

M

A·T·R·I·X

75p

THE · NEWSLETTER · OF · THE · BRITISH · SCIENCE · FICTION · ASSOCIATION



February March 1987

68

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	Maureen Porter	3
THE AWARDS DEBATE	Paul J McAuley, Joseph Nicholas	4
WALKING ON GLASS - THE BSFA COLUMN		5
Collating for the Curious		5
BSFA Profile - Joanne Raine		7
NEWS	Paul Kincaid et al	7
MEMBERS NOTICEBOARD		10
THE PERIODIC TABLE		11
The Benelux SF Project - Graham Andrews		11
STORE WARS		13
SFF Books - Stan Nicholls		15
MEDIA REVIEWS		15
The Magic Toyshop - Caroline Mullan		15
A Boy and His Dog - Phil Nichols		16
Looker - Jon Moran		16
The Children of Green Knowe - Maureen Porter		16
Time - Roy Gray		17
FIRE & HEMLOCK - The Fanzine Column		17
WRITE BACK		20
SOAPBOX - Dave Wood		24

ARTWORK

Cover	Stephen Wanderson
p. 3	Jim Barker
p. 4	Stephen Wanderson
p. 7	Ian Brooks
p. 15	Neil Allan
p. 20	Richard McLaren

MATRIX Contributing Editors

NEWS

Dave Hodson
104 Debden
Gloucester Road
Tottenham
London N17

MEDIA REVIEWS

Mark Greener
38 Dunmow Road
Bishops Stortford
Herts

CLUBS

Ron Gemmell
79 Mansfield Close
Birchwood
Warrington
Cheshire
WA3 6RN

BSFA CO-ORDINATOR

Paul Kincaid
114 Guildhall Street
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1BS

MATRIX EDITOR

Maureen Porter
114 Guildhall Street
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1BS

FOCUS EDITOR

Paul Grunwell
218 Rainsford Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 2PD

(0303 52939)

(0245 350889)

PAPERBACK INFERNO EDITOR:

VECTOR EDITOR:

Andy Sawyer
1 The Flaxyard
Woodfall Lane
Little Weston
South Wirral
L64 4BT
(051 336 3355)

David V Barrett
23 Oakfield Road
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 2UD

(01-688-6081)

Copyright: ©BSFA Ltd 1987. Individual copyrights are the property of the authors and editors.

Please note that any opinions expressed are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the editor or the BSFA.

ISSN: 0307 3335

Printed by: PDC Copyprint
11 Jeffries Passage
Guildford
Surrey
GU1 4AF

BSFA MEMBERSHIP costs £10 per annum and is available from:

Membership Secretary: Membership renewals:

Joanne Raine
33 Thornville Road
Hartlepool
Cleveland
TS26 8BW

Keith Freeman
269 Wykeham Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG6 1PL

Typesetting by Maureen Porter (with a little help from Paul Kincaid) - typos are her fault.

Production by Maureen Porter (with rather more help from Paul Kincaid) - crooked numbers are his fault.

RED SHIFT

Another issue, another editorial. My thanks first to all those people who sent Christmas wishes, get well messages or commiserations about the snow. Christmas was, how should I put it, memorable? New Year proved even more so as BoSFA HQ disappeared under a pile of snow and left your trusty editor snowed in and unable to get to work. Oh dear, what a shame! The extra week's holiday was very welcome however, and I spent a very pleasant time curled up in front of the fire watching the Co-ordinator hard at work (work fascinates me - I could watch it for hours), inbetween watching the travel broadcasts and being very glad I wasn't under that snowdrift twenty minutes up the line. Everything you heard about it was true, and then some. But we're back to normal now, I'm afraid, although the post is still dodgy.

I must admit that I am starting to feel a little happier about the way *Matrix* is progressing. My first issue was a struggle, my second marginally better, and last issue, I thought, had some semblance of real organisation. What people think about this one remains to be seen. More importantly, things are at a stage where one can start planning several issues ahead, organising contributions round specific themes. What have I got in mind? Ah, well some of that would be telling, but I would like to enlist some help from administrators of writing groups and apas. I want to do a general report on what groups are available, how they are progressing, whether there are places available, that sort of thing. I can arrange this for the apas I already know about (TWP, Pieces of Eight, PAPA, TO) and for the Orbiter workshop, but I'm fairly sure that there must be some other apas I've not yet come across. I did hear a rumour about a comics apa, for example, and is there anyone out there who can advise about overseas apas. All information would be gratefully received and put to use.

This edition of *Matrix* sees the return of the magazine listings, the one thing that people have persistently campaigned for (I get nervous going to the TUN these days in case someone else explains that this feature simply must return as life isn't worth living otherwise). I hope it can be a regular feature - just send me the magazines. More volunteer reviewers would be appreciated. I can't promise you review material immediately but it would be useful to have your names on file. Specialist reviewers would be much appreciated - areas such as media and SF cinema, fantasy role playing, they will all need coverage sooner or later, and it would be very nice to have the people ready to call on.

I've published a preliminary list of specialist bookshops, by no means complete, so addenda and amendments would be welcome. There is also the first in a series of features on bookshops, taking us a little more behind the scenes. Stan Nicholls has been putting in some valuable work on behalf of *Matrix*, and I'm glad to finally have this feature under way.

As usual, I am still keen for more contributions from BSFA members - media reviews, con reports, Soapbox pieces - the usual sort of thing, so keep the contributions flooding in.

However, I have to report failure in trying to get this awards symposium together - people just didn't respond. Fair enough, but I'm printing the two lengthy pieces I did receive, so as not to waste the time and effort of Joseph Nicholas and Paul McAuley.



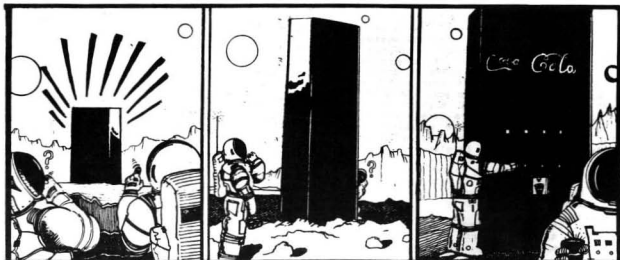
1987 is - can you have failed to notice - the year that the Worldcon comes to town, in the shape of Conspiracy '87 at Brighton. Right now, I'm looking for people who are going to be at the convention, for all or part of the time. The BSFA is going to need people to man a desk for the duration of the convention, so I'm looking for people willing to spare an hour here or there, taking care of the desk, interesting people in joining the Association, and selling its publications. I can assure you that the best way to enjoy a convention and to meet people is by doing something, and manning a desk is an excellent way of combining pleasure with a little work for your Association. Any volunteers please send your names and I'll be in touch with you nearer the time.

Whilst I'm at it - do you fancy seeing what the *Matrix* editor looks like when she's at work. I'm running the convention daily newsletter (there's some theory I have experience of production) and will need volunteers to act as my ears and eyes around the convention. Again, I need an hour here or there from people, perhaps a couple of hundred words about some event you attend during the convention. And I want people to distribute the newsletter around the place, of course. Again, volunteers names to me ... or I might start checking out just who is going. Remember, one volunteer is worth ten pressed men. Interested in becoming instantly famous in a gathering of 5000 people? Curious about whether I am the way you imagine me - do I really spend all my time at a word processor? Is my right index finger really sharpened like a scalpel blade, and do I always have a red pen about my person for some quick-fire editing. Now is the time to find out. Despite the way I might come over in print, I'm not so bad. Watch me fall apart as the deadline looms and that should convince you of my fallibility.

However, enough of this frivolity. It's the early hours of the day I'm due to post this edition to the printers and something tells me I have some way to go before I meet my bed this morning. Just enough space to wish every one of you a slightly belated Happy New Year.

Your next deadline for getting material to me is Friday March 20th - but post early for guaranteed publication.

Maurice



The Awards Debate

"Conventions are fun, and trophies decorate the den like nothing else. But for writers (or readers) to frame a standard of excellence based on purely intramural criteria, and to make it their goal to win an award is to confuse literature with bowling." Thus Thomas M. Disch, in his by now infamous broadside against what he called the "Labor-Day" group of writers. From which I conclude that, if the BSFA awards are to continue, we shouldn't take them as seriously as many of the letterwriters on this subject seem to.

Actually, I don't think that the criteria by which the BSFA awards are determined are as ossified as those which determine the Hugos. Not yet, not yet. But if any of the suggestions recently aired in *Matrix* are acted upon, they are in danger of becoming so. So it is my belief that, far from being altered, the awards should carry on as before, and in as relaxed a manner as possible: a belief I'll try to justify by dealing with suggested changes in the award for best novel, since that's where most of the reforming zeal has been directed. To take the points one by one:

1) Separate awards for paperbacks/hardbacks, or award to paperbacks only.

The arguments for this are degenerating into a parody of the Monty Python sketch about the reminiscing Yorkshiremen. I know that times are hard for many people, and I don't want to get into a discussion of whether or not hardbacks are expensive (relatively, they're not). Rather, my argument is that, since buying a book simply because it is on the final ballot of the BSFA award is not necessarily a good reason for buying it, price doesn't enter into the matter. If you haven't bought all the books already (as you are an SF fan I assume you've bought one or two), then use the library, as both Mike Brain and Andy Sawyer have suggested - with the caveat that

perhaps there should be more time between announcement of the shortlist and the final ballot. More cogently, if the award was for paperbacks only, it would lose the edge of topicality. We would be voting for books first published two or three years ago in many cases, often longer.

2) There should be a definition of SF so we know what to vote for, or there should be a separate award for fantasy.

If anyone can come up with a workable definition of SF then it will be a world first, I think. I assume that the BSFA represents a broad church, and as such, so should the award. To me, SF (speculative/science fiction/fantasy) is anything I point my finger at and say, "That's SF!" Obviously, in each instance there will be people who disagree with me, but that's what democracy is all about, and isn't that what the BSFA is?

3) The award should go to British writers only.

To me this is the most invidious suggestion of all. Are we to demand proof of nationality before we hand over the award? And how would you classify Michael Coney, say, British-born but living in Canada? Or Geoff Ryman, a Canadian living in Britain? After all, the BSFA has a large number of overseas members. Are we to start a purge?

4) The awards should be abandoned.

Perhaps they should, if that's the majority opinion. But if the awards are to be kept, we should think about what they are for. Certainly not to provide a benchmark of literary standard, or to add another brick in a ghetto wall. Then what? Perhaps, to provide a chance for every member to give an opinion on current SF, once every year. Perhaps to give the BSFA a chance at a little publicity: are the awards announced anywhere other than *Matrix*? In the trade periodicals of the publishing business? Even in *Locust*? After three years in the BSFA I'm still not sure what the awards physically are. A trophy? A certificate? A pint of beer and a kiss on the cheeks from the chairman? From this I conclude that the actuality of the awards isn't important, but the ritual is; and ritual, as long as it isn't taken seriously, is not a bad thing. It can

provide a focus, a little social glue. We in the BSFA need ceremonies, I suppose, is the point of it all.

Paul J McAuley

The first complaint to deal with is the perennial one about the price of hardbacks; that because people can't afford them they can't read the new books as they appear and so can't make an informed choice about the best of any given year's output. But one doesn't have to pay to read a hardback; as Andy Sawyer points out, ordering one from your local library costs nothing. It simply isn't true, either, that all new fiction automatically appears in hardback first; most of it, particularly science fiction, now appears first in paperback (and anyone who tells you that it isn't a 'proper' novel is simply trading on snob value, which is no value at all). The 'first British publication' rule takes account of this by ignoring the distinctions between hardback and paperback publication and allowing people a free choice of what they think is the best of that year's output. Without that rule, the award would not only not have any meaning but would be impossible to operate coherently from year to year.

Splitting the award in two, for hardbacks and paperbacks, or excluding hardbacks entirely, is likely to create only confusion. In the latter instance, a book would be excluded from consideration solely on the grounds of its price, which for an award that purports to be concerned with literary quality seems a strange and contradictory distinction to make; and in the former instance one would end up with a two-tier award system in which (among other things) the 'first British publication' rule would disappear, the same book could win two years running in both its hardback and paperback editions, a book that lost in the hardback category could spawn a caucus of lobbyists to promote it in the paperback one ... and so on.

Restricting the award only to British writers on the grounds that it's a British SF award, as some have suggested, will tend to enfeeble it by parochialising it, making it seem as though we think British SF is incapable of holding its own against everything else and so has to have a special award of its own so that it doesn't get a fit of the sulks every time it loses a Hugo or Nebula. Or something like that ... but to exclude non-British authors solely on the grounds that they are not British is again a contradictory distinction to make in the rules of an award which purports to be concerned with literary quality. And what would one do about authors who are resident here but who are manifestly not British, such as Leigh Kennedy and Lisa Tuttle?

The point to bear in mind is that the more complex one makes the rules, the more time-consuming they are to explain (as they have to be, every year, for the benefit of new members, those who didn't vote the previous year, those who've forgotten them; and the more time-consuming they are to explain the less likely people are to vote. One only has to look back through the award records of the 1970s to see the almost endless and certainly bewildering series of rule changes that emerged each year ... a series of changes I feel sure must have been a contributing factor to the persistently small number of people who voted. The rest probably got fed up with all the changes and decided to forget the whole thing.

So I'm all in favour of keeping the rules the way they are at present, the way they are at present (apart from being the ones that I devised) being simplest to understand, the easiest to administer, and (perhaps) the less contentious. Of course, they don't satisfy everyone, but then what set of award rules ever would? Someone's bound to complain about *something* every now and then.

Joseph Nicholas

WALKING ON GLASS

The BSFA Column

URGENT! URGENT! URGENT! URGENT! URGENT! URGENT! URGENT!

SITS VAC

The BSFA urgently needs help! We have three vital positions to be filled.

TREASURER/COMPANY SECRETARY to prepare our accounts, keep our finances up to date, handle our bank account, and prepare and oversee budgets for the BSFA and the various magazines. You must be able to handle accounts for a small company (access to a computer with spreadsheet would obviously be an advantage), but no professional qualifications are required, and you can be anywhere in the country so long as you are reliable and can keep in regular contact with the rest of the committee.

A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT to help prepare final typed copy for Vector. You must be fast and accurate with constant access to a word processor - preferably an Amstrad PCW8256/8512 to maintain consistency with the rest of the team. You can be anywhere in the country so long as you are reliable.

A DESIGN ASSISTANT to help with the design and paste-up of Vector artwork. You too must be fast and accurate, preferably with access to an Amstrad PCW. In addition you must have access to a copy camera (if possible), and graphic arts materials (like a drawing board, etc.)

THE BSFA NEEDS YOU NOW! This is your chance to help your organisation. All three of these posts must be filled quickly. So write or telephone Paul Kincaid, 114 Guildhall Street, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1BS, (0303) 52939, today!

ENT! URGENT! URGENT! URGENT! URGENT! URGENT! URGENT!
Paul Grunwell has asked me to apologise for the lack of *Focus* this mailing. He has recently suffered a family bereavement, so please, anyone expecting to hear from Paul, he hopes you'll understand if he's a bit slow in responding.

However, *Focus* is desperately in need of material both fiction and non-fiction. Paul has very little work he can print and would be grateful for all contributions. He hopes to produce an issue of *Focus* for next mailing and then be back on schedule for the mailing after that.

Paul can be contacted at 218 Rainford Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM11 2PD

COLLATING FOR THE CURIOUS

by Maureen Porter

Despite being a member of the BSFA for several years, and once living considerably nearer to Reading than I do now, I'm ashamed to say that I had never been to a mailing session before last December. Reasons? No time, too far to travel, but most importantly, I didn't know where the mailing sessions were held and I didn't know any of the people there. Okay, I was scared.

I'm not scared now, but it was still daunting to seek off from Folkestone at the crack of dawn in order to reach the mailing session at a sensible time. The trains from London to Reading are fairly frequent and it took no time at all to arrive at Reading Station, although finding a bus is a little more tricky. Basically, you're looking for a bus going to Shinfield Road, and all you need to do is ask for the stop nearest Chancellor's Way. Bus drivers in Reading seem to be very amenable. On the other hand, you could always walk if you have the time and it's a nice day.

As a reward for our enthusiasm Paul and I found that we were the first arrivals, apart from Keith Freeman, whom I met for the first time - even *Matrix* editors don't get around as much as they ought to. Mailing sessions are held in the Blandford Lodge Annexe which is a large terrapin hut with rows of tables on which were spread the component parts of the magazines. I naturally spent a few minutes seeing how the latest edition of *Matrix* had turned out, before we went off to round up the collating machine, aided by Mike and Debbie Moir who had also appeared bright and early. Cups of tea all round and we got down to the serious task of collating Vector.

Collating is hard work. Anyone who has ever put together a fanzine, or stapled up a few apa contributions will tell you this. On the other hand it can also be a lot of fun. Providing the hands keep moving the tongue and brain can do whatever they like so there's ample opportunity for a chat, or bring your personal stereo if you feel unsociable. I think that people on the collating machine have the better job but this might be because I took a little while to come to terms with my stapler and discover that it was a job better done standing up. It is also true that stapling is slower than collating, and that looking at M. John Harrison pale as a spectator sport once he's passed before your eyes for the hundredth time. I turned the pile upside down which seemed to help. It is another fact of life however, that a pile of stapled magazines is a satisfying sight.

By this time production was in full swing as Roy Macinski and Nick Trant were putting together *Paperback Inferno*, but we're not superhuman so somewhere about lunchtime we adjourned to the nearest handy pub for some lunch before getting down to some more hard work in the afternoon. Numbers had increased even further by this time as other members of the committee arrived for the meeting later in the afternoon, and Mike Westhead and Roger Perkins, delivering Beacon flyers for mailing, found themselves also collating, stapling and folding. We had our meeting (report included in this issue) and once that was over, some made their way home, and others continued collating for a while. We packed up about 6 pm.

Collating is hard work but fun as well. It does some interesting things to your muscles but this is more than balanced out by the good times to be had the very nice people you will meet, plus the knowledge that you are doing something mindbogglingly useful for the BSFA. Collating sessions kick off about 11am and go through till about 6pm, plus that break for lunch. You don't have to go both days, nor do you have to attend every mailing session, though regular collators are naturally very welcome, but an effort once in a while will be appreciated. If you're still not sure where to go, contact Keith Freeman for details on 0734 666142 or else write to him at 269 Wykeham Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 1PL (and don't forget an SAE!) for further information.

And remember, for every collating session you attend, you receive a month's extension on your current subscription. How's that for an incentive?

BADGES

BSFA badges are available. They are 2" in diameter, and carry the BSFA logo. Cost is 25p plus a stamped addressed envelope, and that 25p can be sent in stamps. Please do not send loose coins through the post.

Contact: Joanne Raine, 33 Thornville Road, Hartlepool, Cleveland, TS26 8EW

(please bear in mind that Joanne has just taken over and allow a little extra time for delivery.)

In line with my aim of keeping BSFA members abreast of committee activities, this is a brief report of the most recent committee meeting, held at Reading on December 6th.

Present were Dave Barrett, John Harvey, Paul Kincaid, Hussain Mohamed, Mike Moir, Maureen Porter (who took the minutes) and Keith Freeman (for part of the meeting).

Apologies were received from Paul Grunwell and Andy Sawyer.

The committee meeting got under way with some discussion of committee posts which needed to be filled. Two candidates for the post of Advertising and Publicity Manager were considered and the Committee decided that Dave Wood would be most suited for this position, in view of the fact that his work deals with similar areas. Dave's brief will be to find advertisers for BSFA publications and place advertisement on behalf of the BSFA. (Proposed P Kincaid, seconded D Barrett)

We had received four offers to take on the post of Membership Secretary now that Sandy Brown has decided to stand down. After some discussion it was decided that Joanne Raine should be offered the post. (Proposed D Barrett, seconded M Porter)

[A brief article about Joanne should be included in this BSFA column]

We also discussed BSFA finances but rapidly discovered that we have little information about them at present owing to the difficulties of getting in touch with Phil Knight, currently Treasurer and Company Secretary. Phil has decided that he must relinquish the post as he can't give it sufficient time. Paul Kincaid and myself agreed to initiate a search for a replacement, particularly to take care of the financial aspects as we need budgets to work to, particularly with the amount of printing work undertaken.

[An advertisement for a new treasurer will also appear in this BSFA column]

Hussain Mohamed, who takes care of production aspects of Vector, indicated that he would be unable to continue as production assistant, because of increasing difficulties in obtaining access to the specialised equipment and materials required for production, although he would still act as adviser on the design of Vector.

Interim measures for coping with this problem were agreed upon, and it was decided that we should advertise for a new production assistant urgently.

At the EGM last November, it was agreed by the members present that the annual subscription to the BSFA should be raised to £10, £1 higher than the Committee had already decided. In line with this other subscriptions were to be increased.

The Standing Order is to be increased to £9.50p (50p discount on the full subscription)

Joint membership is raised to £11.00, for which the joint members receive two copies of *Matrix* and two copies of proxy voting forms.

Overseas membership rates were adjusted accordingly. Surface mailings are to remain at \$20, whilst airmail mailings will rise to \$35.

The cover prices of magazines were also increased. Vector now costs 95p, Paperback Inferno costs 50p, *Matrix* costs 75p and Focus costs 95p.

Sample mailings will cost £1.50.

We also agreed on production schedules for 1987, which will be administered by Paul Kincaid.

'Kaeti and the Hangman' - Keith Roberts (*Kaeti and Co.*, Kerosina Books)
'Winter Market' - William Gibson (Interzone 15 & *Burning Chrome*, Gollancz)

MEDIA

Reinimator
Overdrawn at the Memory Bank
Mr Fye
Dr Who - Trial of a Timelord
Aliens

ART

Screaming of the Beetle - SMS (Interzone 18)
The Clocktower Girl - Keith Roberts (Frontispiece of *Kaeti and Co.* & Cover of Vector 132)
Cover of Interzone 15 - Pete Lyon
Cover of Interzone 16 - Jim Burns
Cover of Interzone 17 - John Avon

The 1986 World Fantasy Awards were presented at the 12th World Fantasy Convention at Providence Rhode Island in November. The awards were chosen by a panel of judges consisting of: Robert Collins, Ellen Datlow, Dean R. Koontz, Patricia McKillip and Charles DeLint. The winners were:

LIFE ACHIEVEMENT

Avram Davidson

BEST NOVEL

Song of Kali - Dan Simmons

BEST NOVELLA

'Nadelman's God' - T. E. D. Klein

BEST SHORT STORY

'Paper Dragons' - James Blaylock

BEST ANTHOLOGY/COLLECTION

Imaginary Lands - Robin McKinley (Ed.)

BEST ARTIST

Jeff Jones tied with Thomas Canty

SPECIAL AWARD - PROFESSIONAL

Pat LoBrutto

SPECIAL AWARD - NON-PROFESSIONAL

Douglas E. Winter

SPECIAL CONVENTION AWARD

Donald A. Wollheim

More SF awards from around the world. In Germany the Kurd Lasswitz Awards are presented by German professionals for work from the previous year. The 1986 Awards were:

BEST NOVEL: *Endzeit* - Herbert V. Franke
BEST NOVELLA: 'Traumjäger' - H. J. Alpers & R. M. Hahn
BEST SHORT STORY: 'Polarlicht' - Reinmar Cunis
BEST TRANSLATOR: Lore Strassel
BEST ARTIST: Helmut Wenske
BEST FOREIGN NOVEL: *The Minds of Billy Milligan* - Daniel Keyes

Meanwhile in Sweden the Svenska SF-Priset (Swedish SF Awards) were presented at Luncon II to:

BEST SWEDISH NOVEL: *Kysst Nej Dodligt* (Kiss Me Deadly) - Carl Johan De Geer
BEST SWEDISH SHORT STORY: 'Androider drommer inte' ('Androids Don't Dream') - Bertil Martensson
BEST TRANSLATED NOVEL: *Inverted World* - Christopher Priest

PEOPLE

Following our reports in the last two issues of *Matrix* on the health of BSFA President Arthur C. Clarke, we have received a letter which explains: 'The accident which left me totally paralysed in 1962 appears to be having delayed after-effects, and I have to spend at least an hour every day in physiotherapy or exercise.'

Looking ahead to this summer, he reports that at the moment it is 50:50 whether he will be able to attend Conspiracy 87, the British Worldcon in Brighton this August.

He also says that he has completed editing *Arthur C. Clarke's Chronicles* for COLLINS, and is still at work on *Odyssey Three* for DEL REY, as well as the novelisation with Gentry Lee of the film *Cradle*, which he is co-writing (with Lee) and co-producing with Peter Gruber for Warner Films. At the same time, five other of his novels have been optioned for films: *The Songs of Distant Earth*, *The Fountains of Paradise*, *A Fall of Moondust*, *Childhood's End* and *Rendezvous with Rama*.

OBITUARIES

Joseph Bayly, publisher and author of *Winterflight*, *The Gospel Blimp* and the children's fantasy *I Saw Gooley Fly*, died on 16 July 1986, he was 66.

Clyde S. Kilby, academic and authority on the works of Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, died on 17 October 1986. He was 84. Among his books were *Tolkien and the Silmarillion* and *The Christian World of C.S. Lewis*.

Andrei Tarkovsky, the Russian film maker, died on 28 December 1986 of cancer. Among other highly acclaimed films he directed *Solaris* based on the novel by Stanislaw Lem, *Stalker* based on the novel *Roadside Picnic* by Boris and Arkady Strugatsky (*Guests of Honour* at Conspiracy 87), and his most recent film, *Sacrifice*, which has just opened to very good reviews, is also science-fictional.

George Markstein, novelist and scriptwriter, died on 15 January 1987, aged 57. Among his considerable body of work for television, he developed the idea of *The Prisoner* with Patrick MacGowan, and wrote most of the scripts.

PUBLISHING

First an apology to KEROSINA BOOKS. Due to a misunderstanding I reported that the limited special edition of *Shades of Darkness* by Richard Cowper had been delayed, in fact it appeared as expected on its scheduled publication date.

KEROSINA have also announced that they have signed a contract to publish the next novel by Brian Aldiss. The book will appear at Conspiracy 87, but as yet it has no title.

This brings us on to news about JONATHAN CAPE. With the departure of Liz Calder to the newly-formed BLOOMSBURY PUBLISHING, there are rumours that a number of the authors she handled are to seek pastures new. One who is leaving is Brian Aldiss. After Malcolm Edwards managed to secure Aldiss's non-fiction for GOLLANCZ from WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON with *Trillion Year Spree*, he has now completed the coup by also winning the fiction. The novel from KEROSINA will slip in during the changeover period.

Paul Kincaid and Mike Noir are to write a book-length study of Keith Roberts for SERCONIA PRESS in Seattle. Paul Kincaid has also completed an article on 'Science Fiction' for the forthcoming *Handbook of British Popular Culture* from GREENWOOD PRESS.

Cheap Truth, the irregular fanzine and organ of 'cyberpunk' ideology, produced by the pseudonymous Vincent Omiaueritas, is now dead. The last issue, November 1986, reported its demise in typically graphic terms: "Node Zero", the global info-nexus of the CHEAP TRUTH publishing empire, has been reduced to smoldering wreckage in a poorly-realized action-sequence right out of the worst tradition of macho adventure fiction.' It couldn't

graphic terms: "Node Zero", the global info-nexus of the CHEAP TRUTH publishing empire, has been reduced to smoldering wreckage in a poorly-realized action-sequence right out of the worst tradition of macho adventure fiction. It couldn't be anything to do with Bruce Sterling's avowed intent to stop writing 'cyberpunk'?

Alan Moore, the writer of comics *Watchmen* and *The Ballad of Halo Jones*, has also produced the script for a new film by Malcolm McLaren, *Fashion Beast*. At the same time, he has been approached by Paramount and Columbia over possible film versions of *Watchmen* and *The Ballad of Halo Jones*.

Dark Knight, the graphic novel that subverts the traditional comic-book hero Batman, written and drawn by Frank Miller, has now been published in Britain by TITAN BOOKS.

The Wizards and the Warriors by Hugh Cook which has just come out from COLIN SMYTHE and CORGI, is said to be just the first in a 20 volume series: *Chronicles of an Age of Darkness*. The publicity material accompanying the book proclaims: 'Hugh Cook has planned his writing schedule to the year 2003!!' Volumes 2 and 3, *The Wordsmiths* and *The Varguuld and The Women and the Warlords*, are due out this year.

Terry Pratchett's newly published novel, *Equal Rites*, was serialised on *Woman's Hour* on Radio 4 in January.

Robert Silverberg; *Mona Lisa Overdrive* - William Gibson, the third and supposedly the last novel in his 'cyberspace' sequence; *The Coming of the Quantum Cats* - Frederik Pohl; *This is the Way the World Ends* - James Morrow, and anti-nuclear satire; *Evil Water* - Ian Watson, a new collection of short stories; *Gollance/Sunday Times SF Competition Stories*, the winners and runners-up; for children there's the first of a two-part fantasy by Douglas Hill, *Blade of the Poisoner*, to be followed in autumn by *Father of Fiends*; there's a new collection of chilling short stories by Joan Aiken, *A Goose on your Grave*; and, perhaps inevitably, there's *The Second Great Dune Trilogy* - Frank Herbert, the last three novels in the series gathered together in one volume over 1100 pages long.

Meanwhile, the first titles in the GOLLANCE paperback line have been announced. In May there will be *Witch World* - Andre Norton, *Angel with the Sword* - C.J. Cherryh, *The Other Side of the Sky* - Arthur C. Clarke, *Hegira* - Greg Bear, *The Masks of Time* - Robert Silverberg, *The Faceless Man* - Jack Vance, *Lightwell* - Bob Shaw and *Mission of Gravity* - Hal Clement. These are followed in June by *Web of the Witch World* - Andre Norton and *Eye Among the Blind* - Robert Holdstock; and in July by *Star Gate* - Andre Norton and *To Live Again* - Robert Silverberg.

Whilst on the subject of reprints, new titles announced by GREENHILL SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY are *Master of his Fate* - J. McLaren Cobban originally published in 1890, and *The Blind Spot* - Austin Hall and Homer Bon Flint, first published in 1951.

GRAFTON offers us July 20, 2019: *A Day in the life of the 21st Century*, Arthur C. Clarke's celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Apollo Moon Landing; *Spider World: The Tower* - Colin Wilson, his first venture into SF; *Daggerspell* - Katharine Kerr; *Replay* - Ken Grimwood.

The Spring list from HODDER includes *Misery* - Stephen King, *Sepulchre* - James Herbert and *Into the Out Of* - Alan Dean Foster.

ROBERT HALP's list features *A Demon Close Behind*, a collection of ghost stories by former film buyer for ITV Leslie Halliwell, and *Classic Stories of Mystery, Horror and Suspense* edited by Simon Petherick.

GOLLANCE have announced their spring list. Hardbacks include: *Robot Dreams* - Isaac Asimov, an illustrated edition of all his robot short stories, with one new story added; *Ancient Light* - Mary Gentle, the sequel to *Golden Witchbread*, along with a reissue of her first book, *A Hawk in Silver*; *The Legacy of Heorot* - Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle and Steven Barnes; *Star of Gypsies* -

NEW AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS

W.H. ALLEN: *The Complete Supernatural Stories of Rudyard Kipling* - ed. Peter Haining, *Mysterious Motoring Stories* - ed. William Patrick.

ARROW: *Ender's Game and Speaker for the Dead* - Orson Scott Card, *The Black Ship* - Christopher Rowley.

BANTAM: *The Postman* - David Brin, *Champions of the Sidhe* - Kenneth C. Flint.

CAPE: *The Shift* - Hugh Cook

CENTURY: *Time out of Mind* - John R. Maxin.

CORGI: *The Wizard and the Warlord* - Elizabeth H. Boyer, *Year of the Lucy* - Anne McCaffrey.

FUTURA: *The Memory of Whiteness* - Kim Stanley Robinson, *Twilight of the Gods 2: Groa's Other Eye* - Dennis Schmidt, *The Power of the Serpent* - Peter Valentine Timlett.

GRAFTON: *The Best Science Fiction of Isaac Asimov* - Isaac Asimov, *Letters from the Dead* - Campbell Black, *Orphans of the Sky* - Robert A. Heinlein.

GREENHILL: *Tourmalin's Time Cheques* - F. Anstey, *Planetoid 127* - Edgar Wallace.

GOLLANCE: *A Fall of Moondust* - Arthur C. Clarke, *A Wreath of Stars* - Bob Shaw, *This is the Way the World Ends* - James Morrow, *Equal Rites* - Terry Pratchett, *The Fall of the Families* - Phillip Mann.

MACDONALD: *The Forge in the Forest* - Michael Scott Rohan.

METHUEN: *Doors of his Face, Lamps of his Mouth* - Roger Zelazny.

NEW ENGLISH LIBRARY: *Expedition to Earth* - Arthur C. Clarke, *The Santaroga Barrier* - Frank Herbert, *The Years of the City* - Frederik Pohl, *The Ice King* - Michael Scot.

ORBIT: *Cat Karina* - Michael Coney, *The Winter of the World 1: The Anvil of Ice* - Michael Scott Rohan, *Major Operation* - James White.

OXFORD: *The Roving Mind* - Isaac Asimov.

PALADIN: *The Ticket That Exploded* - William S. Burroughs, *In Milton Lumky Territory* - Philip K. Dick.

PAN: *Dark Gods* - T.E.D. Klein.

PENGUIN: *The First Men in the Moon* - H.G. Wells.

SPHERE: *Past Times* - Poul Anderson, *K.I.D.S.* - Trevor Hoyle.

UNWIN: *The Hour of the Thin Ox* - Colin Greenland, *The Princess of Flames* - Ru Emerson, *The Summer's King* - Cherry Wilder.

MISCELLANEOUS

No sooner has *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* opened in America, than it is announced that Admiral Kirk himself, William Shatner, will direct the fifth *Star Trek* film. Meanwhile a new *Star Trek*

television series is being made for transmission in America later this year. It is set 100 years after the events of the old television series, and has a completely different cast. There is no indication of how this will affect the apparently lucrative and unending series of Star Trek films.

Other snippets that have come our way include the faintly unbelievable news that Daw Books have been running a 'Does your cat look like Fritti Tailchaser?' competition with a grand prize of a year's supply of Meow Mix. Tailchaser is the eponymous hero of Tad Williams' *Tailchaser*, reviewed in a recent Paperback Inferno. (I didn't like it - MSP)

We also note that American Star Trek fans failed in their campaign for a Star Trek commemorative stamp when the Citizens Postage Stamp Advisory Service of the U.S. Postal Service denied their request. Postal official Donald McDowell is quoted as saying, 'We do not put commercial enterprises on postage stamps'.

CASSANDRA GOES PUBLIC!

After three years as a workshop with a paying membership, the Cassandra group is to be restructured. membership is to be dropped, and all publications now welcome submissions from any amateur writer. The Mercury postal workshop is also open to anyone who wishes to take part.

Cassandra's aims remain the same: to encourage new writers, and to promote intelligent SF to a wide audience. Cassandra is not a paying market but all manuscripts will be given a sympathetic reading, and authors of rejected stories will be told why they were rejected, if the enclose a stamped, addressed envelope.

The annual weekend workshop is to be continued, but on the basis of invitation rather than first come, first served. Anyone wishing to submit a story for consideration should first get in touch with Bernard Smith for further details.

Contact addresses:

Cassandra Anthology (short stories) and general enquiries: Bernard Smith, 8 Vansford Walk, Thorplands Brook, Northampton NN3 4YF

Starwine (poetry), Crystal Egg (Children's fiction): Steve Bowkett, 88 Northampton Road, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 9HF

Dreamscape (articles about how to write) and all magazine subscriptions: Dave Clements, 69 Roundhill Road, Kettering, Northants, NN15 6BE

Mercury (postal workshop) and clubs liaison: Liz Sourbut, 15 South Bank Avenue, York, YO2 1DR

FAN NEWS

The One Tun has moved! You may already know that SF fans have been meeting regularly on the first Thursday of the month at the One Tun in Farringdon for well over ten years. In recent years the premises have become rather crowded and it is nothing uncommon to see forty or fifty people standing around in the street outside, enjoying the cooler air.

Moves have been afoot for some little time to find another, larger pub, but this was accelerated by the landlord's decision at the January Tun to ban a well-known London fan from the pub on the grounds of this fan's homosexuality. Many fans feel unable to continue patronising the pub under these circumstances, and the monthly gathering will be moving to the Wellington, opposite the Old Vic entrance of Waterloo Station as from the February meeting, 5th February.

TAFF/GUFF/DUFF

These three fan funds have announced their 1986-87 candidates and ballots are available from the administrators. Voting is open to anyone who has been active in SF fandom for at least one year.

TAFF (The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund) will send an American fan to Conspiracy this August. The nominees are Bill Bowers, Brian Earl Brown, Mike Glicksohn, Jeanne Gomoll and Robert Lichtman.

Deadline for voting is £1 and the deadline is March 14th. Ballots are available from Greg Pickersgill, 7a Lawrence Road, South Ealing, London W5 4XL.

GUFF (The Going Under Fan Fund, or Get UP-and-over Fan Fund) will send an Australian fan to Conspiracy this August. The nominees are Valma Brown, Irwin Hirsch and Jean Weber. The deadline will have passed by the time this edition of Matrix goes to press but any donations towards the fund should go to Eve Harvey, 43 Harrow Road, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3QH. Winner to be announced as soon as I hear.

DUFF (The Down Under Fan Fund) will send a North American fan to the Australian National Convention in April. Candidates are Lucy Huntzinger, Kathy Sanders, Laurraine Tuthasi and Tom Whitmore. The deadline was December 31 1986 so I will hopefully be able to announce the winner in the near future.

Dave Collins and Terry Broome are taking a collection within SF fandom to donate to charity in memory of Rob Gregg, who died recently.

Cheques should be made payable to Dave Collins and all donations should be sent to Dave at 21 Exleigh Close, Bitterne, Southampton, SO2 5FB.

Terry Broome is presently in hospital in Mansfield and would, I'm sure, appreciate letters. In the meantime we wish him a swift recovery. He can be reached at the following address.

Ward 7, Harlow Wood Orthopaedic Hospital, Nottingham Road, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4TH

Owen Whiteoak will be resident in London from 1st February. All mail should be addressed c/o Pam Wells, 24a Beech Road, Bowes Park, London, N11 2DA

MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD

Please note that all entries on the Members Noticeboard are absolutely FREE and that all adverts should be sent to me (Maureen Porter) at the editorial address. I'll take For Sale and Wanted ads, plus ads for penfriends, and other fans in your area, though at my discretion, not to mention ads for help, anything like that.

WANTED

I'm still looking for children's fantasy books, hardback or paperback. I'm particularly interested in titles by Edward Eager, Jane Louis Curry and Louise Lawrence. I am also looking for *Drowned Asset* by Diana Wynne Jones. Or tell me what you've got and I'll let you know. I am Maureen Porter, 114 Guildhall Street, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 1ES. Tel 0303 52939

I'd like to thank those members of clubs and groups who have already been in touch with me about this, but I am still trying to compile a complete listing of SF clubs and groups in the UK and worldwide for Conspiracy, the Worldcon in Brighton in 1987.

If you are a member of a local or university group, please GET IN TOUCH as soon as possible. **WHEN** and **WHERE** does your club meet and **WHO** should I send information to?

I am also collecting fanzines, clubazines and newsletters from now until August 1987, for display in the fan room at **CONSPIRACY**. This is **good** publicity for your group or zine. Use it!

GO ON! Deluge me with mail!!!

I am Pam Wells of 24a Beech Road, Bowes Park, London, N11 2DA. Or you can phone me on 01-859-0401 after 6pm and at weekends.

Can anyone help me obtain copies of the following Eric Frank Russell short stories: -

Controller (Astounding SF, March 1944)
Invisible (Captain Future, Winter 1940)
The Kid from Kalamazoo (Fantastic Adventure, August 1944)
Egyptian Episode (Tales of Crime and Punishment, 1938)

Poor Dead Fool (Thrilling Detective Stories, Jan 1938)

Spontaneous Frognation (Unknown, July 1940)

Or *Butterfly Planet* by Phillip E High, published by Hale.

I am Andrew Pestell, 12 Downs Road, Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 1PA.

Any condition p/b or h/b

David Benedictus	<i>A World of Windows</i>
Richard Cowper	<i>Domino</i>
Kay Dick	<i>They</i>
Keith Roberts	<i>Anita</i>
Frederick Turner	<i>A Double Shadow</i>
Jay Williams	<i>Unid</i>

I'm also after records or tapes of

Trees *The Garden of Jane Delawney*
Meal Ticket *Somewhere there are Islands (used in The Flip Side of Dominic Hyde)*

David V Barrett, 23 Oakfield Rd, Croydon, CR0 2UD

This is a request that the BSFA has received recently. We can't get involved in exchange programmes as an organisation but if any member would like to get in touch with Witold, please feel free to do so.

I'm interested in SF literature. I would like to make contact with SF fans in the UK. I offer all books and SF magazines available in Polish and I can exchange them for English SF books and magazines. I would be very grateful for help.

Witold Kurylak, 44 - 100 Gliwice, ul. Wroclawska 24/8, Poland.

I have also received a request for help from Joyce Day, Secretary of the Science Fiction Foundation, which is based at the Northeast London Polytechnic.

If anybody would like to donate books to the Foundation library, she would be extremely glad to receive them. At present she is particularly keen to obtain works of criticism.

Contact Joyce at Northeast London Polytechnic, Longbridge Road, Dagenham, RM8 2AS

Can anyone please lend me a copy of *The Making of Space 1999* by Tim Heald?

Please contact Patrick Lee, 24 Ousden Drive, Chesshant, Herts, EN8 9RL

FOR SALE

Thomas M Disch - *Camp Concentration*, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1968. 1st ed, vg-nm condition in dust-jacket

E C Tubb - *Ten from Tomorrow*, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1966. 1st ed, vg-nm condition in dust jacket.

E C Tubb - *Death is a dream*, Rupert Hart-Davis, n.d. 1st ed, vg-nm condition in dust jacket.

Offers please to Stan Nicholls, 2 Allison Court, 43 Parkhill Road, London, NW3 2YD

Practically (?) full set of *Omni Magazine*. Sale of the century at £40.

Reader's Union SF Hardbacks £1. Lists available.

Also wanted - SF films on Philips Laserdisc.

For sale - *Damnation Alley* and *Abba - the Movie* (Laserdisc).

Mr J Jagla, 92 Fir Tree Estate, Thurgoland, Sheffield, S30 7BG.

Alasdair Gray - 1 copy each of *Janine*, 1982 and *The Fall of Kelvin Walker*, both near enough mint condition hardback. Sensible offers only to Maureen Porter at the editorial address.

THE PERIODIC TABLE

THE BENELUX SF PROJECT (SFcon 15) - 26 October, Aalst, Belgium.

by Graham Andrews

Some people believe that no SF convention can succeed without at least one 'Big Name' GOW - pro and/or fan. Well, the Benelux SF Project (aka SFcon 15) provided strong evidence to the contrary. (My apologies to both Eddy C Bertin and Robert Smets, who have acquired 'Big Name' status among real Europeans, and deserve to be better known abroad).

The project took place in the function room of a pub called De Mause Madelan (work it out yourselves) in Aalst's venerable Grote Markt (ditto). It was an ideal venue for such a snug convention: a well-stocked bar, a roomy stage, and plenty of space for spectators, book tables, art displays etc. The - conversational! - 'crack' was very good. Also, lest I forget, the project was: a) open to the general public, and; b) free of admission charge.

A highlight of the primary programme was a panel discussion on 'Hardcore SF and Fantasy', with, among others, Patrick Van de Vlede, Anemarie W. Ewyck, Kees Van Toorn and the ubiquitous Eddy C Bertin. ECB also gave a talk about 'Modern SF and Horror Fantasy in Flanders', reading from several of his own works. Robert Smets later followed suit with a talk/reading entitled 'SF for the Revolution'.

The secondary programme included an effective *Sferror-Show* parody by Gilbert de Wilde, plus

exhibitions of film posters, SF-oriented postage stamps and vintage pulp magazines (not just from the USA). Georges 'Count' Couste had the largest bookstall and it was possible to pick up scarce paperbacks for ridiculously low prices by Anglo-American standards.

Finally, a special "thank you" must be extended to the organiser, Patrick Van de Wiele, who turned the notion of a local sf project into reality after plans for the more ambitious Beneluxcon 13 had fallen through.

CONVENTION ROUNDUP

Supporting membership means that you will receive all progress reports of the convention, the programme book, badge and the other bits and pieces handed out. A progress report is just that, something which gives you information on how the con is developing, how to get there, and the current list of members. The more sophisticated cons will often contain articles or pieces of original work by guests, and so on. The programme book is basically something which tells you about the convention, supplies a timetable of events, introductions to the guests, and, and, and. The most elaborate productions are almost zines in their own right, and well worth hanging on to.

Attending membership means that you can go to the convention as well. It is possible to convert from supporting to attending membership, generally by paying the balance between the two.

Pre-supporting memberships and convention bidding are somewhat different. If you pay pre-supporting membership you are showing your support for that convention in its attempt to win the bid to put on a convention. You're also providing finance to get the bid on the road, for publicity and bidding parties. If the convention you support wins, you'll find that your pre-supporting membership is deducted from the supporting/attending membership. You may occasionally find that even if your bid lost, the winning team are feeling generous and will do the same, but this is not a general rule. Not all conventions involve bidding. It occurs for such things as Eastercons and Worldcons, which are annual and peripatetic, and also for Unicorns.

1987 CONVENTIONS

CONCEPTION

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

13-15 February, Queen's Hotel, Leeds

Membership: Attending £6.00

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

MICROCON

Exeter University SF Group's 8th Annual Convention

21-22 February, Cornwall House, Exeter University.

GOH: Tom Shippey

Membership: £1. Available from Exeter university SF Group, c/o Societies Rack, University of Exeter, Exeter, Devon.

CORFLU 4

20-22 February, Cincinnati, Ohio

Information from Bill Bowers, 2468 Harrison Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45211, USA

A con for fanzine fans, nearest approximation might be a combination of Mexican and the now defunct Silicons.

ORICON

6-8 March, Essex (anywhere in particular?)

Membership: £12.00 plus 3 SASEs

Send cheques/POs/etc to 66 Burdett Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, SS7 7JW

An Irwin Allen cum General Media Convention.

FANDERSON '87

3-5 April, Ladbroke Silver Sands Holiday Centre, Caister-on-Sea, Norfolk

Membership: Fanderson members £8, £12 for non-members. Accommodation, I'm told, is cheap.

Contact: Fanderson '87, 62 Meath Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 1JB

BECCON '87

The 1987 Eastercon

17-19 April, Metropole Hotel, NEC, Birmingham (Please note the corrected date)

Guest of Honour: Keith Roberts
Fan Guests of Honour: Malcolm Edwards & Chris Atkinson

Membership: Attending £11, Supporting £6

Send cheques/POs/etc, payable to "Beccon", to Beccon '87, 191 The Heights, Northolt, Middlesex.

CAPCON

1987 Australian National SF Convention

18-20 April (MOVED from 25-27 April)
Queanbeyan, ACT, Australia

Guests of Honour: Robert Asprin & Lynn Abbey
Fan Guest of Honour: John Newman

Membership: Attending: A\$25 in advance, A\$30 at the door, Supporting: A\$5

Information from Capcon, PO Box 312, Fyshwick, 2609 ACT, Australia

3rd INTERNATIONAL NICE SF CONFERENCE

23-25 April, Nice, France

An academic conference with the theme: Edgar Allan Poe and Visionary Reason

Queries and proposals for papers to: Mrs Denise Terrel, director, Centre d'étude de la Métaphore, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Université de Nice, 98 bd Edouard Herriot, BP 369, 06007 Nice Cedex, France

SOL III '87

Star Trek con

May 1-4, Liverpool

Information: Jean Barron, 39 Dersingham Avenue, London E12 5QF

RUBICON 2

29 May-1 June, Newbury

Membership: £5

Contact: Krystyna Oborn, Bishop's Cottage, Park House Lane, Reading, Berks, RG3 2AH. Cheques payable to 'Rubicon'. **CONNOTES**

Unicon 8

3-5 July, New Hall, Cambridge

GOH Geraldine Harris

Membership: Attending £8, supporting £4

ALBACON 87

Glasgow's 10th Summer SF Convention

19-22 June, Central Hotel, Glasgow

G.O.H. Brian Stableford

Membership: Supporting £4.00, Attending £8.00

Contact: Albacoon '87, c/o Mark Meenan, 'Burnawn', Stirling Road, Dumbarton, G82 2PJ

MYTHCON XVIII

Mythopoeic Society Conference. Theme: Tolkien Retrospective

14-27 July, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

Write for further information to Mythcon XVIII, c/o John D Ratcliff, Conference Secretary, 628 W 117th Street #2, Milwaukee, WI 53233, USA.

CONSPIRACY '87

The 45th World SF Convention (the first in Britain since 1979)

27 August - 1 September, Metropole Hotel & Brighton Centre, Brighton

Guests of Honour: Doris Lessing, Alfred Bester, Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, Jim Burns

Fan Guests of Honour: Ken and Joyce Slater, Dave Langford

Toastmaster: Brian Aldiss

Store Wars

This sees the start of a hopefully regular column which spotlights various specialist SF-related businesses around the country. I'm extremely grateful to Stan Nicholls for all the hard work he has put into producing the string of articles I shall be using. This time I've also compiled a list of specialist shops around the country. I don't claim completeness and will hopefully be updating it with information from BSFA members. I should add that a mention in this column should not be regarded as a recommendation from the BSFA

CATEGORIES

- A - Import comics
- B - Back issue comics
- C - film and tv books and magazines
- D - merchandise
- E - SF/fantasy - selection
- F - SF/fantasy - specialist
- G - mail order
- H - mail order only
- J - standing order/reservations service

Membership: Attending £30 (children 8-14 £15.00), Supporting £10 (NOTE RISE IN MEMBERSHIP RATES)

Contact: Conspiracy '87, PO Box 43, Cambridge, CB1 3JJ

WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION '87

30 October-1 November, Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Guest of Honour: Piers Antony

Fan Guest of Honour: Frank Kelly Freas

Information from World Fantasy Convention '87, Box 3251, Darlington Branch PO, Pawtucket, RI 02861, USA

1988 and onwards

CONGREGATE

10-12 June, 1988, Peterborough

G.O.H - to be arranged

Membership: Supporting £5, Attending £11.00

Information from Chris Ayres, 67 Ayres Drive, Stanground, Peterborough.

ALBACON '88

tentatively July 1988

Central Hotel, Glasgow, Scotland

Guest of Honour: C J Cherryh

This was a Eurocon bid but will apparently go ahead regardless.

Information from Albacoon '88, 105 Craigton Road, Govan, Glasgow, Scotland, G51 3RQ.

The 1988 Eurocon will be in Hungary, rather controversially as apparently, the con should have rotated to the West that year anyway.

HUNGAROCON

10-14 August, 1988, Budapest.

Contact: Hungarian SF Society, Eurocon Committee, Budapest, Hungary, H-1078

Rodney Books, 33 Longbridge Rd, Barking, Essex

A, B, J

Andromeda, 84 Suffolk St, Birmingham, B1 1TA

C, D, F, G

Nostalgia & Comics, 14-16 Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham, B5 4EN

A, B, C, D, E, G, J

Wonderworld, 26 Ashley Rd, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 4LH

A, B, C, G, J

Forever People, 59 Park Street, Bristol

A, B, C, D, F, J

American Comic Enterprise, 6 Museum St, Colchester, Essex

A, B, C, D, G, J

Cardiff Fantasy Centre, Jacobs Market, Canal Wharf Market Station (Sat Only)

A, B, E, J

SF Bookshop, 40 West Cross Causeway, Edinburgh

A, B, C, D, F, G, J

AKA Books and Comics, 33 Virginia St, Glasgow, G1 1TU

A, B, C, D, F, J

FutureShock, 200 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3

A, B, C, F, G, J

Twilight Zone, 47 Princes Ave, Hull, Humberside

A, B, C, D, F, G, J

Jack's Planet, 376 Ilford Lane, Ilford, Essex

A, B, E, J

Globe Fantasy, St Margaret's Green, Ipswich, Suffolk

A, B, C, D, E, G, J

Books, Bits and Bobs, 8 Richmond Rd, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey

A, B, C, D, E, J

Odyssey 6, Harrison St, Off Vicar Lane, Leeds

A, B, C, D, F

Worlds of Wonder, 12-13 Mini Market, Lincoln

A, B, C, F

Chapter One, 6 London Rd, Liverpool, L3 5NF

A, B, C, D, F, J

Ogre Books, 120 Picton Road, Liverpool, L15

A, B, C, F, J

At the Sign of the Dragon, 131 Sheen Lane, London, SW14 8AE

A, C, D, F, G, J,

Comic Showcase, 76 Neal Street, London, WC2

A, B

Eternal Comics, 695 Seven Sisters Rd, London, N15

A, B, J

Fantasy Centre, 157 Holloway Road, London, N7

F, G

Forbidden Planet, 23 Denmark St, London, WC2H 8NN

A, B, F

Forbidden Planet 2, 58 St Gile's High St, London, WC2

C, D

Heroes, 21 Canonbury Lane, London, N1

A, B

London Comic Sales, Unit 17, 49-53 Kensington High St Market, London W8

A, B, G, J

Quality Comics, 3 Lewisham Way, New Cross, London, SE14 6PP

A, B, C, D, E, G, J

Quality Art, 502 Kings Road, Chelsea, London, SW10

A, B, C, D, E, G, J

Odyssey 7, Manchester University Precinct, Oxford Road, Manchester

A, B, C, D, F

Odyssey Magazine and Poster Centre, 21 Hanging Ditch, Corn Exchange Buildings, Manchester M4

A, B, C, D, E

Readers Dream, 100a Harlington Road West, Feltham, Middlesex

A, B, E, J

Timeslip, 17 Prudhoe Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7PE

A, B, C, D, F, G, J

Nostalgia & Comics, 129 Middlewalk, Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham

A, B, C, D, E, J

Comix & Comics, 83 Upper St Giles St, Norwich, NR1 2AB

A, B, C, D, E, J

Rainbow's End, 78a Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 2BX

A, B, C, E, G, J

House on the Borderland, 107b Cromwell Rd, Peterborough

A, B, C, D, F, G

Sheffield Space Centre, 485 London Road, Heeley, Sheffield, S2 4HL

A, B, C, D, F, G, J

Fine Lines, 57 High Street, Shoreham, Sussex

A, E, G

Collector's Dream, 4 Talza Way, Victoria Circus, Southend, Essex, SS2 5BH

A, B, G, J

New Bookshop, 339 Chartwell Square, Victoria Circus, Southend, Essex

A, B, C, F, J

Fantasy World, 10 Market Square Arcade, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs

A, B, C, D, F, G, J

Outer Limits, Rembrandt House, Whippendell Rd, Watford, Herts

A, B, C, D, G, J

The Place, 68 Worcester St, Wolverhampton, WV2 4LE

A, B, C, D, E, J

Mail Order Businesses

A - New Books, B - Secondhand.

This list is subject to revision. Best to write for catalogue.

Black Hill Books, The Wain House, Black Hill, Clunton, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 0JD

A

Dreamberry Wine (Mike Don), 233 Maine Road, Manchester, M14 7WQ.

A, B

Fantast (Medway) Ltd (Ken and Joyce Slater), PO Box 23, Upwell, Wisbech, Cambs, PE14 9BU

A

Les Escott, 84 Ivy Ave, Bath, Avon, BA2 1AN

B

Simon Gosden & Andy Richards, 25 Avondale Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 8EJ

B

Jon Harvey, 56 Mickle Hill, Little Sandhurst, Camberley, Surrey, GU17 8QU

B

SFF BOOKS

The man behind *SFF Books* is T.A. Wilkinson, and he describes his venture as a "... mix of bookshop, book club and magazine." The inspiration was "... what I believed to be a chasm in SF retailing: the lack of available books, comprehensive reviews and a general but wide interest magazine." The first issue of his catalogue-cum-journal - digest size in litho with colour wraparounds - appeared in May '86. So far only British editions are stocked, the majority SF and fantasy, but there are plans to widen the scope and include some horror, "historical fantasy/myths and legends."

During my own time working in various specialist stores I was often asked what criteria I used in ordering stock. I usually replied that if books were selected on a qualitative basis alone we'd probably need only one shelf to display all of them on. (Obviously, personal opinions are entirely subjective and in the end people are going to make up their own minds.) So *SFF Books* is a bit unusual in that each title on offer is accompanied by a critical capsule review. This is a deliberate policy and Wilkinson made his position clear at the outset: "The most annoying thing about book club blurbs is that they tell you every single book is great ... I decided therefore to be honest in my reviews." Some of his comments are quite sharp. Of an Edmond Hamilton novel he says, "Dated, trite, predictable and just about readable"; "... more a breeding ground for adjectives than good ideas" is the verdict on Richard Ford's *Nelvaig's Vision*, while *Lord of Light* is recommended "for masochists only". Half the fun in reading the catalogue comes from comparing your own views against his. (How can he

possibly describe Van Vogt's dire *Computerworld* as "A frightening novel that takes 1984 one step further?") There is even an "Unreadable" section, to which he consigns the real junk - including James Branch Cabell (which caused something of a fuss apparently), E.R. Eddison and Eric van Lustbader. (I shouldn't think there were too many complaints about the latter.)

This outbreak of transparent honesty does not seem to have been as counterproductive as it might at first appear. Wilkinson makes the point that he wants to cater to the general SF reader (as opposed to finicky fans presumably), and insists "The response that we have had has been all that we hoped for." But how to define *SFF Books*? It's not a book club in the strictest sense as there are no membership dues or obligation to purchase. It isn't solely a mail order operation either because its catalogue has pretensions to being a magazine. T.A. Wilkinson says that the future of *SFF Books* is still under consideration, but the general idea is to keep expanding the magazine, with the book business remaining as its core. Actually this could be a smart move. After all, newspapers and magazines rely on advertising, and bringing the same principle into the small press field could solve the problem of making low circulation publications viable. (I think organisations like the BSFA may benefit from moving in a similar direction, but that's another story.) Although a better analogy might be with the offshore pirate radio stations of the sixties. Several of them got around the government ban on broadcasting advertising by issuing mail order catalogues, which seemed to work well until more draconian measures finally sunk them.

If there's a danger here it's in falling between two stools for too long, which can only result in fragmenting the target audience. (Customers? Readers?) But there are signs that things are moving in the right direction, with a steady increase in editorial copy. Several author interviews have appeared, there's a lively letters column, and as of the October edition, fiction is being used (in this case a piece by Peter Norwood). There are going to be more illustrations, apart from bookcover reproductions, and a regular competition of some sort. Although I would like to see it move into imported material - a pain to organise, I admit - which would give it a more competitive edge, *SFF Books* is an innovative attempt at a synthesis between retailing and publishing, and on that basis alone deserves support.

SFF Books: PO Box 712, 65 Dumbreck Road, Eltham, London SE9 1XF. Tel: 01-859 6649.

Stan Nicholls

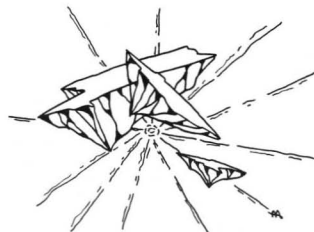
MEDIA REVIEWS

The Magic Toyshop - London Film Festival

Reviewed by Caroline Mullan

I have been reading Angela Carter's novels and short stories for several years now: they are often strange and fantastic, using ideas and themes common to science fiction and genre fantasy in unique ways. So when the London Film Festival showed *The Magic Toyshop*, adapted by Angela Carter for her second novel, I was naturally interested.

The story, that of three orphan children coming to live with a cruel uncle and having to cope with a new way of life, is substantially unaltered from the book. The children are moved from country wealth to city squalor, from white-flounced four-posters and nannies to a house where their uncle loves toys and hates human beings. His wife is dumb, her brothers rough and crude Irishmen; all of them work for, and fear, the toymaker. He



manipulates his toys and tries to control his family too, growing crueler as they forge bonds of love and affection with one another. In the end he overreaches himself and is destroyed in his attempts to destroy their lives.

The film focuses on Melanie, the eldest of the children, on the verge of womanhood as the film opens. She is under constant threat from her uncle, becoming sexually aware as he manipulates his puppets in symbolic rape and attempts to goad his brother-in-law to the real thing. Awakening sexuality is a common theme in Carter's work; here, as in *The Company of Wolves*, it is the subject of lush photography. The camera lingers on Melanie's near-nakedness in symbolic poses and situations. Other images are also memorable: the toyshop becomes a chamber of horrors, with puppets metamorphosed into human beings. The camera follows sleepers into their dreams, the little boy dreaming he's at sea, in an attic room which rolls and pitches in the wind.

It may be worth mentioning that friends who had not read the book found the film of *The Magic Toyshop* more satisfactory than I did. Having read the book I am frustrated by changes that seem to weaken the story. However, whether or not you know the book, if you liked *The Company of Wolves* you will like this film. It is certainly worth seeing, unlike many films of this quality you will probably get the opportunity to see it; it was financed by Channel 4 and will be shown on television sometime in 1987.

A Boy And His Dog (1975) - directed by L Q Jones
BBC 2, 22nd November 1986

Reviewed by Phil Nichols

One of the few Harlan Ellison stories to make it onto the big screen, *A Boy And His Dog* is the tale of an unusual love triangle. In the year 2024 in what's left of Arizona, Vic and his telepathic dog Blood scavenge for any food and girls they can lay their hands on. It's a symbiotic relationship: Vic finds food for Blood, Blood sniffs out the women for Vic. Vic becomes attached to one Quilla June, a girl sent up from the underground, preserved-in-aspic town of Topeka to act as a lure for a fertile young man. Vic's desire for frequent sex is ironically realised as, 'down under', he is used as a sperm machine for the Topekans are increasingly sterile. Escaping, Quilla June tagging along, Vic finds Blood, wounded and emaciated. Quilla June beseeches him to leave the dog and travel on with her. But a boy loves his dog and so Vic saves Blood by feeding him Quilla June.

As scripted and directed by L Q Jones, *A Boy And His Dog* is an impressive adaptation of Ellison's story, accurately reproducing both the spirit and the detail of its source. Perhaps the film's most remarkable feature is the dog, Blood. He is Vic's sixth sense and always his conscience. He is smart, apparently infallible, and has a remarkable way with words. Tim McIntire's dubbed-in voice leads to an easy suspension of disbelief, while the dog itself steals the show with a performance that puts Lassie in the shade.

Unusually, the film is inventive even where it departs from its source. The portrayal of Topeka, for example, with its carnival atmosphere, populated by painted faces, fake smiles belying the decay of the underground suburbia, owes as much to Jones' imagination as to Ellison's. However, the 'down under' sequences are structurally weak, and act to break the main flow of the plot. In particular, Vic's escape from Topeka is both too easy, suggesting an anxiety of the part of the director to get back above ground, and too protected, as if he feels some duty to make the escape seem more difficult than it actually is. Unfortunately, this two-mindedness threatens the mood of the entire film.

Above ground once more, the Quilla June-Vic-Blood triangle is effectively played, until Jones opts for an easy joke as both his punchline and his means of explaining the resolution ('I'd say she had a marvellous judgement . . . if not particularly good taste,' quips Blood). It's a funny line, but it distracts and detracts from the significance of Vic's decision: his killing of Quilla June is an act of love, love for Blood, and a rejection of his earlier obsession with the need for sex. In a strange way, Ellison's story is a very moral one, but Jones clouds the point, submerges any profundity the tale may have, in favour of a quick laugh.

I don't mean these comments to sound too harsh, for *A Boy And His Dog* is a marvellous film. But for one or two minor flaws, it is a masterpiece, well-deserving of the fulsome praise it has already received.

LOOKER Directed by Michael Crichton, starring Albert Finney, James Coburn, and Susan Dey. BBC 1 November '86

Reviewed by Jon Moran.

Looker (1981) is a competent film from a talented director, Michael Crichton. This is another of the near future thrillers in which he seems to specialise (remember his excellent debut *Westworld* (1973), more recently *Runaway* (1985)).

In an unusual piece of casting Albert Finney takes the lead role as a plastic surgeon who becomes embroiled in a murder investigation, with himself as the suspect when three beautiful models he has operated on are subsequently murdered. From there a bizarre and tangled plot is revealed, concerning television hypnosis for shady commercial and political purposes, which the Head of Reston Industries (James Coburn) is involved in, up to his neck. The film's cast list also includes a bevy of ex-Playboy Playmates, so you can't deny that *Looker* isn't good to look at. It's glossy, clever piece of film-making.

The Children of Green Knowe - adapted from the story by Lucy M Boston. BBC 1, 27 November - 18 December 1986.

Reviewed by Maureen Porter

Adapting a much loved children's classic must be a thankless task. So many people have their own idea on how it ought to be done, and where this book/series is concerned, I am as guilty as the rest. I've loved the book since I was a child. I have a clear idea of exactly what Tolly and Mrs Oldknow look like, and could probably find my way round the house blindfold. That makes it hard to review a television series with anything but the most critical eyes. Surely it couldn't give me a new insight to a book I know so well - or could it?

In this case, the series enhanced the book immeasurably, underlining certain points that couldn't be clearly visualised yet remaining basically faithful to the plot, re-arranging events for smoother progression of the plot yet without disturbing the basic thread of the story. Indeed, whole sections of dialogue were taken straight from the book, the production having been done in consultation with Lucy Boston herself.

The story is simple, concerning a small boy's gradual awareness of the ghosts of previous occupants of his great-grandmother's house, until they become as real to him as his grandmother and the gardener and fulfil his need for playmates. Throughout the action is threaded a series of stories told by his grandmother about the ghostly children and their adventures. This was done very skillfully in the series, without being obtrusive or disrupting the flow of action. The acting was superb, Daphne Heard and Alec Christie deserving particular praise for their handling of the major

roles. Neither of them looks at all as I imagined Tolly and Mrs Oldknow, but somehow it doesn't matter any more. They convinced me, and that's enough. Mention should also be made of the wonderful recreation of Linnet's story in which a statue of St Christopher come to life and fords the river. They'll never do it, I thought, but they did, and neatly underpinned a series of similar images I hadn't previously noticed, lending considerable power to the text. I'm already looking forward to another production from a team, who've already given us *The Box of Delights* as well as this outstanding series.

TIME by Dave Clark, starring Cliff Richard, and with a portrayal by Laurence Olivier. Dominion Theatre, London.

Reviewed by Roy Gray

As straight SF the theme of Dave Clark's *Time - the musical* is dated. The human race is on trial before a court of our Galactic Superiors. One man is snatched from Earth to defend it/us against such serious charges as using science to develop weapons, starvation amid food surpluses, and so on. The penalty of guilt is annihilation.

The rock singer 'hero' - Cliff Richard - is transported with a dazzling display of lights, lasers, subsonics (and a three girl backing group) to the Andromeda Galaxy to attend the hearing. His initial refusal to have anything to do with it is eventually reversed, mainly by a rapping Ford Prefect-type DJ cum space pirate who happens to be hiding out on Earth, and who has interfered already by switching the teleplot focus from the original choice of defendant - a politician.

Fire & Hemlock

The Fanzine Column

A few words of explanation might be in order about what I want to do as this column develops. I've not turned over all the reviewing to one person. In the past this has developed into a rather onerous task for those who like fanzish zines being obliged to read fictionzines and so forth. I'm planning to develop a stable of reviewers and farm out bundles of zines to them from time to time. The idea is that there is a wider spectrum of opinions, and people aren't obliged to comment on things they simply aren't interested in. Any volunteers, especially for fanfanzish and specialist magazines would be welcome.

So, rather in the way that the *Vector* and *Paperback Inferno* reviews editors collect in the material and distribute it to reviewers, I want all magazine editors to send their material to me at the editorial address. Please mark it clearly 'For Review', and if Paul Kincaid or myself are already on your mailing list, please send two copies. I don't send out my personal copies for review, although I do make a note of them in the magazine listings.

I need more information on magazines. If you produce a magazine of even marginal interest to *Matrix* readers, I would at least like to hear about it and preferably receive at least one sample copy, though a regular review copy would be very nice. This includes all media zines, fiction and non-fiction, Dr Who, Star Trek, and so on and literary magazines - Lovecraft and that sort of thing - not to mention things like gaming magazines with some reference to D&D and tht sort of thing. Clubzines as well, please. You get the idea? Think of it as a free advert.

I thought the script was lacking in wit and best described as earnest. The choice of certain words, such as 'timelord' and 'stardate' also grated. The music was also below standard though it improved in the second act. The melodies were B side material though a pleasant riff which accompanied Akash's monologue was reminiscent of a phrase from *Gone with the Wind*. I found the lyrics difficult to distinguish but later, quieter pieces expressed some nice, pious sentiments.

The cast did well with the material. Jeff Shankley as Melchisedec made an implacable prosecutor and Cliff Richard was his usual professional self, defending the indefensible. His choice for the leading role was commercially very astute. When he leaves in April this year the show may struggle - it depends on who replaces. Unfortunately, Laurence Olivier's script does not match his appearance, and at that magnification he probably deserves an Oscar for keeping a straight face. However, the one genuine moment when emotion is communicated to the audience is all due to Olivier's ability.

Tickets range in price up to £20, and unfilled seats are available, mostly in the week, to students, pensioners, etc, for £7 one hour before the show. Seat location is important. To appreciate the effects the front circle is probably best, with mid and back stalls a close second. Should you go and see it? Yes, if you can afford it. This is a first and is interesting for that reason. The effects are striking and show what could be done with SF on stage, though whether it should be done is another matter. It's perhaps old hat to us but maybe to the general public it's a new and exciting concept.

This time around I have two reviews, one handling fanfanzish zines, the other dealing with fictionzines. A few words of explanation will, I hope, clear up any problems, but if there is anything you don't understand, do write in and ask. Fanfanzish zines, well, it's not easy to explain, but they're produced by fans, frequently do not contain fiction, and might not actually say anything about SF. So if you're looking for the dope on authors, lit.crit and reviews, stick to BSFA publications. On the other hand, if you like reading about other people, what they do, what they think, and want to get involved in a written conversation, this could be for you. And sometimes they do have lit.crit. and reviews. Most of these zines are available for 'the usual'. This could be for a LOC (a Letter Of Comment, in which you could give your opinions on the zine, take up a point, whatever you like and seems appropriate), a trade, if you produce your own zine, (although some people don't trade - it varies), an article, money sometimes - well, you'll see as you get involved. Fictionzines tend to be available for money but are generally not too expensive. They often seem to be photocopied or litho'd whereas many fanzines are still produced with a duplicator, though this doesn't mean that the reproduction is necessarily poor.

Anyway, we'll see how this column develops over the issues. Any refinements you feel are necessary, please feel free to let me know.

Fanzine Reviews #1 - Fanfanzish zines

by Nick Cheesman

ERIC THE MOLE #2 - Ron Gemmell

I think everyone could write a fanzine like this, filled with memories of school life and old girlfriends, as if trying to exorcise them. I'm afraid that such jottings appeal only to those who write them unless there is an injection of humour, which this sadly lacks. Nevertheless, the four pages of A5 were legibly printed, quite well laid out and whiled away a few minutes quite painlessly. I hope that the author has gained

enough experience and confidence to move onto bigger and better things in the future. I understand that there won't be an ETM 3, but that *Eat That Duck* will rise from the ashes. You could do worse than ask for details. (Actually, ETM is quarto size, though the metric-minded members of BSFA may not have met this size before - ED)

VET CHEESE #2 - Steve Hubbard

The author admits that he wrote the zine in only three weeks and it does rather show. The layout is a bit patchy although it is legible, and the zine lacks a contents page, so it's a bit difficult to work out who contributed what, and how much of it is the author's own work.

Having said that, this is fabulous stuff. A piece of homespun mythology sets the tone, followed by a wonderfully manic and macabre pseudo-court hearing again Glen A. Larson for alleged crimes detrimental to the good name of Skiffy (Sci-fi to you), written by U.E. Who is this person and why isn't he writing his own zine? Sadly the piece ends at the halfway stage, (or does it?) so we may never know the outcome. There is also a liberal dose of letters and reviews which makes this a highly desirable read. Sadly WCS has been temporarily suspended. Still, write to the man.

YUPPIE TERRORIST REPRISALS HIT BRISTOL! Christina Lake and Peter-Fred Thompson

Yes, it's 'spot the word-processor time', folks which the authors readily admit is of the lesser-spotted PCV variety. Despite this, it doesn't really meet my (possibly eccentric) layout standards as in some places it is a wall of unbroken text, and I'm a lazy reader who gives up the fight about halfway through. It features a nice line in mock journalistic approach though, as the title suggests, with lots of contributors, letters page, fanzine reviews, editorial comment and a 'con' report. This is one zine I think everyone will want to read cover to cover - twice.

PINK FLUFFY BEDSOCKS PRODUCTIONS #7, 8, 9, 10 - Owen Whiteack

This refers to the assembled ramblings of one Owen Whiteack, with the unusual and original idea of numbering each issue of his zine consecutively whilst using a different title for each one. It doesn't look word-processed yet remains well presented and legibly printed.

Owen seems to have an enormous numbers one-liners which seem to crop up when you least expect (or want) them to. Most of the text seems to consist largely of quotes from other people he met at conventions although this is by no means a dry 'con' report zine. Owen makes the repertoire seem fresh and involves the reader in the strange, twilight world of off-the-cuff humour. But how on earth does he remember it all? Is it a case of poetic license or does he carry a tape recorder secreted about his person at every convention?

The zines also feature a number of letters from the readership which are usually accompanied by a few satirical remarks from Owen that usually raise a smile. Perhaps this isn't that best that fandom has to offer but I liked it.

Now, where's the bar? I need a drink.

ERIC THE MOLE #2 - Ron Gemmell, 79 Mansfield Close, Birchwood, Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 6RN (available for the usual?)

VET CHEESE #2 - Steve Hubbard, 42 Langdale Road, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcs, DY13 0BJ (available for the usual)

YUPPIE TERRORIST REPRISALS HIT BRISTOL! - Christina Lake and Peter-Fred Thompson, 47 Vessex Avenue, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 0DE (available for the usual)

EXPENSIVE 7, DOPE, SEX AND CHEAP THRILLS 8, STAMPEDE 9 & SKULLROSES 10 - Owen Whiteack c/o Pam Wells, 24a Beech Road, Bowes Park, London N11 2DA (available for the usual, but give him a break as he's moving at the moment)

FANZINE REVIEWS #2 - Fiction zines

By Stuart Falconer

Let us begin with the South Hants SF Magazine AUGURIES, edited by Nik Morton. He is to be congratulated on producing a fine, readable magazine with a cover price of only 50p. Issue 4 is very good value indeed, with five stories, some poems and an extract from a longer work in progress. Stylistically, there is a great deal to choose from, straightforward storytelling rubbing shoulders with more fragmentary work, humour and seriousness, all handled with aplomb. One story which sticks in my mind is the work of Charles Stross, a remarkable young man with a taste for the macabre. Imagine if you will, an unholy hybrid of the currently much talked of Cyberpunk with Old English Gothic and you have something of the flavour.

Auguries 5 contains fewer contributions but is four pages longer than its predecessor. There is one very neat story by John Light called *Living Space*, and a couple of good poems. The main bulk of Auguries 5 is a single novella by Nik Morton himself, *Their Lives Touched*. This moving story describes the converging life histories of two survivors in a devastated Britain in the not-too-distant future. Gang warfare, indoctrination of children, terrorism; all human life is here. Nik's special issue was worth the effort, there is a need for magazine space devoted to longer stories of this kind.

CASSANDRA #11 was published just before Christmas, after delays and problems but was worth waiting for. I'm not going to review the anthology as such, but rather would like to draw your attention to it and suggest that it is up to the reader to do the reviewing. The Cassandra Anthology, in case you've not come across it before, is not so much a magazine as a workshop forum conducted in public. The idea is that readers can write to either the magazine or the individual contributors to make comments and suggestions (addresses are included). The price has recently gone up to £1 per issue. Worth every penny, I say. Issue 11 has seven good stories covering a wide range of styles and subjects. Read. Enjoy.

FISHERY, edited by Simon Ings, is also worthy of your attention. I've seen the first three issues and liked them all. It doesn't set out to be exclusively SF but the emphasis is on vigorous imagination, carrying both fiction and poetry, as well as some good artwork. Once again there is a wide choice of material.

On then to RON'S RAYGUN #5. First the good news. This is an excellent magazine. Now for the bad news. a) There is no fiction in issue 5, which puts it beyond my scope. (This is my fault for relying on my memory of previous Rayguns, and not having time to read #5 first. Apologies to Ron and Stuart - Ed.) b) This is the last one. Ron Gemmell is moving on to new works. By the time you read this he should be ready to unleash the non-fiction *EAT THAT DUCK* upon an anxious world. I wish him well with his latest venture.

Having said that, it's a shame that a magazine which has in the past done its bit for fiction is to disappear. I think that fiction, and in particular the short story, is worth taking seriously, whether amateur or professional. Like many worthwhile human activities, it is often a good idea to share it with at least one other person. The best way to share fiction is to put it into magazines, and every time a title ceases to be published we are the poorer.

AUGURIES - Nik Morton, 235 West Street, Fareham, Hants, PO16 0HZ (50p per issue)

CASSANDRA ANTHOLOGY - Dave Clements, 69 Roundhill Road, Kettering, Northants, NN15 5EH (44 per annum, for four issues)

FISHYE - Simon Ings, 93 Narbonne Avenue, Clapham, London SW4 9LQ (41 per issue)

RON'S RAYGUN #5 - Ron Gemmell, 79 Mansfield Close, Birchwood, Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 6RN (available 'for all the usual reasons')

CURRENT FANZINES

This is by no means an exhaustive listing of fanzines, but includes everything I've personally received during the six months. Please send me details of any zine you produce, or anything you've received lately, which I haven't listed. This also includes professional magazines of interest to SF fans. I don't personally take many so would welcome all information. As time goes on I'll probably divide this column into sections. This time around, it's simple alphabetical order of title. I include price and/or availability. See the introduction to this column for an explanation of 'the usual'. Personalzine means that it is exclusively written by the person listed.

ANVIL - Charlotte Proctor, 8325 Seventh Ave South, Birmingham, Alabama 35206, USA. Available for the usual or \$6 per year.

BSPAN #15 - Elaine Stiles, 3003 Ellerslie Ave, Baltimore, MD 21218, USA. Fanzine, presume available for the usual.

A BIT POTTY! - Malcolm Hodgkin, 15 Fife Park, Strathkinness High Rd, St Andrews, Fife, KY16. Probably available for the usual, write and ask.

CAREFULLY SEDATED 4.5 - Alan Rosenthal & Catherine Crockett, 349 Montrose Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M6G 3GQ. Available for the usual, mostly letters this issue.

CHALVEY QOTHA #5 - Geogre Bandar(sic), 33 Ragstone Rd, Slough, Berks, SL1 2VP. Reputedly a nice looking zine. Available - write and ask.

CONJURER #5 - Ian Sorensen, 304a Main St, High Blantyre, Glasgow, G72 0EH. Fanzine about conjuring. Available on request. Seminal reading.

FUCK THE TORIES #3 - ed Terry Hughes, Valma Brown, Judith Hanna, Joseph Nicholas, 22 Denbigh St, Fimico, London SW1V 2ER. Ideologically sound zine, available for the usual.

HOLIER THAN THOU #24 - Marty Cantor, 11565 Archwood St, North Hollywood, CA 91606-1703, USA. Thick zine, available for the usual, including column from Steve Green on British fandom.

IDOM #20W - Chuck Connor, Sildan House, Chediston Rd, Vissett, Nr Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0NF. Available for the usual. Fanzine.

ILLYRIA #3 - Peter Smith, 16 Trestra Walk, Woking, Surrey, GU21 4XP. Fanzine, available for the usual.

INKWORM BLUES - Lenny Bailes, 504 Bartlett St, San Francisco, CA 94110, USA. Available for the usual.

LARKIN - Irwin Hirsch and Perry Middlemiss, Box 2708X, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia. Available for the usual, one zine for each ed. if trading.

LINES OF OCCURRENCE - Arthur D Hlavaty, 819 W Markham Ave, Durham, NC 27701, USA. Available for the usual, an sf fanzine.

NOVOID - Colin Hinz, 1118 College Drive, Saskatoon, Sask. S7N 0W2, Canada. Available for the usual.

OGOTRYA #3 - Alyson Abramowitz, 132 Burnette Grove Circle, Nepean, Ontario, Canada, K2J 1S9. Fanzine, available for the usual? Write and ask.

PULP #3 ed in rotation by Vince Clarke, Rob Hansen and Avedon Carol, Pam Wells. Contact address: Vince Clarke, 16 Venderow Way, Welling, Kent, DA16 2BN. Available for the usual, fenzine.

SANS SERIF #1 - Victor Gonzalez, 3815 Eastern Ave North #3, Seattle, WA 98103, USA. Available for the usual, fenzine.

SAT'D'Y BARLEY #1 - John Harvey, 43 Harrow Rd, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 3QH. Fanzine plus, available for the usual. This is what happens when you resign from the BSFA Committee.

SCIENCE FICTION FIVE YEARLY #8 - Lee Hoffman, 401 Sunrise Trail NW, Port Charlotte, FL 33952, USA. Available for 7the usual. Irregular zine with contributions by various well-known UK fans.

SIC BISCUIT DISINTERGRAF #9 - Dave Rowley & Joy Hibbert, 11 Rutland St, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5JG. Available for the usual, 40p or 3 for £1, or pre-arranged trade. Fanzine

SONGS #12 - Pete Presford, Rose Cottage, 3 tram Lane, Buckley, Clwyd, N Wales. Available for the usual?

SPACE VASTREL #4 - Michelle Mujsert, Mark Loney, Julian Varner, PO Box 545, South Perth, Western Australia, 6151. Available for the usual, fenzine with serious SF element.

SQUINCH #1 - Jerry Kaufman, 4326 Winslow Place N, Seattle, WA 98103, USA. Available by whim. Write and ask. Personal fenzine.

STICKY QUARTERS #15 - Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield Rd, Detroit, MI 48224, USA. Available for the usual. Fanzine.

STILL LIFE #4 - Simon Ounsley, 21 The Village St, Leeds, LS4 2PR. Available for the usual, fenzine.

TRAPDOOR #6 - Robert Lichtman, PO Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442, USA. Available for the usual, fenzine.

TRIPTYCH - John D Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, Bucks, MK16 9AZ. Available for the usual? Fhz ed. in three sections by Roger Vaddington, Ian Covell and Iain Byers.

TWENTYTHIRD #9 - Jimmy Robertson, 46 Woodville Rd, London, NW11 9TH. Available for the usual, fenzine.

VAHFULL #17 - Jack R Herman, Box 272, Wentworth Building, University of Sydney, Australia 2006. Available for the usual, fenzine.

WALLBANGER #13 - Eve Harvey, 43 Harrow Rd, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 3QH. Available for the usual, fenzine, 7the last edition of this excellent zine.

WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE #24 - Jean Weber, PO Box 42, Lyneham, ACT 2601, Australia. Available for the usual, fenzine.

WHIMSY #5 - Jeanne Gomoll, Box 1443, Madison, WI 53701 - 1443, USA. Available for the usual, letterzine.

XYSTER #15 - Dave Wood, 1 Friary Close, Marine Hill, Clevedon, Avon, BS21 7QA. Available for the usual, fenzine.

ZETETIC #1 - Joy Hibbert, 11 Rutland St, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5JG. Formerly the Sic Biscuit Religious Supplement, fenzine, available for loc, contribution or 40p per issue.

WRITE BACK



Despite problems with the post because of Christmas and bad weather enough letters got through to Folkestone to allow a substantial letter column. If you're not mentioned, it's because I haven't received your letter yet - as I said, the post is doing very strange things. Prizewinning letter this time came from John Fairey, who happens to be the only other fan in Folkestone - this is not a fix, honest. Who will be the lucky person next time? Keep the letters rolling and it may be your turn.

As usual, I reserve the editorial right to shorten letters as necessary, but don't let that prevent those long letters coming in. I like to have a choice from plenty of material.

However, we start with an apology to Jim Goddard of Kerosina Books, for getting our information wrong last time. It just shows that you can't be too careful.

Jim Goddard
Plovers Barrow, School Rd, Womansland, Salisbury,
SP5 2BY

On page 9 of M67 someone states that our special edition of *Shades of Darkness* was slightly delayed. I'd like to set the record straight as this is important to us if to no-one else.

We went to considerable lengths to get copies of the ordinary edition of *Shades to Novacon*; they were collected from the printer in Bristol early Friday afternoon and were on sale in the bookroom late that same afternoon, 31st October. If anyone cares to check the pages of Whitaker, they will see that publication date for this book was 20th November. Copies of both editions were in stock with all bookshops who had pre-ordered before this date.

Details like this are important to us for several reasons. Firstly, because we are a newly established publishing company, we still have to fight a lot of prejudice from those who believe we will not do what we set out to do; or, if we do achieve once we will fail again. Secondly, because so many American small-press publishers deliver their signed limited editions late we have vowed that this will never happen to our titles. We intend, for the foreseeable future, to continue using SF conventions as launch platforms for our titles, sometimes we may have to display books ahead of official publication date, sometimes it may not be possible to get both editions from the printer early, but this should not automatically be taken to mean that either edition is late.

You may like to tell your readers that our next title *Grainne* is proceeding on schedule, and copies - hopefully of both editions - will be available at Becons, again this is slightly in advance of official publication. The collectors edition will be signed and numbered, cloth bound and slip-cased. Included in the price (£35) will be a second hardcover volume by Keith Roberts.

The item which has engendered most letters was, perhaps not surprisingly, Philip Collins' piece in last issue's Soapbox. Why are you reading this instead of watching it? (well, this was the whole idea of Soapbox.)

Tom Jones
14 Haywood, Bracknell, berks, RG12 4WG

Philip Collins seems to have misunderstood that film/video and the written word are not interchangeable media; they have strengths and weaknesses, ignoring the current practical problems, such as the fact I can take a book on a train but would have difficulty with video, surely a book's great asset is that it both allows and forces a reader to use his/her own imagination - you point your own images in your head. I think it was Marshall McLuhan back in the 60's who predicted the death of the written media and its replacement by the visual. He was wrong, Philip Collins is also wrong.

In a similar vein,

Ken Lake
115 Markhouse Avenue, London, E17 8AY

Is Philip Collins serious? I assume he must be, in which case, can he not be shown the error of his ways? The point is quite simple to grasp - it's based on a concept which we call 'imagination', and which is better defined here as 'creative imagination'. And the way it works is like this: take any SF book that has been made into a movie of any kind. Read the book - LIVE the book if it's any good at all. Now watch the movie and discover that it's NOTHING like you imagined. It may on occasion be better than your own imagination - I can't think of a single example of that, but I have to admit such a thing could exist. But it is someone else's imagination, hardened into faked-up scenery and characters, paint and paper, stones, claspboard and stuff. You are watching people going through the motions of pretending to be other people, against a backdrop that you KNOW is bogus.

Read a book and within your own mind you have created a whole world that lives, that's completely honest and natural because it comes direct from your personal experience into 'life' without the interference of any outside person or thing.

Historically, fiction arose in three steps. First, inward contemplation - living and enjoying your own dreams, creating them while you're awake, just for yourself. Next, TELLING them to others - the storyteller existed in society for millions of years before books came along. Third, READING what storytellers have written down - whether silently to yourself, or as a member of an audience at a

public reading, you were given the storyteller's dreams in words, but still supplied all the colour, all the visualisations yourself. Turning all this into movies merely forces every member of the audience to swallow ONE man's vision, as enacted by a group of professional pretenders dressed in bogus clothing - what terrible restriction on the right to imagine.

Dave Wood
1 Friary Cl, Marine Hill, Clevedon, Avon, BS21 7QA

The strong eidetic possibilities of the cinema have been known and employed since the beginning of this particular form of communication. There has always been a body of manipulators who have realised and used the powerful hallucinatory nature of the medium, applying it to looking at both themselves and at other people. Through the twentieth century the moving image has impinged on the written word but it cannot and will not kill that word because it has a different function. Movement, and today colour, informs and excites, but it cannot have the same affinity as the word in the way we remember or create our illusions. In our eye we can concentrate on the procession across the screen and it can be rich in meaning, but it cannot compete with the word in triggering images of all the emotions aroused by the subject. Nor can it be pondered or have then affinity with the way we remember.

The earliest films were usually conceived with only a few descriptive words on paper and many were simply improvised as they went along. When plots reached even the most basic levels of complexity the directors realised that a breakdown in any succession of scenes was needed. Out of this was born the scenario. Soon there was a requirement for fully developed screenplays, describing not only the action in a scene and sequence but also the dialogue. Film became heavily reliant on writers. We now had the director with his instinctive feeling about film seeking from his writers a series of symbols and statements as 'tools' for transformation. The end result might not be the writer's personal vision, it may not be that of the director, but the result is some kind of translation or transformation from one tradition to another form. Think about it. The result, the visual substance, the potential meaning, the specific image become 'second hand' to the viewer, visualisation that is almost voyeuristic in that the meanings of the written word are absorbed through an interpreter. This gives the film maker control over the imagination of his audience, opposing the wonders of reading the word and forming your own mental image of subject and meaning; the writer can only ask the reader to 'see' it in his way; words as a structure give self imagination so much more to work with. In other words, while the film maker gives his visual interpretation the writer gives room for imaginative interpretation, a far more satisfying opportunity.

Michael Cobley
18 Athole Gardens, Hillhead, Glasgow, G12 9BA

[Philip Collins] fails to realise that for large and growing sections of the population, reading is already a 'dinosaur' skill, used only to peruse the TV mags, the teen mags and the daily tabloid comics. For them, reading as an activity must be no more strenuous than squeezing jelly through a sieve. Contrary to Mr Collins' opinion, film is not a language but a medium. Neither is it more truthful than print - both are equally open to the purposes of propaganda (being that which aims to convert rather than elucidate) while one is utterly different from the other. Where print possesses a fairly rigorous grammar and syntax, film does not; where print can be examined and criticised in its own terms, film cannot; where print has a coherent and indissoluble quality, film is only transient. Where print-medium information requires an effort from the reader,

film-medium information (I include TV) demands the observer's passivity.

This acquiescence, combined with other factors like mass unemployment and the collapse of skilled industries, is stoking a furnace of illiteracy the full consequences of which we are yet to detect. Illiteracy means ignorance and stupidity and to advocate conditions that have already produced it is pouring oil on ominously troubled waters. TV (and to a lesser extent, cinematic film) is to literature what videos are to music: both are image killers, murderers of the imagination. And without the feeding of individual imaginations what does culture become? - an endless string of Madonna/Duran Duran videos?

Nicholas Emmett
Bygdoen Alle 49C, Oslo 2 0265, Norway.

All art, down the line to soap operas, must to some degree be interactive at the time of apprehension. The person watching the most mindless soap opera has decided to suspend disbelief, to interact. The more work a medium does (films provide the visual as well as the verbal) the less need to interact. To read a novel, written by a genius, the reader must work with the author at the number of stated levels, and move through gates that even the writer never knew about, for great art is always a journey, never an arrival. Intellect and imagination must be used, for as John Sayles says, 'we are faced with no more than squiggly lines on paper'.

Arguing for the best of both worlds is

Patrick Lee
24 Osuden Drive, Cheshunt, Herts, EN8 9RL

I agree that film and video are better than the written word when it comes to entertainment, and sometimes they can save time spent reading the actual book, but I believe we should stick with the written word alongside film and television and video. Aside from the cost, which is the biggest barrier, you can't put your ideas on film if you don't have the equipment, and you have to know how to use the equipment properly.

Books have always been our source of knowledge, and I'm sure Mr Collins would agree that they should continue to be so. In terms of SF, books are the starting point for the film, and conversely can often explain the background of a story if you didn't understand it from watching the film. Background explanation, so long as it is not too lengthy, adds interest to a story, and can answer the questions you may have about the characters, their world and so on, particularly if the book is based on a film/television serial/drama.

Peter A Tennant
9 Henry Cross Close, Shipdham, Thetford, Norfolk, IP25 7LQ

Mr Collins praises film as a way of expressing personality and style, but surely this is largely irrelevant. Or does Mr Collins mean to imply that only those able to project a forceful personality have anything worthwhile to say, and that those who are shy and prefer the anonymity of the written word are not worth bothering about. You only need look at the media circus into which American politics has degenerated to see what emphasis on superficialities over substance leads to.

Nor is the visual image any guarantee of honesty as Mr Collins supposes. It is possible to fake emotions. Some people earn their living by doing so - they're called actors, and feature quite prominently in the making of films, I believe.

For me, the great strength of the written word as a medium of communication lies in its intimacy.

You are in a one to one relationship with the mind of the writer. There are no distractions. You are able to absorb what the writer has to say at your own pace and make of it what you will. Reading is a sharing experience, like making love, if I may be permitted a loose metaphor, while the more forceful medium of film is perhaps akin to rape.

By contrast, Kev McVeigh offers a little hope.

Kev McVeigh
39 Coundon Rd, Coventry, CV1 4AR

What we should be doing is looking towards a new form which more successfully blends literature and film/video without losing the best of each. I know that at present there is a broad gap between readers and media fans. Blame lies on each side, though perhaps more so among the latter. Readers watch films as well, but how many Star Trek fans read further work by Ellison or Spinrad, for instance.

And lastly, on this subject, we have Dave Kelly with an interesting analogy

Dave Kelly
179 Ramsgate Road Rd, Broadstairs, Kent

To me a good book is like a good wine, something to be savoured, the only real difference being that you can only drink the wine the once, the book you can go back to time and time again without it losing its flavour. TV is, well, like a beer. Good beer is OK but hard to find, even in these days of real ale. It also has the same effect, it flows through and is lost forever.

I've also received several letters on religions of one sort or another.

Ken Lake

I was a bit sorry to read Kev McVeigh saying that 'I know of no major religion/movement that has not produced evil or atrocity (M67, p.21) ...' for I feel that's a somewhat partial comment. I would say no movement of ANY kind, religious or not, large or small, has not produced some kind of unfortunate reaction - even my own professional field of philately has, I am sure, been the cause of wars and struggles! The point to remember is that it's not the CAUSE that is necessarily at fault, but the people who carry it out, who interpret the world crookedly through the distorting lenses that they have built for themselves out of a misunderstanding or misapplication of the ideology within that movement. I may be overly pessimistic - I await confirmation that the Baha'i Faith has never harmed anyone, for example, but I have serious doubts about butterfly collecting and the study of entrails as aids to discerning the future.

Throughout world history there have been visionaries imbued with ideas which will, they believe, take away evil, hardship, pain and introduce pleasure, life after death and social security to their adherents. The simple ideas of these people are ALWAYS embroidered, ALWAYS applied to specifics rather than absorbed as general guides, ALWAYS turned into a dogma. And, people being what they are, there will always be a section of any population that can't quite grasp these ideas, that wants nothing to do with them, that has 'how dare they?' beliefs of its own. Anathema! Fire and brimstone! Kill the apostates! Burn, witch, burn ... But let's not blame it all on 'religion' - National Socialism and Soviet Communism have killed far more people than any religions in the history of the world, for a start.

I've also received a letter from Jon May who wrote the article on Scientology in M66, referring to an article in The Guardian for 8th December.

Jon May
53 St Anne's Rd, Exeter, EX1 2QD

Headlined 'Milan in Scientology purge', it described how a Milan magistrate had ordered the closure of 26 Scientology churches in 19 cities. The cult was charged with conspiracy to commit fraud, practicing medicine without qualifications, and tax evasion. The article gives some indication that the cult is still a powerful force, easily able to recruit members, since although it has been active in Italy for six years, it is thought to have 120,000 followers and the two buildings closed in Milan alone were rented for £185,000 and £309,000 a year, housing 150 people. If an average of a quarter of a million per building is accepted, the 26 churches suggest an income of well over £6 million pounds.

Neither do the activities of the cult seem to have changed that much either. The articles report the authorities' claim to have found files kept on journalists and others who have criticised the cult. The much vaunted 'drug-rehabilitation' treatment that defenders of the cult inevitably cite as proof of its pro-social behaviour also gets a mention, for 'the most distraught of the cult's followers are the drug addicts whose families have paid large sums of money to have them cured ... the treatment allegedly consisted of large doses of vitamins and detention in a prison-like atmosphere'. They have been denounced for unethical practices.

Moving on, I've also had one or two letters about Christian SF.

Alex Brown
28 Danescroft, Bridlington, N Humberside YO16 5PZ

The letters in M66 & 67 about 'Christian SF' seem to be missing the point. Paul Morris asks whether there is any Christian SF, and P T Ross' reply gives the impression that there is loads of it. There isn't. Virtually the only SF written from a Christian viewpoint is contained within the novels by C S Lewis that Ross mentions. Tolkien did not write SF and Charles Williams' obscure novels are, as Ross admits, 'on the fantasy side of SF'.

There is, however, a lot of SF about Christianity, for example, Walter Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, and Fritz Leiber's *Gather, Darkness* both speculate on the role the Church might play in the future, while the Blith novels cited by Ross discuss the problems which might be encountered by a space-travelling Jesuit. These novels are about Christianity, but are not written from a Christian viewpoint. Therefore they are not 'Christian SF'.

I do not agree with P T Ross' assertion that 'Christianity ... can certainly be used as the basis for solid speculative writing'. Christianity and SF are incompatible, one being based on dogma and providing a rigid view of the universe whilst the other is speculative and encourages a flexible view. As Cy Chauvin, 'SF isn't limiting'.

Finally, Paul Morris ought to be warned that there is a fair bit of heretical anti-Christian SF. If he found *Fountains of Paradise* offensive, he will have to avoid Moorcock's *Behold the Man* at all costs.

Putting aside his editorial hat for a few paragraphs, we have some reading suggestions from

David V Barrett
23 Oakfield Rd, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 2UD

A few more titles of Christian SF - and some not specifically Christian but deliberately religious SF ...

There's quite a number about the Last Days, Armageddon, the Rapture, and all that, which should be available from most Christian bookshops, including: *In the Twinkling of an Eye* by Sydney Watson, *Behold a Pale Horse* by Joe Musser, *The Clock Strikes* by Frederick Tatford, and *13th Thief in the Night* by Jim Grant.

Lion Paperbacks have recently started publishing both fiction and nonfiction for the more general market, including Stephen Lawhead's *Dreamchief* and Job Houghton's *Hagbarth's Doom* and *Gubial's Greed*, and re-issues of George MacDonald's fantasies.

Roger Dixon (who wrote *Christ on Trial* and *The Messiah*) produces a somewhat average space-ark novel, *Noah II*. One of the first quasi-SF novels I can have read is *Peter: the Adventures of a Chorister* by Sydney Nicholson, with a young choirboy jumping forward century by century. Two books of religious SF short stories worth looking at: *Gods for Tomorrow* ed. Hans Stefan Santesson and *Flame Tree Planet* ed. Roger Elwood.

And there are SF novels about religions, often (but not always) invented: Zelazny's *Lord of Light*, Farmer's *Night of Light*, Heinlein's *Stranger*. And many others. I always wanted to write a doctoral thesis on religion in SF - or at least an article for *Vector*. I don't have the time to research it properly now, if anyone out there would like to do the latter, drop me a line.

Letters to Dave please, not me.

Moving on again, it's time for a swift roundup of other subjects raised.

Kev McVeigh

Michael Cobley's regional news proposal on quite ludicrous. In the two years I've been involved in fandom I've tried to get in touch with groups of people in the various places in which I've been living. In Manchester I found a non-existent SF group and the nearest real SF activity was in Warrington. As I was on supplementary benefit at the time this was rarely feasible for me. When I returned to Cumbria I tried again. Ron Gemmell put me in touch with the Carlisle group (50 miles from me) only for me to be informed by Shep Kirkbride that he was 50% of the membership. In Coventry I have set up a group but only six people appear on a regular basis. From this limited evidence I suspect that regionalising SF and the BSFA magazines is a negative move and only by centralising do those like myself get further involved.

I think, in fairness, one must point out that a lot of fans don't necessarily want to be part of a group. Please don't despair with your group of six, Kevin, it's a start, and gives you something from which to expand.

Ken Lake

I think five active fans live in Walthamstow yet we never read about Walthamstow fandom in your organ: this is blatant censorship and shows a lack of any regionalistic training on your part. What crap! If Scots want to read about Scottish fandom, I suggest they stir themselves to tell YOU what's happening, so that you have something to publish.

I fear our TV-orientated society has led to a belief that editors CREATE the contents of their magazines out of their own activities, and that they also have hordes of willing representatives in every hamlet and village waiting to spring to the telephone or typewriter with vast outpourings of news which - in your case - as a heedless and Home Counties-orientated editor you choose willfully to ignore.

Ah, would that it was so, Ken, would that it was so. And now, a plea from Patrick Lee

Patrick Lee

I'd like to use *Matrix* as a loudhailer to a handful of SF artists and to the organisers of Conspiracy. To Chris Foss, Tony Roberts, Peter Elson, Tim White and Colin Hay - come to Conspiracy and meet your fans! To the organisers, please invite the above artists because I would very much like to meet them all, and see some of their original paintings.

I've checked the BSFA mailing list and sadly, I'm not sure that any of these artists will see Patrick's request. Conspiracy already have got the artist Jim Burns as their Artist GQH, and the artists mentioned aren't registered for the convention. However, I will draw the attention of the programme organisers to this but cannot guarantee that this will produce any results.

It's not often that I blow my own trumpet but I couldn't resist the two letters following.

Tom Jones

I enjoyed the convention roundup. I've always liked con reports and M67 was certainly packed with them. I hope you can keep up the pressure so that they continue to roll in. I particularly liked the diversity; SF, fantasy, Olaf Stapledon, Milford and Thunderbirds. There may have been times in my youth when I would have scoffed at one or more of these but no more, SF's great joy is diversity. The desire to find someone to look down on seems a human trait. Within the literary world SF is still pretty low down so we denizens of the gutter search for someone even 'lower' - usually Star Trek/Star Wars/Gerry Anderson fans. Sad, because it's just a mirror of our own activities.

Thanks Tom - I'm glad that someone has twigged what I'm up to. I'm very pleased to say that the word is starting to go round that I'll accept media material - dammit, I'll accept anything that might be of interest to SF fans and that can be fitted in.

Martyn Taylor

Flat 2, 17 Hutchinson Square, Douglas, Isle of Man

It's been quite some time since I took much interest in *Matrix* - the mailing is usually scanned *Vector*, PT ('cos that's where I'm likely to see my name) and then *Matrix*, and even then without any great attention. M67, though, was different. For the first time in a long time I found myself presented with something which could reasonably call itself 'The Newsletter of the BSFA' - news and lots of it, reviews covering a wide spectrum of event and review, views which were interesting. All in all - and that little sketch doesn't cover it all by any means - something well worth reading.

Well, aint that nice? But, to redress the balance, and to prove that one's friends are frequently one's sternest critics, even with the possible prospect of a free book, we have

John Fairley

78 Somerset Rd, Folkestone, CT19 4BV

I feel at times you take some comments a little too personally, for example your response to Michael Cobley (M67). You do yourself an injustice. Although his letter has only reached you recently it is probable that the opinions contained in the letter were formed before your editorship. Indeed it is a compliment to your work that he feels it worthwhile to comment.

I sit corrected - you can tell John's a teacher can't you?

And that's all for this time, but please do keep those letters coming in!

SOAPBOX

'Slipping the Surly Bonds of Earth'

or, the writer contends that 99% of sf writers flunked out when it came to lift-off.

By Dave Wood

The average person has seen thousands of images on film and paper of the space programme, and nobody can have been untouched, however briefly, by the majesty of the moment of lift-off. Yet how often in our literature have we had this experience communicated to us as an artistic vision, a magical thing occurring between writer and reader as some form of eloquent statement?

We all know what a space launch is like and I have a fond feeling that the sf reader did long before the reality. How did we get this image? Where are the passages so strong that they gave an entire readership such a collective vision? Where indeed?

The anniversary of the ill-fated Challenger mission set me searching for this classic sf motif. After all, as Brian Stableford asserts in the *Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction*:

'It is natural that sf should be symbolised by the theme of space flight, in that it is primarily concerned with transcending imaginative boundaries, with breaking free of the gravitational force which holds consciousness to a traditional core of belief and expectancy.'

Sadly, my search led me quickly to the conclusion that few sf writers ever seemed to see the launch as an important image of the first steps into space and far from finding a sublime instance in the 'breaking free of gravitational force' were never really happy until they were 'out there'.

Hours of ferreting through browning pulps and tatty paperbacks unearthed little in the way of examples pre-Apollo. What post-Apollo visions we have come from the reportage of such 'outsiders' as Wolfe and Mailer. Indeed, in the aftermath of the Challenger disaster, President Reagan's eulogy took the words of American poet John Magee and not those of a 'master' of sf.

'Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth and danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings
And, while the silent lifting hand I've trod
the high, untrespassed sanctity of space
Put out my hand and touched the face of God'

So what did I find?

Jules Verne is a logical place to start. Ignoring his means of transportation he still provided an evocative and powerful view of his Florida launch:

'No words can convey the slightest idea of the terrific sound! An immense spout of fire shot up from the bowels of the earth as from a crater. The earth heaved up, and with great difficulty some few spectators obtained a momentary glimpse of the projectile victoriously cleaving the air in the midst of the fiery vapours!

'At the moment when the pyramid of fire rose to a prodigious height into the air, the glare of the flame lit up the whole of Florida. And for a moment, day superseded night over a considerable extent of the country.' (*From The Earth to the Moon*)

Compare that with this by reporter John Noble Wilford:

'At 9.32am, EDT, orange flames and dark smoke spewed out of the huge Saturn 5 rocket supporting the Apollo 11 spaceship, as Cape Kennedy. Then, ever so slowly, the 3,617-ton vehicle struggled to overcome the earth's gravity, finally clearing the Pad 39A launching tower, and arched out over the Atlantic Ocean. The powerful blast-off set a tremor through the ground, and staccato shock waves beating at the estimated one million people who stood under the Florida sun that Wednesday morning. . . . (We Reach The Moon)

Realism meets reportage. And a far cry from the visions of Ray Bradbury who lived in his own special universe:

'One minute it was Ohio winter, with doors closed, windows locked, the panes blind with frost, icicles fringing every roof, children sking along slopes, housewives lumbering like great black bears in their furs along the icy streets.

'And then a long wave of warmth crossed the small town. A flooding sea of hot air, it seemed as if someone had left the bakery door open, the heat pulsed among the cottages and bushes and children. The icicles dropped, shattering, to melt. The doors flew open, the windows flew up. The children jerked off their wool clothes. The housewives shed their bear disguises. The snow dissolved and showed last year's ancient green lawns. Rocket Summer. (*The Martian Chronicles*)

This bears no more relationship with the 'truth' than does Jamaro Bumbleilly the giant moth which carried Dr Dolittle to the moon. And yet it embodies something which is part of the jig-saw puzzle of the collective vision. Compare it to the reality of:

'Time seemed to speed up tremendously in the final thirty seconds of the countdown. In thirty seconds the rocket would ignite right underneath his back. In those last moments of his entire life he did not pass before his eyes. He did not have a poignant vision of his mother or his children. So he thought about abort procedures and the checklist and about not fucking up. He only half paid attention to Deke Slayton's voice over his headset as he read out the final "ten . . . nine . . . eight . . . seven . . . six . . ." and the rest of it. The only word that counted, here in this little blind and stuffed pod, was the last word. Then he heard Deke Slayton say it: "Fire! . . . You're on your way Jose!."

which comes from Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff*.

It was now getting a bit like the dog that didn't bark. There is a fine example by Heinlein in his *Man who sold the Moon*, but it is a lengthy passage and I must ask you to look it up for yourself. As for the rest, well there was an odd bit by Richard Vaughan in 1934 with *Exile of the Stars*:

'Rockets flamed and roared from the soaring nose of the great cylinder, and simultaneously, the spaceship rocked upwards in a tormented frenzy of flight.'

And I found Robert Bloch back in '39 telling *The Strange Flight of Richard Clayton* where:

'The switch moved downwards. For a moment nothing happened. Then a sudden jerk threw Clayton to the floor. The future was moving! The pinions of a bird beating as it soared into the sky - the wings of a moth thrumming in flight - the quivering behind leaping muscles; of these the shock was made . . .'

But enough is enough!

Then it struck me. Men went into space in such the same way they had sex! On a pillar of *****

A new paragraph and they were into post-coital free fall and reaching for a cigarette.

Wow! I must have learnt it all behind the school bicycle sheds.