

BSFA AWARDS

The BSFA AWARDS were announced on Sunday, 31st March 1986 at Albacon, the 1986 Easter convention held in Glasgow.

The results are as follows:

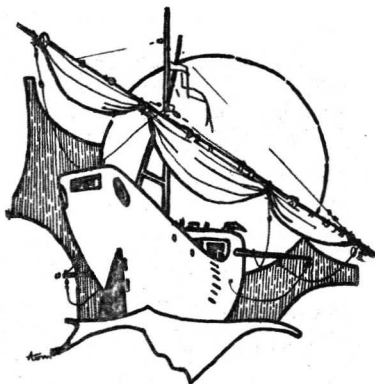
Novel: **Helliconia Winter**
- Brian Aldiss
(Cape)

Short Story: **Cube Root**
- David Langford
(Interzone 11)

Media Presentation: Brazil

Artist: Jim Burns

Each award was announced by one of the convention celebrities - Joe Haldeman, Clive Barker, Chris Boyce and Bob Shaw respectively. Brazil won easily but both fiction awards were closely contended and all nominees received a similar numbers of votes. A full breakdown of the voting for both ballots will appear in the next Matrix.



Judy-Lynn del Rey, Frank Herbert, Robert P Mills Dead

A BLACK COUPLE OF MONTHS FOR SCIENCE FICTION...

After the death of L. RON HUBBARD on Friday January 24th from a stroke, February proved to be even blacker. On Feb 7th ROBERT P. MILLS, the former editor of THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION and literary agent, died of a heart attack in San Diego. February 11th saw the death of FRANK HERBERT following cancer surgery on his pancreas. It seems Herbert had known of the

condition for at least a year. The planned seventh DUNE novel was never started. Both Mr. Mills and Mr. Herbert were 65 years old.

February 20th brought more bad news with the death of much respected editor-in-chief and publisher of Del Rey Books, JUDY-LYNN DEL REY. Mrs. Del Rey had been in a coma since October 17th 1985 following a brain hemorrhage at her office at Del Rey Books. An operation to remove the clot had previously been successful.

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Front Cover Artwork by Arthur Thompson

This issue of Matrix was edited by John Harvey

News Editor - Dave Hodson

Please send NEWS items for inclusion in the next issue to Dave at
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All other correspondence, articles, artwork, advice and abuse to
43 Harrow Road, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3QH.

MATRIX 64 DEADLINE 10 MAY 1986

BSFA membership costs 7 per year and can be obtained through

Sandy Brown, BSFA Membership Secretary, 18 Gordon Terrace,
Blantyre, Lanarkshire, G72 9NA - Membership renewals to Keith
Freeman, 269 Wykeham Road, Reading, Berkshire RG6 1PL

EDITORIAL

I suppose you all expect the usual sack cloth and ashes routine after the non-appearance of Matrix in the last mailing and to be honest you all deserve an apology but really this is all getting too repetitive. So rather than taxing my brain and your patience further with 101 excuses for Dave Hodson's disappearing Matrix trick let's discuss what is being done to remedy this.

Dave has decided that editing Matrix is getting too much to cope with and so has stepped down. Obviously the BSFA is looking for a new editor and until one is appointed I'm sitting in the editor's chair. This has left Dave with the less onerous task of editing the News pages. I trust my presence here will be very short lived, in fact I rather hope you will find some other name at the top of the next Matrix. If not then there should be an announcement giving the new editor's name and address. Until then can I ask that you send your letters etc. to me. I am pleased to be able to say that we have applications from a number of very good candidates for the editorship so Matrix should start to get back to full strength in the near future.

As usual this editorial is being written at the last possible moment and in fact 90 per cent of Matrix is duplicated and ready to go! This does give me the chance to apologise for and correct a couple of typing errors that crept in, the first being in the convention listing. Beacon is spelt with a double 'a' so send your cheques payable to "Beacon" not Beacon as I stupidly typed. The other is on page 20, yes I know that is NOT how you spell competition!

John Harvey

NEWS

* NEW BOOKS...

April Paperbacks: Arrow: THE SKOOK - J. P. Miller £2.95; WINGS OF FLAME - Nancy Springer £2.95; GUARDIANS OF THE TALL STONES - Moyra Caldecott £4.95; THE KINGS JUSTICE £2.95, THE BISHOPS HEIR (re-issue) £2.95 - Katherine Kurtz; WAY OF WYRD - Brian Bates £2.95. Venture: THE CHRONICLES OF THE STAR KINGS - Edmond Hamilton £2.50. Century: THE UNLIKELY ONES - Mary Brown £5.95. Gorgi: THE RAVENANTS - Sheri S. Tepper £2.95. Coronet: WEB OF DARKNESS - Marlon Zimmer Bradley £3.50; ROCKETSHIP GALILEO (re-issue) - Robert Heinlein £1.95. Dent: THE BEST OF FICTION MAGAZINE (anthology including Aldiss, Burgess, Gray) - edited by Judy Cooke £4.50. Futura: THE SHATTERED STARS - Richard McEnroe £1.95; THE ROAD TO CORLEY (new edition) - Richard Cowper £2.25. Grafton: THE OPIUM GENERAL £2.95, THE MAD GODS ANULET (reprint) £1.95 - Michael Moorcock; FIRE LANCE - David Mac £2.50 (this guy writes some good stuff, give it a try - Dave Hodson); NIGHTFALL 2 (rep) £1.95, THE END OF ETERNITY (rep) £1.95, X STANDS FOR UNKNOWN (non-fiction) £2.95 - Isaac Asimov; KING ARTHUR AND THE ORAIL (non-fiction) - Richard Cavendish £2.95. Peladin: THE BUSINESSMAN - Thomas Disch £2.95. Lion: EMBRYON 1: THE SEARCH FOR FIERRA - Stephen Lawhead £2.95. Methuen: ORION - Ben Bova £2.50. Oxford: KAI LUNG'S GOLDEN HOURS - Ernest Bramah £5.95. Pan: THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE (rep) - Arthur C. Clarke £2.95. Penguin: THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER - Edgar Allan Poe £3.95; THE DARK IS RISING (omnibus ed.) - Susan Cooper £4.95. Sphere: SONGS OF THE DEAD MEN SING £2.50. FEVER DREAM (rep) £2.25 - George R. R. Martin; MANSEED - Jack Williamson £2.50; MISSION (rep) - Patrick Tilley £1.95; THE CAVES OF NIGHT (rep) - John Christopher £2.50; INCONSTANT MOON (rep coll) - Larry Niven £2.50. Target: GALAXY FOUR - William Emms £1.60. Unicorn: DRAGONSBANE - Barbara Hambly £2.95; THE SUMMER TREE - Guy Gavriel Kay £2.75. Orion: THE DREAM YEARS - Lisa Goldstein £3.50; ESCAPE PLANS - Gwyneth Jones £3.50; TIME - SLIP - Graham Dunstan Martin £3.50.

May Paperbacks: Arrow: THE TERRIDAE (yet another Dumarest) - E. C. Tubb £1.95; IN OUR HANDS THE STARS (rep) - Harry Harrison £1.95. Gorgi: THE SWORD AND THE SATCHEL - Elizabeth Boyer £2.50. Coronet/MEL: THE SWORD OF THE LAMB - M. K. Wren £2.95; STARKADDER - Bernard King £2.50; V: PRISONERS AND PAWNS (tv tie-in) - Howard Weinstein £1.95; METHUSELAN'S CHILDREN - Robert Heinlein £1.95. Futura: THE HERO AND THE CROWN (DAMAR book 2) £2.50, THE BLUE SWORD (re-iss) £2.50, BEAUTY (re-iss) £2.50 - Robin McKinley; THE SECOND BOOK OF SWORDS £2.50, THE FIRST BOOK OF SWORDS (re-iss) £2.50, EMPIRE OF THE EAST (rep) £2.50 - Fred Saberhagen; HOSPITAL STATION (new ed) - James White £1.95. Grafton: NEUROVANCE - William Gibson £2.50; THE ANUBIS GATES - Tim Powers £2.95. Lion: LILITH - George MacDonald £2.50. Methuen: A HERITAGE OF STARS (rep) - Clifford Simak £2.50. Pan: DREAMSNAKE - Vonda McIntyre £2.50. Pendor: THE PLANIVERSE (rep) - A. K. Dewdney £3.95. Penguin: CAT'S CRADLE (rep) - Kurt Vonnegut

£2.95; MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM! (rep) - Harry Harrison £2.50; THE NARRATIVE OF ARTHUR GORDON PYM - Edgar Allan Poe £2.50. Target: ALLAN QUARTERMAIN - H. Rider Haggard £1.95; THE LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM - Bram Stoker £1.80; DR. WHO: TIMELASH - Glen McCoy £1.60; TULLOUGH AND THE EARTHLINK DILEMMA - Tony Attwood £1.80. Unicorn: JORMUNDGAND - Nigel Frith £3.50; A PRINCESS OF THE CHAMEL - Cherry Wilder £3.50.

June Paperbacks: Bantam: THE PRACTICE EFFECT - David Brin £1.95. Futura: A CREED FOR THE THIRD MILLENNIUM - Colleen McCullough £2.95. Grafton: LYONESSE 2: THE GREEN PEARL - Jack Vance £3.50; STARS IN MY POCKET LIKE GRAINS OF SAND - Samuel Delany £2.50; THE PALACE OF ETERNITY (new ed) - Bob Shaw £2.50; NEGROSCOPE - Brian Lumley £2.50; THE SWORD OF THE DAWN (new ed) - Michael Moorcock (no revised price as yet). Methuen: THE ALCHEMICAL MARRIAGE OF ALISTAIR CROMPTON (new ed) - Robert Sheekley £2.25; STATUS CIVILISATION (new ed) - Robert Sheekley £2.25. Unicorn: DAYBREAK ON A DIFFERENT MOUNTAIN - Colin Greenland £3.50; HART'S HOPE - Orson Scott Card £2.95.

July Paperbacks: Futura: SKELETON CREW - Stephen King £2.95. Lion: EMPYRION PART 2 - Stephen Lawhead £2.95. Methuen: PRIDE OF CHANUR (rep) £1.95, CHANUR'S REVENGE (rep) £1.95 - C. J. CHERYTH.

SPRING HARDCOVERS FROM BRITISH PUBLISHERS...

W. H. Allen: STRANGERS (horror) - Dean R. Koonts £10.95; DR. WHO: THE KING'S DEMONS - Terence Dudley £6.50; THE SAVAGES - Ian Stuart Black £6.95; THE GIANT ROBOT (re-iss) - Terence Dicks £6.95; FURY FROM THE DEEP - Victor Pemberton £6.95; THE CELESTIAL TOY-MAKER - Gerry Davies £6.95; SEEDS OF DEATH - Terence Dicks £6.95 (all the above are April/May releases).

Allen & Unwin: THE DREAM YEARS - Lisa Goldstein £8.95; ESCAPE PLANS - Gwyneth Jones £8.95; A PLACE AMONG THE FALLEN - Adrian Cole £8.95; THE WITCH IN THE CAVE - Martin H. Price £8.95; TIME - SLIP - Graham Dunstan Martin £8.95; BADGAD (part one of THE PRINCE OF STARS IN THE CROWN OF TIME) - Ian Dennis £8.95 (all the above are April releases).

Bantam: KILLASHANDRA - Anne McCaffery £8.95; THE ISLE OF GLASS (first of yet another bloody fantasy trilogy called THE HOUND AND THE FALCON) - Judith Tarr £8.95, released in May.

Bodley Head: GHOST ON THE SUNLIGHT (sequel to QUEEN OF THE LIGHTNING) - Kathleen Herbert £8.95, released in May.

Coronet: XORANDOR - Christina Brooke-Rose £8.95, released in June.

Century: THE UNLIKELY ONES - Mary Brown £9.95; CONTACT - Carl Sagan £9.95, both April releases.

Chatto: GREEN EYES - Lucius Shepherd £9.95 (simultaneous paperback release £3.95) (a certain ex-MATRIX editors favourite new writer, read this book - Dave Hodson).

Constable: THE GREEN LIFE AND THE WHITE GODDESS (Celtic fairytales) - George MacDonald & Fiona Macleod, introduction by Elizabeth Sutherland £8.95, released in April.

Andre Deutsch: THE OLD GRINGO (non SF; based "around the enigma of the death of Ambrose

Bierce" - Carlos Fuentes £8.95, May release; THE LAST ELECTION (near-future Britain) - Pete Davies £8.95, no release date yet.

Richard Drew: THE GOLDEN SWAN £8.95, WINGS OF FLAME £8.95 - Nancy Springer, both April releases.

Elm Tree: A TIME BEFORE GENESIS - Les Dawson, this is supposed to be some sort of humorous book, £8.95, April.

Farricrest: ENEMY MINE (film novelisation) - Barry Longyear & David Gerrold £8.50. STAR TREK: (all June releases at £7.50) BLACK FIRE - Sonni Cooper, ABOOE OF LIFE - Lee Correy, PROMETHUES DESIGN - Sondra Marshak & Myrna Culbreath, TRIANGLE - Sondra Marshak & Myrna Culbreath, THE WOUNDED SKY - Diane Duane, THE TEARS OF THE SINGERS - Melinda Snodgrass (no, this last one is not a late April fools joke).

Gollancz: COUNT ZERO - William Gibson £9.95; THE DAY OF FOREVER (first world hardcover edition) - J. G. Ballard £8.95; BLOOD MUSIC (this book is brilliant, better than Neuro-mancer - Dave Hodson) - Greg Bear £9.95; TOM O'BEDLAM - Robert Silverberg £9.95, all the above are April releases; WELCOME, CHAOS - Kate Wilhels £9.95; MAN OF TWO WORLDS - Frank & Brian Herbert £9.95, these two are due in May; ALWAYS COMING HOME - Ursula Le Guin £9.95 (there is also a cassette of music based upon parts of the book available at the cost of £5.95); MASTER OF PAINWAX - Phillip Mann £9.95, both June; INVISIBLE MOUNTAINS - Bob Shaw £9.95; BLACK STAR RISING - Frederick Pohl £8.95; SPHINX - D. M. Thomas £9.95, all of these due in July.

Grafton: THE REST OF THE ROBOTS (rep - April) £8.95, I, ROBOT (rep - April) £8.95, THE CURRENTS OF SPACE (rep - July) £8.95 - Isaac Asimov; THE CITY IN THE AUTUMN STARS - Michael Moorcock (the sequel to THE WARHOUND AND THE WORLDS PAIN) £9.95; THE SWORDS OF CORUM (omnibus ed) - Michael Moorcock £9.95; DEATH IS A LONELY BUSINESS - Ray Bradbury (a crime novel, but I'm sure it'll be of interest to many of you) £8.95, May; LORD OF THE LEVELS: A NOVEL OF THE PARANORMAL - Michael Bentine (I don't know if this is the ex-Goon or not) £9.95, May; A DARKNESS AT SETHANON - Raymond E. Feist £9.95, simultaneous paperback publication £6.95, July; SONGS OF DISTANT EARTH - Arthur C. Clarke £9.95, July.

Robert Hale: NIGHT OF THE RIPPER £9.95, PSYCHO 2 £9.50 - Robert Bloch, both June; UNIVERSE 13 - edited by Terry Carr £8.25.

Harrari: THE LIVES AND TIMES OF JERRY CORNELIUS (revised edition) - Michael Moorcock £8.95.

Hodder & Stoughton: RAINBIRD - Peter Fox (a thriller set in the year 2000, shades of Clive Cussler) £9.95, June.

William Kimber: (all these titles are published in May at £8.50) SUPERNATURAL SLUETHS - edited by Peter Haining; TALES FROM THE SHADOWS - R. Chetwynd-Hayes; THE HAUNTED GARDEN - Mary Williams; THE DEATH ROOM (a collection of mystery, horror and SF stories) - Edgar Wallace.

Michael Joseph: THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS (rep) - John Wyndham £9.95, April.

MacDonald: THE ANVIL OF ICE - Michael Scott Rohan £9.95; A MEMORY OF WHITENESS - Kim Stanley Robinson £9.95; DOWNTOWN - Vlado Polykarpus & Tappan King £8.95 (simultaneous paperback publication at £4.95), all the

above are May releases.

Library reprints of paperback editions: FIRST BOOK OF SWORDS - Fred Saberhagen £8.95; VAMPIRE JUNCTION - S. P. Somtow £8.95; CREWEL LYE - Piers Anthony £8.95; ATLAM 5: SOME SUMMER LANDS - Jane Gaskell £8.95; DEALING IN FUTURES - Joe Haldeman £9.95, all the above due in April; DAY OF THE DISSONANCE - Alan Dean Foster £8.95; A NOOSE OF LIGHT - Seamus Cullen £8.95, both of these due in May; THE WILD SHORE - Kim Stanley Robinson £9.95, June; HOSPITAL STATION - James White £8.95, June.

MacMillan: THE BRIDGE - Iain Banks £9.95, May (if you haven't read THE WASP FACTORY go out and buy it tomorrow - Dave Hodson).

Methuen: NOWHERE - Thomas Berger £9.50.

N.E.L.: VARGO-MOON - Bernard King (fantasy novel set in 9th century Scandinavia) £9.95, April; THE CAT WHO WALKS THROUGH WALLS - Robert Heinlein £9.95; THE TOUCH - P. Paul Wilson £9.95, both June.

Pani: THE COMPLETE HITCH-HIKER - Douglas Adams (an omnibus of all 4 hitch-hikers guide books plus 'a guide to the guide') £9.95.

Seyvern House: DARKOVER LANDFALL - Marion Zimmer Bradley £8.50; THE MARATHON PHOTOGRAPH AND OTHER STORIES - Clifford Simak £7.95, both April; ON A PALE HORSE - Piers Anthony £8.95, April; LAMMAS NIGHT - Katherine Kurtz £9.95.

Viking: MIRROR IN THE MIRROR - Michael Ende £8.95, June.

Weidenfeld & Nicolson: BOOKS OF BLOOD vols. 4, 5 & 6 - Clive Barker £8.95, June. There will also be a limited edition numbered, boxed set of these books akin to the limited edition of the first three volumes priced at £45 - strictly for completists, we think.

* US PAPERBACKS & HARDCOVERS DUE IN MAY...

Ace: THE WARLOCK WANDERING - Christopher Stasheff \$3.50; MERLIN'S BOOK - Jane Yolen \$2.95; RUN TO THE STARS (re-iss) - Michael Scott Rohan \$2.95; SWORDS OF RAZMILIN 4: DEATH'S ACOYTE - Robert E. Vardeman & George E. Proctor \$2.95; STAR SURGEON - Alan E. Nourse \$2.95; GRIMBOLD'S OTHER WORLD - Nicholas Stuart Gray \$2.95; SATORI - Dennis Schmidt \$2.95; SURVET SHIP - Marion Zimmer Bradley \$2.95; FEDERATION (re-iss) - H. Beam Piper \$2.95.

Arbor House: April: BURNING CHROME - William Gibson (first world hardcover edition of a collection boasting to contain all Gibson's short fiction including collaborations) \$14.95; COLD SEA RISING - Richard Moran h/c \$16.95, May; ONLY APPARENTLY REAL: THE WORLD OF PHILIP K. DICK - Paul Williams (trade paperback criticism) \$7.95.

Avon: SPELL OF MORTAL WEAVING - Esther M. Friesner \$2.95; SIGN OF THE UNICORN (re-iss) - Roger Zelazny \$2.95.

Baen: FAR FRONTIERS VOLUME 5/SPRING 1986 - edited by Jerry Pournelle and Jim Baen \$2.95; RANKS OF BRONZE - David Drake \$3.50; I, MARTHA ADAMS (?) - Pauline Glen Winalow \$3.95; MERCENARY FROM TOMORROW - Mack Reynolds and Michael Banks \$2.95; High Justice (re-iss) - Jerry Pournelle \$2.95.

Berkley: TRIGON DISUNITY BOOK 2: ENTOMA - Michael P. Kube-McDowell \$3.50; BATTLESTAR GALACTICA #12: DIE CAMELEON - Glen A. Larson and Robert Thurston \$2.95; THE CHRONICLES OF TORNOR BOOK 2: THE DANCERS OF ARUN (re-iss) - Elisabeth A. Lynn \$2.95; BRISINGAMEN (re-iss) - Diane L. Paxton \$2.95.

Bluejay: THE THORNE OF SCONE - Patricia Kennealy h/c \$16.95; DARK VALLEY DESTINY: THE LIFE OF ROBERT E. HOWARD - L. Spague de Camp and Catherine Crook de Camp and Jane Whittington Griffin \$9.95.

Bridge: April: MISSION EARTH VOLUME 2: BLACK GENESIS - L. Ron Hubbard h/c \$18.95.

DAM: AMAZON WARRIOR JALAV # 5: TO BATTLE THE GODS - Sharon Green \$3.50; VISIBLE LIGHT - C. J. Cherryh (original collection of stories) \$3.50.

Del Rey: THE SONGS OF DISTANT EARTH - Arthur C. Clarke h/c \$17.95, signed limited slipcase edition \$75.00; THE PATHFINDERS - Geary Gravel \$2.95; THE BARD OF SORCERY - Gerard Houarnner \$2.95.

Doubleday: March: A DARKNESS AT SETHANON: THE FINALE OF THE RIFTWAR SAGA - Raymond E. Feist h/c \$17.95; QUADRIPHOBIA - Alan Ryan h/c collection \$12.95, April: THE HUGO WINNERS VOLUME 5 - edited by Isaac Asimov h/c \$18.95; THE BIRD OF TIME - George Alec Effinger h/c \$12.95. May: TREK TO KRAGGEN-COR - Dennis L. McKiernan h/c \$12.95.

Pocket: STAR TREK: DREADNOUGHT - Diane Carey \$3.50.

Questar: PANDORA'S CHILDREN - KATHRYN LANCE \$3.50; PANDORA'S GENES (re-iss) - Kathryn Lance \$2.95; IT CAME FROM SCHEMNETADY - Barry Longyear (collection) \$3.50.

Spectra: THE COMING OF THE QUANTUM CATS - Frederick Pohl \$3.50; THE GANDALARA CYCLE # 1: THE STEEL OF RATHSKAR, THE GLASS OF DYSKORNIS, THE BRONZE OF EDUARTA (omibus ed) - Randall Garrett and Vicki Ann Heydon \$4.95; THE GANDALARA CYCLE VOLUME 2: THE RIVER WALL - Randall Garrett and Vicki Ann Heydon \$3.50; TRIAD - Shiela Finch \$3.50.

Tor: SHADE OF THE TREE - Piers Anthony h/c \$1.95; FLIGHT IN YKTOR - Andre Norton h/c \$14.95; THE NIGHT OF THE RIPPER - Robert Bloch \$3.50; THE KUNDALINA EQUATION - Steven Barnes \$3.50; CRISIS - James Gunn \$2.95; MASTER OF LIFE AND DEATH (re-iss) - Robert Silverberg \$2.95.

- * The Christian Century, an American periodical, carried what it claimed was the exact location of the Garden of Eden in its January 29th issue. The article's author, the Rev. D. O. Van Syke, fixed the mythical gardens local as being in Galeville, Wisconsin. All readers of Robert Rankin know this to be totally inaccurate; the garden was in fact in Brentford.

- * Doubleday, the American publishers, have received FOUNDATION AND EARTH from Isaac Asimov and slated it for September 1986 release in hardcover. It is reported to be Asimov's 100th book for Doubleday; PROLUDE TO FOUNDATION looks like being his hundred and first.

- * Due for release in the summer of 1987 is TALES FROM THE FORBIDDEN PLANET. This is to coincide with the Brighton Worldcon, CONSPIRACY. The volume will be a totally original anthology and authors already approached include Bob Shaw, Clive Barker, M. John Harrison, Harry Harrison and J. G. Ballard, the common link being that all these authors have signed books at the Forbidden Planet book and comic shop.

- * The sequel to the film ALIEN should be ready for release late this year and, originally enough, is called ALIENS. The plot seemingly involves Earth being invaded by a 50 foot long queen alien whilst Ripley is being court-

marehalled for blowing up the Nostromo.

- * Frank Herbert was sufficiently far enough into a sequel to THE JESUS INCIDENT before he died that his collaborator, Bill Ransom, will probably be able to finish it.

- * From the mouth of Toby Roxburgh comes news that Futura are to re-issue the classic Vampire novel INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE by Anne Rice and have acquired the rights to the sequel recently issued in the United States, THE VAMPIRE LESTAT.

- * Neal Gaiman, co-compiler of that chucklesome tome GHASTLY BEYOND BELIEF, is to begin writing a once a month SF column for the Sunday version of Eddie Shah's new newspaper TODAY.

* THE NEBULA AWARD NOMINATIONS...

Best Novel: HELLICONIA WINTER - Brian Aldiss; **BLOOD MUSIC** - Greg Bear; **THE POSTMAN** - David Brin; **ENDER'S GAME** - Orson Scott Card; **THE REMARKING OF SIGMUND FREUD** - Barry N. Malzberg; **DINNER AT DEVIANT'S PALACE** - Tim Powers; **SCHISMATRIX** - Bruce Sterling.

Novella: GREEN MARS - Kim Stanley Robinson; **SAILING TO BYZANTIUM** - Robert Silverberg; **GREEN DAYS IN BRUNEI** - Bruce Sterling; **THE ONLY NEAT THING TO DO** - James Tiptree, Jr.; **THE GORGON FLY** - Kate Wilhelm; **24 VIEWS OF MT. FUJI**, BY HOKUSAI - Roger Zelazny.

Novella: A GIFT FROM THE GRAYLANDS - Michael Bishop; **THE FRINGE** - Orson Scott Card; **PALADIN OF THE LOST HOUR** - Harlan Ellison; **PORTRAITS OF HIS CHILDREN** - George R. R. Martin; **THE JAGUAR HUNTER** - Lucius Shepherd; **DOGFIGHT** - Michael Swanwick and William Gibson; **ROCKABYE BABY** - S. C. Sykes.

Short Story: PAPER DRAGONS - James P. Blaylock; **SNOW** - John Crowley; **THE GODS OF MARS** - Gardner Dozois; **Jack Dann & Michael Michael Swanwick:** MORE THAN THE SUM OF HIS PARTS - Joe Haldeman; **OUT OF ALL THINGS BRIGHT STARS** - Nancy Kress; **FLYING SAUCER ROCK AND ROLL** - Howard Waldrop; **HEIRS OF THE PERISPHERE** - Howard Waldrop; **HONG'S BLUFF** - William F. Wu.

- * STARDATE, the ex-games magazine that has been turned into more of a straight SF title by its new publisher, will be imported into this country by Titan Distributors. The magazine is bi-monthly and edited by David Bischoff.

* MAY MAGAZINES...

Amazing Stories: July: SOLSTICE - Bill Johnson; **MONEY TROUBLE** - Sharon N. Farber; **THE WINDS OF OBERON** - Brad Strickland; **LOVELY ROADS** - Juleen Brantingham; **STREET TALK** - J. B. Allen; **THE DAY AFTER** - Jonathan Sheen; **THE BROTHERS LAMMIA** - John Betancourt; **ALONG THE SAN PENNATUS FAULT** - R. A. Lafferty; **RACCOONS** - Kevin O'Donnell, Jr.; **THE MAN WHO CURED CANCER** - Carol Depper; **THE KING ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS** - Avram Davidson.

Asimov's SF Magazine: COLLISION - James Tiptree, Jr.; **CHANCE** - Connie Willis; **INVENTIONS BRIGHT AND NEW** - R. A. Lafferty; **FOR A PLACE IN THE SKY** - Richard Paul Russo; **THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN PHOTOGRAPHING NIX OLYMPIA** - Brian W. Aldiss; **THE SHADOW ON THE DOORSTEP** - James P. Blaylock.

Fantasy & Science Fiction: **UNCLE TUGGS** - Michael Shea; **IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME** - Bradley Denton; **EX-CHAMELEON** - Ron Goulart; **RECON MAN IN THE CITY** - Felix C. Gotschall; **A TRANSACT** - Kim Stanley Robinson; **PLAYMATES** - Chuck Rothman; **TADCASTER'S DOOM** - Philip C. Jennings; **THE VIEW FROM THE TOP OF THE TOWER** - Harry Harrison; **POINT ZERO** - Terrence M. Green.

And now, in lieu of a regular fanzine review column, we reprint below an article about fanzines in general, and 4 in particular, that first appeared in Prevent 14, a gensine produced by John Jarrald (Fan Guest of Honour at Albascon, this year's Eastercon), who lives at: 31 Dukes Way, West Wickham Kent BR4 9AU.

WHERE REALITY AND LOST DREAMS MEET

PAUL KINCAID

What is a fanzine? As soon as you enter the minefield of fanzine criticism you come up against that question. Let's face it, criticism is mostly a matter of comparing something with a sort of Platonic ideal, so before you can go anywhere else you have to decide what this ideal fanzine is. Now fandom pretends to anarchy, but in truth it's about as anarchic as a monastery (if a trifle less abstemious). Authority, the dictates from on high, count for a lot. There was a time when the worth of a fanzine was measured by what Greg Pickersgill, or D West, or Joe Nicholas thought of it. Today, heaven help us, Steve Higgins probably fills that role. The loud and lordly voices have shouted out that in each age there are fanzines which are as near archetypal as dammit, be they Stop Breaking Down or Wrinkled Shrew or Tappen or what have you. And if there are today no fanzines to measure up to these near-mythic productions, it sometimes seems that is caused as much by the lack of powerful advocates as any real lack of quality. Or perhaps more accurately, as any real quality in these much-hyped stars. Were they really the measure whose dead hand reaches out still to raise or demolish each neo's efforts? Was Tappen really some golden mean by which we can and must assess the achievements of Mince?

Rubbish!

There is no ideal fanzine, there is no golden mean. Still less is there a golden past. It happens that most people build upon the achievements of the past, they take what worked well before as something that will work well today, or as a springboard into new and more exciting ideas. But do you judge the dive by the quality of the springboard? Do you assess a copy on the stature of the original? When a critic reads a fanzine he has, or should have, a wealth of experience behind him, yet that new fanzine is still fresh and unique and can only be judged as such. You don't read the editor's experience when you read his zine, all you read is his current achievement.

Just so, when you set out to write a fanzine you may be doing so for the first or the fiftieth time, in a very real sense it doesn't matter. Each and every fanzine is

virgin territory, you are forever starting over again at the beginning. Which is not to say that experience counts as nothing, but it is to say that experience will not write a fanzine. It is a tool which, in skilled hands, can help produce improvement from one effort to the next. That is all. Any fan editor who sits down smugly to say: I am experienced at this, therefore what I do is going to work... well, that fan editor is probably due for a rude awakening.

Flashback! Back three or four paragraphs:

What is a fanzine.....

Right, let's start on a slightly different tack. How do you measure a fanzine? What is the standard you hold it up against? Well, if each and every fanzine is unique, with no antecedents or descendants, surely there is no standard. Oh of course you can judge it, judge the quality of the writing, the quality of the artwork, the quality of the layout, the quality of production, all the elements that go into the fanzine can be judged by standards that are valid in or out of the narrow confines of fandom. But to judge it altogether as a fanzine?

All one can do is measure the fanzine against the editor's own conception of what a fanzine should be. Sometimes it is possible to guess at this from the zine itself, especially if the editor is a Steve Higgins, prone to making weighty pronouncements about the nature of fandom and fanzines. More often it has to be gleaned from previous efforts. Each new fanzine is, willy-nilly, one further step towards the editor's definitive statement of what his fanzine should be. Which brings us back, in case you hadn't noticed, to that vexed question of experience.

Which disparate musings were first prompted by This Never Happens 7. TNH is frequently mooted as one of the better fanzines of the moment, and certainly appears to be greeted as if all expectations will be met. Readers are confident of it - it looks the same, therefore it will be the same. And this belief appears to be shared by the editors, for Christina Lake says:

Ideally the previous issue of the fanzine should create the context, but it almost never does. Either there was no last issue, or it was so long ago you've totally forgotten it, or the editor has completely changed his aim and concept between issues. The only exceptions I can think of to this are TNH and Xyster. Lillian and I strive for a modicum of continuity in themes and writers, and to create a general feel about the fanzine which we hope readers and writers will relate to.

So I began to search TNH for this continuity, and did not find it. Unless of course they refer to the fact that the co-editors are always contributors, Lillian Edwards can't avoid the subject of comics, and there is a continuity of look. In fact the more I think about it the more clear it is that their joint concept of a fanzine is dependant upon the look of it.

In this I suspect Lillian is the guiding force, her obsession with comics and with

style (in terms of appearances rather than literary style or anything of greater depth), along with her own artwork all inform the magazine. It is a pity that they seem to exercise little editorial control over the artwork they use - the Captain Kelvin strips are feeble in the extreme, both in execution and concept, and Ros Calverley and Cath Easthope have both done much better work than anything used here and a careful editor would surely have either rejected them or sent them back for re-working. As for Lillian's own doodles, they strike me as very rough sketches without any obvious signs of hard work or revision, and I suspect that some of them at least would not have been used if she wasn't co-editor.

Is a look a fanzine? Oh certainly you know *TNH* from the moment you see it, and as you turn the pages you are safely back in familiar territory. Clearly the editors work hard in producing each issue, with illustrations inserted in the text in a way that makes it all seem quite attractive. It is a pity that the care is not obviously accompanied by an equal measure of thought. The illustrations neither tie-in with nor counterpoint the articles they accompany. There are exceptions to this: Christina's piece on girlfriends is nicely accompanied by two pictures stolen, presumably, from a girl's comic, though it is senselessly concluded by a landscape by Cath Easthope, Simon Ounsley's revival of Gonad the Barbarian is illustrated with two appropriate sketches by Lillian, though I can't say their execution is up to much, and best of all is Lillian's piece on comics where the pictures not only illustrate the work of one of the artists discussed, but also occur alongside the text that specifically refers to them. If only this level of integration between text and illustration were pursued throughout the fanzine it would finally achieve what the editors have so clearly set out to achieve.

In a fanzine were image counts above content, it is perhaps not surprising that the written contributions represent a fairly usual grab-bag of anything that comes to hand. There are no real achievements but numerous signs of editorial laxity. The whole effect is of something a little tired, a little under par. Hazel Ashworth's conreport is fine, but Simon Ounsley's 'The Further Adventures of Gonad the Barbarian' is simply another of his oblique views of fandom. It will be applauded, because Ounsley is fandom's current golden boy, and, as usual, it is quite well done, but for Ounsley it is 'as usual', he's done it before, and better (notably in *TNH* 6 3/4). My own contribution descends into bathos and sentimentality and clearly needs the firm editorial control it did not receive. There was a year between delivery and publication, and in that time it was once hinted that I might be asked for a rewrite, but nothing came of that. My fault for delivery first draft copy, their fault for using it. As for the lightweight conceit of Tim Jones, it's the sort of thing we've seen countless times before, and this example is no better and no worse than others of its kind, the only question is why include it here?

When we come to the editorial contributions, however, we come to the best and the worst of the fanzine. The best is Lillian's

compilation of quotations under the title 'True Love', an intelligent, challenging and sensitive piece of work. The worst is the uncredited take-off of the admin pages of *TWP* - and what proportion of the readership could be expected to know what was being gyped? I dislike this whole 6-year-old-twins persona that Lillian and Christina put on, I find it a wearisome excuse - "don't blame us, we're just little children". Well, this is the 6-year-olds at their worst, giggling in the corner and thinking how clever it is to be naughty, when in fact all they are is trite and unpleasant. Bad taste is fine, Roy Kettle has raised it almost to the level of an art, but where it is done simply to show off it is silly and reprehensible. And I for one don't like jokes about Linda Pickersgill committing suicide or Maureen Porter being pregnant (and that is in despite of whatever personal interest I might have).

Between these two extremes are a good piece by Christina on girlfriends that somehow falls short of the standards she can achieve, Lillian's piece on comics which can have told aficionados nothing new, and provides no personal perspective for the rest of us, it is competent journalism but not really fanzine material, and Christina's ill-organised 'Article of Faith' which had some good general points to make but which was flawed by erratic critical judgements and a tendency to go way over the top into wooliness and meaninglessness. Comparing Ounsley's conreport in *TNH* 6 3/4 to 'The Affirmation' does justice to neither work. "Many American fanzines are unreadable simply because they are unreadable!" is a stupid statement that tells us nothing, least of all whether and why American fanzines are unreadable, and I still have to work out the meaning of: "Maureen has developed to somewhere between perfection and extreme this style."

After the plaudits given to earlier issues, this may be an example of the editors settling back upon experience, thinking a good fanzine comes easy. They have reduced it to a formula based on their conception of a fanzine - the lay-out, the production values, the personality of the editors - all the things they can now do with their eyes closed. But it's not enough, and where they have worked hard, for instance in putting together 'Hispanic Graffiti', it only serves to show up a somewhat lackadaisical approach elsewhere.

Someone else I suspect of settling back upon his laurels is Steve Higgins. With a safe reputation as leader of the fanish critical revival, he is briefly in a position of being able to utter any gobbledegook and find it engraved upon fanish tablets of stone. *Stomach Pump* 10 is not gobbledegook, but it is hardly up there with what has gone before. Actually, what did go before? I remember SP5, the carefully orchestrated fanish criticism session, but bigger all since then. If SP10 is anything to go by, it's because Higgins hasn't bothered to carefully orchestrate anything since then. 6 made his reputation, mention *Stomach Pump* and that's the issue everyone thinks of, but how much that represents his concept of a fanzine is open to question. Oh it ties in very closely with what he says, but not what he does. Higgins in Theory and Practice are two very different

creatures.

In a letter to Pervert 13 we get:

The most pernicious error was your implication that rigorous editing was incompatible with regular publication schedules. There's no point publishing at all if your material doesn't manage a certain minimum level of competence - the need to communicate regularly isn't going to be served by a fanzine which is so bad it doesn't communicate anything when it does appear.

All very praiseworthy and true, but in Stomach Pump 10 we get:

At the other end of the room is a pile of articles gathering an accusatory layer of dust. Beside it is an even taller pile of loes, which when I get drunk enough I might actually finish reading.

The second hardly suggests the "rigorous editing" demanded in the first, but it is the second which certainly sets the tone for what follows. SP10 bears all the hallmarks of something cobbled together for the sake of putting out a fanzine. His own introduction is a ramble of unconnected anecdotes that never build up to any point - exactly the sort of writing he usually has little time for elsewhere.

Then, in response to a letter from Hazel Ashworth, he makes a strong plea for serious writing in addition to humorous pieces, when this issue of Stomach Pump is notable for a complete lack of any serious writing. Like Steve I like a leavening of serious articles with humorous, and likewise I see no reason why serious articles should be humourless, it's precisely because of this balance that Stomach Pump tends to be one of the better zines around, and it's precisely because there is no such balance in this issue that it becomes just another run of the mill fanzine. Yawn.

So, what exciting prospects does Higgins hold out for us? Well, there are two letters overblown into articles though neither is really enough to carry that extra weight, two articles, and a gossip column that not only seems to lack any scurrilous truth, but also falls abysmally to muster any bite in its fiction. A sad, flaccid, pointless thing.

The extended letters consist of Judith Hanna anecdotalising on how Joseph Nicholas came to terms with the nasty side of sheep farming, an amusing trifle but no article, and Michael Ashley being ... well, Michael Ashley. Ashley is one of those curious characters who seem to do and say nothing unless it is coldly calculated to make him appear nastier than ever. I suspect him of being incapable of any genuine passion since he declaims everything which such fire and noise and artificiality, his maunderings are written with bile but no talent and I wonder that he seems to have found a secure and regular spot in any Higgins production. Still, if either or both of them consider that annoyance is sufficient motive for what they do, let them get on with it, I have no interest in Ashley's blether and no respect for his opinions, but as long as he's not left frightening the horses we might as well leave

him to his solitary devices if he can't get off any other way.

The articles include a piece by Tony Berry about his hatred of creepy-crawlies, about which I can say little other than that in some previous incarnation Higgins would have questioned whether it was fannish at all and have said it didn't belong in a fanzine. I wonder if his view of fannishness is changing, or is theory over-ruled by expediency?

Nigel Richardson's contribution is the best here, partly at least because he is writing at greater length than anyone else. Judith's piece, for instance, can hardly be judged because it's over almost before it's begun. Richardson and Ounsley are two of a kind, both writing about ordinary events with a surreal twist. They do it well, but the trouble is always that surreal fantasising about a girl seen at a bus stop or in a pub tends to sound somewhat the same after a while, and I rather fear that they are both reaching that point with me. I enjoyed this piece, but I'm not sure I want to read any more of them. And it certainly doesn't have the substance that this fanzine so sadly lacks.

Steve Higgins begins his fanzine with the complaint that no fanzine worth mentioning has appeared since the last Stomach Pump. If he were critic rather than editor I think he'd say exactly the same about his poor offering.

And having gone on at far greater length than I intended about a couple of fanzines that didn't come up to my expectations, I'll try to deal more briefly with a couple that did, though the expectations may be lower.

It is quite easy to see what Ian Sorensen believes a fanzine to be, it is evident in issue after issue of Mince. Indeed, Mince is perhaps the most consistent fanzine going at the moment. It consists of generally short pieces, usually humorous, with no intention to be anything other than lightweight and amusing. He rarely talks about fandom, that common topic of fanzines, nor about conventions, nor any of the usual fanzine fodder. Instead, we get excruciating puns, anecdotes about himself and a small cast of other regulars (Mike Molloy seems to have become a knee-jerk funny character now, his name dropped in just to ensure a cheap laugh if things are getting too serious). It's not exactly what I like in a fanzine - the puns are just bad, the relentless good humour is wearying, it's about as substantial as candy floss, and there's a self-conscious twopenness about it that makes me wince - but it can't be denied that it's one of the most consistent fanzines around. Sorensen has clearly worked out exactly what he wants a fanzine to be, and he's stuck rigidly to that formula. The Ten Commandments even includes a run down on all the previous issues, complete with his own coy judgements on them. (I applaud the motive if not the achievement).

At least he announces that Mince 10 is to be the last of the breed. Perhaps he'll give up on fanzines as disposable junk and concentrate on Conrunner which at least has the potential to make a serious contribution

to fandom. A forum for views on running convention is something we've needed for a long time, particularly now that there are so many in this country, and so many are not living up to expectations. Conrunner isn't there yet, and indeed it still has a long way to go. Some articles are still too general to be of much use, others are too particular to allow application to other conventions, he has so far failed to get the right balance. He has yet to run an analysis of exactly why some conventions do fail, and he has also failed to provide contrasting views. There is an underlying conception that runs through the zine about what shape a convention should be - for instance both Jonathan Cowie and Sue Stuart in this issue assume a convention that is unlike any I would really enjoy - and no contrary voice has yet expressed itself in these pages. But at least Conrunner is a start, and an honourable start.

Jim Barker is someone else who seems to have a set idea of what constitutes his fanzine. A revolution could occur in the world of fanzine publishing, and Helpmaboab would still come out looking and sounding exactly the same. There may be the occasional outside contributor, but they have little or no effect on the look or flavour of the fanzine. To that extent, Helpmaboab 5 is archetypal. For this really is nothing more than an update on the private and professional life of James Barker Esq. As a letter to friends who may be wondering what's happened to him since his last letter (Helpmaboab 4) it's fine, but as a fanzine?

What Sorensen and Barker are both doing is seeing fanzines within a very limited framework. They can fill that framework regularly and easily, which is why their fanzines are consistent. But they choose to ignore all else that might go into a fanzine, for that might take them beyond the bounds of their competence. Fair enough, it produces a reliable product, but an unexciting and in the long run an uninteresting one. Steve Higgins, Christina Lake and Lillian Edwards all have a broader vision of what a fanzine might be, which opens them to more failures (such as their latest efforts). The broader vision requires greater effort to achieve it, and they don't always show themselves willing to make that effort. Nevertheless, their success when they do achieve it can be quite glittering. In terms of the targets they set themselves, in terms of how they measure up to their own conceptions of a fanzine, TNH 7 and Stomach Pump 10 must be accounted failures, while The Ten Commandments and Helpmaboab 5 are probably successes. Even so, I can't help preferring the failure of one to the success of the other.

Fanzines reviewed:

This Never Happens
Lillian Edwards and Christina Lake
1st Floor Flat, 47 Whiteladies Rd., Clifton
Bristol
Stomach Pump
Steve Higgins
200 Basingstoke Road, Reading, Berks, RG2 0HH
Mince & Conrunner
Ian Sorensen
304a Main Street, High Blantyre Glasgow
Helpmaboab
Jim Barker, 113 Windsor Road, Falkirk,
Stirlingshire

Due to my close personal contact with the editor of this issue, I've managed to wangle myself some space to plug a cause close to my heart:

GUFF

as seen by Eve Harvey

GUFF is a fan fund. A way for lots of people to put some money together to send one lucky sod on a free holiday and given her/him a free convention. At its basest that's the truth but there must be something more to explain the plethora of funds around today - TAFF (the most venerable), DUFF, PFANZ, SEFF and, of course, good old GUFF (well, as the 1983 winner I might be just a wee bit biased here). GUFF - Going Under Fan Fund or Get Up-and-over Fan Fund depending on your departure point - is aimed at establishing further contact between Australia and Europe by sending a delegate from one to the other alternately. I went to Australia for the Worldcon (Aussiecon II), and now know why GUFF is something worthwhile and deserving of far more attention than it gets at the moment as the poor relation to TAFF.

I think it's fair to say that most of us are in fandom to meet and exchange views with people; people from different parts of the UK and as many different countries as possible. With the distances involved, however, contact can only be maintained by the written word - fanzines being the easiest method to talk to each other on more than a one-to-one basis. Over the past decade Australia has been pretty quiet on the fanzine front as seen from Europe. Only a few have been making it across the gulf, and those mainly of one genre - sercon (serious and constructive). Hence not much contact between the bulk of European and Australian fandom. Having gone last year I can report that Down Under has a very active fandom, full of interesting people I'd never heard of before, and never would have without the trip because they aren't active in areas that communicate with the world at large.

I hope I succeeded in my ambassadorial duties and that many of those people I met will follow up and establish contact over here on a much broader front so that we can all start talking to even more people. In 1987 we'll have an Aussie over here to attend our worldcon. Conspiracy, and I sincerely hope we can welcome, entertain and impress him/her as much as the Australians did for me. The candidates are (in alphabetical order since I've got to be impartial) Valma Brown, Irwin Hirach and Jean Weber. More info can be gained from me at the address below.

Oh, and I did have a fantastic holiday, thanks.

As a fund-raising effort, I have lots of goodies to sell or auction - books, fanzines, D&D magazines, etc. If you're interested write to me at the following address:

43 Harrow Road,
Carshalton,
Surrey SM5 3QH

and I'll send you the current issue of GUFFSTUFF which contains a complete list together with news etc about GUFF. And watch out for GUFF flyers in future mailings.

CONFAN

CONVENTION NEWS

Two items of news to come out of Albacon which affect future Eastercons (besides Becon winning next year's con - see below) are that two year bidding is to be operated from next year and that an Eastercon constitution is to be formulated. The first of these means that next year's bidding session will be for Eastercon 1988 and 1989. So if you're planning for a future Eastercon get it together for Becon. Tim Illingworth is preparing an Eastercon Constitution for presentation at Becon, if you have any points you wish to include contact Tim at 63 Drakes Rd., Chessington, Surrey.

CONVENTION ROUND UP

BALLCON

- The Eleventh European Science Fiction Convention
10 - 13 July 1986 - Zagreb, Yugoslavia

Membership - Attending 25 US\$
Supporting 12 US\$

Send cheques/POs/etc. to Ballcon, c/o Generalturst, Congress Dept., Praska 5, 41000 Zagreb, Yugoslavia.

The flier for the con gives very little info on the what or who of the convention, still if you are into Eurocons there will be plenty there to entertain you.

FIFTEENCON

- A Convention to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Brum Group.
11th to 13th July 1986 - Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham

Membership : £6:00

Send cheques/POs/etc. to Pauline Morgan, 321 Sarehole Road, Birmingham 28

Guests of Honour : Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison

Believe me that is the best double act you'll see on the con circuit! More info. on the con from Bernie Evans, 7 Grove Rd., Acocks Green, Birmingham 27.

CONCEPT

- Unicon 7 (Un7con)
8th to 10th August 1986 - University of Surrey, Guildford

Membership : Attending £8:00
Supporting £4:00

Send cheques/POs/etc payable to "Concept:Un7con" to 9 Graham Rd., Wealdstone, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 5RP

Guest of Honour : Tanith Lee

FANTASYCON XI

- The British Fantasy Society Annual Convention
26th to 28th September 1986 - The Midland Hotel Birmingham.

Membership : Attending £10:00
(£9:00 BFS members)
Supporting £2:00

Send cheques/POs/etc. payable to "Fantasycon" to Fantasycon XI, 15 Stanley Rd., Morden, Surrey, SM4 5DE

NOVACON 16

31st October to 2nd November 1986 - DeVere Hotel, Coventry

Membership : £8:00 attending
(£10:00 on the door)

Send cheques/POs/etc to Graham Poole, 86 Berwood Farm Rd., Wyde Green, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands.

Guest of Honour : E.C.*Ted* Tubb
Special Guest: Chris Evans

Progress Report 1 has just been published and reveals that the room rates are £21:50 single per night and £16:50 per person per night twin/double. Following certain unsociable activities (vandalism and unauthorised multiple occupation of rooms) by some members of last year's Novacon the hotel and committee are promising to get heavy on offenders this year!

CONCEPTION

- A celebration of the 50th anniversary of the 1st ever SF convention, held in Leeds in 1937.

13th to 15th February 1987 - Grand Hotel, Leeds

Membership : £6:00

Send cheques/POs/etc. payable to "Conception" to 12, Fearnville Terrace, Oakwood, Leeds, LS8 3DU.

BECCON '87

- The 1987 Eastercon
April 1987 - Metropole Hotel, NEC, Birmingham

Membership - Attending £10, Supporting £5.
Note that these rates will be going up at the end of September, or thereabouts, by £1.

Send cheques/POs/etc., payable to "Becon", to Becon'87 191 The Heights, Northalt, Middx.

Guest of Honour - Keith Roberts
Fan Guest of Honour - to be announced

After running three successful Becons already the committee look set to bring the same efficient level of organisation to Eastercon. It will make a welcome change to have a new venue and some new ideas?

CONSPIRACY '87

- The 45th World SF Convention

22nd August to 1st September 1987 - Metropole Hotel and The Brighton Centre, Brighton

Membership : Attending £25
(Child aged 8-14 £12.50)
Supporting £10.

Note that these rates will be going up on 2nd September so book early!

Send cheques/POs/etc. to Conspiracy '87, PO-Box 43, Cambridge CB1 3JJ and make them payable to "Conspiracy '87".

That great SF circus, the Worldcon, doesn't come to the UK very often, the last time was 1979 and who knows when the next will be? So if you want to experience it, book now before the price goes up.

The guest list runs as follows:

Guests of Honour - Doris Lessing,
Alfred Bester,
Arkady & Boris Strugatsky,
Jim Burns

Fan Guests of Honour - Ken & Joyce Slater,
Dave Langford

Toast Master - Brian Aldiss

The first Progress Report is just out and to say the least the production puts to shame many convention programme books. The current membership level is reported to be 2160 - it's going to be a biggie!

MEXICON 2 - THE SEQUEL

by Martin Hewitson

Well you know how it is with sequels, in some ways they are better than their predecessor and in others they are worse; so it was with Mexicon 2. For me there were two main differences between this convention and Tynecon 2-The Mexicon, whereas the latter was held in Newcastle and I went with my girlfriend (see Matrix 58), this one was held in Birmingham and I went alone.

As a convention hotel the Royal Angus suffers from one main flaw - there is not enough function space on its one main floor. The organisers of Mexicon 2 used the available space so that the main programme hall and the fan room were situated either side of the bar/lounge, meaning that the book room had either to be located three floors higher or, as happened, split into four small rooms on the same floor. Thus each dealer had a room of their own but only about four or five people could browse at any one time. It's all a matter of the convention committee and their priorities, other people would use, and in the past have used, the fan room as a book room. Thus is the compromise of the Angus.

An important aspect of a Mexicon is its solid, single stream programing and this convention was no exception. The programme began at 7 pm on Friday with the Opening Ceremonies, an event traditionally not loved by con-committees as they find themselves on display to the gathered throng and thereby named as "the-ones-to-blame". The item is also used to try to introduce famous names in attendance, the danger here being that those remembered are "in the bar" and those forgotten sit quietly hurt in their seats. Mexicon got the first over as quickly and managed to minimise the second as much as humanly possible. This was followed immediately a Question Time session chaired by Greg Pickersgill with panelists Kev Williams, Ted White, Caroline Mullan and Chris Evans. One question put to the panel was a request to name their high and low points of SF reading in the past year. It quickly became apparent that Caroline was the only one to have read any SF in the past

year, and she couldn't remember what it was called!

The programme continued with a talk by Iain Banks, author of "The Wasp Factory", followed by a panel discussion on the state of fantasy today. The interesting feature of this being a slightly shloshed Geoff Ryman talking about the amount of kitsch that is around these days.

Later in the evening the first item of the film programme, "Scream and Scream Again", was shown. This was one of only four films scheduled for the convention and one of those failed to arrive! I think that unless the films can make a positive contribution to the overall idea of this type of con - that is one which is centred on Written SF - then they ought not to be included at all.

Friday continued with all the usual SF convention activities - most of which require little official organisation. The principle one being socialising; talking to all those fans you haven't seen since the last convention and with all those fans you've only just met.

Saturday had a writers workshop, chaired by Lisa Tuttle, running concurrently with the main programme (what was that about a single stream programme?). This ran from 11 am to 4.30 pm with a break for lunch. The six people in the workshop (including myself) had each submitted a piece of work before the con. These were circulated to all the participants so that we all had chance to study the stories before we sat down to discuss them. I think everybody enjoyed it and received helpfull advice but I also think I can safely say that the best thing I contributed to the workshop was some body heat! I still have a lot to learn.

Other programme items I attended were a panel entitled "Why We Write", chaired by Rachel Pollack with four writers from different literary areas - Anne Hamill (fan writer), Jan Mark (pro), John Clute (critic) and Alan Moore (comics writer) - and a panel on the use of horror in fiction. This started entertainingly with the four panelists having a "jamming" session using the furniture as instruments and singing as they tested their mikes. Definitely one of the best programme items so far.

Later I went in search of the Fan Room and was very impressed. In my opinion the Fan Room at the first Mexicon was a mess but in complete contrast this was well put together, welcoming and accessible. As a consequence I spent some time in here, picking up some fanzines, listening to fan conversations (which were exactly what I had read them to be) and came away knowing more about fandom than before. For me a most successful feature of the convention.

Saturday night had a disco in the main hall which gave Rocky Horror fans a chance to dance out their obsessions.

The Sunday programme began at 11am with "Transatlantic Echoes", a panel featuring Ted White, Avedon Carol and K W Jeter, all from the other side of "the Big Pond", giving their views on the British SF scene and life in the UK. Another of the panelists, William Gibson, suffered from one of the illnesses that were rife at this convention and

therefore could not make it to the panel. Luckily this was one of the few occasions that he was absent from the convention. This panel was followed by a talk given by an author's agent, Pamela Buckmaster. She chose to enlighten us on the relationship between the agent/author and agent/publisher. This was very good indeed and I would have liked to see it extended to include an author and a publisher in the discussion.

Unlike the first Mexican, where an auction was held as an off the cuff event at the end of the convention, this time the auction was included as part of the programme. Because of this it lost some of the spontaneity and sparkle but was nevertheless still good fun. Pages were ripped out of books considered less than "good" as an incentive to buy them, books were thrown across the hall and Gregg Pickersgill refused to sell a book because of the low bids offered. Part of the money raised went to the Mexican Earthquake Relief Fund.

After the closing ceremonies at 9:30 pm there was a party with free drink, the Mexican Death Punch, lovely stuff! That night saw a few of us staying in the bar and lounge until breakfast, watching Iain Banks recording his publisher singing on a mini cassette, sponsoring Andrew Rose to tie his shoelaces (not as easy as it sounds), and getting people to try a horrible concoction of drinks - all for charity of course.

During the weekend there were a few quizzes. The Brain of Mexican, open to all convention members, was won by Dave Langford; a Fans vs. Pros quiz was won by the pros (as they did at the first Mexican), in this Malcolm Edwards could have won without help from his three team members. Then there was Supremacy, a contest between the sexes, which tested the competitors sense of touch, taste, sight and hearing amongst others. This was won by the male team.

So, what were the bad points about this convention? Well the Book Room being a number of small book rooms, the hotel running out of drink (not to mention the price of cider) and the lack of heat in the main hall from Saturday to Sunday evening. This was I am sure directly related to the theft of one of the wall phones on the Friday night and its return on Sunday. Other points were the non arrival of Joan Aiken (family commitments) and Brian Aldiss (work commitments-watch out for a revised edition of "Billion Year Spee", the late start of most of the programme items, average 10 mins and in one case half an hour. Finally the amount of illness that was affecting many people. But what do you expect during winter.

The good points included a far better fan room, meeting more people (pros are real people too), Cactus Times-the daily news paper. Well done to Abbey Frost and Mike Hamilton who managed to produce five editions in two and a half days. But of course most importantly was the fact that everybody enjoyed themselves.

On the whole, as a sequel to Mexican 1, I would say it was no better and no worse. What I would like to know is "when do we get Mexican 3?" - the trilogy complete.

MEXICAN 2 - 7th to 9th FEBRUARY 1986

MEDIA REVIEWS

THE RAY BRADBURY THEATRE: THE PLAYGROUND
- 5 January 1986, ITV, 30 mins

Directed by William Fruet
Produced by Seaton MacLean
Starring William Shatner

OVERDRAWN AT THE MEMORY BANK
- 11 January 1986, C4, 1.5 hrs

Based on a short story by John Varley
Teleplay by Corinne Jucker
Directed by Douglas Williams
Produced by Robert Lantos and Stephen J Roth
Starring Raul Julia
Linda Griffiths

Reviewed by Terry Broome

Ray Bradbury's stories are simplistic and fascinating. His preoccupation with intrinsically evil children is apparent in such works as 'The Veldt', 'The Small Assassin' and in the teleplay of 'The Playground'. This story is given a bone-jarring theatrical introduction by the author and finished with him in a self-congratulatory mood, but overlook this and it becomes an enjoyable production.

The published version concerns the fears of a father for his son, his own paranoid hate for school and the bullies who frequent the playground. Wishing to save his innocent son this horrific ordeal, he makes a pact with the power which controls the ground and is cast into a living hell. In the process, he discovers many of his former 'fellow' pupils have made the same deal: not only will there be another twelve years of bullying but, as an underscore, he knows how events will turn, and so has the extra dread of living a life that will be boring because it has already been led. There is a flaw in that the bullying can be so easily avoided second-time around if everyone involved co-operated.

The teleplay makes some interesting alterations. In the written version we are in no doubt as to what is going on, but one of the strengths of the teleplay is that during the course of it, we are left wondering if Charles Underhill, the father, is nuts, or if he really has encountered an evil force. In the written version, it is the son who is happily ignorant of the deal his father has made, but in the teleplay, it is the father who is unhappily ignorant of his son's deal, and so in adapting the story to television, the son has changed from an innocent into a focus for evil, a transitory Jekyll and Hyde.

The story works on a much more rational basis than the play, which falls down because Steve, the child, could have no idea of the possible torture ahead - his cold-blooded craftiness is too developed for a boy of

three or four. Steve must also have, at least, a strong dislike for his father and this is never explained. Shatner puts in a credible performance as Underhill - possibly the finest piece of acting he has ever done.

OVERDRAWN AT THE MEMORY BANK appears in the collection 'In The Hall of the Martian Kings', as does 'The Phantom of Kansas', a thematic prequel set in the same universe. What constitutes identity? Varley explores this theme using the device of the memory cubes ('The Phantom of Kansas' explores it further with cloning). In the story, Aram Fingal goes to the Kenya Disneyland voluntarily and enters the body of an African lioness; in the teleplay, he is sent to Novacorp's Nirvana complex for compulsory rehab, and is put into a baboon (not a lioness as the TV TIMES indicated). This is achieved by recording his memory on a cube, which is then implanted in the head of the host animal, so connected that the human has virtual control over the other animal. Fingal's body, meanwhile, is stored according to the disc he is wearing, but a kid from a school party changes it and Fingal's body subsequently goes missing.

There are complications, because Fingal's cube is an economy model, made for a short life-expectancy, and will disintegrate even more rapidly if not kept activated. In the play, he is taken out of the baboon when it is attacked, and because the technicians can't find his body, he is hooked up to a computer. He 'wakes up' and begins to recreate the world he EXPECTS to see, his mind unable to comprehend the true nature of his predicament. The screen version mentions no clones, nor does it mention the insurance cubes of the original story, so Fingal, as played by Raul Julia, will effectively be dead once his cube - and with his identity - falls to pieces.

Apollonia (Linda Griffiths), a technician, is assigned to him to prevent him going nuts, keep him (and thus his cube) activated, and warn him about tampering with the computer whilst he is inside it. But as soon as Fingal realises he is dreaming his whole existence, which is very boring for him, he turns more-and-more to his dreams and visions of his favourite films and movie-heroes (as shown here by 'recreations' of 'Casablanca' and, in particular, Bogart and Lorre). The company chairman doesn't like meddling and enters his fantasy world - at first trying to scare him, but when Fingal starts tampering with the programming itself, to kill him. Apollonia, meanwhile, tries to give him protection, and a romantic relationship forms between the two. His body, of course, is eventually found and Fingal returns to it, having fixed the computer to do as much damage as possible, especially to the company chairman.

Just as there are important and crucial differences between the two versions of 'The Playground', so there are with 'Overdrawn'. In the story, the events are set in a Disneyland, underground, on the Moon; if Fingal's Kenya memory cube is destroyed, he can expect to live on from the memory stored on an insurance cube he made three years previously, even though he would lose three years of his life; and if his body is

destroyed, there is always a clone - his three-year-out-of-date memory can be put into not so the teleplay. The only mention of old films get in the written version are a few brief paragraphs, and Fingal's achievements are earned in a totally different manner, by spending his time studying various courses for a diploma in computer studies. He gets the diploma in what is to him a year, but in reality is only six hours, an accomplishment made even more rewarding when you realise he was told, as a child, that he'd never be good enough. The screen version overlooks these messages - ITS Fingal achieves success by ruining the system - it's the old American cliché of the Misfit-Against Society (Fingal's world, as seen in the play, echoes '1984' and 'Brave New World'). The accomplishments of the original Fingal are that of a man who has beaten the system from the inside; and the nature of Fingal's relationship with Apollonia is not so assured as in the screen version, and far less romantic, and for these two reasons - because they're more realistic - they're more satisfying.

The story explores, excitingly, the possible capabilities of the mind, a theme almost entirely overlooked in the play, which loses its power in comparison - a weak, glossy shadow of the original.

The differences in the teleplay metamorphosises it from a story of the nature of reality and the image of a realistic hope in a state utopia (as in the story), to an escapist romantic-fantasy concerning the archetypal non-conformer in a sterile dystopia. Both versions have a sense of humour, the play sometimes self-consciously, and despite my comments, they are both enjoyable and entertaining.

The complicated nature of 'Overdrawn' requires you to catch it right from the very start, or you will be distracted trying to catch up with the events: this is pleasing, in a way, because it indicates intelligent sf may still have a place on the American screens, and worrying in that it will be less accessible to the general public.

'The Playground' short story is far more entertaining than the play simply because of the incidental detail and the insights you could perhaps derive from knowing how Charles Underhill is thinking; likewise, the story version of 'Overdrawn' is easier to accept. It is internally more consistent (except for the author's choice of lioness) and vastly more detailed. The differences between the two versions of the latter aren't as great as those of the former, even though 'The Playground' is far simpler, because the one big change in Bradbury's story is more crucial than the changes in Varley's: it was for this reason that the teleplay of 'Overdrawn' proved more satisfying than that of 'The Playground'.

They are both recommended, but with reservations.

"THE BERNT ARSE PACK AT THE ROYL XCHAYWIS"

The Manchester Royal Exchange Theatre's production of Riddley Walker by Russell Hoban
Reviewed by Roy Gray

Riddley Walker at las mayd it to the stayj in Russell Hoban's adaphshon of is oan buk. Iwl reis the temptyashun of caryin on like this cos a joks a jok an this is a revu.

My wife is a regular at Manchester's Royal Exchange Theatre and alerted me to this production last year. I did send the news to the BSFA and I hope some of you managed to take advantage.

We went along to director Braham Murray's talk on the play and one of the two discussions of the play held between the audience, director, writer and actors after a performance. These talks on productions and "after match analysis" are a regular feature of R.E. productions.

At the talk it became evident that a significant proportion of the audience have been walking out, that most critics were not in favour and this latter is sufficient to prevent future commercial productions of the play.

This is a pity because the play was well conceived, expertly realised and faithful to the book in a way that rarely occurs with films. Where the play strayed from the book - and Hoban had made some changes - it usually clarified it and made it more accessible, though obviously not enough for some.

There is no doubt it is a difficult novel and it made a difficult play. So how was it done? Readers will remember the degenerate form of English in the book - it is set 3000 years in the future, after a nuclear war. This is used to good effect because as speech this language is much easier to understand. So the play, as the novel, is full of puns, wordplays and extended meanings but where some of these escaped me in the novel they stood out here. For example: hart/stag hart/heart and hart/hearth. Despite this strange language the protagonists' emotion as they realise what the world has lost is communicated very effectively to the audience.

The dog pack, the "Bernt Arse Pack" were played by a group of actors. Although they annoyed several reviewers I found this worked very well, surprisingly well in fact. They scratched, pawed, panted, stretched and slobbered powerfully around the stage area to great effect. About all they did not do was leave the odd turd for the cast to step in.

The dogs were also a major flaw in the production because the old pack leader's death early in the play was mishandled and may have made, to those of the audience who were ignorant of the novel, the later behaviour of the dogs with Riddley Walker appear a result of chance rather than reason.

Overall the plusses far outweighed the minusses and repayed all the efforts of the production team, writer, cast and audience.

I did suggest to Braham Murray that he do more SF based productions. In the nicest way

he was not keen on this, citing poor writing as a reason to keep off SF. True as it may be this makes little sense to me, after all plays from novels have to be rewritten and he steered Russell Hoban through 9 drafts before "Riddley Walker" was satisfactory. There was no time to pursue but perhaps the cause is not lost yet.

TIMESLIP - 28 December 1985 - ITV
Written by R Holmes - Starring John Taylor, Virginia Hey, Jeff Harding

Reviewed by Colin Harris

I suppose one should be grateful for any science fiction that fights its way into our living rooms at a time when Blake's 7, Dr Who and the rest are rapidly becoming no more than fading memories. However, even the lack of alternatives was not enough to make up for the severe deficiencies of this single 30-minute show, dumped as it was in an unfavourable 11.30 p.m. slot. The TV company clearly agreed with me, dragging in Duran Duran's John Taylor amidst much publicity in a pathetic attempt to boost audiences. In the event he provided no more than a token presence, as a hacker whose computer enables him to observe the future events comprising the story proper. The story itself, of a pair of lovers under attack from the computerized security system in their office block, was competent, but in terms of originality suggests that our TV SF at least may be at an all-time low. Even the final twist (the executive's lover is herself an android) was a failure, clearly thrown in 'for good measure' whilst contributing nothing to the plot beyond its immediate surprise value. Come back Sapphire and Steel, all is forgiven!

BSFA PROFILES**SANDY BROWN - MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

Job: Chartered Quantity Surveyor
Family: Wife - Helen; Daughter - Elspeth (who at 9 was youngest recorded fanzine producer)
Joined BSFA: 1972
Membership Secretary: April 1979 to date
Fanzines Edited: The Friends of Kilgore Trout Magazine Nos.2-5
Fanzines Produced: Herulius lacrymans 1 to 3
Fanzines Co-produced: Drygulch Nos.1-6;
Indian Scout Nos.1-19; Northfield's Mortician!
Favourite SF Authors: Jack Vance, Cordwainer Smith, Ian Watson, Richard Cowper, Keith Roberts
Favourite non-SF Authors: C S Forester, Ed McBain, John Hersey, Eric Ambler, Arthur Conan Doyle, Dashiell Hammett, S J Perelman
Favourite Poetry: Ogden Nash, Robert W Service, Fitzgerald's 'Omar Khayyam'
Sports: Badminton, playing cards, watching cricket
Hobbies: Photography, winemaking, home computing, films, hoaxes
Tipples: 'Famous Grouse' with ice
Favourite Music: J S Bach, Richard Strauss, Beethoven, Musorgsky, 20's jazz, Bob Dylan, Gilbert & Sullivan
Favourite Artists: Pats Waller, The Corries, John Cooper Clark, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Flanders & Swann

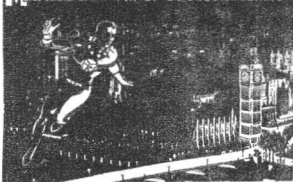


The Comic Review

COMICS NEWS...

Contracts have been signed for a SWAMP THING/MR. MONSTER team-up to be published by DC +++ First Comics are planning yet another set of adaptations of Michael Moorcock books: THE WIERD OF THE WHITE WOLF is the Elric adaption and will last six issues, THE CHRONICLES OF CORUM will run indefinitely +++ The TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES will be the guests of Munden's Bar in GRIMJACK # 26 +++ Howard Chaykin will produce an AMERICAN FLAGG SPECIAL to introduce the characters for his TIMES series of graphic novels +++ The offices of Eclipse comics has been devastated by a major flood in California and as a result several titles have been delayed. The affected titles are THE CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS INDEX, MIRACLEMAN # 7, D N AGENTS # 7, and SCOUT # 7. +++ The Marvel comic issued to raise funds for famine relief, HEROES FOR HOPE, has raised \$150,000 +++ Chuck Beckum's initial work on MIRACLEMAN has been greeted by a less than enthusiastic audience, the sample art below shows why I think +++

MIRACLEMAN - PIN-UP BY CHUCK BECKUM



Josh Palsano, the owner of the newest London comic shop GOSH!, is to launch a new British comic anthology title provisionally titled GOSH! Co-publisher and editor on the title is to be long-time comics fan Floyd Jones-Hughes with ex-MARVELMAN artist Garry Leach as advisory editor. The first few issues will feature the PARADAI strip originally due to be released by Eclipse comics by Brendan McCarthy. Leach's first superhero work since MARVELMAN and a brand new strip called EDGE-NAN which is a superhero strip set in gangland London. Brian Bolland is also due to contribute to the magazine in some capacity +++ The third printing of TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES will sport a Rich Corban cover +++ Kitchen Sink are planning a 3-D volume of the work of underground artist Robert Crumb +++ The London Comic Art Convention has confirmed Jack Kirby as guest of honour +++ DREADSTAR will be published by First Comics as of number 27 +++ Titan books are to release albums of HALO JONES books 1, 2 & 3 and an omnibus edition of D.R. AND QUINCH which will include the original FUTURE-SHOCK appearance of the two characters, of course everybody knows these were written by fan favourite Alan Moore of SWAMP THING, MIRACLEMAN and V FOR VENDETTA fame +++ John Byrne's last issue of the FANTASTIC FOUR will be number 295 +++ LOVE & ROCKETS book 2 will be out this summer and will reprint issues 3 & 4 of the magazine.



The cover from DC Comics up-coming HEROES AGAINST HUNGER, to follow the same theme as Marvel's HEROES FOR HOPE and raise funds for famine relief.

THE BSFA AWARDS

- COMMENT BY NICHOLAS MARONEY

No doubt the British Science Fiction Awards will be a subject at this year's annual general meeting. As proved time and time again you can't please everybody all of the time, but I'm sure things could be better than they are.

On the one hand you have non-SF works being nominated and even winning the awards. On the other you have a very small number of people voting.

Firstly, I cannot understand why at the end of the day people should want to vote for non-SF works. No matter how good they are there's hardly much point giving them the British Science Fiction Award. Even fantasy material should not be considered since there are such things as the World Fantasy Award. The situation was becoming a bit chronic when last year the novel category had just one work of science fiction in it. Hardly surprising then that this novel went on to win both Hugo and Nebula awards.

On the subject of the number of votes, it was reported in the June/July '85 mailing that nearly twice as many people voted than last year. In the next mailing the number of votes and ballots was reported and despite the doubling the figures were woefully short of respectable (i.e. just about breaking the 130 ballots barrier). The Hugo awards managed roughly three times this.

Why was the number of ballots so pathetic?

Before I answer that question, I'll consider just how successful the result was.

The Hugos are awarded at a convention habitually attracting a greater potential voting committee and taking place significantly later in the year. As far as the BSFA Awards are concerned these advantages can't be conjured up.

There is a case for saying we have enough voters of sufficient QUALITY for the numbers not to matter. I don't doubt the quality of last year's nominations for best novel (Mythago Wood, The Glamour, Empire of the Sun, Nights at the Circus, Neuromancer) but I wish we could persuade the voters to vote for SF.

How many of you people out there know what SF is?

I'm not asking you to define what it is, I'm just asking you if you can tell the difference between Tolkien and Herbert, or the difference between The Einstein Intersection, The Reefs of Earth, The Dies Irae Trilogy and Homer.

If you can't recognize an SF novel when you read one then you're in the wrong organisation.

I propose a separate category for Best Non-SF Novel. In this you could vote for the best Fantasy and also the best Mainstream novels whose authors owe development in their work to the conventions of SF.

That's all very well, but now I can answer my first question. The reason the number of ballots was so pathetic was that it isn't

easy to vote.

You have (I have, that is) three weeks to sort out your/my nominations. After that you have umpteen possible nominees to find and read if you're a completist. If you just wait for the nominations to arrive two months later you could have up to five novels to track down and read.

Let's be pessimistic and say you haven't read any of them and they are all hardbacks. You have two months to do your business. I can't afford to buy them so I'm off to the library. Let's be optimistic and say it takes three weeks for them to arrive. The Post Office wastes a couple of days while they let you know. You've got a little over a month to read them. A book a week - no problem.

Unfortunately there are a couple of assumptions in the above that may cut some of us out. I haven't even gone into the possibility somebody else might want the same books i.e. another BSFA member. If you're not going to the Eastercon you've got to meet an earlier deadline. Isn't it a lot of hassle just to vote for some award?

You decide.

My opinion is that things would be a lot simpler if you cut out the hardbacks and wait for them to come into paperback. There won't be any blurb on the first edition about winning the BSFA Award but you can't have everything.

What if a book doesn't get into paperback? Then it's probably no good anyway. The people lined up at the front didn't take that comment too well at last year's AGM and I'm not sure why. Do they actually believe a nomination helps the book get into paperback? I can just imagine them thinking, "Even if it happens once, it makes it worth all the hassle."

Is that why we have the awards? If that isn't the reason, what is? Tell me, I'd like to know.

MEMBERS NOTICEBOARD

WANTED: Contact from any SF/F fans and clubs in the South East.
Dave Kelly, 179 Ramsgate Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 2EW

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THE NOTIONAL: Keep up with the SF News and Reviews from "Down-Under". The Notional is published monthly by leading Australian Fan Writer Leigh Edmunds. Copies available through UK agent John Harvey, 43 Harrow Road, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 3QH. Subscriptions £7.50 for one year - sample copy 70p (refundable on your first subscription)

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MEMBERS NOTICEBOARD is your way of contacting other BSFA members if you are looking for a book, want to sell something or simply want to make contact. It's free so why not use it - send your ad to the Matrix Editorial Address today!

WRITE BACK

THE LETTERS COLUMN

DAVID BOYCE
EAST COTTAGE
BLITON HALL
HARROGATE

First of all let say that you and the other editors do a fine job. Considering that it is a purely spare-time activity and

completely voluntary I think that you are all to be congratulated. I have no regrets at all on joining the BSFA! I am quite satisfied with what I receive for my money and I see myself maintaining my membership for a long time to come. Having said all that I do have some points to make which I hope will be constructive.

I discovered Science Fiction 16 years ago at the age of 14 and have considered myself an SF fan since then. I never wanted to read any other kind of fiction once I found SF and I very rarely have. My first SF was a book by Andre Norton that I came across in the Junior section of the public library. Then my brother-in-law introduced me to Asimov and I progressed from there. The point I want to make is that until 18 months ago I had no idea that the BSFA existed. I found out about it when I saw a copy of Vector in a bookshop, which I believe was there thanks to the efforts of David Barrett (all credit to him). Surely then the BSFA needs more publicity. I can't help wondering how many more people there are like me, or like I was, reading SF but never having heard of the BSFA.

Now for some comments on Matrix. What happened to your editorial in M62? Why weren't there more media reviews? Don't let the Media reviews slip. My main complaint is that I HATE the illustration at the head of the letters column. Do we have to have that awful picture? It makes me feel like skipping the page altogether. Congratulations to Simon Walker and Chris Carney for the crosswords - I find them then impossible to complete (I'm afraid I don't know any Czech SF playwrights) but they are very cleverly put together. I loved the transcript of the Bob Shaw talk in M61.

You can see that I've taken notice of your comments re. the letter column heading and there are rather more Media Reviews in this issue. Now onto more comments on the BSFA and publicity.

IAIN ANDERSON
ORNUM
BANCHORY
KINCARDINESHIRE

The most important thing the BSFA MUST do is come out of the closet. If you want more members you will have to tell them the BSFA exists.

I am a case in point, I have been an SF fan all my life and a serious reader since I was 15, that's now almost 9 years ago yet I did not know the BSFA existed until the summer of 85 and then it was purely

by accident. I flicked through the back pages of a book and noticed the BSFA's name - now how can you expect a large membership with this kind of publicity or lack of it?

I know money is tight but perhaps an inexpensive way to gain publicity is through posters, although I have no idea how much such an exercise would cost. If the BSFA could print posters I would gladly go around badgering bookshops and libraries into displaying them. I don't know how many people this would attract but at least the public would know of the BSFA's existence. As to the number of mailings - keep them the same - if they were increased there would be less time to read the books.

P.S. Tell Kevan McVeigh that if he wants to hear good music (see M62) to listen to Rush's 2112 or Hemispheres or any of Tangerine Dream or the classic Yes albums - supplies great atmosphere for reading SF.

Publicity for the BSFA is a perennial concern and getting new members in is essential to the continuing health of the Association. But unfortunately there is not the budget for TV ad campaigns, full page ads in the Guardian and hoardings all over England. I also believe that we don't really want vast numbers of members - not if we continue to operate as an amateur organisation. Serving 800-1000 members is bloody hard work at times, double that number and the whole thing might even collapse! If the decision was to aim for a membership of this size, then dramatic reorganisations would have to take place first, so that the system could cope with the influx of numbers. It could almost turn into a 'chicken-and-egg' situation - to manage a large membership full-time salaried officers would be required, but couldn't be afforded until we had the membership.

Seriously, we are on the look-out all the time for ways of acquiring the members we need and unfortunately these methods mean that some 'fish' slip the net. There were some BSFA posters around at one time but I'm not sure who has them now, perhaps Sandy Brown can throw some light on it. I think the numbers problem will raise its head again in the very near future, or be solved by the Worldcon in 1987 if the 90%-odd rise in membership that occurred after the 1979 worldcon happens again. But until then let's go on to Kev McVeigh, whom I hope noticed that P.S.

KEV MCVEIGH
37 FIRS ROAD
MILNTHORPE
CUMBRRIA

Why was it possible to produce issues 57 & 59 in a fold over spine, rather than the staple down the side of the others, but not for all the rest? It makes the first impression so much better.

Aside from the stapling the cover of M62 was very impressive though 16 pages is a bit on the slimside surely? After M56 was described as "rather skippy" at 25 pages things have gone slowly downhill (ignoring the 8 page M61) to this low point. Why? Are you short of material? Whose fault is this, is it not coming in or merely not good enough? Also where was the editorial in M62? You list it in the contents page and refer to it on the letters page but I cannot find it, which is a bit poor in an otherwise fairly good issue.

The answer to your first question is simple - money. To do the

folded-over MATRIX we have to use a commercial printer, the side-stapled format can be done on our own equipment, therefore saving money. It is the long-term aim to switch to your preferred format, but as always money limits ambition. Why was A62 only 16 pages long? To be honest it was done in a bit of a rush and there was not the time to obtain articles and columns plus regular columnists not coming through etc.. This gives you some idea of what happened to the editorial - it didn't get written!

JON RYAN You asked 'What direction
19 KIRKROFT AVE should the BSFA be
KILLAHARSH taking?' For what it's
NR. SHEFFIELD worth here is my opinion.
Before I begin, may I make
clear that opinion is what this is - the view
of one member asked to comment.

I'll start by being rude. Our editor stated that "I cannot promise that I won't Foul Up on an issue of Matrix again.....". Sorry but I find this inexcusable. When I joined, I paid my seven quid (of which more later) on the understanding that I would receive a given number of mailings. I do not think it is unreasonable to expect to receive them.

I'm not blaming Dave personally - problems do arise, nowt we mere mortals can do about them. What does seem wrong is a system that doesn't allow for them. Would it not be wrong to elect a reserve editor who could take over should Dave (or any of the others) not be able to get the job done?

On the subscription : seven quid is four pints of beer or six packets of fags or 58p per month. That is not really very much. But 'tis enough, I think. However if I was asked politely to make a small contribution towards, say, a new printing machine or whatever, I would be happy to do so - what say the rest of you out there?

I would also like to know what the membership is, and what is being done to raise it. How about a few incentives? A while ago you said that you cannot give away a free digital watch to everyone who recruits a new member, or afford to advertise in the 'Times'. Well digital watches can be obtained wholesale for about 70p each and the 'Times' advertising costs start at £4.00 per line. Or have you thought about asking various publications if they would be willing to run an article about the BSFA? More practical may be to offer a free mailing to anyone who can drag in a new member.

A couple of economies that come to mind - first does time and money need to be spent compiling and sending out a list of members names and addresses to everyone? The only people whom I can imagine have any use for this are the editors of fan mags. Secondly, why not combine Vector and PI? They both serve broadly the same purpose so why keep them separate?

In conclusion, may I say that I think the BSFA is well worth keeping and I for one intend to remain a member.

OK re the litho machine, but it's only a small part of the problem - we can acquire new machinery, but who will operate it? I've had enough after 6 years and nobody else has come forward willing to help.

It's difficult to say exactly how many members there are at any one

time but currently it's about 800. Your ideas for publicity are well worth considering and I hope those responsible do just that but I really doubt that the cost of a Times ad would even pay for itself in extra members.

I'm afraid that the saving on not distributing the membership list is not that great as it doesn't cost much to do. The purpose is to allow you to see if there are other fans in your area. Combining VECTOR & PI is up to the editors.

NICHOLAS MAHONEY I'm coming to find that
(No address on the so called myth about
the letter I'm the BSFA's favourite reply
afraid) isn't as much of a myth as I thought. Correct me if I'm wrong but I believe my last letter had a stamped

addressed envelope in it. I'm quite sure you're very busy so don't crack up but isn't there something wrong when you haven't got time to do the job? Doesn't it indicate there ought to be a few more changes. Vector now has more than one editor so why not more than one editor for Matrix too?

It nags at the back of my mind that that might not be the reason. Maybe you just don't like my ideas or the way I express them. Maybe my imagination is more vivid than even this organisation's average but it strikes me I'm being treated almost as if I'm a dangerous revolutionary whose ideas didn't ought to get into the air. I know from some conversations I had at Yorcon III that I'm not alone in thinking that there ought to be a few changes. The letter column simply does not reflect the kind of talk I heard. There seems to be quite a bit of verbal war between Bernard Smith and Dorothy Davies of late but isn't this a little more fundamental, a little more, not to put too fine a point on it, important.

It's also noticeable the letter column isn't as large as it once was and you said it was the most important thing in Matrix. I AGREE, so let's have more letters and more room for illiterates like me if that's the reason I cannot get in.

I would also like to complain about the nominations list. 'Sharra's Exile' doesn't belong on it. I'm also wondering if 'The Integral Trees' was excluded by a hardback publication or not. If not then its absence is rather embarrassing. My main bellyache is that you don't tell us which ones are hardbacks. Fortunately being an extraordinarily regular visitor to bookshops - good and inadequate - I know the difference in the vast majority of cases. The BSFA award forum was a disaster. One letter said nothing in particular, just stirring up dust, and the other suggested such a ludicrous and disorganised alternative that no one would've gone for it. What the hell is going on?

Well, I hope that the fact that your letter has seen the light of print allays your fears of being ignored. The only thing I can really comment on is to agree that yes, Matrix probably does need more than one person on the editorial team. But that's for those who follow to decide on.

TERRY BROOME Sixteen pages for Matrix
23 CLAREMONT ST. is pitifully short, made to seem even shorter by the sorry lack of mainstream SF news, reviews and a rather short local. The cartoon strip I found to be rather pointless. It seems to

start in mid-story, goes nowhere, and isn't explained - if it's a serial, at only four or six readings a year, the action won't progress far and the readership is not only likely to be bored of it, but to have forgotten the previous one....it is drawn well, however.

I left the British Fantasy Society when I realised all I'd ever get from them were pages and pages of boring and totally useless book lists. Perhaps useful to anyone who can keep up with new hard/soft backs, but useless to anyone at all if the information is already a month or two out of date. Is it a page filler? I ask myself. Part of the disillusion with the Matrix is the repetition of news with LOCUS - but I'm glad it's there because not many readers subscribe to the latter magazine. Sorry to see no reminders about The Times yearly SF competition, especially as it has finished for another year.

Even though I enjoyed James White's Novacon speech, I felt Matrix was the wrong place to put it, at least in the form it was presented. Matrix is, foremost an SF News magazine, and while the latter half of White's speech fits this description, the first half is decidedly fanish and might therefore have been better suited to a fanish fanzine. For this reason, I didn't enjoy the editor's account of Novacon; it gave only information on the fanish sides, in particular, HIS experiences. The result is that it isn't a fair account of the convention, fanish or formal, at all. There was the filking, the games room events, and the popularity of the lounge near the bar on the ground floor. But Matrix is an SF News zine, it's not supposed to be a fanish fanzine, and so, here, these comments are misplaced. It wouldn't have been so bad if even a cursory mention of the Main Programme had been attempted, but it wasn't. Concepts in Matrix have a duty to mention these things, the stated intentions, and how well they actually turned out. Hodson fails to list why, technically, the convention was a disaster. His personal opinion and impressions are of little importance when disassociated from an overview of the facts. The fact is the con failed to meet up to its intended objectives (I was there, with many of the intended speakers never showing, leaving John Brunner to do an impromptu speech himself, lifeless but commendable. The discussions which were held were petty or anaemic with a generally poor showing, and the film programme messed about so much it was hard to find out what was on when. The fan room, once moved, was extremely inaccessible and thus uninviting to a first-time con-goer. And in both locations, proved to be too small. The other fan events were more approachable, and despite the almost total breakdown of the Main Programme, everybody did seem to enjoy themselves, even me!

The layout of the reviews in Matrix were annoying - with a film and two convention reviews sandwiched inbetween comics reviews, and I got the horrible feeling Matrix was turning into a COMICS - Review/News fanzine because of this imbalance - only one core SF review.

Inky Fingers was a rather cursory and ultimately rather pointless column. Useless to all those not considering producing their own fanzines, and useless to anyone thinking of it, because of the sheer

lack of information. Potential fanzine producers would have to search elsewhere for information anyway, especially to do their sums on the expenses of each system. What WOULD have been useful, is a Disadvantages and Advantages list, with approximate costs set out, giving minimum and maximum totals one can expect to pay out producing the fanzine by that method.

Finally, is MATRIX a BSFA fanzine, or a Hodson fanzine? I ask because insulting Dorothy Davies without apparent reason, especially in a BSFA mag, seems to me to be a highly personal endeavour, and of no importance to the BSFA or its membership. If he has a gripe, then he should state the facts, SHOULD HAVE stated the facts when Dorothy was still with us and could have made a response on an equal basis. It is disappointing to see MATRIX reduced to the level of a gutter-press, the editor reduced to back-biting bitchiness.

I've been with the BSFA for three years now, and have witnessed the decline in quality of MATRIX and this saddens me. Up until now, there has still been reasonable satisfaction from reading it, because I used to enjoy it. I don't write often to VEC or P.I. because I'm satisfied with them, and enjoy them tremendously. I'm writing now because I don't want to see MATRIX getting worse, I want to see it IMPROVING. As MATRIX now stands it will be anathema to prospective members, and a very off-putting sight to current members. I like the BSFA and I want to see it carry on, if not thrive. I write because I care about the BSFA and think MATRIX, as it stands, will seriously harm the Association in the long run. So pull your thumb out, Dave, and restore MATRIX to its quality and its importance.

I have to differ on the subject of what should and shouldn't be in these pages - Matrix SHOULD have a fanish fanzine element to it. I agree that it cannot all be this, nor should be. Matrix must combine news & fan activity material. Therefore James White's speech is essential Matrix material - 95% of BSFA members would never have seen it otherwise. The speech was included for 3 main reasons: 1) it gave something of an insight into the mind of an author the membership would have heard of, but in a style unsuited to Vectors 2) it provided a 'taste' of the sort of talks etc that are provided at conventions, for those who have never attended one! 3) it provided a 'heavier' piece of reading as contrast to snippets of news, reviews, letters etc - the lack of which has been a complaint that has been made against Matrix by several people who have been members for several years and could compare previous styles of Matrix to its present format.

Concepts by their nature will be only HIS experience - is anybody capable of saying what anybody else's experiences were? After all, what is a book review, film review etc? Surely a concept is merely a review of an experience in similar vein to that of a book? OK, so Dave, because all he saw was the fanish side, missed out comment on the programme don't blame his report so much as the fact that there wasn't a second complimentary report printed alongside it. In fact I wish you had submitted one, judging from your letter you certainly had some worthwhile comments to make.

I've not been very happy with "Inky Fingers" and that's why it is not in this issue. I must point out though that I did start off the series with a cost comparison of fanzine production methods. Your comments have prompted me to rethink the idea through and I hope to have something to cover this aspect of fan activity out soon.

I have to agree that Matrix has not been all that it should be recently. Dave's good intentions when taking over the editorship have not been realised, that unfortunately is the risk the Association has to take when appointing an editor. Still we must look to the future and the promise that Matrix will improve rapidly in the next few months - stick with us SF fans.

That's all for the letters for this issue, which is not very surprising. As you will see from the lack of What'sHappenedFrom I've used all of the available letters so unless you write there will be no Loccolium in Matrix at all. Let's have your letters on any subject that interests you not just the BSFA.

John Harvey

Competition Corner

By LIZ SOURBUT

Entrants for the "Mr. Spock Meets Sherlock Holmes" competition were: HELEN BERNARDI, TREVOR BONE, COLIN HARRIS, KEV MCVEIGH ("Why do you think he's Holmes's?" "The clothes for a start; then his fingers have the callouses of a violinist, and he's a cocaine addict."), HELEN MCNAB (Spock: "You are Sherlock Holmes, I presume?" Holmes: "Enterprising of you, sir. May I ask how you deduce that?" Spock: "Elementary, sir. There's no face like Holmes's."), DAVE WOOD ("The Vulcan has agreed that if I will teach him how to snort cocaine, he will teach me how to wiggle my ears!"), and the winner this time, WILLIAM WALKER, who finishes his piece with the worst joke I've come across in a long time:

(After the Klingon attack has been repelled, the closing, lighthearted scene, so typical of Star Trek).

Spock enters, carrying a bucket of paint and a brush.

"What's the paint for?" asks Kirk.

"Oh," says Spock, "I suddenly felt the urge to paint the door."

"Tell me," says Holmes eagerly, "that must be yellow paint you have for the door, and d'you know what that will make it?"

"Oh, go on, say it." Chorus the whole crew.

"Well," says Holmes, "if you paint that door yellow it will become -- a lemon entry, my dear Spock."

((Think about it.))

"Actually, the paint is green," says Spock smoothly.

"W-w-what?" gasps Holmes. "How can the paint be green? How did you do it, man?"

"Didn't you know?" says Spock. "After all, it's a well-known fact. I am always in control of my emulsions."

And if you think you could have done better, well, why didn't you? Why not try this:

MATRIX 63 COMPETITION -- ANAGRAMS

Below are 9 anagrams of the titles of SF novels and stories. Each anagram gives a (very) cryptic clue as to the title. Solve the anagrams and then, from your general knowledge of SF, tell me who wrote each piece. Two marks for each correct title, one mark for each correct author, and the person with most marks wins. Just in case of a tie-break, and as an added challenge for those of you who doubt my genius (!) in compiling these things, you may if you wish also send me a witty and relevant anagram for: TIME CONSIDERED AS A HELIX OF SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES by (of course) Samuel R. Delaney.

So, with Scrabble sets at the ready, here goes:

1. FALLING YET TIL NIGHT
2. STRONG, FOR A MAN
3. CLOCK IN PAIN. THEN TREK
4. A HARD TIME QUEST
5. O, MY SOUL. I BLAZE!
6. JEER THAT BIG GOD
7. LET NASCENT VALOR SLIDE
8. IN AS INTENDED, BUT NOT HOME. WHY?
9. THAT HERO DUE FOR THE WORST?
10. IT NO VAPID, CHASTE TALE

(The punctuation is not that of the original title.)

Entries to Liz at 8 Petersfield Rise, Roehampton, London SW15 4AE. The prize as usual is a book token.



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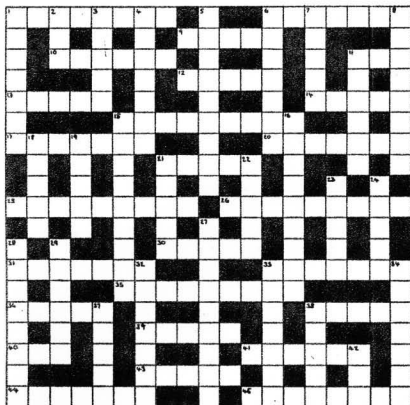
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Tues - Sun 10am - 6pm.

Billion Year

Crossword No. 5

Simon Walker



ACROSS

1. Mega defence computer created by D F Jones. (8)
6. Story of Art/Science enmity by Harness. (3,4)
9. Family of Scandinavian gods. (5)
10. Atheling was a well known one. (6)
11. Film by Michael Campus of breeding ban. (3)
12. Covenant spent an awful lot of books pursuing this law-giver. (5)
13. Creator of Sector General series. (5)
14. ...in Italbar ? (2,3)
15. Cowper's giant sub. (9)
17. Renegade wizard in JRR's saga. (7)
20. Hero of Blade Runner. (7)
21. Personal transport method of Tiger/Tiger! culture. (5)
25. Van Vogt's fictional version of dianetics. (9)
26. Collaborated with Merrill as Judd. (9)
30. 18thC. Irish satirist. (5)
31. Empress of Van Vogt's Isher. (7)
33. Ghastly people who cut out all the best bits. (7)
35. They brought Earth's childhood to an end. (9)
36. Kuttner's Gallagher can only work when he's this. (5)
38. US fanzine, won a Hugo in '74. (5)
39. Culinary wizard from Hordes of the Things. (5)
40. Obsessive character of Pohl's Gateway series. (3)
41. Irish regular of the Flying Swan, Brentford. (6)
43. House of Poe. (5)
44. Winged horse. (7)
45. Lord Valentine's four-armed friends. (8)

DOWN

1. Perelandra creator. (1,1,5)
2. Missive to fazine. (3)
3. Home to the Hobbits. (5)
4. Fabled horned beast. (7)
5. Odd this, I could've sworn I knew what this word was all about, after all it is sitting in my word list and I wouldn't have put it there without a good reason would I but I just can't remember what that reason was, however it's too late to change it now so you'll just have to guess it O BYC doer (though I'm convinced nobody actually bothers with this wretched thing) so anyway - 'a stuncure' is an anagram of it and I'm sure it's got something to do with stars or somesuch and Van Vogt keeps ringing bells, God knows why - I think my mind is going, you know how it is...oh yeah, it's got 9 letters....
6. Wyndham's violent vegetation. (7)
7. We all do this. (5)
8. Leiber's silver scribes(8)
11. 12 heavenly divisions.(6)
15. Clemens' Riverworld state. (9)
16. Wells' moon dwellers. (9)
18. A spirit of the air. (5)
19. Publisher, of JRRT. (5)
21. Christian myth hero. (5)
22. Author, by Vonnegut. (5)
23. Material of Silverberg's tower. (5)
24. Imaginary medium now known not to exist. (5)
27. Homicidal vehicle by Sturgeon. (9)
28. Sheekley novel. (8)
29. Great river of Middle-Earth. (6)
32. Station orbiting Aldiss' beleaguered planet. (7)
33. US Midwest "rural" author. (1,1,5)
34. Iron Curtain answer to 2001. (7)
37. Author, 'Flowers for Algernon'. (5)
38. Feline god of 1 down's world. (5)
42. Archaic indeed - non SF I'm afraid. (3)

THIS
SPACE
TO
LET

Well it should have had the answers to the last crossword in it but they are not available at the moment so you'll have to wait for Matrix 64. See you then.

