

Worldcon Set Fair!

The British Worldcon bid for 1987 is moving apace. As reported in the last issue of Matrix, San Diego has dropped out of contention leaving just Phoenix, Arizona and Britain. At the recent Los Angeles Worldcon, support for Britain was growing. Says Dave Langford: "The Americans seem to think that it's a Good Thing. Even people like Gary Farber have been going around offering their support for the British bid."

Membership, albeit still only pre-supporting, now stands at over 600 and the Worldcon publicity machine is now grinding into action. A FR or information sheet is being made up for Atlanta, although there are no immediate plans to hit the UK market just yet. One piece of good news is that the proposed location (Brighton) is shaping up well. The Brighton Corporation have offered free use of their facilities at the Brighton Centre, a purpose built conference centre just along the sea-front from the Metropole Hotel, site of this year's combined Easter and Eurocon. The centre seats 5000 and has all the necessary facilities, quite apart from being more homely than the aircraft hangar to the rear of the Metropole.

Currently Colin Pine and Malcolm Edwards are spearheading the British campaign, and if you should wish to pledge your support by taking out a pre-supporting membership, rush your crisp £1 note (or cheque) to Malcolm at:

28 Duckett Road, LONDON, N4.



News Info

New BSFA Information Officer Mike Moir is already getting down to his job of sorting out the many queries that he's being sent on things Science Fictional. Mike is looking at various ways to improve the service and make it relevant to larger numbers of the membership. Quite apart from a voracious appetite for collecting SF books and magazines, Mike is building up a reference section and has also begun gathering a team of experts to assist on those really awkward questions. Chris Hughes, Matrix 54 editor jokingly commented that someone, somewhere was just waiting to find out all the pseudonyms of Philip Jose Farmer. Guess what one of the first queries he received was? And he answered it too.

The next stage is to launch a series of author fact sheets, giving the essential information on a number of popular writers. The sheets will be updated from time to time and will be added to as demand increases. Says Mike: "I hope these will be really useful to BSFA members - and no doubt, specialists in certain fields will correct me on some bits of information. This is just what I want. In this way, we can ensure that they are as factually correct as possible."

If you wish to make use of the BSFA's information service, why not send you query to Mike (with a stamped s.a.e if possible please) at:

7, The Thickett, Five Elm, Whitenap, Romsey, Hants.

News Digest:

The Royal Charity Film Premiere this December is to be the long-awaited film version of Frank Herbert's Dune. Full details in this Matrix.

J.G. Ballard's latest novel, 'Empire of the Sun', depicting a small boys view of being interned by the Japanese in 1941 China, is one of the six novels short-listed for the Booker Prize.

BBC 2 showed a landmark programme concerning the horrors of Nuclear War on Sunday September 23rd. Too late for review in this Matrix, but the two hour story 'Threads' (by Barry Hines, who also wrote the screenplay to Kes) depicted the effects of a nuclear attack on the city of Sheffield. Seen by many commentators as an update on the BBC's War Game (which has never actually been seen on TV) it will no doubt cause a lot of comment. The show was followed on 24th September by the documentary "On the 8th Day", which itself was the subject of a "Newsnight" Nuclear Debate later the same evening. More details and reviews will follow in the next Matrix.

BSFA 1984 Annual General Meeting minutes go out with this mailing.

Next mailing, the 1984 BSFA Award nomination ballot will be distributed, so get thinking now about the works you'd like to see represented.

Interzone Story Poll

Latest news in from Interzone man David Fringle is the result of the recent story popularity poll covering issues five to eight inclusive. Most popular with the readers was Geoff Ryman's "The Unconquered Country" which was well ahead of anything else. Second was Richard Cowper with "The Plithonian Factor", whilst third was "Unmistakable the Finest" by Scott Bradford. David Fringle observes that "About 140 people made some attempt to answer the questionnaire which was slightly down on last year even though more people have renewed their subscriptions than at this time last year!". A late piece of news is that Arthur C. Clarke has made a generous donation to the magazine, following in the footsteps of Sir Clive Sinclair and an anonymous British SF writer.

A new British edition of Omni is scheduled to appear this coming November. When first launched in 1978, Omni appeared as an American and a European edition. The latter was edited by Dr. Bernard Dixon, who relinquished his post as editor of New Scientist to take the job on. Never wholly successful in this format (basically the US edition with a few British ads and token UK content from folk such as Patrick Moore) it was slowly abandoned in favour of the US version - despite some spirited enterprise on the side of UK person, Andi Oppenheimer. Now, the thing looks as if it's going to be done properly. New editor John Chambers will be controlling a 16 page insert which will be produced in the UK and then stitched into the US edition. Chambers hasn't, apparently, had much experience of Science Fiction, but as he says 'The emphasis will very much be on the science side; we are a science magazine'. However, the editorial content will permit UK SF news to get some look in, and already Interzone and the BSFA will be benefitting from its appearance.

COMPETITION

M54 - SPOT THE BLURBS

Well, setting a nice easy competition certainly boosted the immense hordes of eager entrants to unprecedented levels, such as seven. We can make that nine by counting Brian Aldiss (0 points), who wrote in about the competition but neglected to answer the questions, and Geoff Rippington (1) who scored a point without even entering - for reasons which will emerge. (Oh, and I forgot the zero score verbal entry from Chris Hughes...) Proper written entries came from Andy Sawyer (2), Richmond Hung (2½), Adrian Chandler (also 2½), Dave Wood (2½ again), Keith Marsland (5½), Mark Hewlett (7), and, the winnah, the man who evidently retted his brain with more and worse blurbs than anyone in the BSFA, JOSEPH NICHOLAS (9). The usual £5 book token will be awarded (as will the previous two: take heart, Andy & Sue) the very second I've prized money from the BSFA coffers. Now for the answers and a spot of commentary...

- 1) "Something is sucking the human mind dry! And has been for the past 200 years." My favourite answer was Adrian's: "Trick question - not a book at all - it's Crossroads." As with later questions, I awarded half a point for getting the author - Colin Wilson - but for a full point you had to get the actual book, *The Mind Parasites*.
- 2) "In front of 80,000 people Heisenberg, the new Messiah, the darling of the media, had gone into a trance of immeasurable depth." Aha, I say to those of you who offered Herbert's *The Eyes of Heisenberg*, you fell into my trap. Only Joseph answered, correctly, *The Walking Shadow* by Brian Stableford.
- 3) "From the most acclaimed writer of imaginative fiction in the world comes this masterwork of myth and terror, a pantheon of modern gods..." No, Adrian, not the "Critical Mass" column from *White Dwarf*. Take it away Dave: "From the man who writes his own blurbs and those of many another fabulous new talent as they come off the print line we have Harlan Ellison with *The Deathbird Stories*." Yes.
- 4) "Once before the Lord of Flames had been driven halfway across the universe..." This is the one which Geoff Rippington coincidentally revealed in his Vector editorial. Nearly everyone got it right, though no one mentioned Vector... It was *The Towers of Toron* by Samuel R Delany.
- 5) "The Chems were the prisoners of eternity, gripped by the despair that immortality brought..." Frank Herbert's *The Heaven Makers*.
- 6) "But in its way the earlier work is as brilliant, as amusing and as profound an indictment of the failings and follies of the British, as its successor is of the Russian, way of life" This was the tricky one. Most frequent guesses were Ais's *Russian Hide & Seek*

and Orwell's 1984: those who guessed the latter get half a point. The rather convoluted sentence is from a Secker & Warburg reprint of Orwell's "earlier work" *Coming up for Air*, the successor referred to being *Animal Farm*. Nobody mentioned either title.

7) "Extermination of an alien life-form leads to surprising consequences" Again, no correct answers: Robert Silverberg's collection *Sundance*.

8) "Originally a Hugo and Nebula winning novella, now the most magical novel in SF." Spiker and Jeanne Robinson's icky *Stardance*. No points at all for myriad guesses of *Dragonflight*.

9) "While attempting to repel an intergalactic invasion, mankind resorts to a weapon of such awesome destructive power that it...threatens the very existence of the universe." Good guess: Kapp's *The Chaos Weapon*. Rotten, toadying guess: *My The Space Eater*. Correct answer: Jack Chalker's *The Legacy of Nathan Brazil*.

10) "A world of accekeratubes, Moonbase Zero, intelligent computers and mass-marketed psychedelics..." John Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar*.

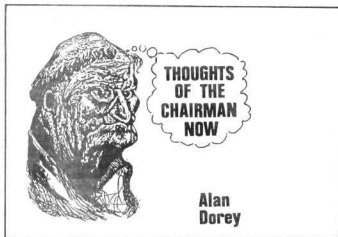
11) "Barch, an Earther, and Kemeitek Lelainr, the beautiful stranger from a far world, have together been captured and transported to Magarak by... great black creatures whose faces are stiff with black bristles." Adrian: "The Great Magarakian Razor Shortage - I'm afraid the author has slipped my mind." Dave: "This is that spiffing book whose title escapes me by that chappie who wrote something very similar and has a thundering good climax where Kemeitek Leianr is snatched from impending rape or worse when she passes Barch her Lady Gillette and he shaves off the alien leader's black bristles thus rendering him impotent..." Joseph (irritatingly correct as usual): Jack Vance's *Salvage of the Klau*."

12) "She had been built to serve man, and yearned for his return and the feel of his bare feet on her decks..." Richmond: "The Rowboat that time Forgot". Multiple wrong guess: "The Ship Who Sant". Revealed truth: T J Bass's *The Godwhale*.

As a footnote to this, Dave Wood provided a blurb for me to guess. "Unicorns rampant on the hilltops, and yellowskinned bandits on the river bottoms... a fugitive Nazi and girls so nubile that they insist on a roll in the hay without any formal introductions... plus the fabulous Ratnose..." Sounds a bit like *The Autobiography of David Wood*, Gent.

Thanks to all.

For M55: *The Meta-Quiz*, see back cover.



I must admit I'm not too thrilled at having to write this particular column this month. No, it's not because I've suddenly lost all interest in the BSFA, but simply that with me filling in (yet again) with a Matrix, it means that I've got to type up my words of wisdom more than once! You will be pleased to learn that we almost certainly have a new editor for Matrix - and as soon as some small background details have been resolved, we'll get him working on the next M. Watch this space.

In the meanwhile I have been shackled to my typewriter for the past three days getting the material together. The smell of Cowgam adhesive has worked its way into every nook and cranny of my 'office' and if I see another piece of lettraset that's gone crooked, I think I shall scream. Well, probably tear up a fanzine or something. Secretly, I do enjoy putting fanzines together - it gives me a wonderful sense of achievement. And, when I'm doing Matrix, it gives me a much greater insight to and feel for what is happening in the Big World of SF. Normally, the news is what you make it. In Matrix, who is not witness of the thrilling (and it has to be admitted, the very dull) open up in front of you making me (for one) really want to get up and out there, being an essential part of what's going on.

I tried this last month. The South Hants SF group, under the iron rule of Mike Chester and drunken gaze of Ric Cooper, invited me down to do a talk. I did do a talk for them three or four years ago, and I was wondering when they would steel themselves sufficiently and ask for a repeat visit. When the call came through, the words 'Free Drink!' all night went over, and I accepted. Normally, when I give talks or appear on Programme Items at convention, I try and talk about an SF theme, be it the works of H.G. Wells or J.G. Ballard or even what the BSFA really does. Recently, though, I've been running quizzes at conventions, which go down well - chiefly I suspect because I try and involve the audience, try to ad-lib and create an event, rather than just let people watch someone mumble the question and have someone equally indistinct croak the answer back. I didn't want to do a quiz though. Although I have a vast bank of some 2,500 questions (with constant additions, deletions and updates), it would need a couple of teams and the right sort of atmosphere. So, I thought about SF things in which I'm involved and decided to do a talk on running conventions.

I used a flip chart with key phrases written on it, but the rest was just me and the audience having a number of extended conversations. And, it worked very well. A number of new people made it down to the pub in Southsea and I feel certain that they got something out of it. What I liked the best though, was the opportunity to show that fandom isn't an exclusive club, and that once you've made the decision to do something, there are people around who will welcome you and show you what fandom can offer. And, even if I do say so myself, I know I can stand up in front of a bunch of

people and have the confidence to do a talk. I also enjoy going to local group meetings - and even here in the Deadzone of Manchester, I can get to Bolton, Warrington, Preston - even Leeds, all within 45 minutes drive of BSFA HQ.

This is also why the BSFA London meetings are so important, and why we've tried to set up regional meetings. It's a gathering of people of all sorts, all with that common interest, SF. Even if you don't talk about it, you know it's there, something to fall back on when the going gets awkward. As I've said in reply to some of the letters in this issue of Matrix, it is the getting together of fans, the mutual support and enthusiasms engendered by such meetings that will help us to further SF in this country. In our small way, we like to think that the BSFA is doing its bit.

DIFFERENT MATRIX

I'm sure I speak for every member when I say that the last issue of Matrix was the best in a long, long time. Chris Hughes did a superlative job and deserves all our congratulations. This issue, admittedly, won't match his production standard; I haven't the time (what with my usual BSFA activities, Yorcon III, Interzone, running Frank's APA, family etc), but I do hope that it I have managed to borrow some of the flavour that Chris so successfully established. I feel obliged to you, the membership, to do a good job. You pay your £7 each year, you deserve (and should expect) the promised magazines. It is my problem as to who should edit magazines when someone steps down, and that's what I'm not paid for. However, that flippant comment does bring up an interesting letter from Ken Lake. What he talks about is nothing new as far as the BSFA is concerned - back in April 1979 when I became Chairman, I hoped that one day the BSFA could be put on such a footing that we could pay someone to do the day to day running and administration properly:

"Chris Hughes' proposal that all the BSFA publications be melded into one glossy magazine with paid advertising (and bookstore sales) is the best thing that has come out of recent discussions. But I feel it needs at least two properly paid people - Editor (paid on time scale) and Advertisement Manager (paid commission on results) - and also that there must be one overall control point for all the separately edited and compiled sections."

Graham James, who edited Matrix to great effect for a number of issues, often discussed with me the idea of a single magazine, and what Ken suggests above links the two ideas of paid staff to that single magazine. Now, I'm not saying for one second that this is official BSFA policy, but I have been doing a lot of serious thinking and costings of the idea. Most of the figures I use here are averages; they are what I estimate things may cost, and obviously, do not take into account other BSFA expenses (like postage, stationery, committee admin costs and so on). However, I think it gives you an idea of the sort of thing we could do if we were to retain the present £7 per annum subscription rate and the bi-monthly mailing schedule:

For those of you who have seen Interzone, that is the sort of magazine I shall be discussing with regards to the Megamag. Size A4, fully typeset and designed, artwork, photographs, colour cover. Taking last month's Matrix as an example, the page count would be about 60. I am also assuming that the cost of printing includes collating, folding, stapling and trimming - thus saving us energies at the mailing sessions.

BSFA INCOME (memberships - 1000 @ £)	= £7000
POSTING Mailing (1000 @ 56p x 6)	= £2160
MAGAZINE (Using IZ printer - 7000)	= £4500

Cash left: = £340

Now, the income would obviously be increased by advertising income. If we charge £50 per page, I

would confidently expect us to be able to sell 6 pages each issue. This would increase our money left from £340 to £2140. In theory, this should amply cover our other admin expenses. But, if we are talking about paying someone to take ads for us (on a commission basis), we have got to start talking about say 25% of the ad rate going to that person. So for every £50 page we receive, £12.50 would go to the Advertising Manager. Obviously, the more successful he is, the more ads we take, and possibly, an increased page count would be needed.

There are a number of options open, which will need thinking through very carefully. I used the Interspace printer to do the Season '84 programme book. For 2000 copies with four colour cover, 72 A4 pages, printing, stapling, trimming and folding, we paid almost £1100. But, I had to do all the typesetting and design and layout. The point is though, is shows what can be done if we put our minds to it. If we had access to a good word processor (and even more importantly, a good printer for that WP), then the magazine could be feasible. The conceptual difficulty of melding together the Matrix, Vector and PI bits isn't insurmountable. Separate editors for each, say with me as Chairman checking that there's no overlap. Pay a designer to put it together (say £150 per issue) and pay the overall editor for time consumed on typesetting the text. It can be done - but we need to consider our moves very carefully. At the moment, we are entirely dependant on income for the members we have. Going over to the big mag idea, would make us even more dependant on not only members' income, but advertising income. Despite the fact that people will be paid on results, we will be more susceptible to the vagaries of the SF market.

Having said that, though, it would be a grand idea to switch over to a thoroughly professional looking BSFA magazine. Thanks Chris for getting the ball rolling.

LAST WORDS

Next mailing (Christmas, no less!) will see the distribution of the 1984 BSFA AWARDS nomination ballot. Full details will be given on the ballot, but in the meanwhile, why don't you start thinking of your favourite novels, short stories, artists and films of the year (nearly) gone by? There has been a remarkable variety of material and I would urge you all to make sure that you cast your vote and make the BSFA AWARDS even more representative.

That's all - see you next time!

Alan Dorey

bsfa Posts

VECTOR EDITOR - As you all know, Geoff is having to relinquish the editorship of Vector at the end of this year due to an impending addition to the family. As a method of birth control editing Vector is not to be recommended, but otherwise it's all good clean fun. Geoff has been at the helm for a long while now and his efforts will be hard to follow. However, I am certain that out there in reader-land, there is someone who has the right qualities.

No doubt Geoff will be talking about it in Vector, so I've no desire to duplicate what he says, but the post is the premiere job within the BSFA's publishing activities, so obviously, some publishing/editing experience will be desirable. You must be able to meet deadlines, have access to a good electric (or preferably an electronic) typewriter, have a sense of design, have unboundless energy and patience, and you must be able to liaise and communicate effectively

with all levels of people - be they fans, writers, publishers, artists, reviewers etc. If you're still interested, do please write to me for an Application Form. Your first issue will be that for February 1985, so LET ME KNOW SOONEST!

Write to me at the address below, marking your envelope clearly 'BSFA Application'!

ALAN DOREY, Chairman, BSFA, 22 Summerfield Drive, MIDDLETON, Lancs, M24 2NW.

PAPERBACK INFERNO EDITOR: As stated elsewhere, Joseph Nicholas will be handing over the editorship of Paperback Inferno in June 1985. He has run the magazine to great effect over the past six years and again, he will be a difficult act to follow. At this stage, what I would like to do is invite applications from those who are interested, bearing in mind that the format may be changing after June 1985. For the moment, please write to me, stating what you think Paperback Inferno should be like, and I'll also send out an application form to you. Please mark your envelopes 'Paperback Inferno Application' and send it to me at the address above.

ADVERTISING & PUBLICITY OFFICER: The BSFA still desperately needs an efficient and hardworking fan to fill this potentially important post. It's one of the most unrewarding jobs, but can be made varied and exciting if you are the right person. The holder of this post will play a key part in the development of the BSFA over the next two years. Contact Geoff Rippington at: 128 Whiteley Wood Road, READING, Berks, RG2 8JG.

Noticeboard

***THE MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD is a free advertising service for all BSFA members who wish to exchange items or information, make contacts, publicize fanish ventures, etc.

LIBERATE ESSENCE and mind. Join the Monetary Liberation Front. For details send an S.A.E to: The Monetary Liberation Front, c/o 74 Boundaries Road, LONDON, SW12.

GLORIA MUNDI: The fanzine for discussing Christianity in Science Fiction and Fantasy. Out as soon as I can get together enough material. Please send illos, articles etc; to: Eunice Pearson, 32 Digby House, Colletts Grove, Kingshurst, BIRMINGHAM, B37 6JE. Well, is a Christian fanzine ideologically sound or what?

YOUNG FAN looking for SF pen pal, preferably with an interest in the works of Harlan Ellison. Apply to: Dominic Franklin, 178 Springfield Road, BRIGHTON, East Sussex.

FOR SALE: "Poems and Songs of Middle Earth" LP (Cassford Records 1967), poetry read by J.R.R. Tolkien, songs arranged by Donald Swann. Also "The Road Goes Ever On" (Allen & Unwin Books 1969), Tolkien's poems set to music by Donald Swann. Both items in excellent condition. Offers, with S.A.E please to: K.Braxton, 37 Mellor Road, LEYLAND, Lancs.

ORBITER: I'm all out of ideas for Orbiter ads - so you'll just have to settle for the fax sheet. S.A.E. to: Dorothy Davies, 3 Cadels Row, Faringdon, Oxon, SN7 7AX.

CONVENTION NEWS UPDATE

BECOM apparently is now all sold out, despite the convention being many months away.

NOVACON 14 9-11 November, Grand Hotel, Birmingham. Guest of Honour: Robert Holdstock. Room Rate £15, Attending Membership £6. The Creche, despite notes to the contrary in their Second Progress Report, will be provided. Cash to: 11, Fox Green Crescent, Acocks Green, BIRMINGHAM, B27 7SD.

YORCON III 5-8 April 1984, Dragonara and Queens Hotels, Leeds. Guest of Honour: Gregory Benford. Fan Guest of Honour: Linda Pickersgill. Room Rate: Twin/Doubles: £15.50 per person per night. Singles £18.00 per person per night. All prices inclusive of VAT and Full English Breakfast. Attending Membership to 31st December 1984 - £8.00. From 1st January 1985 - £10.00. Attending membership for the unemployed is just £6.00. As I type these words, another thrilling Yorcon III committee meeting is taking place - lots of good things are planned. Cash to: Mike Ford, 45 Harol Mount, Leeds, LS6 1FW. Or, in the USA, to: Mary Burns, 23 Kensington Court, Hempstead, NY 11550, United States. (Attending: £16 to 31-12-84 - £20 from 1-1-85).

MEXICON II February 1986 "Somewhere in the South of England". The site has yet to be selected, although I believe Bristol was once being considered. At this stage plans are uncertain other than the fact that this follow-up to the very successful Mexicon I, will take place in 1986. A Progress report will appear before Novacon 14 giving further details. In the meanwhile, if you wish to sign up, membership to 31-12-84 is £6.00 and can be sent to: Pam Wells, 24A Beech Road, LONDON, N11 (Cheques made payable to Mexicon).

ALBACON III 1986, Glasgow - Brought to you by the people that gave you Albacoon '84, which despite Harlan Ellison's non-appearance, managed to do pretty well with Norman Spinrad. I must admit, I don't know too much about their future plans, but we wish them well - unlike...ALBACON '86...which is run by the fake Bob Shaw. A flyer has been produced denouncing the other Albacoon crowd and accusing them of all manner of lies and deceptions. And this from a man who didn't tell people until quite late on that his own rival con to Albacoon '84 was being cancelled. A judicious phone-call to the hotel confirmed rumours before any announcement had been made. Suggest you steer clear of this one.

FAN GROUPS THE LATEST LISTING

Fan Groups - Please write in and tell us about yourselves! We have had two applicants for the post of Clubs Liaison Officer, and it would be great if I could pass on to him sufficient information to really get things moving again. The Lucky Winner will be announced in the next mailing when he will begin his new tasks. In the meanwhile, write into ME with all the sordid details - I'll publish all the muck...and more! The rest will go to The News of The World.

BOLTON The Bolton & District SF Group meets every Tuesday at 8pm in The Old Three Crowns, Peasegate, Bolton. A real bunch of loonies, also including your esteemed BSFA Treasurer, Tom Taylor. I occasionally go along when we need to talk about High Finance.

CROYDON Speculative & Imaginative Literature Society can be contacted at: 3 Canterbury Court, St. Augustine's Avenue, South Croydon. Conversation topics: SF and Fantasy.

CHESTER Chester & District SF Group meets fairly regularly in various districts. Contact: Jeremy Crampton, 10 Vicarage Road, Hoole, Chester. Conversation Topics: Drinking, deciding where to meet next, fannies.

GLASGOW Friends of Kilgore Trout meets every Thursday 8pm to 11pm in the side lounge of Wintersgill's Bar, 266 Great Western Road. Numbers vary between 20 and 50.

LANCASTER Lancaster SF Group meets first Wednesday of the month at 7.30 at 45, Blades Street, Lancaster and proceeds onto a pub at 8pm.

LEEDS The Leeds Group, in its various incarnations (the latest of which started in 1973) is one of the oldest established groups in the country. Meets every Friday in the back room of the West Riding, Wellington Street, Leeds. 8pm until 11pm. Come and see the Leeds mafia in real life; find out what really goes on behind the scenes of Yorcon III. A great pint of Tetley's mild too.

MANCHESTER Reputedly, the Mad group of Mancon days still meets - now in the Crown & Anchor, just off Newton Street in the City Centre. Alternate Wednesdays.

NORWICH Norwich SF group still probably meets every Tuesday in the Whalebone, Magdalen Road, Norwich at 8.30pm.

PRESTON Meets every Wednesday from 8pm in, I think, The Black Bull, Preston. However, it may be a good idea to check first with Tom Taylor (22 Kingston Avenue, Tongue Moor, Bolton, Lancs) who usually goes along in his flashy TR7.

READING Meets every third Thursday of the month in the lounge of the Railway Tavern, Greyfriars Road, and, less formally, every Sunday in the pheasant, Southampton Street from about 9pm onwards.

UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS: There is somewhere in St. Andrews. And SF Group. Ignoring the slight air of chaotic apathy surrounding the arrangements, the society meets in the Student's Union each Tuesday during term time. Erudite discussions of the current state of wine gums or who is buying the committee a drink tends to loom large on the agenda, despite occasional successes like getting Bob Shaw to address a meeting. Come along to: University of St. Andrews Science Fiction & Fantasy Society, Student's Union, St. Mary's Place, St. Andrews, Fife, KY16 9UZ. (Info: Malcolm Hodgkin)

WARRINGTON Meets first, third (and occasionally fifth) Thursday from 8pm onwards in the Bulls Head, Church Street, Warrington. Highly recommended, good fun sessions. Even the Greenall Whitley beer tastes palatable. Real Bob Shaw normally there too.

I am also reliably informed (on a recent visit to Interzone HQ in Brighton) that the Brighton SF group is still running, but I can't remember the day or venue. No doubt Andy Robertson, Dave Pringle or Pete Garraat will remedy the situation.

Media News

DUNE FILM PREMIERE: Main news this issue is the long awaited Dune movie which will get its first UK screening at a special charity event in December. The Dune saga has almost been as long as Harlan Ellison's 'Last Dangerous Visions'. One down, one to go. Despite many abortive attempts in the past, including at one stage getting Chris Foss to design a story-board (no doubt huge sand-dunes containing millions of tiny port-holes featured strongly), it has now been tied down and the big mega-hype has started. A regular film magazine 'The Dune Reader' has been prepared, written and edited by Paul Sammon. This will appear at strategic intervals in order that maximum publicity is created. The film is produced by Universal Pictures, directed by David Lynch, has special effects (and story) by Dino De Laurentiis (also responsible for the recent King Kong remake) and stars amongst others, Sting (of rock band The Police), Sian Phillips, Kyle MacLachlan, Jose Ferrer, Max Von Sydow (most recently appearing as Ming the Merciless in Flash Gordon, Three Days of the Condor and in Conan) and Sean Young.

The first efforts at getting Dune off the ground as a movie were made in 1968, just five years after the book's original publication. These attempts came to nothing, partly because the prime mover behind the project (Arthur Jacobs, producer of Planet of the Apes) died before it really began. Further efforts were made in 1973 and it almost came off in 1975 when money was actually made available to Chilean director Alexandro Jodorowsky. Problems of scale mounted and it wasn't until the success of the 'Star Wars' type movies that the project started gathering momentum again.

Certainly the production team have gathered together a wealth of talent in order that the film is a success, leading from Director of Photography, Freddie Francis (French Lieutenant's Woman, Room at the Top, The Elephant Man) to Sounds Designer Alan Splet, whose previous work has included The Elephant Man and Brasherhead.

The initial screening of Dune in this country is on Thursday 13th December at the Empire Cinema, Leicester Square. The event is being billed as a Royal Premiere and Prince Andrew will be in attendance. Proceeds are destined for charity, in this instance MIND, the National Association for Mental Health. Val Mackie, MIND's Special Projects Organiser says that "the net proceeds of the evening will be used to improve and develop services for the mentally ill and mentally handicapped people in this country".

Tickets will be in the range £15 to £80 and if anyone is interested, they should in the first instance write for an application to:

Val Mackie, MIND, 22 Harley Street, LONDON, W1N 2ED

A full report should appear in our February issue.

-AD

1984 MOVIE DUE: Despite my notes in the February Matrix that the Trustees of the George Orwell estate weren't going to allow a remake to the 1950's film version of the classic novel, the film is now complete! At this stage details aren't too clear, although it does star John Hurt as Winston Smith. Hurt first really came

to fame in the TV production of "The Naked Civil Servant" (by Quentin Crisp) and later went onto Alien and The Elephant Man. More details next issue.

METROPOLIS REMADE: Fritz Lang's classic 1926 movie is to see a new version. The Soundtrack Music has been written by Freddie Mercury of Queen. His current single, 'Love Kills' is taken from the soundtrack and of course, Queen's recent hit single "Radio Ga Ga" featured a video which heavily borrowed extracts from the film itself. Queen aren't new to the SF game either - they performed the soundtrack to Flash Gordon in 1980.

-AD

DR.WHO IN AMERICA: An hour long documentary bearing this title is to be broadcast throughout the USA under an arrangement by the Eastern Educational Television Network. Hmm...they take it so seriously. Negotiations are in hand for the BBC to screen the special early in the new year. Apparently the documentary takes a close look at science fiction and the various reasons why people fall in love with the genre. Quoting from the exciting Press release "Tom Baker, one of the Doctor's from the BBC's 21 year old program Dr.Who, makes a special rare appearance on the show. This is a special treat for Dr.Who fans." Oh really? I wish I had time and space to print the whole release; it is truly appalling. Witness these quotes from BBC producer John Nathan Turner "I was indeed delighted with the Dr.Who in America...it was thoroughly enjoyable" (can I have my \$10 please?) and from BBC Enterprises man Chris Crouch, "It was a great pleasure to be the first person in England to see your programme and I most assuredly did enjoy it". Yuk.

RE-RUNS ON TV: Catch that classic series, The Invaders on BBC2, Friday nights at 6pm, stiff little fingers and all. Being reshow currently (but finished by the time you read this) is the TV version of Bradbury's The Martian Chronicles starring Rock Hudson, 6pm Thursday nights, BBC2. Star Trek continues, but switched to the 5pm kiddieslot on Tuesdays, BBC1. The revamped Radio Times has received shoals of letters from elderly Trekkies complaining that they can't get home from work in time to see it....

NEWSTUFF ON TV: The Tripods, Saturdays at 5.15pm on BBC1 for thirteen weeks (started September 15th). Based on the John Christopher novel (heavily borrowed, of course from H.G.Wells), said author showed himself still to be alive in Radio Times interview. The only redeeming feature of this item was a note on how tripods could actually walk without falling over or continually turning round in circles. These are the questions that we serious SF people should be addressing ourselves.

JOHN BRUNNER WRITES TO TV TIMES: Following hard on the footsteps of Bob Shaw (who writes letters regularly to the Radio Times letters page) John Brunner has followed suit by writing to TV Times about the awful V. John said it was awful. No review of this has actually been submitted to Matrix thus far. Did anyone watch it all the way through? Did you know that three hours from the US version was cut before it was screened by ITV? Did you know that a sequel is planned? Wasn't it strange that all those thousands of aliens on board the many motherships all persisted in wearing their human disguises all of the time. Do you really care?

-AD



MEDIA REVIEW



TV

DEATH WARNED UP -

A review of "SECONDS", 1966 film, directed by John Frankenheimer, screenplay by Lewis John Carlino, from the book by David Ely.

Screened ITV 24-8-84

Reviewed by Simon Ings

'Seconds' is an unstable work. It oscillates between pretension and cliché, its narrative power fogged by an inconsistent (and sometimes downright senseless) script. These failings, however, cannot disguise what is arguably a genre classic.

For all its faults, Frankenheimer's film is intellectually and emotionally disturbing. Financier Arthur Hamilton, successful in business but partner in a loveless marriage, is contacted by a sinister company which offers him the chance of bodily rejuvenation and a 'new life'. Hamilton (John Randolph) accepts the offer, is duly transformed into smart, vigorous Tony Wilson (Rock Hudson) and is moved to a rich and glamorous neighbourhood on the West Coast, there to play out his arranged role of successful artist.

At first he finds his new existence novel and exciting, with its concomitant free sex, wild parties and general dissolution. But soon his usual sense of life's emptiness catches up with him. Such shallowness is a state of his mind, he realises, not of circumstances. Pining for the stability and drowsy routine of his old life he flees the colony, but is soon recaptured by the company and killed.

The film's standard of performance was high. Randolph plays Hamilton with assurance and portrays well the old man's despair and confusion. His conversation with the old man of the company (played by Will Geer) is particularly strange. Hudson, though he struggles with a script that has fallen in quality from the pre-transfiguration scenes, succeeds in his difficult role - that of an old man in a young man's body - and the continuity of character between the two is accomplished and credible.

Salome Jens' portrayal of young Wilson's lover is a great (though understandable) disappointment. Screenwriter Carlino, whose Kafkaesque characters and

situations make up the sinister and powerful 'company' scenes, has drifted into downright pretentiousness over Hudson and Jens' affair - Jens has been given an implausible if not ridiculous role - she seems more to suffer, than to act.

Her relationship with Tony Wilson is poorly expressed and seems forced - not least thanks to the grape-cry scene. This sequence was, I suppose to be an apocalyptic symbol of Wilson's abandonment to youthful excess and the collapse of his former moral and emotional nature. In fact it does nothing more than sink in the mire of its own out-dated prurience. This tends to devalue the remainder of the film, which now rapidly picks up.

The film's theme is best summed up by Mrs Hamilton, the 'widow' of Hamilton/Wilson when she paraphrases Eliot's lines -

"It takes so many years
To learn that one is dead"

From the very beginning of the film, the middle-aged Hamilton is empty, his life impoverished of meaning - he is 'dead'. The company which transmutes him is sinister only in that it makes explicit the hypocritical meaningless of the 'Normal World', as it might already appear to Hamilton.

We have little free-will in what we do with our lives - so Hamilton agrees to transfiguration, not simply because he wants to, but also so as to avoid an intricately contrived blackmail prepared for him.

We play our roles in our lives, hide our insignificance with titles and positions - so Hamilton, now Wilson, 'paints' by virtue of forged certificates and company-issued paintings.

In the real world, we seek to emulate others, only to become disillusioned with those from whom we seek approval. So, Wilson becomes accepted by the West Coast colony only to discover that the people around him are themselves 'reborn', like him.

CLASSIC WELLS -

A review of 'The Invisible Man', 1984 BBC TV adaptation of the novel by H.G.Wells. Six half hour parts, commencing 4th September 1984.

Reviewed by Matthew Shackleton

Another H.G.Wells novel to be given the 'classic' treatment by the BBC. It is as faithful a TV version as could be reasonably expected, although one does keep going back to the 1933 movie version starring the great Claude Rains. The locational detail is well up to par, showing us turn-of-the-century village life at which the BBC has had so much experience. As with the production of 'The History of Mr.Polly' in 1981, each episode moves slowly on, although here we have the bonus of clever effects filming and string pulling to show the presence of the Invisible Man.

The protagonists' invisibility comes from changing his optical density and he quickly discovers that life becomes very difficult, nigh impossible, when you cannot become invisible at will. Pip Donaghy plays him as a tetchy, exasperated man trying to find the way back to proper visibility.

On the whole a good, solid character production leaning heavily on the skills of actors like Frank Middlemass (who played Headmaster Herries to such good effect in R.L.Delderfield's 'To Serve Them All My Days') to lift the show from a routine novel adaptation to an interesting television event.

We seek comfort in separate religions, each claiming superiority over the other - so Wilson is given the last rites by a priest qualified in three faiths - protestant, Catholic and Jewish. There are further parallels running through the film, adding to its downbeat allegorical energy.

In the sadly impoverished climate of media SP, this masterly failure is worth ten of the polished yet saccharine entertainments with which we are more frequently provided. It is thought-provoking, visually exciting, and very, very frightening.

MOVIES

Supergirl -

Directed by Jeannot Schwartz

Reviewed by Martyn Taylor

Even in its original cartoon form 'Supergirl' (or was it 'Supergirl'?) was a rather fey and pastel shadow of the bee-knee original, and the movie follows suit. In place of 10 feet nothing Christopher Reeve looking like the entire offensive line up of the LA Rams we have slight, slim Helen Slater (and it isn't her shoulders which get padded out) looking vaguely amused and twinklingly tweaking the chin of a slobbering would-be rapist. That said, 'Supergirl' has merits lacking in the 'Superman' movies - especially II and III. For a start it has reasonably convincing plot within the slim boundaries of the genre, a modest restraint with the special effects and one of the most deliciously over the top acting performances seen in a long time.

The plot is thus: our heroine departs Argo in pursuit of a vital power source - the lucky girl, as Argo is a ghastly, milk and water hole-in-the-head dump designed, seemingly, by Peter O'Toole to permit him a brief reprise of his Henry I role while staring contemptuously down that patrician nose at a yapping puce-faced Simon Ward and Mia Farrow looking like she just stepped off the lot of 'A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy' and wishes she was back! - which has fallen into the hands, or rather the soup of Selina the Sorceress who is bent on nothing less than the obligatory world domination. This fact is discovered when our heroine rescues the bewitched Ethan - whose lines were all written by Mr. Shakespeare - who promptly falls in love, Bottom like, with her alter ego, who is accurately described by the frustrated Selina as 'The Wimp'. After a brief sojourn at a Prep School, where the girl from Argo metamorphoses into what looks to be a good example of that most feared of species, femina preppie pubescens, and where Selina's former boyfriend (played by Peter Cook with a straight face twitching just enough to let you know you aren't supposed to laugh too much) is a Maths teacher (an part-time agent for Acorn Computers by the looks of it) the action moves to Selina's Spanish castle atop a mountain she has dumped at the end of the main drag in Midvale, Illinois and from thence to the Phantom Zone and back by means of a predictably fatal piece of heroism from Mr. O'Toole. Of course love and virtue triumphs, the baddies get theirs with hoist petards all round, and everyone lives happily ever after. Did anyone expect otherwise? You did? Stupid child.

Unusually for such movies the action and the characters appear closely intertwined in that Selina and Co. behave in what appears to be an organic fashion given the predicates of character and situation, which makes a pleasant change from the bored and boring antics of Lester's puppets in the male movies. Helen Slater makes a good Supergirl - a young girl of by no means outstanding looks or

physique who enjoys using those powers but can't quite keep that jutting jaw a la her cousin from trembling now and then. Christopher Reeve as Clark Kent is judicious in the 'Superman' movies, whereas Helen Slater as Linda Lee is perfectly credible - and there is one hilarious piece of business with a brassiere which simply must have come out of some on-set ad libbing. As for the humans...well, Peter O'Toole has put aside his recent tics and twitches and makes decent work of some admittedly modest material, while Peter Cook camps it up but modestly, which is just as well because even E.L. Whisty would have to give his best before a performance of the most towering ham from Faye Dunaway as Selina. Under the rather worried gaze of sidekick Brenda Vaccaro Mm. Dunaway is never far from the ragged edge as a lustful woman given powers she is determined to exploit even if she doesn't quite understand. She comes on like a cross between Milady de Winter, Cruella de Ville and Snow White's stepmother, eyes staring, nostrils steaming, titian hair a-blowing in the wind and the best legs in the world on show whenever and wherever possible. Put simply, she is marvellous - incredible, but marvellous. Of course there is no way a newcomer like Helen Slater could compete with that - the devil does have the best tunes, after all - so she doesn't try, just looks lithe and blonde and good - but not so good that she might not be a 'good sport' if you talked to her right. I've already remarked on what would happen if you talked to her wrong.

I like this movie. I mean, I like it as an appealing piece of nonsense which is very much closer in feel and spirit to the comic originals than the 'Superman' movies, and doesn't attempt those forties sentiments which don't work today. It makes fun of itself, lightly and gently without the mockery of its antecedents which is at the core of the later 'Superman' movies. The effects are sparingly used, and for my money the sequences with Supergirl 'trying her wings' for the first time are far superior to anything in the originals both in technique and content. Hell, she giggles, she plays, she's thrilled to bits by it, and that I like. The movie achieves the seemingly obligatory habit of genuflecting in the direction of previous movies - a habit which can be fun, but gets very tedious very quickly especially when the movie brats and their imitators require knowledge of those other movies to understand the present one. I caught only one major reference of that ilk in 'Supergirl' - and that was to St. Trinitine! This is simple, innocent, escapist entertainment executed with some style, a nice, old fashioned movie. Maybe it isn't the greatest film ever made - it is a tough flabby in places - but 'Supergirl' is fun.

STAR TREK III - THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK

Directed by Leonard Nimoy

Reviewed by Ros Calverley

- 1) Do Vulcan priestesses shave their armpits?
- 2) What is the best way to disarm a Klingon warrior?

The answers to both these fascinating questions (and more) can be found in the new Star Trek film, The Search for Spock - now playing at a cinema near you!

Just from the above it should be obvious that there are certain difficulties in assessing this film. It is aimed entirely at those who will like questions such as these. The action depends closely on that of The Wrath of Khan. There is very little attempt to recap on the previous story for those who were in Outer Mongolia at the time, so this film is incomprehensible unless you have seen the other one. The characters are given a good deal of importance, at the expense of some action, so the film is hardly likely to appeal

to those who do not like Star Trek - the series. And, also there is one ten minute scene (of which more anon) which can only be understood by those with good memories of two Star Trek episodes which have not yet been repeated: this time: to anyone else, even somebody who has seen both films, it must appear to be in some esoteric form of code.

With this caveat - that here is a film for Star Trek fans, made by those who know the series inside out and do not feel any need to explain themselves to the uninitiated, and that it is necessary to take it on its own terms - the film is a good one in some ways. Undemanding intellectually but good fun; visually attractive; well directed considering that Mr. Nimoy's previous experience of direction consists mostly of T.J.Hooker; ingeniously and sometimes bafflingly plotted. The special effects are not in the 'Star Wars' class and were not intended to be, but they are consistently more than adequate. One sequence - when the Klingon vessel materialises alongside the hapless merchantman - is quite spectacular. Director Nimoy fulfills his self-imposed brief, to concentrate on the personal and emotional interactions of the 'Trek' family, only adequately - but he has done a good job in the circumstances. This is Admiral Kirk's film from start to finish; William Shatner's acting is still, after all these years, so imprisoned by stage conventions as to be irretrievably hammy on small or large screen.

The acting side does produce one truly outstanding performance. This is from the new discovery, Robin Curtis, as Lieutenant Saavik - Spock's half-Vulcan, half-Humman protégée. The part forbids Curtis to display much overt emotion, but she is capable of conveying more than a slight twitch of the facial muscles than can most film actors with a full scale grimace or a bout of hysterics. Hopefully she will be seen again, and in other contexts, a name to watch.

Unfortunately two of the major criticisms of the film also revolve around Curtis's role.

First, there is almost nothing in the way of character establishment save among the central and long familiar group. One feels like saying, 'yes, I know that, but what about... (insert name)'. Saavik is particularly ill-served here. In the *Wrath of Khan* she was introduced as an interesting and somewhat ambiguous character, far from completely given to Vulcan convention and aware that she will never be quite like Spock. In this film she does not develop at all. We learn nothing about her. She acts throughout as a cool, detached Spock clone (save for the obvious differences). This is not only inconsistent, it is boring. We are only aware of her as anything other than a walking computer because of Curtis's fine acting, and there are limits to what even she can do with what she is given.

As Saavik is one of the young newcomers and ought to represent the future of Trek if it is to have one (don't all pass out at once!), this seems to be a serious error. Likewise the killing of Kirk's illegitimate son David Marcus: this cuts off the most promising line of development at a stroke.

There is a reason for the death. With it we hit the second criticism - and also the point where this review gets ideologically biased: In my opinion 'The Search for Spock' is the most deeply sexist of all the 'Trek' films.

The sexism is not immediately obvious. Star Trek has come a long way from Janice Rand's pink boudoir. Starfleet is a racially and sexually integrated force these days. Humans and aliens of both sexes decorate the background in equal numbers. Admittedly Uhura still only plays small parts, but this is nothing new and in this she has some absolutely priceless lines to say; she makes an impression out of all

proportion to the length of time she is on screen (though there are some unanswered questions - I want to know how the hell she managed to get away from the transporter base without being arrested, let alone made it all the way to Vulcan). But Saavik emerged in *The Wrath of Khan* as a dynamic and vital character, didn't she?

Yes, that's right. And in this film as well she has the longest and most important female part. But some things can outweigh length and centrality. Saavik is not one of Kirk's 'pirates'. She is on the Genesis planet with David Marcus, exploring; together they find the infant who becomes the new Spock. And as a result Saavik performs the only pivotal action by a major female character in the whole film. She does not demonstrate her competence in her roles of officer and scientist, nor is she any help at all against the appalling Klingons - in fact David Marcus dies in her defence. No. Her one important action, the only reason from the scripter's point of view for her, rather than anyone else, to be with David in the first place, is this: she saves the life of the rapidly ageing Spock II when he goes into his Vulcan mating season. Amok Time? Mate or die? Remember? Got the idea?

This is the sequence that to a non-fan would seem to be in code (this is after all, a PG film). Unless you've heard of pon farr before, and know the meaning of the finger-touching gesture, you just won't have the faintest what's going on.

This subplot is obviously intended for further use. There were already suggestions of a romance between David and Saavik in *The Wrath of Khan* - and so this is one of the reasons David has to die. At the end of the film we are left uncertain whether Spock remembers events on the Genesis planet - but we do see Saavik look him in the eye - and then cast her gaze modestly toward the floor.

I repeat: this is the only significant action by a female character in the whole film. And there seems to be no purpose to it save to provide Spock with a prospective mate. Does anyone else find this as distasteful as I do?

A third criticism - even more basic - is that the story has an illogical premise: Vulcans we learn, are out and out dualists: body and mind or spirit (used synonymously, here) are completely separable. Spock is supposed to have passed on his spirit before his death; at the end of the film it is renited with his body which had previously been mindless. Yet in *The Wrath of Khan* - and in the opening sequence of this film - we see Spock perform several tasks requiring intelligence (and even speak) after he is supposed to have passed on his mind/spirit. This is a shame. It undermines the entire plot and prevented me, a fan, from suspending my disbelief for a moment.

All this said, there are many enjoyable things about this film; not least some well written and highly amusing dialogue. The audience laughed heartily on many occasions. This, and the overall visual attractiveness of the film make it well worth seeing - but, as indicated, mainly to fans.

Fans are also those who will be most upset by the cuts made in the cinema print. The original print was almost ten minutes longer. A few cuts were made, of gruesome material, to obtain a British PG certificate; as happened with *Khan*. Others seem to have no reason save to shorten an admittedly long film...but what Trek fan is going to find anything like this too long? We lose one entire conversation between Kirk and McCoy and part of another; we lose most of the procession to the temple and the cameo of the Vulcan child (still annoyingly on the cast list). But far worse, we lose Saavik's explanation of the purpose of the Vulcan Ritual. This is really stupid. It very nearly succeeds in making the end of the film incomprehensible. I would love to hear it.

Sequel...? That is a silly question. This film ends with our heroes marooned on Vulcan (they have a ship, but since it is a Klingon scout vessel it would be a little conspicuous) and wanted by the police of half the galaxy, and with the Enterprise blown to smithereens. There will definitely be a sequel. Spring 1986 is the current estimate.

And the answers to those vital questions?

- 1) Yes. After all, every good guy and gal in Star Trek is really on the side of Peace, Justice and the American Way (of personal hygiene)
- 2) For this one, we have the example of Admiral Kirk who is by now the Federation expert on dealing with Klingons twice your weight and half your age. In this film he shows us How To Do It. He kneels the Klingon in the nuts.

BOOKS & WRITERS NEWS

J.G. BALLARD'S NEW NOVEL has now been published and already it has gone to a second printing, such is the demand. *EMPIRE OF THE SUN* has received rave reviews practically everywhere, including the Daily Express, Daily Mail, Guardian, Observer and Sunday Times. Ballard was interviewed on Radio 2 and in a run-down of the Booker Prize shortlist on BBC2's 'Newnight' on 18th September, not only was 'Empire' included, but it was the only novel of the six to have the bonus of a film accompaniment. This was an interview with Ballard, together with him reading extracts from the novel. Martin Amis also conducted an interview in the Observer colour magazine on September 2nd which (for Amis) was quite interesting.

Gollancz themselves are all set to hype the book for all it's worth. Extracts were sold to The Times for publication, Books & Bookmen (specialist publishers magazine) gave it a cover feature and in major bookshops up and down the country, there's going to be an 'In-store video campaign' I don't know quite what this will show, but look out for it. It'll make a change from the usual stuff. Jonathan Cope, duly miffed at not being able to publish 'Empire' are re-issuing in hardback four earlier Ballard novels, including *The Drowned World* and *The Crystal World*. No doubt 'Empire of the Sun' will be a very strong contender for the £15,000 Booker Prize, so watch Channel 4 on October 18th when Melvyn Bragg is fronting an hour long show, partly live from the presentation dinner and partly recorded film interviews and so forth from the six short-listed novels.

HARRY STRIKES BACK - or so said the Guardian on 18th August regarding Harry Harrison's new novel. 'West of Eden' (Granada £8.95) is in the same vein as Brian Aldiss' 'Helliconia' trilogy in that he's assembled various 'experts' to assist him in the novel's creation. What would happen if the giant meteor that is supposed to have hit Earth and destroyed the Dinosaurs actually missed? What if the Dinosaurs then evolved to an advanced stage and were pitted against still primitive humans? Wow...and Harry brings in Jack Cohen and a whole host of other boffins to figure it all out. Well, the answer is that you'd still have the Rolling Stones, Status Quo, Yes and other dinosaur bands, but they'd be swamp-dwelling vegetarians.

HARLAN ELLISON, fresh from giving his air-ticket to Norman Spinrad (thus allowing the former to finish 'Last Dangerous Visions' and the latter to go to Glasgow), seems to be all set to keep his post as P&SF's new TV and movie reviewer. They're not quite in 'The Glass Teat' league, but nevertheless, they have been interesting, if only because they irritate so much at times. The trouble is he will keep going on about how truly wonderful Stephen King is and what a super film 'Indiana Jones & The Temple of Doom' is. The September issue is a fine case in point for those wise readers cough up their £1.50 to buy it each month.

CHANGES AT INTERZONE - This magazine has been edited and published from the first by a team of volunteers. Three of the original founder-editors, John Clute, a certain BSFA Chairman and Ros Kaveney - are to take up roles as advisory editors, leaving the three others, Colin Greenland, Simon Ounsley and David Pringle, as Co-editors in charge of the day-to-day running of the magazine. In addition, two new assistant editors have been taken on - Judith Hanna and Lindsey Morris. They will be helping to assess the story manuscripts that are arriving in ever increasing quantities. Abi Frost (currently the magazine's designer) now becomes News Editor too. This hasco-incided with the major re-design of the magazine with issue and is geared to projecting the magazine onto an even more successful basis for 1985.

INTERZONE ANTHOLOGY - Dent are to publish in quality paperback format the first Interzone anthology in April 1985. This comes at the same time as a Spanish collection (1) and should help promote the magazine even more. The stories are:

- 1) The Cabinet of Edgar Allen Poe (Angela Carter)
- 2) The Flash Kid (Scott Bradford)
- 3) After Images (Malcolm Edwards)
- 4) Kitemaster (Keith Roberts)
- 5) The Monroe Doctrine (Neil Ferguson)
- 6) Angel Baby (Rachel Pollack)
- 7) On the Deck of the Flying Bomb (David Redd)
- 8) What Cindy Saw (John Shirley)
- 9) The Object of the Attack (J.G. Ballard)
- 10) Something Coming Through (Cherry Wilder)
- 11) Dreamers (Kim Newman)
- 12) Tissue Ablation and Variant Regeneration (Michael Blumlein)
- 13) O Happy Day! (Geoff Ryman)

The Geoff Ryman story is the longest in the collection and is original to it; all the others have appeared within the pages of Interzone.

And finally, on Interzone, courtesy of one D. Langford, (who he?) an extract from the J.G. Ballard piece 'What I Believe' in issue 8 has appeared in the Pseud's Corner column of Private Eye (21-9-84). What with the letters to Private Eye Chris Hughes discussed in the last Matrix, our man DEL is in severe danger of becoming another Larry Adler - and he can't even play the mouth organ!

THE MARGON THEORY OF EASTERBONS CONSIDERED AS A PAIR OF GENTLEMEN TROUBERS!



FANZINE REVIEWS

Sue Thomason

THE PROLOGUE

Greetings and welcome once again to the Matrix fanzine review column. This time I want to start off by considering that mysterious entity, the letter of comment (LoC). There's been quite a bit of debate recently in fanzines about what constitutes a proper LoC, the ethics of looting, and so on, and I thought it might be interesting to, er, review the situation for people new to the art.

In its simplest form, a letter of comment is just that: a written communication which comments on the fanzine received. Feedback, response. This might take the form of an "I liked X because...but didn't like Y because..." series of comments on the zine, an anecdote or so sparked by one of the articles - "That reminds me of the time when", a response in agreement or disagreement with some statement or point of view expressed in the zine. And here the problems start. Some editors simply want comment, feedback on the contents of the zine. Others want material for recycling into their next zine in the form of a letter column. A zine with a tradition of a lively letter column makes interesting reading, but it's obviously most frustrating for the editor of such a zine to receive a long string of letters of the 'I liked X but not Y' variety, or a red-hot communication marked DNQ (= Do Not Quote). Many editors are happy to trade zines. Some ask for more personal responses, in the form of (say) a loo every two or three issues. Almost all editors feel that a plain request-plus-stamp is fine first time round, but very few will send zines out into a vacuum for long.

Fanzines take time, money, thought, sweat and certain basic skills to produce. They don't just spontaneously generate themselves out in the vacant interstellar spaces (a phrase nicked from T.S.Eliot, thus getting rid of my Obligatory Cultural Reference for this issue). It seems polite to acknowledge the time, effort, thought etc. by putting in a bit of the same when looting. This is fine for those of us who don't get 33 fanzines a week, but eventually a loo threshold is reached where the cost and effort of it all becomes too much. Then it's high time to put out a zine of your own...and send it to:

SUE THOMASON, 9 Friars Lane, BARROW-IN-FURNESS, Cumbria, LA13 5NF

I'll then try and review them for Matrix. Please mark your zine DNR if you don't want it reviewed in Matrix (though everything I receive gets listed in the Short Title Catalogue).

IN DEPTH

Well, what goodies have we got this time around? Let's start with the excellent *ATU XVIII*. The editor assures us that *ATU* is not an SF zine...all I can say is, you sure could have fooled me. It's packed with literate, thought-provoking writing on everything from setting up a vigilante group to software piracy to reviews of favourite video games, a fine philosophical essay, zine reviews, a very good statement 'Against God' which cogently summarises the editor's feelings about religion in general and Christianity in particular. The thematic letter column (which seems to be gaining

popularity as a method of dealing with letters) is fascinating, lively and well-edited. *ATU* is definitely a thinking fan's zine. If you like a good argument, don't miss it.

SOMEBODY BEFORE is the best first fanzine I've seen for a long time. It's about a newcomer to fandom, com, zines and so on. Rambro's writing is clear, perceptive and honest. And accurate. He manages to say more sensible things about fans and fandom after five minutes at Mexico than some of us observe after five years of observation from the inside. Rambro is a Good Thing (though possibly a Bad King) and should be encouraged by offers of trade. ((Quite agree - AD))

CALABAN is the best of this month's literary zines, ie; those dealing in fiction and poetry. In fact it's the only literary zine this time around. I suspect that most people who dismiss fan fiction as not worth a second glance, haven't had a second glance, or sometimes even a first one. Calaban is well worth getting hold of and reading carefully, if only to see how the other half lives (or at least writes). Issue 3 is mostly poetry with a story by Basilio Pearson herself and some excellent artwork by Dave Haden. It has a nice relaxed feel to it; spacious but not too big, well laid out, comfortable.

FOSSILISED THOUGHTS, an ensmallled zine (this format seems to be gaining more and more converts) has the following to recommend it: a very funny cover, some very funny parody/nature on Von Daniken and a really top-class account of epilepsy from the inside. Everyone should read this last; it's informative and personal without being confessional or sensational, and dammit, everyone should know what to do (and what not to do) for someone who has an epileptic fit. This is fanwriting at its most useful.

ACONESTIS is a personal favourite that won't be to everyone's taste. Unless you get a kick out of in-jokes about librarianship, dreadful seventeenth century jokes, silly newspaper cuttings, and/or the Beatles, you won't like the first issue of Aconestis. I do, and I do. Aconestis is very obviously a zine published for love, for fun and for a smallish like-minded audience. It has no intention of being all things to all people, but is simply a round trip of the editor's quirks, foibles, obsessions, interests and hobbies. There are numbers of this sort of zine around, and when you find the one to suit you, you'll know what fun they are.

KYSTER's annish is a real delight, the opposite of the new ensmallled personalzine. It's big, it's got lotsa contributions, it's got illos and conrps and humour, it has a lovely friendly nonprofessional feel to it with half a dozen different typefaces and layout styles (and that's only page 1 of the letter column). However, it's a faannish annish. Don't say I didn't warn you.

That was the good news. The bad news this time is limited to **THIS WILL NEVER COME AGAIN**... a zine which made me feel very, very uncomfortable. The worry hit half way down page 1 with the statement:

"I'd be an oddity in the world of SF fandom because after a long struggle between my selfish desires and my love for the Lord Jesus whom I accepted into my life as a personal saviour a year and a half ago - I abandoned a lot of the trappings of SF fanish life..."

The only one he mentions, by the way, is alcohol. This is not worrying me because of any feeling that Christianity of whatever brandname, or religion in general, is not a fit subject for fandom to involve itself with. Quite the reverse. Religion is one of the Big Issues that many people are genuinely interested in, and I've seen some very fine and thoughtful writing on the subject in various fanzines. I am frightened because if what the author

says is true, he has had one of the most deeply affecting, intimate, meaningful experiences it is possible for himankind to have - in his terms, it is the most meaningful experience - he has met God. To describe and refer to this experience, he uses a trite little jargon phrase, which he does not explain. I find myself feeling embarrassed by the zine and protective towards its author because of the feeling I get that he's sincere, well-meaning and emotionally frighteningly unprotected and shallow. He has a 'closed' philosophy; he knows he's right, he knows where to find all the answers. This is inimical to fandom. Fandom is open-minded. It may be obsessive, but it is not fanatical. I feel there's no way I can communicate with this man. And, by the way, he's wrong about alcohol - which is no more a necessary precondition to fanaticism than totalitarianism is for Christianity. I hope that this zine gets a thoughtful response. Not either a parade of meaningless evangelical brainwash burble, or a KTF squelch, but a response which might make the author aware of how he gratuitously insults those who don't think as he does. Some fat chance, I suspect.

Until next time....

SHORT TITLE CATALOGUE OF CURRENT FANZINES

The 'usual' means that a fanzine is available for any of the following: Trade for another fanzine, Loc, contribution of artwork or written material, editorial whim, polite request for a sample copy accompanied by either a Stamp or promise of a Loc, money (just keep piling it in front of the relevant editor until they smile).

ACNESTIS 4 Andy Sawyer, 45 Greenbank Road, Birkenhead, Merseyside, L42 7JT. USUAL. 10pp personalzine. Topics: The Beatles, Librarianship, 17th Century fandom, Lettercol.

ANSIBLE 39 Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU. MONEY (£2/6 issues), CONTRIBUTION (mostly scandal). The fans' answer to tabloids. 12pp, illos, indispensable gossip and news.

ATU XVII 11 Trevor Hendham, 53 Towncourt Crescent, Tetton Wood, Kent, BR5 1FH. USUAL. 50p. 40pp, illos, cuddly gnome knitting patterns, philosophical essay on signification, statement of (some) reasons for atheism, book and video game reviews, etc.

BUZZ 2 Lawrence Dean, 12 Wilmelaw Avenue, Sharples, Bolton, BL1 7AX. EDITORIAL WHIM ONLY. 6pp

CALABAN 3 Bunice Pearson, 32 Digby House, Collette Grove, Kingshurst, Birmingham, B37 6JE. MONEY.

CONTRIBUTION Fiction/poetry zine, illos, 14pp.

CHALKDUST 2 Frances-Jane Nelson, 62 Campsie Road, Wishaw, Scotland, M12 7QG. USUAL. Personalzine, 12pp.

CLOUD CHAMBER 28/29 Dave Langford (Ansible address). For Frank's APA/WHIM. 6pp each.

FOR PARANOIDS ONLY 2,0001 Nigel Richardson, 9 Windsor Green, East Garforth, Leeds, LS25 2LG. EDITORIAL WHIM. 16pp. Lettercol.

FOSILISED THOUGHTS 2 Stephen Davies, 87 Holland Pines, Great Hollands, Bracknell, Berks. USUAL. 20pp, lettercol, personalzine.

GREEN SHADOW AND SUNLIGHT Mary Gentle, Flat 1, 11 Alumhurst Road, Westbourne, Bournemouth, BH4 8EL. STAMP, EDITORIAL WHIM. 14pp, personalzine.

RIVERBURN Paul Dormer, 41 Lee Court, Lee High Road, London, SE13 5PE. For ??, 16pp, personalzine.

SHUFF 4 Dave Rowley, 11 Rutland St., Hanley, Stoke on-Trent, Staffs, ST1 5JG. Loc, WHIM, MONEY (17p). 12pp, personalzine, lettercol.

SIX AND THE SINGLE MINCE Ian Sorenson, 142 Busby Road, Clarkston, Glasgow, G76 8BG. USUAL. 14pp, personalzine. Lettercol, useful wonderful cover.

SOMEBODY BEFORE 1 Ian Rambo, 14 Bakdale Terrace, Jesmond, NEWCASTLE-upon-TYNE. USUAL/TRADE. 8pp, personalzine.

SONG TO ANYTHING THAT MOVES 2 William McCabe, 53 Wenman St., Balsall Heath, Birmingham, B12 9SF. USUAL. 20pp, yellow personalzine.

SPAGHETTI JUNCTION 3 Mike Dickinson, Jackie Gresham, c/o Dickinson, 146 North Parade, Sleaford, Lincs. USUAL. 12pp. Topics: Italian telly, football, lettercol etc.

STOMACH PUMP 5 Steve Higgins, 62 Connaught Road, Reading, Berks, RG3 2UA. USUAL. 8pp, personalzine.

TALBS FROM THE SLACHPAP Abigail Frost, 69 Robin Hood Gardens, Cotton St, London E14 and Helen Starkey, 6 Skelgill Road, London, SW15. Trade - there are two editors at two addresses - copy to each please! Sample copies from Helen, 25p. USUAL. 8pp. Londonfan gossip and wit.

THIS WILL NEVER COME AGAIN Phillip Greensaway, 38 Minth Avenue, Galon Uchar, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan, South Wales. USUAL? 14pp personalzine (incorporating CORNERSTONE, a Christian youth mag).

THOUGHTS 1 Mike Lewis, 12 Parkwood Close, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 2KN. USUAL. 8pp, personalzine, fanzine reviews.

WERNERMAN'S WREVENGE Vol. 1 No.6 Jean Weber, PO Box 42, Lynnhaven, Australian Capital Territory, 2602, Australia. USUAL, 18pp, illos, articles 'Please Get Your Sheep Out of My Swimming Pool', book reviews, diary notes, lettercol. For rave reviews see Matrix 54.

WISHPFUL THINKING Chris Anderson, 77 Baronscourt Terrace, Edinburgh, EH8 7EN. USUAL. 8pp personalzine.

XYSTER Annish. Dave Wood, 1 Priory Close, Marine Hill, Clevedon, Avon, BS21 7QA. USUAL? 44pp, illos, outside contributions etc.



'Come back! Don't leave me!
I promise not to criticise
BSFA again.'

The Members



Revenge

HILARY ROBINSON
25 Princetown Road,
BANGOR, Co. Down,
BT20 3YA

I FEEL I have been insulted by a man I don't even know. I take very strong exception to the last sentence in Mr. Dorey's piece in Matrix 54, which

suggests that aspiring writers like me are looking to the BSFA to provide some sort of vanity press. I have noticed lately that the term 'fan fiction' is being used by the BSFA almost with an audible sneer. Why is it that fan non-fiction is both supported and encouraged in all BSFA publications, but fan fiction is frowned upon?

If you read the autobiographies of established SF writers, you find the vast majority cut their teeth either on pulps (if of that generation) or fan writing (if younger). Everybody has to learn somewhere, and I object to the number of BSFA members whose attitude is - "Well, you're not practising on us!" Why not? Article writers practise on you and you don't seem to object to that.

I also reject the idea that Orbiters, valuable as it is, is the be-all and end-all for growing writers. What's after Orbiters? Intertone or the Abyss? You leave us very little other choice.

If the BSFA is not interested in encouraging new writers, why don't you say that plainly, and we can leave your organisation and look for one that is, but don't complain about the fact that the media only rehabs old themes and nobody writes new stuff. The BSFA is doing its best to insult and drive away developing talent, and that cannot be good for the future of the Association.

***I led with Hilary's letter because it does raise a number of interesting points and she does argue her case very well. Obviously it would be very easy for me to fall into the trap of defending myself and the BSFA for all we're worth. However, I do believe that we are trying to provide some of the facilities that Hilary hints should be available. The line that Hilary objects to in my column last issue was at the very end of the spectrum 'at the crudest level' was part of the phrase I used. The BSFA has no definite plans to introduce a fiction magazine. Focus does carry fiction, and that whole arena provides much more than just an outlet for fiction. It gives information; notes on how to go about it and so on; it is a Writer's Magazine, so I cannot see how the BSFA can be perceived as a body that abhors fiction. Fan Fiction has for a long time been a term that has been the recipient of adverse criticism. It all depends upon your definition. Fans all love to write, be it fiction, articles, reviews, comment

or news items. Fiction is perhaps the most difficult to do well and the easiest to do badly. More people write non-fiction for the BSFA partly because we promote ourselves in that vein, but partly also because, people like to read information and comment about the subject that draws us all together in the first place.

We are interested in encouraging new writers; that's why we started Focus, despite the flack that we've had over the years. There is a possibility that Focus will become more frequent in 1985 (still under consideration by the committee); the BSFA has been instrumental in assisting the birth and growth of INTERZONE. It may be labelled elitist by some; I (as one of the co-editors) know that it is not loved by everybody, but its creation did show our concern about the lack of a fiction outlet in the UK. It did show that we wanted to encourage and develop new talents (which has happened). I firmly believe that there should be more professional SF magazines within the UK. There are other outlets. Try the Cassandra anthology, edited by Bernard Smith. The BSFA will not be starting (or acquiring) a fiction magazine, but if we can justify the cost and we can get the formula right, the more frequent Focus will provide the chance to have more fiction published. At the bottom line though, is the question of actual ability - regrettably, we can't all be super fiction writers. We can learn some mechanics of the trade, but there must be a certain flair, individualism and energy too. We will try to encourage people to write, or to join local groups where the mutual support and interest of the other members can often be very beneficial.

As far as insulting you Hilary, no that was most certainly not the intention. All I was trying to say was that occasionally we all need to face reality, and that because we have written a piece of fiction, it doesn't mean to say that it is deserving of reading. In the BSFA we treat non-fiction in precisely the same way; quite a lot never seen the light of day.

If there is anything that we can do that will encourage yourself, or help you (and others in a similar position) let me know. We will try - honest!

ELIZABETH SOURBUT
10 Trentholme Drive,
The Mount, YORK,
YO2 2DG

For some months now I have watched the battle over a BSFA fiction magazine rage, and at last I feel that I must join in.

When I joined the BSFA a year ago I was sent a flyer which said: "The BSFA...aims to promote and encourage the reading, writing and publishing of science fiction". (my own emphasis). Good, I thought, this is for me. I bought the back-issues of Focus, and I found them very useful. But now I am looking around for markets for my fiction, and my heart sinks. I subscribe to Intertone, but with only four issues a year they can't hope to publish all the good stories that come their way. The BSFA promises to "promote and encourage" the writing of SF. Not just the writers (as with Focus), but their writing itself. We have "M" for fanish writers, Vector for article writers, PI for reviewers, all amateur, but where is the outlet for fiction writers to write fiction?

We are not asking to foist "tenth rate fiction" on the membership as Nigel Richardson suggests (M53). I have read the four issues of the "Cassandra" anthology, and the material is far from tenth rate. If they can do it, why can't the BSFA? If everybody who has written in support of a Tangent revival writes just one story, then you have enough for a first issue already. And you can be damn sure they won't be shoddy pieces. We want this project to work, we want to show the membership that unpublished authors can write bloody good fiction, so we'll make sure that what we send in as good as we can make it.

Give us a sympathetic atmosphere and then see how many good submissions you get. Don't just say that it can't work. Try it and see. I'm quite sure that it can. (And if you're so short of collators, I'll help, OK?).

***No doubt we will give some thought to a fiction magazine, but as I've said in the reply to the first letter, if Focus becomes more frequent, there is your outlet. Matrix isn't for fanfarnish writers - it's a news magazine for the BSFA, and not all our contributors in the BSFA are amateur. Still, I am being a little pedantic. We want to encourage the writing of SF, but for professional publication - that is the way we will change the stifling market we are presently in. We do this by reviewing, writing about SF, writing about publishing and so on. We are not interested in publishing fiction for fiction's sake. Equally, many of us who do write non-fiction for the BSFA don't expect the BSFA to publish everything we write. That's why a lot of us do our own fanzines!

Anyway, do rest assured Elizabeth, that we will do what we can to help. Right - last comment this issue on fiction, an appropriate summary from Peter Coleborn:

PETER COLEBORN
46 Oxford Road,
Acocks Green,
BIRMINGHAM, B27 6DT

HO JUM: should the BSFA publish a fiction magazine? Why not? I hope I'm wrong but it seems to me that aspiring BSFA

writers want a magazine to publish their fiction simply because they've written it, and that they are BSFA members. Isn't that nepotism? If the BSFA should publish such a magazine it must be top quality fiction, from all fields, inside and outside the Association. Focus already publishes fiction; why not Vector? Badger the editors, the committee. Afterall, the BSFA is your Association. It's your money that's used to pay the printing bills...

Instead of becoming the BSFA's intransigence here, if your work is publishable, submit elsewhere. OK, Interspace may not be your cup of tea. Maybe no-one has yet submitted a particular type of story - your type of story - that's good enough to see print. By the way, IZ is not the UK's only fee-paying market; never heard of Fantasy Tales? You don't know what you're missing. Try the American market: Fantasy & Science Fiction, Analog, Asimov's, Whispers, Shogol, Fantasy Book, Space & Time etc. In the UK there is also Ghost & Scholars, Dark Horizons, Dark Dreams. Buy Locus or SF Chronicle and keep an eye on the market. Listen out for possible locations, all possible locations, to place your fiction, in magazines and anthologies in the genre and outside. Even men's magazines occasionally publish SF - so I'm told. You gotta get off your butt to get published, not gripe at the BSFA's policies.

Ever heard of Clive Barker? No, probably not. Last year he was a complete unknown in the genre. This year he has three (yes three) original collections now out from Sphere. It can be done.

***Again some interesting comments there. Other outlets include Something Else, Granta and possibly, the new UK edition of Omni. Peter also makes some comment about Interspace in his letter, suggesting that we should try and get Geoff Ryman's story "The Unconquered Country" anthologised. As you will see from the news pages, there is an Interspace anthology due next year from Dent, with a completely new Geoff Ryman story. Worth every penny too.

And now, a change of subject - Matrix itself:

ROGER WADDINGTON
4 Commercial Street,
Norton, MALTON,
North Yorkshire,
YO17 9SE

Great issue of Matrix;
bring back Chris Hughes!
Even with the extra effort
going into this production,
the time and trouble, can't
we try for this level at

least once every year; say with the Annish? Always supposing anyone knows when the BSFA was actually

formed; though surely we must be due a Jubilee sometime?

***Actually, we are planning to make both Vector and Matrix of that quality all the time - from next February, fingers crossed. Next year, the BSFA will be 27 years old... back to Roger:

I liked the idea of a multi-paged, multi-hued (multi-opinionated) superine; it was only afterwards that doubts began to creep in. Certainly, one format would be an advantage; and some of the carriage might work. Matrix and Paperback Inferno wouldn't sit too uneasily together, or the 'New Books' info; nor Focus; even the rare member who doesn't want to become a writer would happily browse through that section. The first snag I can see is with fitting Vector in. I see it as the flagship of the BSFA, the outward expression most likely to be found in the SF shops, a sign that there's something of permanent value in the Association; and as such, could it really be relegated to the back of the book. Would each editor be willing to give up some of his power, each kingdom to submit to a higher authority. And what about the letters that each section will still attract, from the Sercon (Vector) to the practical (Focus) to the unusual (Matrix?); will there be a letter for each, or a grab-bag written to the Higher Authority in the hope that he can sort it out? Having got them down on paper such problems aren't insuperable; along with Chris, it's something I'd like the BSFA to consider. ((Please see the Chairman's Column))

Also the idea of reduced rates for the unemployed. As one of Maggie's three million myself (Four, if the TUC are to be believed), I'm very much in favour of such acts of kindness, having seen cinema tickets reduced in York and even bus fares reduced in some fabled land further North; but is the BSFA sub such a Hardship? I've maybe got an unfair advantage having been in work long enough to take my savings to just under the out-off point and so can afford full rate subs for years yet; but £7 a year is just under 14p a week; where can't we find that? Buying one less postage stamp maybe, going without a daily paper for one day a week; reaching the stage where we can't even afford to save that much, I don't think even a reduced sub would help. Still, if it's offered, here's one that'll take advantage; 'never refuse anything' I was always taught.

Other deserving causes...I think the only reason SF fever has never been involved is that they've never been asked. The generosity that goes towards such as TAPP could be harnessed for more wordly operations - witness the response to Matt Sillars, Pamela Boal - it's just the thought that SF and fandom are concerned with less temporal matters than drought in Ethiopia or leprosy in West Africa, such little human disturbances as compared to the worlds of books and stars; though such is our own fault and not that of the BSFA. For any people appealing, I suspect individual fan will be generous enough, when asked; but the BSFA as a whole? Like any other big (?) organisation, any such effort would make its weary way through discussions, committee stages, tactical manoeuvres and politicking and give up the ghost half-way through. (Thinking particularly by the fuss raised by the Polish appeal.) No - using the pages of the BSFA magazines would meet with a ready response to any appeal; but using the BSFA itself for any more direct effort would, I suspect, be more of a hindrance than a help (notwithstanding your good efforts!). It's up to us - as individuals.

***The thinking behind the reduced sub rate for those out of work was simply that unless you are able to plan far enough ahead, then £7 in one go is quite a bit to find when you have many other needs to consider. Like you, Roger, I was prompted to think in this direction by reduced cinema rates and so forth - plus the idea that one or two cons recently are offering discounts.

As for the question of appeals, I do tend to agree with you. The BSFA readily gave space to Matt Sillars, as did Season '84 - but we did have to be

asked first. We will be quite happy to announce details about worthy causes, and indeed, the news pages in this very issue talk about support for MIND, the National Association for Mental Health. It would be awkward for the BSFA as an entity to offer money - who is to decide that any one cause is less worthy than another?

Your views on the Supermag are useful; Martyr Taylor weighs in with his point of view:

MARTIN TAYLOR
Flat 2
17 Hutchinson Square,
DOUGLAS, Isle of Man

Matrix 54 not so much an improvement as a revelation, and not only as far as appearance goes. There was actually some content, some stimulating - as opposed to merely contentious - ideas and a general feeling that somebody, somewhere had out one hell of a lot of thought and effort into the whole affair. Chris is to be congratulated, except his successor who has one hard act to follow.

I think the idea of a single mega-mag has definite merits, as spelled out by Chris, although I have to wonder just how well Matrix and Vector would mix, and who would have the time and strength to edit such a magazine on a bi-monthly basis.

On the whole I think an umbrella magazine would be a poor idea because of the mix of the social and the most academic would be so easy as to be impossible. A joining of Vector and PI though, that would be an idea. I note duplications in the contents of the two magazines in this mailing, and know that Geoff is looking for reviews of books I have already reviewed for Joseph. While I'm all in favour of as many of the members getting free books as it is possible I have to wonder whether a book like Kingsbury's Geta is worth reviewing once, never mind twice. In view of the convergence of the editorial standards I wonder whether some better liaison isn't in order. I know that I don't put any less effort into a review for PI than I do for Vector, and don't like to think of that effort being duplicated.

Having heard that both Joseph and Geoff intend to take their leaves are long perhaps an overall review editor could be appointed when their successors take over.

***There is currently discussion going on within the BSFA committee about the future role of PI when Joseph hands it over in June 1985. By that time he will have run it for six complete years and has stamped much of his own individuality on it. It may be that a fresh approach is required; certainly I agree that it is vital we have more co-ordination and control over books that get reviewed.

TERRY BROOME
45 Hykeham Road,
LIMCOLN,
LN6 8AA, Lincs.

Congratulations on a very neat Matrix: The cover of 54 was really superb and the illo's within worthy of mention for their generally good standard.

In reply to Margaret Hall's letter, I doubt if the Intersone editors would be consciously sexist and choose male writers over femalewriters. The best stories are published: That's what Intersone has to do commercially, to stay in business. Even a new writer won't get a say if his/her work is bad or simply atrocious: and Intersone has stated its desire to introduce new writers to the professional field. So, in this respect, I don't think Margaret's comments are fair ones.

Is it Intersone's fault that she doesn't like their stories? Of course not! But if Margaret does wish to see her kind of stories in print she can do one of two things, shop around or produce a magazine herself, whichever is more convenient.

***In actual fact, a quick glance at this issue's news pages will show that Intersone has brought into its overall editorial fold Lin Morris and Judith Hanna. Back to you Terry...

Onto Malcolm Edwards - I've long agreed with his opinion on nuclear warfare. Yes, I'd rather be red

and give hope to my children's children for 'freedom' again, than not only be dead, but to drag the whole animal kingdom down with me - and with them a good percentage of what makes this world so beautiful - our plant life: To do so would be utterly selfish and unthinkably cruel and tragic.

And what has the nuclear debate got to do with the pages of Matrix? asks Simon Ings: Because it concerns our future, our present, the way we live our lives - even our very private ones. Matrix and the other BSFA magazines are unlike many other fanzines in that they ARE concerned with SF, our future, the state of writing and publishing, as well as the inward-looking fanzine. This has got to be remembered and fresh views and ideas continuously injected into the BSFA if it is to be any use at all.

A last word on "O Alien" - even as an examination of modern society it is a failure: seen this way, it is degrading to SF, cheap and nasty: If Mr. Bloomfield's theory is true, David Gladwell would have done a lot better by presenting it as a straight examination of aspects of our way of life: it is disorderly, jumps everywhere without any kind of logic or consistency and had an extremely bad script to accompany it: As Dorothy said, it's truly appalling - either way it's seen.

***Agree entirely with your sentiments on the Nuclear debate - and indeed anything else that affects us in the real world. Matrix's letters column is for the members; if the subject be Nuclear Warfare or whatever, then so be it. As long as it's interesting and pertinent, why not? Nicholas Davies shares your views on "O Alien":

NICHOLAS DAVIES
21 Toghill Lane,
Doynton,
BRISTOL, BS15 5SY

I have been a BSFA member for two years now and this is my first letter to any BSFA publication. What has prompted me to write is Anthony Bloomfield's letter on the subject of the BSG TV documentary "O Alien".

In his letter Anthony says that the programme was an examination of modern society rather than SF, the alien just being a vehicle. This is correct, but even when viewed this way it is not successful. It has been a long time since I watched "O Alien" and I have to admit that I have forgotten parts of it, but my reaction to it is still fresh in my mind. And that is that it was lousy. I do remember the slaughterhouse scene and my reaction to it was similar to Anthony's, but that one minute still leaves thirty-nine of rubbish.

***Someone else with a wise word or two on one of our reviews is Jim Darroch:

JIM DARROCH
8 Montague Street,
EDINBURGH, EH9 9QU

Just read the review of "Brainstorm" in Matrix 54. I find it difficult to believe that Colin Bird is talking about the same film that I saw. Brainstorm is one of the worst SF movies that I've ever had the mistake to view. The entire plot-line is handled in the most simplistic and sentimental, pocket-religion style imaginable. What the tape of supposed after-life reveals is simply that the deceased scientist went to a heaven peopled by Walt Disney style angels. Aw. Isn't that better. The special effects are bereft of any real imagination, mostly consisting of fish-eye views and kaleidoscopic patterns. The dialogue is very banal with supposed scientists saying idiotic things.

Anyway, it's silly. Just thought I'd set the record straight.

***And quite right to, Jim. And now, slapped wrists time for Chris Hughes:

ALEX STEWART
11A Beverley Road,
COLCHESTER,
Essex, CO3 5NG

My contributor's copy of Matrix 54 arrived this morning, and to put it mildly, I'm Not Pleased with the way Chris has presented "my" conrep. I say "my" in quotes because it bears very little resemblance to what I actually wrote.

Specifically; its been cut by more than half, the ordering of paragraphs has been altered, sentences have been deleted, concatenated, and, worst of all, my phrasing, punctuation and syntax have been altered throughout. In short, a piece I spent considerable time on has been reduced to verbal coleslaw.

What really irritates me is that in doing this Chris has distorted my views, and all but obliterated my own style, without telling me first. I had no idea he intended to do this until the sine fell through my letterbox. Had I known the piece was going to appear in this form, I would have insisted on my name being removed from it. I repudiate this version utterly, and would appreciate a note to this effect appearing in the next issue.

***No sooner said than done. I'm not defending Chris, but with the tight schedules to which any Matrix editor is subjected, it is often difficult to do everything in the manner that it deserves. Matrix is a big job and occasionally editors do get a little headstrong and creatively edit, rather than just edit. Please accept my apologies, though, for any embarrassment we may have caused you.

And now, more slapped wrists - this time for the whole BSFA magazine production team:

DARROLL PARDOE For a society whose main
118 Cote Lea Square interest is the published
Southgate word, the BSFA seems
RUNCORN remarkably confused over
Cheshire WA7 2SA copyright. Let's take an
example - the four publications

in the August mailing:

VECTOR: "All contents (c) 1984 by BSFA on behalf of individual contributors."

MATRIX: "(c) 1984 BSFA Ltd: Rights revert to contributors on publication"

FOCUS: "Copyright (c) by the BSFA Ltd on behalf of the individual contributors, to whom rights are hereby returned."

PI: "Entire contents copyright 1984 by the British Science Fiction Association on behalf of the individual contributors, who retain all rights."

Sadly, all four of these notices are seriously in error. Under British law the copyright in a work is initially the property of its author and this copyright is automatic - it involves no form of registration whatsoever. As soon as the work is published, the statutory copyright time begins to run, expiring only 50 years after the author's death. Now, no-one else can acquire that copyright from the author, its original owner, unless the copyright is specifically assigned in WRITING. I'm assuming the BSFA (unlike some learned societies I could mention) doesn't require all its contributors to sign away their copyright in submissions. That being so, all the statements quoted above are meaningless. The copyright remains with the authors throughout. The works are not copyrighted 'by the BSFA' since no 'copyrighting formalities' exist. All that is needed is a simple statement thus:

"Copyright (c) BSFA Ltd 1984"

This copyright notice, the one you put in the magazine, refers to a different copyright altogether, the BSFA's copyright in the arrangement and typography of the whole magazine. It has no relation at all to the author's copyrights in the individual works. If you want to decalre the obvious at unnecessary length you could say:

"Copyright (c) BSFA Ltd 1984. Individual copyrights are the property of the authors and artists."

I hope this is all fairly clear!

***It certainly is, Darroll. We stand corrected. We'll get it right in the December mailing!

These two letters arrived very late on in my plans for this issue of Matrix. I felt that both were of importance and since I had a little space left once pasting-up had been done, I've put them in:

DAVID LANGFORD
94 London Road,
READING,
Berks, RG1 5AU

Bernard Smith does get a bit carried away in his letter to Matrix 54. By the end of his first paragraph his defence of the amateur writer has got him worked up to the point at which he appears to be conveying that, really, it's rather an idiotism of an author's commercial crassness should he/she actually manage to sell any work. This argument certainly disposes of all those nasty published authors at a single stroke; but it was my understanding that several members of Bernard's own "Cassandra" group had "sold out" to vile commercial forces in this fashion.

***And speaking of Bernard Smith, here he is:

BERNARD SMITH
8 Wansford Walk,
Thorlands Brook,
NORTHAMPTON,
NN3 4YF

For someone so hostile to the printing of fiction through the BSFA, I notice that Alan Dorey is not averse to including a little fiction of his own in Matrix 54. I refer to that classic of the imagination titled 'Fiction Magazine' (Part of Thoughts of the Chairman Now).

At the AGM it was formally proposed that the Cassandra Anthology become the fiction magazine of the BSFA, and that this would be decided by a ballot of the full membership. So much for helping with the distribution!

The reason that the offer was withdrawn had nothing to do with 'doubts about enthusiasm' but everything to do with being told by the chairman that he and his committee did not want a fiction magazine, would oppose it, did not believe printing fiction had anything to do with promoting SF in relation to the BSFA, did not like the thought of 'outsiders' coming in with a magazine, had been put off the idea of fiction magazines by the disaster of Tangent, would only go into the project if forced to and then under protest, and to top it all the ballot was to be ditched and the decision left to the committee. Surprise, surprise. There was also much twittering in that article about extra cost, extra work at mailings etc. It is a fact that we had a number of volunteers lined up to help with the mailings, and plans drawn up to help offset any increased costs by using our own funds and other money raised by us. I would have been more than happy to give these details to anyone on the BSFA committee had they bothered to get in contact. As it happened, from the outset I did not receive any letter or telephone call offering to discuss these things, even after repeated requests on my part for someone on the committee to do so. The fact is, that the idea of a fiction magazine is a non-starter not for any of the reasons invented in that article, but because Alan Dorey and associates have simply decided that they do not want one.

Amongst those 'Thoughts' in Matrix 54 were ones about a great BSFA renaissance. If this ever comes about, a good way to start it would be for the Chairman to stop abusing his position by feeding lies to the membership through its official news-letter.

***This letter, as I intimated at the outset, arrived after the normal deadline. It is a measure of the importance to us as the committee that this subject be discussed that we have held back and made alternative arrangements to deal with our printing schedules. Bernard is no doubt a well meaning person as far as Cassandra is concerned

and whilst he may wish to maintain a bitter view of the situation, this is what we as a committee have to say.

- 1) At the AGM (to which Bernard was not present), we agreed to publish a 'letter of intent' from Cassandra, in order that we might solicit the members' views. The AGM minutes state this quite clearly, as can be seen with the enclosure in this mailing. The difficulties caused by Simon Polley resigning the Matrix editorship meant that at very short notice, myself and John & Eve Harvey had to produce a Matrix within a matter of days. Several pieces of copy failed to get into that issue because they were in transit between several people involved with Matrix. There would have been no issue at all but for me driving the copy I had down to London and giving it to the Harveys for printing and despatching. Regrettably, Bernard's letter was in that pile of unused copy. Until the issue appeared, I was not aware that it hadn't seen print. Ian Watson rang me and said it wasn't in there. I wrote to Bernard straight away, apologising to him and assured him that the letter would go in the next issue (ie: Matrix 54).
- 2) Prior to that, we as a committee had spent a considerable amount of time after the AGM at Easter discussing the matter. You may know that this was held at Seacon '84 when all of us had very many other things to deal with not allied to the BSFA.
- 3) Bernard rang me shortly after Ian Watson and practically expected me to take Cassandra on without further discussion. I explained that it was not that easy. He withdrew his letter. Thus, there was no need for a members' ballot.
- 4) Bernard's facts in the letter printed above are a little wide of the mark. Our prime consideration throughout has been to ensure that we don't commit the BSFA to something that may not be viable, financially or administratively. As a committee we felt we were acting in the best interests of the BSFA by not endorsing his proposals. We cannot take on every offer that comes our way to distribute someone else's magazine. Indeed, the reason why Tangent fell by the wayside was the difficulty of controlling the editor, and the fact that the editor wanted to put his own funds into it too - thereby 'buying' a certain degree of implied, if not implicit control. My predecessor as Chairman, Tom Jones, made it quite clear in the 1979 AGM that this could be a potentially dangerous move.
- 5) The BSFA does cater for the fiction writer, as we have always clearly stated in Focus. Indeed, we as a committee have always supported and pushed Focus even when there was some movement within the BSFA for doing away with it.
- 6) We must be convinced of the viability of anything before we carry it out. I repeat this because it is so important. All along we have been concerned that much of Bernard's facts and figures are just that: Bernard's facts and figures. At the AGM Ian Watson was asked by the floor "Would the BSFA be liable for its debts?" Ian replied that it wouldn't make a loss.
- 7) It is a pity that the situation has had to come to this, but we care too much about maintaining the BSFA than to fall foul of attempts to force our hands.

We as a committee have discussed the contents of Bernard's letter above fully in the last two days. We sympathise with his feelings, but feel sure that the BSFA membership will understand why we have come to the conclusions that we have. However, if any members feel strongly that a fiction magazine, as opposed to Focus, is an essential part of the BSFA mailing, please write and let me know. Throughout this issue of Matrix you will see our thoughts on fiction within the BSFA. I would be equally interested to hear your views on these too.

Write to: Alan Dorey (Fiction Magazine), 22 Summerfield Drive, MIDDLETON, Lancs, M24 2WV.

Right - that's it for the letters this time round in a slightly slim-line Matrix. As noted elsewhere in this issue, we do have a new editor for Matrix 56 due out in December. However, in the meanwhile can you please send your Letters of Comment on this issue to me:

ALAN DOREY, 22 Summerfield Drive, MIDDLETON, Lancs, M24 2WV Tel: 061-653-6293.

MATRIX 56 DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 17th

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LATE NEWS***LATE NEWS***LATE NEWS***

BSFA LONDON MEETINGS

Judith Hanna writes that these are still running successfully on the third Friday of each month at the KING OF DIAMONDS, Greville Street/Leather Lane London (Near Chancery Lane Tube). Official events start at 8pm, but people begin aggregating from 6pm onwards. Admission price is still only 30p.

Future meetings are:

October 19th: 'Discussion of the BSFA'

What is it? What does it do? What should it do? Whence? Whither? Why? And what colour?

Judith will arrange for any suggestions/criticisms to be noted and forwarded for publication in Matrix.

November 16th: 'CHRISTMAS PARTY'

See ad on the back cover of this Matrix! Only £1 per head for lots of food and free drink (until our bar money runs out). It's being held early this year (so that you're not all thoroughly sick and tired of tinsel and carols) because the third Friday of December falls too close for Val to let us have the downstairs bar that evening - hence No Meeting in December.

Judith also wishes to step down from her job of running the meetings. She's put in a lot of hard work over the past year, much of it unrecognized. I would certainly like to thank her most sincerely for the efforts she's made to make sure that the meetings have gone down so well. Thanks Judith!

However - that now leaves us with another vacancy to fill - so:

ADVERTISEMENT: BSFA London Meetings Administrator seeks bright, energetic, imaginative person interested in taking over the rewarding task of lining up programme events for meetings, and raking in the 30p attendance fees. Fun, excitement, sense of power...Don't hesitate...contact Judith NOW! Judith Hanna, 22 Denbigh Street, Pinlloe, LONDON, SW1V 2ER. Tel: 01-821-8627.

From time to time I receive tasteful suggestions (we'll ignore the others which compromise the vast majority), like "How about another nice, simple quiz?" or "Here are some ideas for your next quiz, hint hint." H'm. I think it's about time to call out the immense creative talent of the BSFA. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to devise ingenious quiz questions: one at least, three at most. Send them to me with the answers (please), and huge prizes along the usual lines will be awarded. You will be unsurprised to learn that competition M56 will quite conceivably take the form of a quiz.

What are the criteria for judging questions? They should be amusing, interesting, brain-tickling, not too easy to answer simply by picking up a book ("What is the third word on page 25 of the Granada edition of Foundation?"), nor impossibly difficult to answer at all ("In which SF book is the third word on page 25 'clench'?"). An example of a question I liked at a recent BSFA meeting: "Who wrote Siege Perillous by Lester Del Rey?" (Though this is easily answered by a look at the Encyclopaedia eg: under 'Paul W Fairman') "In which SF novel by a very well-known author are a group of characters called Steen, Balle, Bort, Rune and Fife?" (You can answer that one yourself when you write with your fabulous questions, so there.)

Please rush your brilliant entries in time for the Matrix 55 copydate (see inside back cover of this very Matrix), to:

DAVE LANGFORD, 94 LONDON ROAD, READING, BERKS
RG1 5AU

MATRIX 55

October/November 1984

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STOP PRESS***STOP PRESS***STOP PRESS***STOP PRESS

New Matrix editor found... full details next
issue... new editor is

DAVE HODSON.

PARTY!

1984 BSFA CHRISTMAS PARTY

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 16th

at THE KING OF DIAMONDS, 8pm

£1 gives you free food & drink

DO COME!