cowper's second collection, The Web of the Magi
- in April: an SF anthology for 'young adults' edited by Malcolm Edwards - Constellations
- and a plethora in June including: Keith Roberts's new novel Molly Zero  
Frederick Pohl's Beyond the Blue Event Horizon (sequel to Gateway)  
Arkady & Boris Strugatsky's The Snail on the Slope  
Robert Silverberg's Lord Valentine's Castle  
Larry Niven's Ringworld Engineers  
Michael Bishop's Transfigurations  
James Gunn's The Dreamers  
Terry Carr's Best SF of the Year 9

and interestingly not included in the Science Fiction listing is Gregory Benford's Timescape. I wonder if it will have SF on the dust jacket?

I wonder what Gollancz will do in July? After you've read the next section you might be forgiven for thinking that they publish in an alternative economic universe.



### UNSUBSTANTIATED PUBLISHING RUMOURS

The recession to which most American publishers seem to have fallen prey throughout the last half of 1979 has now crossed the Atlantic to Britain, with catalogues and other publicity releases showing definite signs of a cutback in volume for 1980 - cutbacks that have particular application to the paperback publishers who, in the months before and after Season 79, were releasing some six or seven new titles per month, whereas they are now scheduling but one or two, and in some cases none at all a month. And, to concentrate on three particular paperback publishers:

1. Hamlyn Paperbacks are to fold their SF line altogether, and have in fact already published their last SF title: Henry Kuttner's Clash by Night, a story collection reviewed in this mailing's issue of Paperback Parlour. This means that no other Kuttner titles will be published in this country by any other publisher for some time to come, as Hamlyn have bought up the rights to them all. The reason for this folding is, apparently, poor sales - an inevitable consequence of the minimal publicity and generally poor covers that their SF titles have had.
2. Magnum, the paperback division of Eyre Methuen, is also to cut back, but by how much - and by how much the cutback will affect their SF line - is unknown at present. Despite which an original paperback novel, Michael Conner's I Am Not The Other Houdini is scheduled for publication on March 13.
3. Penguin are to cut back by 20% overall, which means that their SF line will again fold just over a year since its relaunch. It is these days a great deal smaller than it was, mainly because the options on a number of their titles came up for renewal in the year or two before the relaunch, and were sold to other publishers (the most notable titles in question being Ballard's first four novels). They will, however, publish Jack Chalker's Well World series this summer, as originally planned.

Despite the opening paragraph, Locus is reporting 1979 as a record publishing year in the USA. "More than 100 titles were published each month, and more than half were new books, an increase of nearly 1/3 over 1978" (Locus, February 1980). Looks like it was the calm before the storm?

### TRUE FACTS

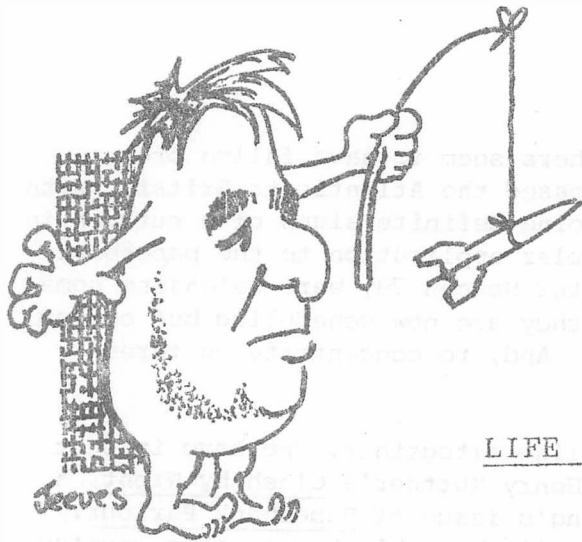
Robert Holdstock's new novel Where Time Winds Blow (not When Time Winds Blow as we said last issue) has been bought by Faber & Faber and should be published early next year.

A E van Vogt has been talking with Twentieth Century Fox about the possibility of similarities between his story Black Destroyer and the film 'Alien'. No legal action is expected, though.

The economic climate is not only hitting publishers, following the resignation of Malcolm Edwards as Administrator of the SF Foundation, comes the news that at present he's not being replaced. North-East London Ploy SF Foundation, it would appear, is slipping into limbo. The journal Foundation should be continued but the future of the library, which includes the BSFA's library, is uncertain! We'll have to look for the Second Foundation (sorry about that).

Virgin are to publish unexpurgated re-translations from the French of Philip Jose Farmer's Lord of the Trees and The Mad Goblin whilst Ace are to reprint their heavily censored versions.

Continued on P.26



Fanworld

### LIFE ON MARS

As promised, we kick off this time with a look at FOKT (Friends of Kilgore Trout), the Glasgow group who are organising this year's Easter convention, ALBACON. Special thanks are due to Jimmy Robertson, who must be otherwise busily engaged in organising the fan room, for producing this report. Over to you, Jimmy....

#### FOKT

"The west coast experience" or as it is more commonly known The Friends of Kilgore Trout is around 7 years old now. It meets every Thursday in a very friendly pub where regulars and trouts intermingle. I've been going about 4½ years and things have changed dramatically in that time. For the first 18 months or so there used to be between 4-14 people at any meeting, now there's never less than 30 and usually more. I don't know why so many people come, they must all like getting drunk. There are no membership cards, guest speakers or dues. No formal event is allowed to impinge upon the riotous assembly. The only time there is any order is when, if we go back to Bob Shaw's flat for coffee, me and the other Crets wipe the floor with the opposition at charades.

The numbers attending Trout really took off after the first Faircon was organised and executed in 78. With the success of that behind them, 2 or 3 of the original committee carried on, with the assistance of the enthusiast in the new influx, to organise Faircon 79 and also a bid for Eastercon 80. Which, as you know, won them Albacon.

The strange thing about Trout is that it provides a focal point for so many different types. There are those who sit in the corner listening to the Hitcher thing on cassette (I KID YOU NOT), fantasy buffs, sercon types, the intellectual cretinfan group (the true ideological backbone by the way) and the ultra exclusive Mad Parrot Mafia.

You can be assured that if ever you do turn up at a Trout you will meet someone you will like/dislike and agree/disagree with (perm any two).

The main reason for Trout's longevity and stability has been its extension, after the pub closes, to Bob Shaw's nearby flat. This allows it to continue until 2 am most weeks. When I first started going it used to go until 5 am, but we're all getting older these days.

These late sessions are actually what Trout is all about cos this is when all the stand-up confrontations occur.

Anyway, the Friends of Kilgore Trout meet every Thursday in the lounge of the Wintergills Bar, Great Western Road, Glasgow, from about 8 o'clock onwards. Come up and see us sometime.



# CLUB DIRECTORY

Since the BSFA's recruitment campaign seems to be proceeding quite healthily, I thought I'd devote the rest of the column this issue to a list of the clubs which I've mentioned over the last year (plus a couple of others which will be featured in greater detail in Matrix 29). This will allow new members to get information which they'd otherwise have missed.

This isn't by any means a comprehensive list of all the sf clubs in the country, but I'm still researching and hope to fill in the more glaring omissions in the next few issues. Meanwhile, if your club isn't mentioned or if there's anything wrong or out of date in your entry, please write and tell me. The address, remember, is 13A Cardigan Road, Headingley, Leeds 6.

The list is arranged in alphabetical order of town or city....

- ABERDEEN      Aberdeen University Union SF Society  
William Goodall, c/o Aberdeen University Union, Broad Street,  
Aberdeen AB9 1AW  
Film shows, a library, a fanzine called RING PULL and a planned  
trip to ALBACON.
- BINGLEY      The Astral Leauge  
D West, 48 Norman Street, Bingley  
Not strictly sf, but very fannish nonetheless. Cosmic peace  
and harmony for 50p.
- CAMBRIDGE      Cambridge University SF Group  
Mike Abbot c/o Pembroke College, Cambridge  
Weekly Thursday evening meetings at the Horse & Crown, King Street.
- DUNDEE      '42'  
Jon Wallace, 21 Charleston Street, Dundee  
Sf and, presumably, the meaning of life.
- EDINBURGH      F.O.R.T.H. (Friends of Robert-the-Hack)  
Jim Daroch, 21 Croslet Road, Currie, Midlothian, EH14 5LZ  
(Apologies to Jim for spelling his name wrongly in the last  
issue).  
Weekly Tuesday meetings (apm onwards) in the lounge bar of the  
Abercraig Hotel, Picardy Place, Edinburgh (near railway and  
bus stations).
- GLASGOW      Friends of Kilgore Trout (FOKT)  
Jimmy Robertson, 64 Hamilton Road, Bellshill, Lanarkshire.  
Weekly Thursday night meetings in the lounge of Wintergills  
Bar, Great Western Road, Glasgow. (For more details, see report  
above).
- HULL      Hull University SF Society  
Dave Harbud, 36 Middleton Street, Springbank, Hull  
Weekly Monday night meetings in the union bar, a library and  
a fanzine calle WHO SUFFERS which should draw an immediate and  
forthright response from the readership (fan fiction, fan poetry,  
liquid crystals and, by way of something interesting, a review  
of Cabell's THE SILVER STALLION. Thanks to Chris Barlow for  
sending me a copy).
- KEELE      Keele University SF Society  
Phil Wain c/o Keele University Union  
An enthusiastic group, who are organising a convention, UNICON,  
this summer. They hold weekly Thursday night meetings in the  
union bar.

LEEDS

The Leeds Group

Weekly Friday night meetings in the West Riding, Wellington Street (near coach and train stations). Attendees' fanzines include O'RYAN and OCELOT. For the ultimate fannish experience, try our special monthly 'Northern Tun' meetings (last Friday of each month) at which copies of the new monthly Leeds fanzine RUBBER CRAB are distributed. The March meeting (the first anniversary) should be especially marvellous.

And now, from the sublime to the ridiculous....

The Leeds University SF Society

Mike Ford, c/o Students Union

Weekly Wednesday night meetings at the Pack Horse, Woodhouse Lane (near the university). A library, an annual film festival (coming up soon), occasional guest speakers and a fanzine BLACK HOLE (probably the world's best sf clubzine).

LEICESTER

The Leicester SF Group

Janet Hunt, 54 Foxhunter Drive, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5FE

A highly-organised group. Meetings at the Black Swan, Belgrave Gate on the first Friday of each month. 7-15 for 7-30. Frequent talks and other events; book, tape and video libraries; and a monthly newsletter. £1.50 annual subs. More details next issue. (Thanks to Steven J Green for putting me in touch with the Leicester group).

LONDON

The One Tun

Informal gatherings at the One Tun near Farringdon tube station. First Thursday of each month. Activities include talking, drinking and the slow torture of Star Trek fans.

Queen Mary College Science Fiction and Fantasy Society

Paul Dembina, 29 Howcroft Crescent, Finchley, London N3 1PA

Irregular meetings and occasional films. A close link with The Ancient Illuminated Seers of Bavaria. More details next issue.

MANCHESTER

The Manchester and District (M.A.D.) Group

Meetings on first and third Wednesday of each month at the Crown & Anchor, Port Street (which is just off Newton Street near Piccadilly). Attendees' fanzines include PERIHELION, STOMACH PUMP and (perhaps) TRIPE PICKERS JOURNAL. Regular trips to Leeds for Northern Tun meetings.

UMIST SF Society

Ian McKee, c/o Students Union, UMIST, PO Box 88, Sackville Street, Manchester M60 1QD

A library and a fanzine called GROK (Cannibalism and levitation?)

OXFORD

The Oxford SF Society

Hugh Mascetti, c/o Jesus College, Oxford

Weekly Sunday evening meetings at the Bulldog Bar, St Aldgates. Sercon meetings every other Thursday with occasional guest lecturers. 3,000-volume library.

ST ALBANS

The Staffen Group

Mic Rogers, 22 Campbell Road, St Albans, Herts

Meetings at the Peacock, Hatfield Road on the second Monday of every month.

STAINES

The Institute for Impure Science

c/o Royal Holloway College, Egham Hill, Surrey TW20 OEX

**STRATFORD**

Stratford SF Group

Nigel Clark, 44 Shelley Road, Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 7JS

Meetings on Friday evenings at the Garrick. 'Going from strength to strength' writes Nigel, this column's most regular correspondent: '..... activities have been many and varied such as a visit to Warwick University to watch Eraserhead; a holy mission to the local cinema to jeer at Lord of the Rings and a couple of imitation room parties to introduce new members to this venerable tradition while reminding old members of happier times.'

**SWANSEA**

Swansea SF Society

Dick Downs, 56 Cefn-yr-Allt, Aberdulais, Neath, West Glamorgan, SA10 8HE

Regular meetings and a monthly fanzine called RED SHIFT.

By the way, university and college clubs are generally open to non-students.

Thanks again to everyone who provided the above information. Keep me informed of developments! I intend to return to the usual format next issue but the contents really depend on you, of course, so if you do run a club and haven't written yet, I'd love to hear from you (the address is above).

P.S. Does anyone know of a club in Bolton?

Simon Ounsley

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**Seacon Flashback One**



**'CALL MY BLUFF'**

L to R - Chris Priest, Bob Shaw (proving he's a true fan) & your editor in the chair.



Rob Jackson's regular look at recent fanzines and other small publications. This issue's pile contains those fanzines received in December 1979 and January 1980. We try and cover everything received, though sometimes we may need to miss things out due to lack of space. In that case preference will be given to British fanzines. For review, send fanzines to Rob at: 8 Lavender Rd., West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT19 9EB.

## On The Carpet

Last issue I promised a general look at current fanzine standards; so, here it is... I haven't got a lot of space (or time), so forgive me if any of my comments seem too sweeping or generalised. There will be more opportunities for detailed discussion in future issues, and there is plenty of chance for you to argue with me (or even agree) in Matrix's lettercolumn; so don't just sit and disagree; sit and write.

Back in Matrix 25 (the August 1979 issue) in my article about American fans I pointed out one possible reason why American fanzines seem bland overall when compared to British ones. This was that Americans see their fanzines more as a public forum and less as a vehicle for personal gossip and argument. We over here may get this impression partly because many of the personalzines published in the States don't find their way over here as many of them are published in the APAs, amateur press associations, closed groupings of fans who regularly receive and comment on each other's fanzines. APAs have developed particularly in the States as a defence against the massive diversity of fandom over there, and we haven't got one over here at the moment. What we do have instead is a lot of rather inbred fannish material published by a group of fanzine fans who see themselves as central, in zines which are distributed generally; I'm referring to such zines as Dot, Gross Encounters, Closer to the Edge and so on. Some of this would be appropriate in a British APA; instead, it's visible to outsiders in local groups, university clubs and so on and seems terribly self-absorbed. Is self-absorbed, actually. This encourages the publication of more material for which a knowledge of the personalities involved is required, and discourages the publication of outward-looking material in which genuinely new subjects are discussed. Gross Encounters 6 last year had a very clever piece in which fans were cast as 17 and 18th century squires, but you had to know the names to appreciate it; zines like Amanita 2 (reviewed below) show more genuine originality because they are outward-looking.

Also, if a writer is obsessed with the idea that what he produces has got to be very polished, Top Quality stuff, it's sometimes more difficult to relax and let the imagination flow; one may be more constrained by current expectation and unable to break free.

Another result of American use of fanzines being used more as a public forum and less for gossip is that they contain less material about their fannish friends' failings and more about the writer's own feelings. This means more in-depth exploration of lots of subjects, but the relative lack of vitriol makes American personalzines generally more analytical and understated — Brassor, reviewed below, contains the type of writing I'm referring to — and hence bland if you're a thick-skinned British fannish critic. (There are exceptions, though — but I'm sure you can find out about those for yourselves.)

All the above is going to be irrelevant anyway unless some of the central fannish clique publish again soon — there's been very little from them since Seacon. Probably they're just resting, though.

### Abbreviations and symbols used:

- F\* Recommended fannish fanzine (i.e. about fans' personalities and social lives).
- G\* Recommended genzine (i.e. general zine, about a variety of subjects).
- N\* Recommended fannish newszine.
- P\* Recommended personalzine (i.e. largely editor-written fannish zine).
- S\* Recommended fanzine mainly about SF or fantasy.

The Usual Available for trade (exchange) with other fanzines, letter of comment, or contribution of written or artistic material. Prices are listed if the editor lists one; if no price is given, write and tell the editor you're interested.

Page sizes FC (foolscap): 13" 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 D: duplicated. L: photolithographed. X: Xeroxed (photocopied). R: reduced typesize (giving methods more words per page).

## SMALL PRESS PUBLICATIONS

S\* Locus 228, 229 (Charles N. Brown, PO Box 3938, San Francisco, CA 94119, USA; £9.55 per year air-mail or £6.00 per year seamount, payable to Locus Publications and sent to U.K. Agent, Chris Atkinson, 28 Duckett Rd., London N4 1BN; USQ RL; 20pp each.) The mixture as before — news of the American professional SF field, but with extras such as occasional interviews and a down-to-earth Norman Spinrad column about selling your SF. No. 228 has a fascinating, too-brief article by Brian Aldiss on his recent trip to China as a member of a six-person "Distinguished Persons Delegation" along with Iris Murdoch, David Attenborough and others. There's a photo of him shaking hands with Deng Xiaoping. I've met someone who's met Deng Xiaoping. Goshwow.

S\* Science Fiction Review 33 (Richard E. Gels, PO Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211, USA; in UK, send £ equivalent of \$13.00 to Wm. Dawson & Sons, Cannon House, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5EE for an 8-issue sub; USQ RL; 64pp.) Big fat zine with lots of book reviews, articles (e.g. by George R.R. Martin on his natural enemy, editors), interviews with SF authors, film reviews, pointed editorial comments, and a few small press reviews; also regular columnists. Gels is reclusive, hungry for influence, fiercely antiauthoritarian yet a totally unashamed glory-seeker, cranky, quirky and at times angry; he has little talent for layout, and lots of people dislike him for his monopoly of the Hugos — yet he produces a compellingly, addictively readable magazine that I wouldn't miss for anything.

G\* Starship 37 (Andrew Porter, PO Box 4175, New York, NY 10017; in UK send £4.75 for 4 or £9.00 for 8 (2 years) to Ethel Lindsay, 69 Barry Rd., Carnoustie, Angus DD7 7QQ; USQ RL; 68pp.) Beautiful, smooth layout as usual: it beats me how one man can put together something that rivals Omni in looks. Content this time is better than usual too: an excellent two-part Silverberg article explaining why he has (a) stopped travelling and (b) restarted writing, and Fred Pohl's marvellous GoH speech at Northamericon, with good little bits of Seacon report including him wondering why firm rounded contours and smooth skin, as on Raquel Welch's chest, doesn't seem as beautiful on Arthur Clarke's tum or bald pate. Also, varied book, film and art reviews: a magazine that's fun and instructive as well as good-looking.

## FANZINES

### Great Britain

G\* Amanita 2 (Cyril Simsa, 18 Muswell Ave., London N10 2EG; the usual; A4 D; 16pp.) Either Cyril's learning, or I'm getting into this — I found this a strange, fascinating and very original fanzine. In fact, utterly bonkers. An idiosyncratic review of J.G. Ballard's Crash is embedded in a description of the review's author, a friend of Cyril's who had hacked the corners of the paperback off; the surreal career of a young lad called Elspeth is briefly described, W.E. Johns's SF is ripped apart, and Cyril reports on some 17th century Chinese fantasy. All this won't be to everyone's taste, but it shows the sort of originality current fannish critics cry out for, a lot more so than yer average "whither fandom?" fannish fanzine. And it's written well.

N\* Ansible 5 (Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave., Reading, Berks. RG2 7PW; 60p for 4 in UK; £1 for 6 in Europe; £1 for 5 elsewhere. Send £, not other denominations; QD; 6pp.) You know what I'm going to say: that this is the essential, witty fannish newszine. Also witty bits about SF: "Lovers of SF will be pleased to learn that the October IASFM was largely destroyed by a warehouse fire (unfortunately it was reprinted)."

P\* Chimera 1 (Ian Williams, 6 Greta Tce., Chester Rd., Sunderland SR4 7RD; the usual, "drink, or a massage"; Q D; 20pp.) Parts of this largely editor-written zine are in the rather self-interested style of his previous personalzine Siddhartha, in particular the Seacon report here which is revised so the joins show too much; but "Life Among the Limpwrist" is very funny to those in the know without being too malicious, and his piece pleading for real originality in fanzines (not just slickly written re-explorations of old themes) should be required reading for fan editors. He doesn't entirely live up to his own aspirations here, but there is time yet, and signs it may happen.

In Defiance of Medical Opinion 2 (Alick Butcher & John Connor, c/o Sildan House, Chediston Rd., Wissett, Nr. Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 0NF; no reasons for availability given, but I think they'll give one to anybody who asks; A4 D; 50pp.) Still has editor-written short stories; also reverent interviews with Lionel Fanthorpe and the editor of Keele University's clubzine. At least they don't put fullstops after questionmarks this time, but they've still forgotten to put their address in the zine — which might explain the lack of locs they complain of.

SF Horizons 1 (Keith Walker, 2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore Rd., Lancaster, Lancs. LA1 3JW; for Teaching SF Society members, and I assume for trade: no other availability given; A4 D; 14pp.) The first ten pages are mostly quite literate book reviews, by people I assume are teachers whom Keith lists at the beginning without

saying who wrote which review. (I suppose Keith has forgotten that Brian Aldiss's and Tom Boardman's shortlived little magazine of SF criticism in the 60's was called SF Horizons too.) The last four pages are SFanzine Review 1, Keith's usual cramped fanzine listings as in Fanzine Fanatique, only even briefer.

G\* Scottishe 78 (Ethel Lindsay, 69 Barry Rd., Carnoustie, Angus DD7 7QQ; 50p, \$1 or the usual; A4 D; 28pp.) The good old-fashioned type of fanzine: comprehensive book and fanzine listings a bit like these, letters and a pleasant Season report with hand-cut ATom (Arthur Thomson) illustrations including a lovely front cover of Miss Piggy and co. in spacesuits. She gets some fanzines I don't, too.

P\* Small Friendly Dog 17 (Paul & Cas Skelton, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport SK2 5NW; 6½" x 8" D; 30pp.) This is how to do a personalzine — almost all Skel's own writing, brief witty jabs at all kinds of topics interspersed with locs. He doesn't ramble on for ages on each topic, but tires of it before you do, and leaves you eager for more. More, please.

Small Mammal 35, 36, 37 (Martin Easterbrook, 191 The Heights, Northolt, Middlesex; free at the One Tun; 2pp each.) Monthly listing of forthcoming events with occasional sarky comments: "This film is violent, gory, psychopathic and really quite enjoyable." The Christmas one was a silly issue about Santa Claus: The Motion Picture in which "Harlan Ellison sent in a script where the starship Enterprise is given this large egg with a curious alien growing in it. He assures me that SF fans will love it." (Sorry, I forgot: A4 D.)

Waif 4 (Tom Jones, 39 Ripplesmere, Bracknell, Berks. RG12 3QA: the usual, I expect; A4 D; 20pp.) Tom prints a few rambling letters, faanfiction by Trigger Vorbs, whoever he is, and an article about a sea-trial trip to Gibraltar; he also merrily continues bashing away at Joe Nicholas. The best part of the zine is the revelation of where the title of Drilkijs comes from (DRLangford + KJSmith). I didn't know that. Duhhh....

Who Suffers 1 (H. U. U. S. F. S. — Hull University Union SF Soc. — no address given, but try Hull University Union, Cottingham Rd., Hull, Humberside; A4 D — on one side of the paper only; 19pp.) This zine has neither its editor's name nor address on it. How can they expect response? It has bits of fiction (one about Captain Smirk and Spottie, ho jolly ho) and reviews; also a page reviling some gloryseeker who tried to muck the society elections up by voting for himself. The last thing the editor should have done is react like this — I bet the idiot lapped up all the attention.

#### North America & Canada

Braincandy 4 (Jason Keehn, Apt. 1B/38 Hannum Dr., Ardmore, PA 19003, USA; \$2.50, \$4 for 2, or the usual; USQ RL; 32pp.) Neatly produced, expensively printed, ambitious zine with a strong interest in visual SF: H.R. Giger, Ted White's Heavy Metal, Karl Kofoed, etc. Also a music column; Hawkwind this issue. It looks as if it's thinking of trying to be a semiprozine. Might make it, too, if that's what Jason wants.

Brassor 4, 5 (Marty Levine, 6201 Markley Hall, Ann Arbor, MI 48109, USA; \$1 or the usual; ½ USQ RX; 36pp, 40pp.) Fairly typical US personalzine — introspective, well-written, gentle; mediocre art. A quote to give you the flavour: "Diaries are silent, patiently listening friends, diaries are cheap psychiatrists, yes — my journal entries are outpourings of emotion, not of intellect." Actually it's not all as flowery as that.

G\* The Diagonal Relationship 11 (Arthur D. Hlavaty, 250 Coligni Ave., New Rochelle, NY 10801, USA; \$1 or the usual; USQ RL; 16pp.) Fascinating Freudian fannish fanzine with all sorts of insightful contents including a brilliant editor-written analysis of the changes in maleness and femaleness in America since the Fifties. I can't resist quoting an Alex Gilliland cartoon: "Smashing the State is not the problem. The problem is keeping the smashed pieces from reforming." — "Maybe we could pass a law?"

N\* DNQ 26 (Taral & Victoria Vayne, c/o 1812-415 Willowdale Ave., Willowdale, Ont. M2N 5B4, Canada; US\$2 for 4 overseas or 1-for-1 trades: your fanzine to both editors gets you two DNQ's; USQ D; 10pp.) Nos. 23 and 24 have also appeared, but I haven't seen them. No. 25 is yet to be published. This is the not-serious Canadian fannish newszine, with a fair amount of material of relevance to British fans. I've not seen The Black Hole yet, but after reading in here that in it scientists searched for "habitable life", I'm not sure I want to...

N\* File 770 17 (Mike Glycer, 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar, CA 91342, USA; 4 for \$2, news or newszine trades; USQ D; 22pp.) The major US fannish newszine. This issue leads with a long article attacking a few (isolated?) nasty events at Northamericon, and has news of future Worldcon bids and US clubs and cons. It also carries an ad for the Fantasy Showcase Tarot Deck, which is a twelve-year project now nearing completion — each card drawn by a different SF artist. Looks well worth the expense.

G\* Knights 21 (Mike Bracken, PO Box 387, O'Fallon, IL 62269, USA; \$1.50 or 4 for \$5 or the usual; USQ RL; 26pp.) Brilliant graphics and beautiful typesetting; goodish new articles, tending towards the gushing, by David Gerrold (on his compulsion to write), Grant Carrington, Victoria Vayne (on what should motivate fan



editors), and others. Cover and most of the artwork not quite up to the very high standard of the graphics; I preferred the Mackay inside full-pager to the covers, but maybe that's just a personal quirk.

Mainstream 4 (Suzle Tompkins and Jerry Kaufman, 4326 Winslow Place N., Seattle, WA 98103, USA; 75¢ each or 3 for \$2 or the usual; USQ D; 32pp.) Good fannish fanzine by two experienced editors. A small argument between Jerry and Mike Glicksohn about TAFF (of course, I think they're both partly right), and Suzle tells us how much she enjoyed Seacon and England, which I wanted to read more of.

The Monthly Monthly 3 (The Gang of Four, c/o Robert Runte, 10957-88 Ave., Edmonton, Alberta T6G 0Y9, Canada; 75¢ each, \$9 per year or the usual (2 copies of your fanzine)); USQ D; 20pp.) Pleasant enough genzine which still promises to be an active forum because it appears so often, but no improvement on nos. 1 and 2 yet. Good piece by James A. Hall on difficulty telling a girl how he feels, and reasonable sercon material, though — I hope they go on finding good material.

The Ruptured Roo 3 (Mark R. Sharpe, PAO NCS-Harold E. Holt, FPO, San Francisco, CA 96680, USA; the usual; USQ X; 14pp.) Pleasant editorial, pleasant Deindorfer article on arriving a week late at a con hotel, pleasant 19th-century description of the Australian coast where Mark was stationed, pleasant film reviews, pleasant art — overall effect is utterly bland.

Tightbeam 21 (Lynne Holdom for National Fantasy Fan Federation, PO Box 5, Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442, USA; \$6 for 6 issues (and one year's membership of NFFF, I think); USQ D/L; 30pp.) The American equivalent of Matrix with a few book reviews which actually have a certain amount of go about them, and a lot of letters, largely of the continuing-conversation type where you have to know what's being replied to. OK if you get into it, but not as newsy as Matrix.

P\* Xenium 12 (Mike Glicksohn, 141 High Park Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3, Canada; editorial whim only; USQ D; 24pp.) Slightly less brilliant than some issues, but still damn good with a witty Spider Robinson GoH speech and a very filthy Gonad the Barbarian-style round robin by Joe Haldeman, Gardner Dozois and others with dirty pictures by Rick Sternbach. Mike won't be obligated to send you Xenium, but it's well worth trying to influence him in your favour.

### Other Countries

Nothing Is But What Is Not 3 (Roman Orszanski, c/o Students' Association, Union Buildings, University of Adelaide, North Tce., Adelaide 5000, South Australia; the usual; A5 RL; 18pp.) An article on the natural history of dragons, and a letter from a temperance campaigner asking Roman to be the bloodshot, dissipated Bad Example on his next lecture tour which was the only bit to catch my eye. Not serious, I think.

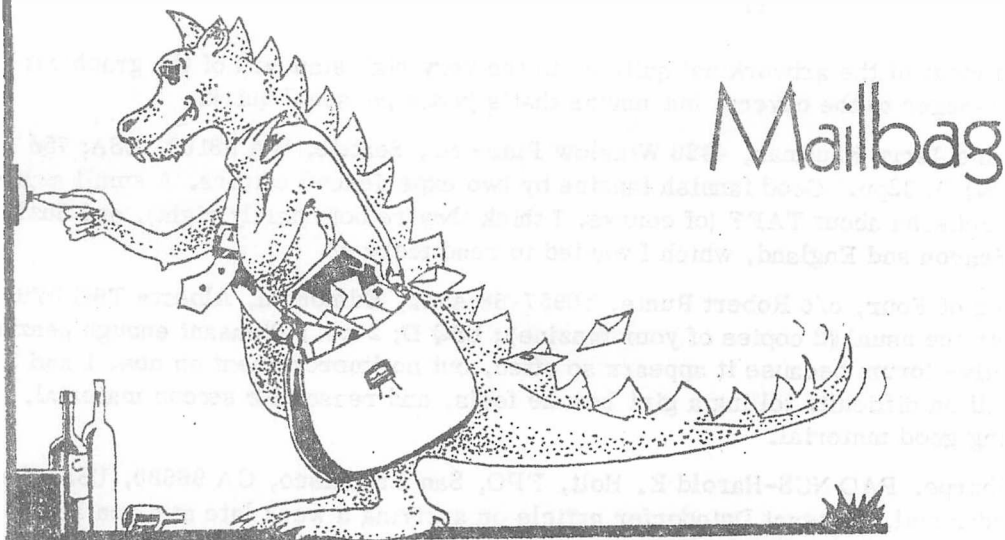
S\* Noumenon 33 (Brian Thurogood, Wilma Rd., Ostend, Waiheke Island, Hauraki Gulf, New Zealand; £4 seamail or £7.50 airmail for 10 issues: money to UK Agent, Keith Walker, 2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore Rd., Lancaster, Lancs; 10" x 7½" RL; 28pp.) The Wellcon issue of this lively typeset zine full of news, reviews and opinions. Interest in SF art, records, gaming and future alternatives is also reflected in the contents. Very stimulating.

Opal 3 (Keith Curtis, Box J 175, Buckfield Hill, NSW 2000, Australia; editorial whim or donations to DUFF; Q D; 16pp.) Pleasant enough but lightweight fanzine with a few general book reviews, a con report fantasy in which Syncon '79 was attended by 100,000 people, and lots of Australia in '83 cartoons.

S\* SF Commentary 55/56, 57 (Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Vic. 3001, Australia; Aus\$5 for 5 or £ equivalent, or some trades & locs; A4 D, USQ RL; 68pp, 16pp.) The "January-October 1979" tenth anniversary issue of the flagship of Aussie highly intellectual sercon fanzines. Full of fascinatingly intellectual tubthumping, but it do go on a bit — 40 pages of a special section on Australian SF. No. 57 is briefer but sharper, containing some very good acerbic replies by David J. Lake and George Turner to unfair reviews by a bloke called Andrew Whitmore in the previous issue.

Sikander 1 (Irwin Hirsh, 279 Domain Rd., South Yarra, Vic. 3141, Australia; the usual; QD; 22pp.) Competent fannish first issue: plain production, competent writing and a long article by John Bangsund, good as usual from him.

The Wheels Adfentures 33 (Anders Bellis & Ahrvid Engholm, c/o Vanadisvägen 13, 11346 Stockholm, Sweden 1.25 skr per issue or the usual; A4 D; 10pp.) After all my knocking of this fanzine in my previous listing, this issue turns out actually to have quite a high percentage of sensible contents, with a con report and a few pieces about 4SJ (Forrest J.) Ackerman — but it is kept down to the previous standard by a flyer with the mind-boggling exhortation: "Scandinavia in '83 for TAFF!"



*Once more I gird my loins and enter the realms of the Matrix Mailbag, boldly going etc. etc. As usual we'll jump straight in at the deep end and bring up a matter which caused not a little heat.*

Marjorie Brunner, The Square House, Palmer Street, South Petherton, Somerset

I was glad to see Allen Boyd-Newton's letter in the December issue because I know John was rather upset by Eve's comments. I think a lot of people don't realise that he's a very shy person (he sometimes suffers stage-fright for literally weeks before he has to make a public appearance, particularly if he has to give a speech). Once the ordeal is over he gets back to normal pretty quickly, but somebody who catches him just before he goes on, for example, always finds him very wrapped up in himself.

On the other hand, we did once get a fanzine from America with a guide to how neofans can approach pros at a convention, and the article wound up by saying, "Start with John Brunner - he never bites!"

I just can't imagine John saying what Simone Walsh claims. I do know that unless he's in a position to offer active support he always refused to support a bid for any particular con-site. What he probably said (actually I asked him and he says this is what he always tells people) would have been, "I think voting for a con-site should be left entirely to the fans." But I don't ever remember hearing him use the kind of phrase Simone remembers.

Don't forget, though, that he was on the committee for the 1957 Worldcon and the 1969 Oxford con, which some people still remember as the best ever!

But there is one thing I want to mention. Just after we moved away from London he developed high blood-pressure and was put on a drug called Aldomet. For some unlucky people this has terrible side-effects, and John turned out to be one of them. (I know he doesn't mind people being told about this - he wrote one of his "Noise Level" columns about it in SFR.)

People who first met him while he was still on the drug may very well have got a bad first impression. A few weeks ago we ran into Paul Begg - who used to run the SF Book Club - and he said that's what happened to him. He found John talked too much, and mostly about himself, and didn't remember people he'd recently met, either. This all has something to do with Aldomet's effect on short-term memory. It really does cause personality changes. I should know. We never came so close to breaking up. Luckily that's all in the past.

But how many top authors do you know who will say what I've heard John tell several people - and I don't just mean science fiction people, I mean people who have asked him why he goes to SF cons and tries to make a point of turning up at all the fans' room-parties that he's been invited to? He says, "I owe my living to these people. I always wanted to be a writer, and without them I couldn't have made it!"

I couldn't have stood him for 22 years if he'd been the kind of person Eve described.

\*\*\*\*\* Thanks Marjorie for your reply to Eve's remarks in M27. John's shyness and his reaction to Aldomet could easily be the reason for his public 'persona' and, as Eve said in the article, it was a purely personal view which we are only too happy to change - but opinions can only be based on one's personal experience. Let's hope we get the chance to get better acquainted in the near future.

*The art vs illustration discussion continues.*

STEVE B INCE, 5 Otterburn Street, Hessle Road, Hull

First of all I would like to answer Mr Mohamed's letter commenting on mine which appeared in M26.

If "care" is all that matters in art, then does it mean that when I paint the wall of my bedroom, taking great care to make sure that the brush strokes don't show and to cover it evenly, I am creating a work of art? Or is there something else that he has failed to explain and which hasn't come through in his letter?

I think that true art must have a feeling towards it and that the feeling is the most important feature. This is the point I was trying to make. Perhaps Mr Mohamed feels that I am slighting his profession - and perhaps I am in a way - but I think that graphic artists do a very good job. Even so, I do not think of graphic art as true art. A graphic artist learns to use the various paints, inks, etc as tools to accomplish a certain job, i.e. putting over a certain image or illustrating a piece of equipment. How can this be put under the title of art? Does an electrician think of his job as being art? In the same way he is told how to use his tools to achieve his ends. I must agree that there is much more originality in graphic art than in being an electrician.

As a final point on this matter: I do think that care matters. If an artist has managed to capture feelings in a painting, say, but has taken no care at all in its presentation (something which must be very difficult) I would then say that that was not art. Perhaps I am trying for a definition of something that may only have a definition in the mind of the individual - much like SF - but this individual thinks like this.

Moving on: I thought Steve Higgins's article in M27 was interesting, but I think he should have gone into a little more detail about how a person gets the fanzines in the first place. I started writing LoCs to Matrix after I knew the sort of things that were written and when I knew what I wanted to write about. How can I write a letter of comment to any other fanzine when I don't know the sort of thing they want? Or do they generally have anything? Articles; what sort of articles do I write? I want to be a contributor and not just a person who sends postage and begs copies that way.

*\*\*\*\*\* Steve Higgins's article in M27 has certainly generated the reaction we had hoped for, but more on that later, now back to the question of Art.*

WILLIAM T GOODALL, The Beeches, Deveron Road, Huntly

Illustrations: art or not? The fact that illustration is commercial hardly seems relevant: in the old days artists had patrons and did what they were told. 'Art for art's sake' is a relatively modern concept, tied up with the politicisation of art, the rise of the notion of the artist as oracle etc. The degree of personal commitment of the artist also seems irrelevant: how can one tell what the artist felt by looking at the picture? Of course an artist who doesn't give a damn, and is just grinding out hackwork at so much per square cm, is likely to produce noticeably poor work. But it isn't necessarily the case: an artist could be working solely for financial gain and yet be technically adept enough (in terms of understanding of colour, balance, composition etc) to consistently produce superior works. The artist needs a faculty of criticism, but he doesn't need to care.

Re Dave Webb's LoC in M27: I generally give an author a couple of chances before giving up - more if my opinion seems particularly contrary, as is the case with my opinion of Ian Watson's novels, of which I have read three and found them all dreadfully boring. I find critics useful for pointing out the unambiguously awful, definitely-to-be-avoided crap; and for pointing out the possibly brilliant, to-be-noted-for-soonest-reading gems. In this way I have avoided the greater part of the works of A E van Vogt, and sought out Disch's CAMP CONCENTRATION, Reamy's BLIND VOICES... But between the extremes of praise and censure I'll have to read the thing myself because, faced with a work neither execrable nor great, the individual critic's idiosyncracies become over-prominent.

*\*\*\*\*\* As I mentioned earlier, Steve Higgins has given a few people something to comment on.*

JEFF SUTER, 18 Norton Close, Southwick, Fareham, Hants

I read Matrix 27, and with good reason. Steev Higgins's article, "The Light Pours Out of Me" on writing fanzines was the cause of my interest because it used my fanzine, Periphery as an example in proving a point or expressing views. First let me make it quite clear that I am indignant with rage because Steev Higgins used my fanzine in a not too complimentary way; I would have to be somewhat short-sighted if I was to assume that Periphery 1 was the best thing since sliced bread. It was not very good, what first issue is? I'm still finding my feet and attempting to do a good job to the best of my ability. That does not mean that I'm not proud of my work. I am, a lot of

effort and work went into it, and so did a lot of me. Periphery, as a concept, is not trying to be the same as anybody else's fanzine, but at the same time I want it to be acceptable to fandom at large and so it must contain some elements that is recognizable to fandom. Its premise, as the title suggests, is to look in from the outside, to pierce the centre from the edge. I want to add my voice to the debates and issues that concern fandom and SF.

Steev Higgins, like many fans, subscribes to the idea that fandom does not need SF. I disagree. Fanzines and fans, even fannish ones, cannot really be divorced from SF. Science fiction is fandom's *raison d'être*, without it fandom would not exist. To argue differently is plain daft. An example. Imagine you are a fan of Abba, if one is to take the opinions of some fans this is what would happen. On the night of the Abba concert all the fans pour into the theatre and take their seats and wait for Abba to come on. There is a hushed silence as the curtain opens and standing there is the reason for the fans gathering. The group sit down and the lights on the stage go off. The group then watch and listen to the audience talk to each other about each other, telling themselves how great they are and how they don't need Abba: how they have never bought a record: how they have never even heard an Abba song.

Leaving that aside we'll go onto another point Mr Higgins raised. He seems to think that if I cannot toe the fannish line, then I shouldn't bother with fandom and join the many other pastimes that abound. Why should I? I enjoy SF: I enjoy conventions: I enjoy writing my fanzine and getting involved. Fandom isn't a privileged body and should not be so. It should be open to all, regardless of opinion. It's not a question of my adjusting to fandom or vice versa, but for both to accept the other with tolerance.

As for my "insistent, humble requests for 'constructive' criticism", how else am I to gauge feelings, attitudes, opinions and criticism if I do not ask those who are the supposed experts, knowledgeable in the field of fanzine writing and publishing? Would he have even read Periphery if I hadn't given him a copy and ASKED for a comment or two? Would he have written the article in Matrix? I was brought up to ask, quietly and politely, if you wanted something: a practice that seems to be losing favour, it would seem.

Yes Mr Higgins I do have a personality. I think it was evident in Periphery, not as strong as it could be, but given time and a chance that personality will become imprinted in later issues, and recognized. I suspect what you were trying to get at was the lack of humour in Periphery. I am aware of this lack (see Periphery 2) and I am doing my best to rectify this and not be forced. It must be done correctly otherwise it falls down. In the meantime, serious writing can be just as interesting.

Also I would like to say a big thank you to Steev Higgins, through his article he gave me the criticism I wanted, and a few tips too. I feel better now that I've balanced things to give my side.

ANDY COBBS, Riverlyn House, Hoveringham, Nottinghamshire

I thought Steev Higgins wrote a very interesting piece about fanzine production. I must say that I found his comments on fanzines in general, rather than in the specific cases mentioned, most illuminating. However, a few things jarred; his concept of negative criticism being the 'right' way to criticise especially. On the whole, though, a piece that I feel will help me in the production of my own zine, Electric Vulture. (Christ, I've got to do it now!)

After my comments last time about Alan Dorey's piece in M26, I found that in M27 he was again most readable though this time managing to be far more in line, in his style, with what his job entails. The summary of ideas, plans and aims within the BSFA was most useful; I must, however, agree with Keith Freeman (Mailbag, M27) when he says that there seems to be a lack of positive planning to marry up to the wealth of good ideas coming out of the BSFA at the moment. (Hoping to start a landslide of volunteers he said, in print no less, anything I can do to help....)

Increasing the membership seems to be a major task at the present. I wonder, though, who it is that the BSFA is trying to recruit; is it the lovers of SF who have never heard of the BSFA or those people within fandom, and on the convention 'circuit', who are too apathetic to join? Possibly it is both, but I think that a distinction should be made between the two groups; and also the methods used to get them to join.

It also worries me as to what, eventually, the BSFA wants to become. Alan's aim, and I presume that of the committee, is couched in that wonderfully obtuse phrase, 'a clearing house of all things science fictional'. What exactly does this mean? Perry Rhodan discussions? SF in the



the world of Renaissance Benedictine monks? I realise that these are extremes (especially the first!), but a definite - or as close as possible - set of parameters has to be arrived at, so that the majority of members are pleased most of the time. Looking at the current state of affairs, though, it seems that the majority don't care one way or another! This is not an unfair comment. The feedback seems to come from a consistent minority; they (we) might be pedantic and repetitive, but at least there is some kind of response. (Actually the lettercol in M27 had a good number of new, if at times reluctant, contributors.)

\*\*\*\*\* *We've passed your comments on to Alan Dorey, Andy, and I'm sure he'll have a reply in his column next issue. Now, back to the thorny problem of Steev Higgins (nothing personal Steev).*

KEITH FREEMAN, 269 Wykeham Road, Reading

Steev Higgins puts down a lot of sense - but also quite a bit of non-sense. He reveals, I feel, a certain amount of ignorance. If Gross Encounters is claimed (be Steev) to be the World's Most Regular Fanzine After Matrix, what does he feel Erg, Scottishe (to mention but two) are? This is not to branch into the American fanzine scene (after all Steev uses the word "World"). In fact, mentioning Erg reminds me that a lot of what Steev says can be boiled down to what Terry Jeeves has said several times - "Have, in your fanzine, what interests you". (I won't guarantee those words have ever actually passed Terry's lips - but the sense is correct.) Obeying this dictate means NOT slavishly copying any other fanzine, NOT putting anything in because "that's what's expected", but doing what you want to do. If the readers don't like it - search for new readers.

WILLIAM GOODALL, The Beeches, Deveron Road, Huntly AB5 5DU (yes, it is a touch of *deja vu!* this must be one of our more affluent members - he can actually afford the postage for two letters.) I thought Steev Higgins's article was very good: it caused me to reconsider my Work in Progress, Woolly Hat 1, and throw out most of the dreck I'd written for it in the last five months...!

Like a great many people these days, I'm new to fandom, though getting less new all the time. The thing that gets me is that, although I've been interested in sf for over a decade and have accumulated a collection of getting on for 1,400 items and founded AUSFS - I've only recently joined the BSFA. Not because I'd only just heard of it (though up-to-date info on who to contact etc is difficult to find) but because the image presented seemed unappealing.

I hasten to add that I like what I see now that I'm in the BSFA - but it doesn't accord with the frightfully sercon and highbrow organisation still represented in the publicity. Nowhere in the new handbills does it say that being in the BSFA is fun, and surely that's the best incentive for joining - I think the cover of Matrix 26 is the sort of publicity the BSFA needs.

Granting for the sake of argument that it is a good thing to expand the membership of the BSFA, here are some (varyingly original) suggestions I've got for improving public awareness of the BSFA (as a step in increasing membership):

- (1) Posters in every bookshop carrying sf. Members should go along and ask to stick the things up: I'm sure most bookshops would oblige.
- (2) BSFA publicity in every hardback and paperback sf book published - surely at least some publishers can be cajoled into donating space, where technically feasible. After all, a strengthened fandom could prolong and reinforce the sf boom to their advantage...

\*\*\*\*\* *For those of you asking yourselves what the hell AUSFS is, it stands for Aberdeen University SF Society. Posters are available from Eve and I, or Alan Dorey or Sandy Brown, should any members wish to try to persuade their local bookshop/library to display them - just drop us a line. The book publicity idea is one of the best, but the problem lies in the exorbitant charges most publishers inflict. The questionnaire was planned to give us more idea of the publications people read so that we can plan a more effective advertising programme and, funds willing, this should be started 'real soon now'.*

DAVE SYMES, 3 Hannington Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth

Despite the criticism the BSFA still attracts from some long-standing SF fans, I feel it offers a good and worthwhile service: (OK, maybe it's not perfect, but then what ever is?) At the simplest level it offers a focus for the neofan; the chance to realise that it, he, she, you're not the only SF fan in the UK. At a higher level, it offers information, through the various BSFA publications, and opportunities to express a personal (usually biased) opinion and to communicate personally, or by LoC, with other fans. Sure, we've all heard it said many times that any old fanzine could do all these things and at far less cost. Maybe, but I don't, in my heart, think so. As it now stands, entering the 80's the BSFA is pretty well organized, with a reasonably large circulation, and so the smalle (clique) fanzines couldn't hope to compete. Of course, on

another level, it encourages serious dialogue on various aspects of SF, through Vector, Matrix, Focus and even Paperback Parlour. All admirable publications in respect of that which each endeavours to cover.

As a constructive suggestion, prompted by enquiries made to me, why not set up a department of the BSFA as a literary agency. The articles of the company loosely make provision for this in Article 3, Clause A(1) - (111) and maybe (1V).

\*\*\*\*\* *The literary agency idea is well worth thinking about. It's something for future expansion but definitely an objective the BSFA should think of for the long run. The problem, as with all the good ideas we, and the membership, come up with, is who the hell can we get to run it. But that shouldn't stop us discussing the idea.*

CLIVE YELF, 31 John Clynes Ct, Woodborough Rd, Putney, London SW15

After all the recent correspondence about the problem, I am pleased to see that someone, somewhere has hit upon the ideal way of overcoming the difficulty of neofan involvement (or lack of it, as the case may be.) I refer to the question "If the BSFA organised a weekly meeting in London, would you attend?" to be found on the back of the questionnaire in the last mailing. This seems to me to be an ideal way, for the London fan at least, to get to know the faces behind the names, and of providing a foothold into the world of fandom as well as a few recognisable faces at the next con. Although it could be argued that this service is already provided by the monthly 'One Tun' gatherings, I, for one, am not able to attend these Thursday sessions, must as I would like to do so. This effectively cuts me off from most of the 'live' SF scene in London, and I would certainly welcome any move to reverse this situation. Would it be possible to hold these meetings on alternate days, however? Say Monday one week, Tuesday the next, so that any member can attend at least once a fortnight. (If not, at least make sure it doesn't clash with the 'One Tun' gatherings).

Still, it is encouraging to know that the committee members are pursuing means of ensuring new members 'settle in' quickly, rather than just talking about it, and I, for one, certainly hope that something materialises.

\*\*\*\*\* *As you will see from the questionnaire results, the idea of a weekly meeting generated quite a lot of comment. Quite a few people said they would not be able to attend every week, others would like rotating days as you suggest. We are looking into this more deeply now and trying to find premises etc. How about having only one meeting a month, but instead of on a particular day, on a particular date (i.e. 20th). This would ensure that the actual day was rotated each month without causing too many diary complications. Or perhaps twice in a month, if we could get enough attendees to make the hire of a room worthwhile? Any ideas anyone?*

*A large proportion of those saying they would not attend these meetings had travelling problems, how about members organising regional meetings for those who can't get to London?*

CLIVE WOODLEY, 19 Cramhurst Lane, Witley, Godalming, Surrey

Depending on which day of the week meetings in London might fall, I would certainly make every effort to attend them. Possibly every two months, when the mailings are to be sorted out, all the necessary publications and envelopes could be brought to a meeting so that those members present could help in the envelope stuffing. I certainly would have no objection to doing this.

\*\*\*\*\* *That is an excellent idea, Clive, we'll have to look into the logistics.*

ROY GRAY, 17 Ullswater, Macclesfield

On the subject of 'To meet or not....', no one seemed to suggest a solution to Eve's dilemma, so I might as well put my oar in.

We should try to see the authors' viewpoint, especially if it is a large con with several thousand visitors. It must be a nuisance to both authors trying to talk to someone and fans who have managed to start a discussion with an author if they are persistently being interrupted. I was not at Seacon but at other, unfortunately long past, cons, I have noticed people can be, albeit unintentionally, quite rude when autograph hunting. So what can be done? Well, a private suite for authors does not seem too popular with fans. How about declaring either one area or one period of the day as either an autograph hunters' area or time? This could work only if everyone 'plays the game', the authors by being around at most of the set places or times and the fans by asking

for autographs, or doing whatever else seems to annoy authors, only in the set places or times. The committee's part is to negotiate the arrangement with writers, encourage writers to refuse autographs out of time or place and ensure the agreement is well publicized.

An activity the committee might like to consider for the BSFA is some gentle lobbying of the TV companies in order to influence their policy towards SF. This is especially important prior to the advent of channel 4 and perhaps should apply mainly to the ITV companies. By lobbying I mean identifying an influential TV company manager/executive/producer and taking him/her to lunch (BSFA to pay) or dinner. Part of the outing to include a short visit to a major London SF bookshop and the rest to putting our viewpoint in the time-honoured manner of the public relations industry. This would be costly but to establish some credibility and influence it might well be worth it. In addition, popular programmes always stimulate sales of associated books so we might persuade a publisher to contribute. I don't want to go on too long but it's an interesting subject for debate.

\*\*\*\*\* *Logical as your ideas are, I'm sure the regimentation required would not appeal in the easy-going atmosphere of a convention. In addition, many authors might not like 'open season' being declared on them, and what about the shame of not being included?*

CHRIS LEWIS, 4 Southfield Rd, High Wycombe, Bucks

So Paul Dembina doesn't like the cover of M26. I thought it was great, second only to the latest one. There's nothing like a good laugh before plunging into the morass of comment, criticism and controversy. Yes, I actually read Matrix backwards starting with 'The Captive' (No. 2 is innocent) and finishing with the editorial! And if Paul doesn't like displaying the cover to his fellow travellers why can't he fold it behind the page he's reading or cover it up with a handy plain wrapper. Personally, if I see anyone on the tube reading something other than a professional production (e.g. papers, glossy magazines, adverts) I think "good for them" even if it is the magazine of the British Singing Fags Association! There was one thing that puzzled me about the M26 cover - who had removed the pint pots from the right hands of the back row? Or do they have an unconscious reflex position in case of alcoholic blackouts?

I reckon I must be in a very small minority of people who went to SEACON for one day only. This was due to a number of reasons, one of which was a nasty feeling that as this was my first con I might not enjoy it. No doubt you'll be relieved to know that I did enjoy my day immensely - and surprised myself by finding that the better moments were those on the fan programme rather than the main one. However, I must agree with Stephen Ramsden. I was awed at the sheer size of the affair and the amount of work that must have gone into it. And actually to see some of these mythical authors - it's reassuring to know they do actually exist, even if they are not very pleasant (I never did like Jerry Pournelle's writing anyway). The trouble was that people were busy, either at programmed events or just doing their own thing. The friendliest people I met were (a) waiting to get into Dave Langford's talk and (b) the Albacon organisers who were out to get my money (see you there folks).

On the other hand, if there had been little or no set programme I would probably have wandered aimlessly about, got generally pissed off with the whole idea of cons and crawled back into my hole.

NIGEL CLARK, 44 Shelley Road, Stratford-upon-Avon

Congratulations on making it to 1980; for a while in January I thought that Matrix had folded for good. Unfortunately my fears seem to have been justified - almost. M27 must have been about the worst issue to date. What has happened to Jim Barker's brilliant interior illustrations? They would, at least, have relieved the monotony of the mailbag and the fanzine reviews. A few issues ago you were taken to task for pruning letters too drastically but is that any excuse for not cutting some of the cackle from the last local. The fanzine reviews are following a similar, ridiculous trend which, if continued, will convert Matrix into a fanzine director. As I say, if it were not for Shazfan and Life on Mars and Paul Kincaid's piece and the spelling bee and the front cover and bits of the editorial and bits of Alan Dorey's piece, Matrix would have been very depressing.

On another tack, Seacon was my first convention and, surprisingly enough, I thoroughly enjoyed it. I found none of the supposed resistance that neofans are supposed to find in the presence of Established Fans. In fact, I managed to meet a lot of people whom I've always wanted to meet. On the whole I had a splendid time. The only thing that puzzles me is that Eve claims that the SFWA members stayed in their suite all the time. This is most emphatically NOT TRUE. Jerry Pournelle was, unfortunately, very much in evidence at the Swedish Room Party where he occupied a good third of the room and generally made his presence felt. I did not stay long in the Swedish Room Party.

ARNOLD AKIEN, 6 Dunblane Road, Seaburn, Sunderland

In the relatively short time I have been reading Matrix and company I seem to have become aware of an unhappy muttering from its organisers - "Why?", it seems to say, "don't we get more response from our readers? We sweat blood writing these articles, why do so few of you respond?" It may well be that I am becoming steadily more paranoid as time goes on, but it seems to me that sometimes, in a desperate effort to provoke response, you otherwise talented writers wander off the path of sensible comment and into a quicksand of futility.

Eve's "To Meet or not to Meet" had, if I read it correctly, the purpose of raising an exchange of opinion from readers on participation by authors and presumably, by extension, other pros in the SF field in conventions. But by getting involved in personal criticism of people she dislikes, whatever she intended got lost and elicited spirited defences by authors' partisans. Sad, the issue deserved better. What surprised me at Seacon was not that a small number of authors got nasty, but that the vast majority of them were so tolerant under what was sometimes extreme provocation.

Eve, everyone presents several different faces to the world. So you don't like the face John Brunner shows you, and perhaps others like you? No doubt your personal opinions of some authors' characters are well supported in your own eyes. Your reply to Allen Boyd-Newton was well made - I am sure that you didn't mean to persuade other people to dislike Brunner, but you did start a chain reaction of futile personal bickering. As for superior attitudes, read your own words Eve:

"I'm not exactly coherent at the moment, but believe me, if John Brunner would come up to me and prove otherwise, I would gladly change my opinion of him" (my own underlining)

Can this be the same Eve Harvey who deplores high-handedness? Can the Eve Harvey who wrote those words be the same one that I met in the fanroom at Seacon. Can this be the person who, when I thanked her for going to the trouble of putting Bob Shaw's The Enchanted Duplicator in print again and said she had done a very good job of it, kissed me, a total stranger, on the cheek. The same Eve who unselfishly devotes so much time to BSFA whilst so many of us members sit on our brains and remain silent? Of course it is!

I am sure that you are (as you might put it) yourself, no matter what the occasion, but the "self" that others see varies according to who they are. I've already pointed out the "3 faces of Eve", there must be more. A little tolerance is what is needed. If this doesn't work then how about treating such people with an expression of polite, amused, contempt. Go on Eve, try it, you can practice on your husband at first, then, as the old adverts for mail order self-defence courses put it "You will amaze your friends and terrify your enemies".

\*\*\*\*\* *Shucks, you've found me out. You are partially right Arnold, I did hope my article would generate some discussion, and on that footing it worked to some extent. I also wrote the article because it was something I felt very strongly about, however I think I have explained myself fully in my other answers, so I'll let the subject drop here. (Er).*

*I see the Black Riders are out again...*

MARY GENTLE, 2 Winston Gardens, Branksome, Poole

I don't like to harp on Bakshi's LOTR, but Anthony Divey's letter raises a couple of more general points.

First: in fantasy, 'films of the book' are rarely successful in representing the original conception. 'Watership Down' is the only exception that occurs. LOTR could be adapted for radio, where the pictures are in your head, but not for film or TV. The word is a more flexible medium. I note with apprehension the forthcoming translation of Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy to the TV screen; another example of the same problem.

Second: admitted my criticism is subjective, but when you come down to analysing it, whose isn't? Though I should think anyone who'd seen Bakshi's 'Wizards' would realise he is not suited to making serious fantasy. (Non-serious fantasy is something else, and fine where it works - as in 'Fantasia' - but the two don't mix.)

What, if anything, I hold in reverence is not any individual book. It is the integrity of the writer's vision - which shouldn't be screwed up by commercial rip-offs.

Passing to the BSFA, I would like to compliment you on Vector. Printing con speeches is great, especially for those of us who don't get round to see them 'live'. There have also been a number of very helpful articles on the writing side of the game. Something else subjective: reviews seem to be better in Vector, why? However - and this doesn't apply just to Vector -



there's a lot of discussion on the state of the SF nation that doesn't actually say much. I am reminded of small religious sects, with endless nit-picking discussions on how many angels can dance on the head of a pin.

Back to the bitching, and a word on the second series of HHGTTG. The word is waffle. I don't deny the bright spots - the concept that the universe is actually run by a solipsist in a wooden shack, a state of affairs I've long suspected to be true - but this series had a great deal of unnecessary to-ing and fro-ing. It gave the impression of being two episodes padded out to five; which is a shame when you think how good the first series was. Where is the restaurant at the end of the Universe? where is Magrathea? where is the Bugblatter Beast of Traal? Sic transit gloria terra.

JOSEPH NICHOLAS, Room 9, 94 St George's Square, Pimlico, London SW1

I'm writing in response to Anthony Divey's letter about Bakshi's The Lord of the Rings. I enjoyed the movie too (and it remains fresh in mind at the time of writing because I only saw it a week ago), and the only quarrels I have with Bakshi's interpretation of the novel are minor ones. The clarity of the characters, for instance, was in marked contrast to that of the backgrounds, the former being brightly-coloured and sharp-edged while the latter were muddy and indistinct, like the rough watercolour sketches they undoubtedly were. Bakshi achieved better "integration" between the two in his previous movie, Wizards, and it's a pity that he couldn't manage the same for LOTR. Lack of time and/or money, I suppose. Further on this matter of backgrounds, however: as anyone who's read Humphrey Carpenter's somewhat uncritical biography of Tolkien will know, the mythical landscapes of his Middle-earth were very much inspired by, and derived from, the real English ones of his childhood, and his distaste for what industrialisation (read Sauron) was doing to them, particularly in the Midlands area (read Mordor) where he lived is very akin to that of the Victorian fantasist William Morris, one of his main influences. The landscapes of Bakshi's movie, however, have no detectable "Englishness" about them, being instead bland and universalised with occasional lamentable touches of Americanness - for example, when autumn comes to the Shire at the start of the movie, the colours of the leaves on the trees are those found in the forests of New England. Never mind Aragorn being ruined for me by his voice being very identifiably that of John Hurt while the character, of course, looks nothing like him. My biggest complaint concerns the voiceover at the end, after the Battle of Helm's Deep, which claims that "the forces of darkness were (thus) driven from Middle-earth forever" and perpetrates a complete lie by doing so: what about Minas Tirith and the confrontation before the gates of Mordor?

Which brings me on to another point raised by Divey. Yes, it's perfectly acceptable to film a book in two parts (except that Bondarchuk's War and Peace was actually filmed in four parts), but in this instance there's no guarantee that we'll ever get a part two. Although all the live action on which the animation is to be based was shot at the same time as that for the first part (to save money), no processing work has yet been done on it and probably won't be until the returns of the first part are fully in, and the producer and his backers are reasonably confident that there is a potential audience for a second part. And if and when part two is released, it will likely lack the power it needs to succeed since its resolution (and the resolution of the saga as a whole) will, as with all other books and movies, depend very much on everything that's gone before. So Bakshi will either have to give us half an hour of lacklustre and very tedious precis, or else a "double bill" of both parts - and since no cinema audience will pay to be talked at, it will have to be the "double bill". Yet what cinema audience will also sit still for five hours of movie? (I and Anthony Divey probably would, but such lifts us from the category of the "average cinema-goer" and makes us something of a special - i.e. minority - case. And large-budget movies are not made for special interest groupings like Tolkien fans.)

But to revert to the matter of objections to the movie as it stands, and in particular those objections raised by Mary Gentle and other Tolkien fans, all claiming, at root, that it is not 100% faithful to Tolkien's original vision. Divey answers this in part by stating, quite correctly, that Bakshi was making the movie as a movie, and not as a literal transcription of the novel; the two art forms are very dissimilar. But how can they possibly know what Tolkien's original vision was anyway? The thing to remember about the novel, and about all novels, is that words alone are not sufficient to convey the image the writer has in mind; he must rely, to a certain extent, on the imagination of the reader to fill in the inevitable gaps; and the reader is required to employ more of his imagination in order to close them. Each and every reader thus has their own individual conception of Tolkien's world; mine is not Anthony Divey's is not Mary Gentle's is not Ralph Bakshi's - and isn't Tolkien's either. It thus smacks of arrogance for any reader to claim that the film is a betrayal of Tolkien's vision when they know perfectly well that it's merely a different vision to their own. And while the movie's "revelation" of the number of different visions that can be gleaned from the book (which even die-hard Tolkien fans must have known, albeit subconsciously, all along anyway) should have been uplifting it seems to have acted more as a depressant, pointing out that their visions of the world are not the most important ones. They are, in a word, jealous, and, worse, they won't admit it.

\*\*\*\*\* Let's finish with some comment about sf!

PAUL DEMBINA, 29 Howcroft Crescent, Finchley, London

I must say how much I disagree with Dave Webb's remarks about SF criticism. Firstly, he says that of course no-one actually buys Perry Rhodan books. In that case would he care to explain how the series is still going strong after a few hundred novels, they wouldn't publish them if they didn't sell! Reviews of books provide (for me at least) an invaluable guide to what the novel is actually about (after who actually believes that the blurb given on the cover is an accurate reflection of content). Without this guide the only alternative is choosing a book with a nice cover and a few superlatives splashed on the cover. I've done this before and ended up with the "SF Classic" The Pawns of Null-A by A E van Vogt - what a load of rubbish it was! I'm not saying that you should automatically buy a book with a good review, instead consider what you look for in a novel (action, intellectual stimulation,....) and see what the reviewer sees as the book's strengths and weaknesses. For instance a reviewer with exactly the opposite aims in reading a book may expose what he believes to be its weaknesses but which may be to someone else's taste. For instance:

"Too clever by half..." i.e. the reviewer is looking for action, but if your penchant is for intellectual books then this "unfavourable" review by a reviewer the exact antithesis of yourself will be a point in its favour.

What I'm really trying to say is understand the reviewer, understand yourself and maybe the review can become a useful guide to picking a book out of so many on the market.

#### We Also Heard From

Many thanks to the following for your letters:

George Hay, Glenn McCauley, Carol Goodridge, D R Nash, Clive Parkes  
Tom Jones, Dick Downes and Greg Hills

\*\*\*\*\*  
News - continued from P. 6

Robert Heinlein's new novel Number of the Beast has been bought by NEL.

A certain David Langford, a name familiar to an elite few, has sent the following item which might clear up one or two misunderstandings.

"True artists of literary form, like what I am, are always eager to clear up misapprehensions about their wondrous creations: I must therefore explain that "Sex Pirates of the Blood Asteroid" (the story by one "David Langford" which appears on the BSFA Award nominations after I promised to keep quiet about Al\*n D\*r\*y's purchase of a gold throne with the litho fund) has no connection with Sex Pirates of the Blood Asteroid that immortal literary work cited by D Constantine in the last Vector Sex Pirates of the Blood Asteroid is an unpublished novel whereas "Sex Pirates of the Blood Asteroid" is a short story which people wish had stayed unpublished (Aries 1: David & Charles, 1979). Nor should my "story" be confused with the "Sex Pirates of the Blood Asteroids" which appeared in the January Penthouse: only the author's name and the text are the same.

#### CONVENTIONS AND EVENTS

INFOCON - Sunday March 23, 1980 sees a small convention being held in Societeit Vilenstede, Amstelveen, the Netherlands. It aims to give a complete picture of current Dutch SF activities. Rare and secondhand books will be on sale and membership is free for all Dutch fans (UK fans as well?). Non-commercial European organizations and fanzines are invited to send 50+ information sheets and 1 or 2 magazines for circulation at the convention. All communications to: R Goudriaan, Postbus 94255, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

ALBACON - 4-7 April 1980, Albany Hotel, Glasgow. It's getting close to Easter so it will soon be too late to pre-register. Contact Gerry Gillin, 9 Dunnotter Street, Ruchazie, Glasgow G33. Unless things have changed, Guest of Honour is Colin Kapp and Fan Guest of Honour Jim Barker. Programme plans at present are:

a debate, 'Who needs Women?', panels including 'Whither Eastercon?', SF Art discussion, talks by Nick Lowe, Chris Boyce, R L Fanthorpe and, of course, Colin Kapp. As revealed in M27, Jim Barker has prepared a 'Captive' slide show and there will be the traditional talk by Bob Shaw on his latest 'scientific' research. The very full film programme includes - Rocky Horror Picture Show, Young Frankenstein, Dr Strangelove, 2001, Soylent Green and The Kama Sutra rides again! (If you find time, you might even catch Eve & I making fools of ourselves in the fan room programme.)

UNICON 80 - After Albacon you might just need a rest and Unicon could provide it. July 4-7 at Keele University, Keele, Staffordshire. Talks, lectures, live events, films, art show, fannish events and a Banquet. Send registrations to PO Box 92, Derby DE1 1AP or contact Unicon 80 at Keele University.

ANGLICON - Mini-convention to be held in Norwich at the University of East Anglia 5-7th September 1984. Accommodation on campus. Further information, write or telephone Glen Warminger, 72 Linacre Avenue, Sprowton, Norwich, Norfolk, NR7 8PG, Telephone (0603) 411680.

ATTACK FROM OUTER SPACE! - Is the title of a special one-day programme of films and discussions on the dangers and delights of tangling with extraterrestrials. The event is presented by Philip Strick and the films under consideration are "Invasion" (1966), "Not of this Earth" (1957) and "The Thing From Another World" (1951). The workshop is organised by the SEH Short Course Unit, North East London Polytechnic and the attendance fee (which includes lunch and refreshments) is £7.00. Applications to attend should be sent to SEH Short Course Unit, North East London Polytechnic, Longbridge Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM8 2AS. (Tel: 01-597 7591 Ext. 35).

#### ODMENTS

Plastics and Rubber Weekly (really!) recently carried the following ad:-

"Sales Person

Avondyke happy action men require additional fast-talking, quick thinking, self-motivated, non-Robotoid colleague (glib foreign tongue gains credit).

Earthly benefits offered include 2-litre spacemobile, Alien encounters (abroad). Interested humanoids please ESP application (confirm by GPO)."

Yet another press cutting, this time from Datalink "GIGO", 28.1.80

#### "BEYOND REASON

The American instinct to boldly go where no man has gone before is being stretched beyond all reasonable decency.

After all, this ambition is usually qualified by an assurance of non-interference with alien life forms.

Not content with the homely mantelpiece spot, NASA, the American space agency is entering into the business of scattering people's ashes around the universe. There is apparently no small demand for this facility among the adventurous dead.

There may soon be something more in the maxim 'they look down on us from above'."

Thanks go to Joseph Nicholas, Malcolm Edwards, Phil Rosenblum, Dave Langford, Locus for their invaluable aid with this news section.

*At last, a feature I've been hoping, and promising, to run for some time gets off the ground. So here's the first Matrix Review Section (just like the "Sundays" eh?) masquerading under another record title as.....*

## Won't Get Fooled Again?

### CARRY ON TREKKING

For the last couple of years those of us interested in such matters have been informed that "Star Trek - The Motion Picture" was to be made holding true to the original philosophy of "Star Trek - The TV Series". And so it came to pass, for Alan Dean Foster has lifted an entire script from the TV series ('The Changeling') and has produced 'Nomad Rides Again'. The cast - original actors to a man - remain the same bunch of clean-cut, multi-national, all-American heroes that we remember and love so well. Kirk is as noxious as ever, accepting all modes of life and society, so long as they don't compromise his Republican value-judgements. The rest of the crew, excepting McCoy and Spock, play out their 2D characters with finesse. McCoy, mithering about scrambled atoms and transporters, you can almost believe in, whilst Leonard Nimoy has managed to create a new, aloof Spock who couldn't give a damn for the Feds.

Spock has been in self-imposed exile on Vulcan for the past two years (following the "historic five-year mission") trying to exorcise his human half in the disciplines of "Kolinahr". Having apparently succeeded, he is suddenly forced into a telepathic rapport with an unimaginably powerful Force, which totally disrupts the tranquility he has been seeking. The Vulcan Masters then disown him, saying that his path "lies out there" (amongst the stars). Having monitored Starfleet's secret communication channels for a while (how implausible can you get?) he discovers that James T has reassumed command of the Enterprise, and is on a mission to contact and divert a horrifyingly powerful force which has casually disposed of the odd Klingon Battle Fleet and Star Base. He puts two and two together, and hitches a lift to meet this new menace that is threatening to destroy The-Universe-As-We-Know-It.

Kirk, having bulldozed Starfleet Command into giving him back the Enterprise (he's been desk-bound for two years, after being promoted to Admiral) has spent what seems like half the film viewing the refitted Enterprise from every direction possible, thus giving the SFX boys a field-day. After blundering about and trying to fire non-functional phasers to extricate himself from a mess of his own making, Kirk settles back into his old position with aplomb, much to the annoyance of Decker, the former Captain of the Enterprise.

With the crew reunited, the Enterprise approaches the source of the disturbance, and penetrates the diffuse cloud that surrounds it, in the centre of which is found an unbelievably large ship on which the SFX really go over the top. A full fifteen minutes is spent traversing it, with effects that outstrip Star Wars by several orders of magnitude.

The other new member of the Enterprise crew, Ilia, a bald Barbie-doll character who is supposedly so good at sexual athletics that she has to take a vow of chastity before being allowed on the Enterprise, is then hijacked by the opposition, and turned into an android probe serving Vejur, who proposes to "remove the carbon life-form infestations from the Enterprise".

After a few abortive attempts to understand and win over Vejur, Kirk inevitably succeeds, and the film climaxes in a glorious pyrotechnical display of the Ultimate Orgasm featuring Decker and Ilia. James T, having saved the world, commandeers the Enterprise and heads out to the inevitable sequel.

As a Star Trek episode, STTMP would have been quite competent, apart from its

too-obvious similarity to 'The Changeling', but even the most dazzling SFX in the world can't disguise a very ordinary script, accompanied by totally antiseptic direction by Robert Wise (also responsible for 'The Sound of Music'). The Enterprise's crew run like clockwork, performing all duties and bodily functions at optimum levels as if they were pre-programmed. There are none of the human foibles that made the crew of the "Nostrono" in 'Alien' believable. Roddenbury seems so pre-occupied with his mystical dream of the advancement of man that he totally ignores the great mass of humanity that literally wallows in shit and couldn't give a damn about the next step in evolution.

Anyway, mysticism and egocentric pre-occupation died out with the hippies, ten years ago. Didn't it?

A miss.

Paul Oldroyd

### The Scifi Image

Naturally, all true sci-fi fanatics were up exceedingly early on the morning of Sunday, 9th February, awaiting with eager anticipation ITV's blinking into life amid the words "Here's a programme about sci-fi". You weren't? Well, I wouldn't have been up either except that I happen to do a paper-round on Sundays.

The 25-minute programme on at this unnatural time of five past nine was 'A Better Read' presented by Bill Grundy, one of a series in which Grundy examines a different genre of paperback fiction each week. This particular week it was the turn of SF and if you're thinking of kicking yourself because you missed it, well don't bother. It began with a few people browsing in bookshops giving their opinions on SF, which produced comments such as "I used to read SF but now I've grown out of it." Next, Grundy taled to Peter Nicholls (editor, of course, of the excellent Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction) who provided thoughtful answers to inane questions (although one accompanying a shot of the inevitable Foundation series by Asimov showed them in the wrong order so that the rather tasty continuous cover art was messed up). This was followed by a terrible interview with Bob Shaw and Chris Priest. While it's true that Grundy's views about SF (dismissing it because of its garish cover art, for example) are bigoted and inance, neither Bob nor Chris put up much of a fight. Obviously the fact that they were in front of television cameras (though with surely a miniscule audience) made them very nervous: Chris said "Um" a few times, Bob said very little and Grundy remained smug. I just wish someone could have been there to crush the slimy little worm (who, naturally, said that literary man's shibboleth 'sci-fi' several times - "You don't like me saying that do you?" he smirked. Slug him, Chris!). Both authors said that they knew little about science, but were unable to passionately defend SF as being a natureal vehicle for writing.

By the end of the programme SF's image was no better than when it had started, but then Grundy came over as a man with his mind made up. All in all, his escapade with the Sex Pistols can now be looked on as one of his better interviews.

Michael Ashley

### AN ENDANGERED SPECIES

The current ennui afflicting magazine Science Fiction is largely a question of definition. The early Sixties supported four simultaneous UK titles ("NEW



WORLD", "NEBULA", "SCIENCE FANTASY", and "SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES"), as well as finding room for consumption of American product. A phenomenon largely fueled by a consistent bedrock SF audience who, largely uncomplainingly, financed the stuff through subscription and newsstand sales. The implosion of this idyll was due to a proliferation of taste. Moorcock's 'experimental phase' "NEW WORLD" ; although vastly innovative ; was also an attempt to reorientate to these new conditions, with magazines winking into non-existence all around, and "N.W." itself sold to new proprietors/publishers, it was a balancing act needing that notorious Arts Council grant to stay afloat. "NEW WORLDS" disappeared leaving its formulaic heritage of pseudo-Bill Burroughs cut-up/dilettante Art Deco posturing, to be scuffed over by "WORDWORKS" and more recently "SOMETHING ELSE". It was a Pyrrhic victory, a rearguard action, the problem of identifying a potential SF-market persisting.

The US scene was regressing to adolescence either in orientation, or in the actual orgy of nostalgia and reprinted self-congratulation drenching "AMAZING" and "FANTASTIC"; while the UK produced "VORTEX", "VISIONS OF TOMORROW", and "SF DIGEST" which - although occasionally interesting - attempted no new tactical assault on the basic impasse.

The much maligned "SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY" - by exploiting demand for sub-Roger Dean/Yes album cover-fantasy posters survived for three years, and if survival is going to be the critique for success then it was a success. It may have invoked the derisive sneers of elitist SF cliques, but happily they are unimportant in the market macrocosm. And in providing early sales for Robert Holdstock, Chris Priest, Ian Watson, Michael Butterworth (and me) it provided a stable outlet for new fiction.

So now we've got "OMNI" with its "PENTHOUSE" affiliations and coffee-table aspirations; and "AD ASTRA". Without the financial safety-net of a "New English Libraries" back-up (as "SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY"), or the deliberately iconoclastic literariness of a "NEW WORLDS", "AD ASTRA" is now celebrating its first year of continued publication, and shows no signs of letting up. It has become a gradual, insinuating success by adopting a modest low-budget fusion of fact/fiction that seems to appeal to a growing readership. It might just be that it has identified that elusive market viability.

Its monochrome first edition appeared almost unnoticed in January 1979 announcing a bi-monthly schedule and an eclectic orientation of 'space exploration, science fact, astronomy and related topics, science fiction from both new and established writers, and a cosmological/futuristic/mysteries middle-ground'. Its fiction quotient was represented by the ubiquitous Rock journalist Mick Farren igniting a weak idea with fine prose; a starship crewed by gays who wind up beating each other to death! There was also UFO's, movies, and Patrick Moore. To the hard-core SF cognoscentis weaned on "NEW WORLDS"-phantasmagoria it might have looked gauche or naive.

Editor James Manning was piloting the project through Rowlot, a small enterprise struggling to acquire distribution, and experiencing problems with printers, but even by the magazine's third manifestation it was looking healthier, the issue headlining some genuinely humorous "Superman" satire by Larry Niven. Issue No. 4 had added a colour cover, and an enigmatic Ian Watson sliver to semantic fiction called "The False Braille Catalogue". A subsequent issue lined up Brian Stableford's "Mortification of the Flesh", a sympathetically illustrated lyrical multiverse Sword & Sorcery fantasy tract. They were racked up alongside Dave Langford, Garry Kilworth and Robert Holdstock. But Manning's policy was to align such names - issue by issue - with newer writers, hence Granville Wilson, K J Carter, Richard Dell, a beautifully evocative "Songsgrave" by Tony Richards, a story about a planet of 'crystallised emotion', plus Karin Adams, Geoff Ryman, and Mike Fredman. A couple of good anthologies-worth of stuff, and as George Hay pointed out to me, paperback publishers demand a ratio of eight 'names' to every two grudgingly tolerated 'non-names' in accepting new compilations!

Fiction-related material in "AD ASTRA'S" first year included an exposition on Lovecraft's "Necronomicon", George Hay questioning the function of Science Fiction, a Norman Spinrad-attacks-the-political-status-quo interview, Asimov writing about asteroids, and an amazingly surreal confrontation between Philip K Dick and Charles Platt with topics ranging from LSD to Dick's alleged spiritual transfiguration (a classic who's sending up who conundrum!). Purists might flinch at the magazine's 'broad spectrum' visual overviews of the "Superman" movie, the inevitable "Black Hole" stills, "Quatermass", and "The Prisoner" autopsy; but such media merchandising sells, and it's a small compromise to make.

Sure "AD ASTRA" miscalculated abysmally with the astrology feature in No. 4, and perhaps the comic strips could be selected with greater integrity, but the straight science features that have buttressed circulation - covering Pluto, space hardware, Sirius 'B' - and the reviews (brief and superficial) are palatable; while Terry Edges's perceptive dissection of the comic industry (Druillet and the excellent "2000 AD") was particularly well-assembled.

Seven issues spread across the year of inception, and a fairly acceptable success to failure ratio. Of course dewey-eyed fan groups will always sit around postulating utopian magazines, be they measured against Moorcock, Campbell, or Carnellian standards. The Science Fiction community delights in bemoaning the lack of professional journals shovelling out new fiction/ supporting new writers; yet with Faustian inevitability their puritan picking at minutea and their impeccable credibility critiques ensure the boycott and ultimate failure of each successive attempt to fill this void. Failure breeds its own logic of defeat, potential publishers wire off SF as a commercial no-go area hedged in by pessimism. A self-perpetuating impasse. "AD ASTRA" is a good magazine with well-motivated staff. It will get better and it should be helped to do so. It needs positive criticism, direct involvement in expanding its market and its contents range. What it doesn't need is armchair critics!

Andrew Darlington

## Miscellany Corner

### MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD

Interested in USA 'small press' publisher's fantasy/SF? If you might be then Andy Richards will be stocking titles not normally available over here at very reasonable prices; books published by Miller-Underwood, Gerny de la Ree, Void Publications and Donald M Grant. Contact Andy at 175 Northumberland Crescent, Bedfont, Feltham, Middlesex (and don't forget am SAE).

\*\*\*\*\*

UFO DIRECTORY of UFO societies, groups and publications worldwide, only £2 inc. postage from UFO Network, 2 St Ivan Court, Colneyhatch Lane, London N10.

\*\*\*\*\*

Available soon - 'Ludds Mill 16' from Andrew Darlington. Plenty of SF in this issue with fiction from Brian Stableford, Barrington J Bayley and 'New Wave' surreal-SF from American writers plus an in-depth analysis of M John Harrison

by Dave Wingrove and Mike Butterworth. All in a two-colour sleeve for 45p from Andrew at 44 Spa Croft Road, Teall Street, Ossett, West Yorks WF5 OHE.

\*\*\*\*\*

Wanted - Menace from the Moon by Bohan Lynch. Harold Powell would like to obtain a copy of this book, he says "It was published as a hardback before the last war - probably mid-thirties - and I believe as a paperback possibly twenty years ago." So if anybody can help to locate a copy, any condition as long as it's complete, please contact Harold at 29 Clarence Square, Brighton, BN1 2ED.

\*\*\*\*\*

Swansea SF Society have social meetings on the first Friday of each month at the Westbourne Pub, Bryn-y-Mor Road, Swansea and their main meetings are on the third Friday, usually in University College. Guest speakers so far have included Brian Stableford, a UFOlogist, Lionel Fanthorpe and Bob Shaw. Ken Bulmer will be talking to members on March 21st. Further details are available from SSFS secretary, Linda Thomas, at 113 Heathfield, Swansea (tel: 54335) or Dick Downes (see this issue's Life on Mars column).

\*\*\*\*\*

For sale - D&D boxed set, unused - £5

Wanted - Copies of UK MAD magazine, pre issue 119. Please state nos. and price wanted.

Out Soon - The first issue of Second Hand Wave will be available at Albacon. it may not be the best fanzine you've read but it'll definitely be one of the worst. None of that awful sf stuff in it, either. Write now to reserve your copy.

All replies to Trev Briggs, 6 The Plains, Crescent Road, London E4 6AU

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Available now, Ring Pull 1 from the Aberdeen University Science Fiction Society, Aberdeen University Union, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB9 1AW. Contents include book reviews and fiction. Send 50p (or the 'usual' - see 'On the Carpet') for your copy, you might even get issue 2!

\*\*\*\*\*

Phoenix-like the Newcastle University SF Society is active again. Plans are going ahead for regular meetings, film seasons and, of course, a fanzine. Although it's nominally for students, arrangements will be made for outside members. Contact Paul Umbers at the University Students Union.

\*\*\*\*\*

Michael Whittell, 10 Leighton Place, Kentish Town, London NW5 2QL, wants people interested in SF to get in touch with him with a view to setting up some form of group in the inner London area. Possibly organised meetings/lectures in library halls etc. Anyone interested, please contact Michael.

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#### SEACON FLASHBACK 2

Panel - The Pleasures & Perils of Serial Writing - Left to Right,  
Marion Zimmer Bradley, Anne McCaffrey, A Bertram Chandler, Larry Niven



# BSFA QUESTIONNAIRE - INTERIM REPORT

To date, we have received 145 responses to the questionnaire, and although the first flood has slowed down to a trickle, that trickle is still continuing and so we have decided to continue the questionnaire for a little longer. Below are the analysed results when we had received 140 replies - a final analysis will be carried out after Friday, 18th April, which will be the cut-off date. At this time we will also hold the draw for the five lucky people who will be receiving a book token. So, you've still got time, please return your questionnaire.

Now to the actual figures. At first I thought our 'bribery' had managed to elicit a fantastic response and the questionnaires came in at a rate of about 10 per day! Great we thought, maybe we've found the right path through the apathy. Unfortunately, when analysing the figures on percentage bases, this was only a 19% response which, when compared to the 17% response elicited by Keith Freeman for the last questionnaire, isn't that good. I had purposely kept the questionnaire extremely short and simple hoping that this would prompt a greater response rate, but it obviously was all in vain. Still, I think we've got a viable sample, and as the replies trickle in we might make the rate over 20%.

## SECTION 1 - Viability of Sample

I'm not a statistician, so most of this section is rather rule of thumb. The questions on geographical distribution and age had a dual role, not only to give us an idea of the 'typical BSFA member', but also to assess the representativeness of the sample we received.

Sample Size: Answers 140. total membership 738 (including those due to renew)  
Response rate = approx 19%

Geographical Distribution:	<u>England</u>		
	North	30	
	Midlands	15	
	London	19	
	S. East	43	
	S. West	<u>8</u>	115
	Scotland		12
	Wales		8
	Eire		1
	Overseas	<u>4</u>	140

Without analysing the geographical breakdown of the complete membership list I can't say for sure this is fairly 'normal' in its distribution, but going by rule of thumb on the total population, the relationships between the various areas is correct, with the vast majority coming from London and the S. East - the most densely population area of the whole United Kingdom.

Age Range: At first we were afraid that our results would be skewed, with too  
& Years a: many younger, and newer members answering - mainly because we felt  
Member : they were likely to be the more active group. Luckily, we were  
completely wrong in this, as you will see from the tables below -  
the age range of those replying was extremely wide, and comparing  
the time a member of responses, with those of the total membership,  
we are extremely representative.

<u>Years A Member of the BSFA</u>	Up to (years)				
	1	2	3	4	More than 4
Actual members	49	32	19	8	29
% of responses	35	23	14	6	21

A similar breakdown of the total membership (thanks to Keith Freeman) is as follows:

YEARS A MEMBER OF THE BSFA	Up to (years)				
	1	2	3	4	more than 4
% of total membership	36	26	15	7	16

If the percentages were exactly the same when comparing the responses with the total membership, I'd start looking for the pixies, but I believe (without going to the bore of significance tests) they are close enough to ensure that we are not getting a biased answer from one particular group of members.

## SECTION 2 - BSFA

Value for Money (actual figures) (% in brackets)

	Good	Average	Poor
BSFA	98 (73)	35 (26)	1 (0.75)
Vector	75 (54)	58 (43)	7 (5)
Matrix	87 (62)	48 (34)	5 (4)
Focus	62 (51)	50 (41)	9 (7)
Paperback Parlour	62 (45)	61 (46)	14 (10)

Obviously, we would expect a high 'Good' and 'Average' response to the BSFA as a whole, since if people were not satisfied they would no longer be a member. I personally feel the rest shows we are doing quite a good job, though, which is nice because usually all you hear are the complaints, not the compliments. Next issue I will do a fuller survey and will be printing some of the comments made about the BSFA (all these comments have been passed on to the respective editors etc. Many thanks for your time and trouble.

## New Ventures

	<u>Interested</u>	<u>Not Interested</u>
One-Day Conference on SF	93	44
Standing Order for Subscriptions	77	57
Weekly Meetings	50	82

The response to this section was extremely exciting. It appears that there is sufficient interest both in the one-day conference, and in some sort of regular meeting in the London area for members. We are all looking into the mechanics of these three ventures and you will be hearing more definite proposals at the AGM at Albacon.

Well, that's enough for now - as I said earlier, I will be doing a more complete and complex analysis, comparing the results I have with those Keith Freeman received when he ran the last BSFA questionnaire. That should be interesting inasmuch as we can get some idea of how the membership of the BSFA has changed over the last few years (if at all).

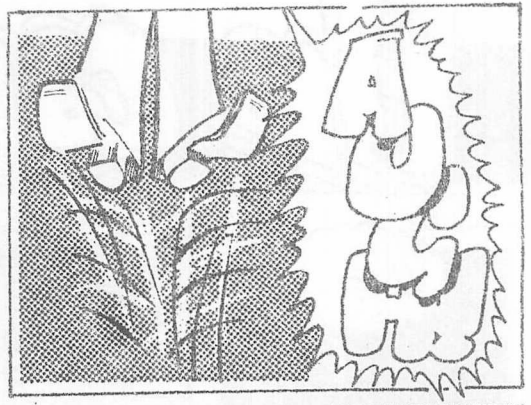
Eve Harvey



# The Captive

BROUGHT TO THE CONVENTION AGAINST HIS Will, The Captive AGAIN TRIES TO ESCAPE WITHOUT REVEALLING WHY HE RESIGNED FROM THE BSFA.







## COMPETITION

The Spelling Bee appeared to be quite popular, in fact we almost had a record number of entries (second only to Jim Barker's front cover competition a few issues ago). We'll feature another Spelling Bee in the near future. Now, the answer:

THE STORM by A E van Vogt (short story, and  
FLESH by Philip Jose Farmer

With the aid of the Ma-rix hat (but without the aid of a safety net) I'll select the winner - and out comes Dave Langford (and that is genuine!), so he'll get a couple of paperbacks.

Now for this issue's competition, we have two teasers for you. Firstly some anagrams from Michael Ashley - rearrange the letters and get:

Some well-known authors - Kill me, eh what?  
Chop him, lesbia!  
Nuttty nerk, R.E.H.

Some novels - His nose rams hers to smash it  
A new nine dildō  
Michael A as petty rat

Some short stories - D., the rat, does sex to poor BSFA (I lie)  
'Or do shoot a nun', you shouted  
Chinamen storm R. G.O.H.

Secondly, from Mark Greener - all you have to do is rearrange the first letter of each of the following films to give a film about a transvestite hot dog.

Charly, Oblong Box, Ultimate Warrior, Robut vs the Aztec Mummy, Eegah, Yoo Kronos, Rabid, Homunculus, Rocketship XM, One hundred years after, Omega Man, Omega ray, On the Beach, Reluctant Astronaut, Panic in year zero, Time machine, Hercules against the moon men, Wrestling women vs the Aztec Mummy, Santa Claus conquers the martians, Robinson Crusoe on Mars, Incredibly strange creatures who stopped living and became mixed up zombies!

So there we have two competitions, two sets of answers and two prizes! Lets have your attempts to either or both by 18th April. Good luck!

### Members' Noticeboard Extra

Wanted: Xerox copy or loan of the following:

Poul Anderson Stories: 'The Sargasso of Lost Starships' - Planet  
Stories January 1952

'A Tragedy of Errors' - Galaxy February 1958

'The Sharing of Flesh' - Galaxy December 1968

Any reasonable price paid for service, contact Andy Firth, 185 Osborne Rd, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear 2 (Phone Newcastle 816375).

\*\*\*\*\*

Finally, we've been naughty and missed the artwork credits from the Contents Page (shoot the typist) so here they are, better late than never!

Cover & Page 18 - Carol Gregory  
Page 1 - Jim Barker  
Page 10 - Terry Jeeves

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\* WITH THIS BSFA MAILING:- \*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

VECTOR REVIEWS SUPPLEMENT - edited by Joseph Nicholas

FOCUS 2 - edited by Rob Holdstock and Chris Evans

MATRIX 28 - edited by John & Eve Harvey

PAPERBACK PARLOUR - edited by Joseph Nicholas

BSFA MEMBERSHIP AMEDMENT LIST MARCH 1980 - edited by Keith Freeman

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Don't forget the BSFA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING on Sunday April 6th 1980 at  
10:00 at the Albany Hotel, Glasgow, during the occasion of the 31st British  
Easter Science Fiction Convention, ALBACON. ALL members are very welcome.

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BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION AWARD FOR 1979 - Please send your votes off to  
Alan Dorey at 20 Hermitage Woods Crescent, St. John's, WOKING, SURREY,  
GU21 1UE as soon as possible. All those attending ALBACON are elligible to vote,  
so make sure you do!

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Apologies for the non-inclusion of the new BSFA Info booklet. Your Chairman  
promises it for the next mailing session which is scheduled for the weekend  
of April 26th and 27th.

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MARCH 1980