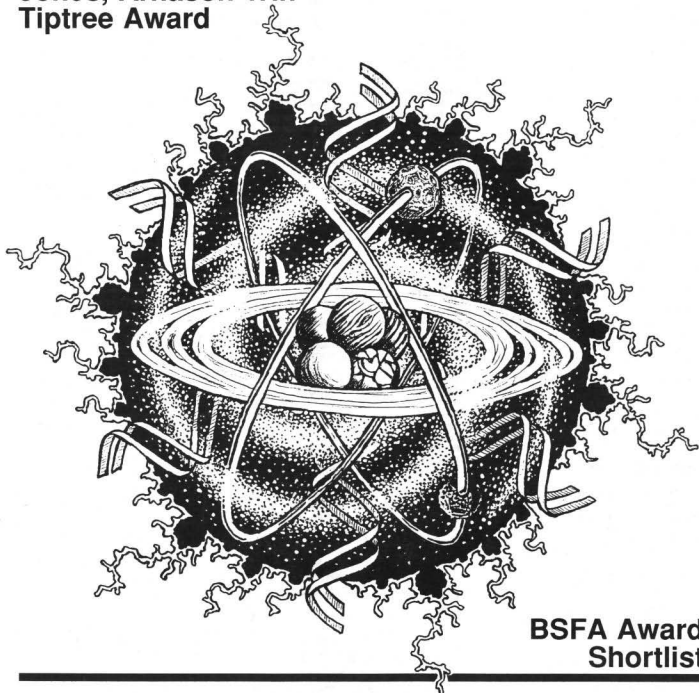


95p *Matrix* 99

The Newsletter of the British Science Fiction Association

**Jones, Arnason Win
Tiptree Award**



**BSFA Award
Shortlist**

April — May 1992

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Printed by PDC Copyprint, 11 Jeffries Passage, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4AP.

British Science Fiction Association Ltd.

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The cover is by Mark Kelly and the interior cartoons are by Ian Gunn.

Any opinions expressed are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of either the editor or the BSFA.

Advertising: Cover £40, full page £35, half page £20, quarter page £15. Rates for multiple insertions negotiable.

Distribution of loose flyers or booklets with BSFA mailings is negotiable. Requests for advertising should be sent to Kev McVeigh.

Submission Details

We can read a wide variety of formats; handwriting is perfectly acceptable if permanent ink is used (we'd be grateful if unusual words could be indicated and reprinted at the end), but we can also accept submissions as plain character files on IBM readable floppy disks (all 5¼" or 3½" formats). We can transfer information from Atari, Amiga or the newer Macintosh machines only if the diskette has been formatted on a PC, and finally we can read PCW disks only by displaying the text on the flickering screen of an ageing CPC464. Should you have access to E-mail, we can receive articles and comments over Janet at: Steve_Glover@uk.ac.lut.hkcom.

Deadline
Wednesday
May 14th

Collating
13-14 June
Applied Statistics
Reading University
Contact Keith Freeman
(0734 666142)

Determinants



There's a periodic suggestion that *Frankenstein* was the first SF novel, with all the razzmatazz that a woman, yes, a female of the species *Homo sapiens* actually managed it. I like the book and have read it in great gasps and re-read it in tiny morsels in bus commuting and have read it casually for pleasure, to pass the time — and quite honestly, I don't think it is a SF novel at all. Sure,

Victor F. dabbled in natural philosophy a bit too often, and animated something inanimate, but the novel is a study of loneliness and alienation through no fault of one's own. That is something Mary Shelley knew from first hand experience.

Her first handicap was her parents. William Godwin, father, was at the height of his fame as novelist, philosopher and radical. Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, mother, author and feminist. Neither believed in marriage; however both were approaching middle age when ideals get compromised with pragmatism. And their baby was due five months later. It — she — arrived in an incredibly nauseating shambles and four days later the mother died of puerperal fever. This was nothing out the ordinary, then. Certainly, the birth was complicated, but the great irony is that this feminist should die of a typically feminine disease.

William Godwin was left with two girls, Mary and three year old Fanny Imblay, his wife's illegitimate daughter by a brief affair in Revolutionary Paris. His finances were chaotic, the cheapest way of getting the children looked after was to remarry. His second wife kept the family going, but preferred her own children to Mary and Fanny. Fanny knuckled under and tried to blend into the background. Mary didn't.

Mary understood and capitalised on the expectation that she should be extra special intellectually, due to her gifted parents. She was a fifteen when she met Shelley — small and slight with a cloud of light auburn hair and calm grey eyes.

There is nothing so selfish and callous as a fifteen year old virgin; Shelley was in any case a great temptation to anyone. He was a young handsome revolutionary poet, accepted by William Godwin, with a beautiful voice and charming manners. It was not important to Mary that he was already married or that his wife was pregnant. They met on walks to her mother's grave and two months later Mary declared her love and offered herself on any terms.

They eloped in true melodramatic fashion at four in the morning, aiming for somewhere foreign. But this meant sea travel and Mary hated the sea. It's not only that at sea was seasick, she perceived the sea as an actively hostile entity. So Mary's stepsister came along for the ride, to act as chaperon, assistant and parasite. Jane has an exciting life too — a brief fling with Shelley who believed in sexual freedom, an even briefer affair with Byron when she was able to say *Suck's boo, I can attract a famous poet too, governessing in Moscow and an adequate eccentric old age in Florence.*

The young tourists traversed France, Switzerland, Germany and Holland before returning. The crossing was so terrible that Mary was, of course, sick. Shelley stayed on deck where he had to huddle together with Jane. In England there were continual financial crises. Shelley converted Mary to vegetarianism — to him that meant bread, nuts, raisins and honey. No wonder Mary was continually tired. She was pregnant and Jane was too fond of demanding Shelley's company. All this stress and lack of food probably explains why Mary's baby was born prematurely. It was a girl who lived thirteen days; possibly a cot death. Shelley kept going off with Claire (Jane thought that name was more likely to attract someone important than just plain Jane), also he was

scared of catching some sort of milk fever.

Shelley isn't being presented as suitable husband material. To be fair, he did marry Mary after his first wife drowned herself. And he did encourage Mary with *Frankenstein*, giving much moral support and helpful advice. He probably saved her life much later in Italy when she haemorrhaged after a miscarriage by putting her into a bath of ice and he dedicated his most lyrical poetry to her. Most of all, he loved her, and that is what she needed.

There's far more to the Mary Shelley story, of course. Her gynaecological history alone would make a fascinating case study. Then there's her extreme sensitivity, almost to the point of psychic empathy; her attempts to accept Shelley's more unorthodox beliefs (like bathing nude in public) and her tangled relationship with Shelley and Jane.

After all that, and a lot more, she just gets remembered for writing *Frankenstein*. And the real SF she wrote, like *The Last Man*, gets forgotten.

Brett Cockrell resigns

Brett Cockrell, the BSFA's Treasurer/Secretary, will leave the BSFA this Easter. He has recently married, moved house and has a young baby girl, Claudia, and it is understandable that he is finding time to cope with the BSFA shrinking. He will be greatly missed, as he has been on the BSFA committee for several years.

If you are interested in replacing him, please contact Kev McVeigh initially (write to 37 First Road, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7QF or telephone 05395 62883). It should preferably be someone who handles money and does book-keeping on a regular basis as the accounts need to be presented in a standard accounting style prior to the annual audit. It will probably involve a maximum of two hours weekly, with a little more in the weeks leading up to the BSFA AGM, when the figures need to be presented, audited and reported to the membership.

The Accounting Policies must include depreciation, stocks, deferred taxation, turnover, foreign currency transactions, research and development (if relevant), government grants (optimist) and intangible fixed assets.

Whoops...

The comment in last issue's "Determinants" implying that the *Forbidden Planet* chain owed large sums of money to the BSFA was simply wrong. *FP* do not owe us any money. The supposition that they did was based upon an imperfectly-understood telephone call. We would like to take this opportunity to apologise wholeheartedly (if somewhat shame-facedly) to *Forbidden Planet*.



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News

from Andrew Adams, Bridget Wilkinson, Tina Anghelatos, David Garnett, Roger Robinson, Chris Lewis, Nicholas Mahoney, John Gribbin, and Mike Don.

BSFA Awards: Shortlist

Best Novel:

Reft Stephen Baxter (HarperCollins); *The Architecture of Desire* Mary Gentle (Bantam); *Eternal Light* Paul J McAuley (Gollancz); *Witches Abroad* Terry Pratchett (Gollancz); *The Fall of Hyperion* Dan Simmons (Headline).

Best Short Fiction:

"Bad Timing" Molly Brown (*Interzone* 54); "Appropriate Love" Greg Egan (*Interzone* 50); "Nothing Special" Colin Greenland (*Tempus*); "Crossroads" Paul J McAuley (*Interzone* 46); "Floating Dogs" Ian McDonald (*New Worlds* 1); "Colour" Michael Moorcock (*New Worlds* 1); "In the Air" Kim Newman & Eugene Byrne (*Interzone* 43).

Best Dramatic Presentation:

Edward Scissorhands Film; *Red Dwarf IV* BBC; *Star Trek: The Next Generation* BBC; *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* Film; No Award.

Best Artwork:

Cover, *Interzone* 45 — Mark Harrison; Cover, *Interzone* 48 — Geoff Taylor; Cover, *Interzone* 52 — SMS; Cover, *Interzone* 54 — SMS; No Award.

Completed postal ballots should reach Nicholas Mahoney (275 Lonedale Avenue, Intake, Doncaster DN2 6HJ) by April 17, although it will also be possible to vote at Illumination, the Eastercon in Blackpool.

First "James Tiptree Jr. Award"

This award, for "a fictional work that explores and expands the roles of women and men" was presented to Gwyneth Jones and Eleanor Arnason at Wiscon.

Gwyneth Jones writes: "The prize is not strictly for women, much less strictly for women's movement political feminists. It's for anyone who's interested in SF's psychosocial agenda. The second year has already started. Send your recommendations c/o Gwyneth Jones, 30 Rudolph Crescent, Brighton BN2 3FT. And if you get the chance, buy *The Bakery Men Don't See* [available from SF3, Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624, price \$10, p&p \$1 in US, \$3 other, contains 1991 Wiscon GoH speeches by Pamela Sargent and Pat Murphy and more than 60 recipes by SF pros and fans]. I don't say you should eat any of the stuff in it. I wouldn't be responsible. But be amazed".

New Worlds 2

The line up for the macho *New Worlds* 2, due from Gollancz in July is:

Introduction David Garnett; "Innocents" Ian McDonald; "Brain Wars" Paul Di Filippo; "Corsairs of the Second Ether" Warwick Colvin Jr.; "Ratbird" Brian W Aldiss; "Candy Buds" Peter F Hamilton; "Great Breakthroughs in Darkness" Marc Ladlaw; "Corsairs of the Second Ether" Warwick Colvin Jr.; "Bruised Time" Simon Ings; "Virtually Lucid Lucy" Ian Watson; "The Face of the Waters" Jack Deighton; "Corsairs of the Second Ether" Warwick Colvin Jr.; "Inherit the Earth" Stephen Baxter; "A Gadget Too Far" David Langford; "Joe Protagoras is Alive and Living on Earth" and "The Name of the Game is Death" Philip K Dick, introduced by Paul Williams and illustrated by Jim Burns; Afterword Michael Moorcock.

Don't think that Warwick Colvin Jr has been duplicated accidentally: the

stories make up different episodes of a serial; the Deighton is a first story, the Langford is reviews and the PKD material is unpublished outlines of SF novels which he sold, but never wrote. And of course adds David Garnett it's all BRILLIANT!

Foundation on the Move

Paul Kincaid described the situation graphically: *The Polytechnic of East London has pulled the plug on Foundation*. Effectively, *Foundation* has 14 months to find somewhere else to store its extensive library (which includes a hefty chunk of BSFA reference library) and to produce the excellent critical and reviews journal, *Foundation*.

The Polytechnic was probably chosen in the first place because George Hay, who was one of the leading figures calling for a Science Fiction resource centre in the UK, was in contact with George Brosnan, then Director of the North East London Polytechnic. This fitted in with the aims of *Foundation*, which were to promote and use Science Fiction, with special reference to education. However, increasing financial restraints have led to this situation and of the various options, the most suitable seems to be to find some other place of higher education to act as host or to set up the SFF in a specially purchased house. The final decision on this has not yet been made.

Whatever the solution, there will be no question of ceasing publication of *Foundation*, although the annual subscription will rise to £10. Edward James will continue editing it and Maxim Jakubowski has offered storage space in his Charing Cross bookshop *Murder One/New Worlds*.

Foundation is therefore planning a fundraising drive, while still continuing with the routine work of packing and cataloguing the library — the next work day is May 16. It is difficult to be more specific about workdays — work is very varied, but may involve shelving books, writing cards, moving books or checking books off against lists (there are lots of donations), stuffing catalogues. There is a huge donation of German books to be catalogued, so anyone with a knowledge of German would be welcomed with open arms. Workers usually break for a drink at lunchtime. There is a fish and chip shop nearby, or some people bring sandwiches and chat or look around. There will be a *Foundation* table at the Eastercon, Illumination, as well as other conventions and please send money, suggestions, ideas, comments, offers of help, interest in the next workday or anything else to: Roger Robinson, 75 Roslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex RM3 0RG. (There is also an article on this in the current issue of *Paperback Inferno*).

Eurocon Award Nominations

Unfortunately, it was not possible to include a Eurocon ballot form in the last issue of *Matrix*, but following enthusiastic efforts by Steve Glover and the Cambridge University SF Society (CUSSF) among others, 57 ballots were returned and the Best British promoter of the year was decided to be the BSFA! Hooray! In the other results, Geoff Ryman was voted to be best author, Jim Burns best artist, *Foundation* best magazine, Gollancz best publisher and Ian McDonald best new writer.

These are the official British votes and will be taken to Eurocon, Freicon, this April in Freustadt where the European results will be forthcoming later.

SF Scene

Respectability at last for SF in San Francisco, where the 203rd American Chemistry Society have scheduled a slot for SF with (of course) *Star Trek*, but also bug-eyed silicon monsters. It will be part of a symposium on chemistry and Science Fiction and there will be more serious items on Isaac Asimov, Thomas Pynchon and Jules Verne. How about this? *Respectability at last!* rejoiced the source, Chris Lewis, the biggest, most prestigious Chemical Society in the world is spending a whole day discussing chemistry and Science Fiction at its national meeting! Unfortunately I can't fix a trip. This competes with interesting topics on the professional development of foreign-born chemical scientists, careers in wine and food chemistry (aka how to turn red wine white with a zeolite or two) and scientific publication in the year 2000 and beyond. April 5-10 were the dates — like Chris, I had a prior engagement.

Anthony Cheetham will launch Orion, his new publishing firm, formally on September 3. The Science Fiction imprint will be called Millennium and it is rumored that Deborah Beale is buying several "first novels" for the launch.

Stephen Donaldson was interviewed by Andrew Adams during his recent

national tour. When discussing his short story "Unworthy of the Angel", which is also his personal favourite, Stephen Donaldson talked a bit about his childhood and formative years: *I grew up on the mission fields in India. My parents were Presbyterian fundamentalists, especially my mother. There is no way in the world I could have the intellectual or imaginative freedom to be a writer at all and not accept the presuppositions of my upbringing. On the other hand it did shape my mind. So the frames of reference, the terminology, the ways of looking at life are very familiar to me, they are part of who I am but the specific belief structure is one which could only interfere with the work I wanted to do. So what I've done is I've put a little reinterpretation on this. So instead of being a missionary for Christ, I am a missionary for stories. I believe in storytelling in the same way that my parents believed in God, and it is my version of god. But it's a very personal thing, and I certainly don't push it on people. I don't usually use the terminology because people don't understand what I am referring to. They may hear the words and they hear the concepts that they are used to, not the ones I personally subscribe to.*

Tina Anghelatos, who features in the Midnight Rose stories writes diffidently about advising fellow writers: *All I can really say is probably something that they've heard before: make time to write and keep writing. However many rejections turn up. I understand that the average number of novels a writer produces before selling one of them, is three. (I've only just started number three ...)*

Stratford Kirby, in a move sure to surprise veterans of Mike Harrison's Goh! talk at X-am, will start a communications course at Huddersfield Polytechnic shortly.

Douglas Adams said in a recent TV interview that although he read Dan Dare and watched Dr Who, he was never a great SF buff and that he actually likes things which are strange and fantastical which are placed in the real world, so that people will then look back at the real world with a start of surprise. It was estimated that it takes him 250,000 baths to write a book (he adores baths) and the quote that has most inspired him is that *Writing is very simple — all you have to do is get a sheet of paper and gaze at it until your forehead bleeds*. The Electric Monk said that one of the most difficult things about a Douglas Adams character was not knowing what would happen next, but if anything would happen next — after all, if you're about to be turned into a coca-cola vending machine, it plays havoc with your sense of motivation.

William Burroughs is rumoured to be visiting the UK in April/May on a lecture tour.

Joe Haldeman, when interviewed for the ISFA, described why he took so long to produce a follow up to *Worlds and Worlds Apart*: *The first two volumes of the "Worlds" trilogy created a deliberate setup for the last one. Both SF novels are about young men who face physical/intellectual challenges and prevail through application of some traditional "masculine" strength; I wanted to write a novel about an older woman who faces an emotional/spiritual challenge, and solves it through something a little more subtle than luck and pluck. One reason if I taken a while to finish is that a man my age writing about an old woman is in large part writing about his mother — and my relationship with my mother changed drastically in mid-trilogy; she had a massive stroke and, rather than have her suffer a nursing home, my wife and I had her move in with us. Since she requires total care, there's an odd role reversal involved, like having a septagenarian infant to care for. So if I taken me some time to get everything into perspective.*

Colin Greenland is still ill, following a flu attack in February, and may now be battling with a viral infection. However, despite the Foundation difficulties (see above) he will continue as Reviews Editor.

Greg Bear discussed his greatest influences in a recent interview with bookseller Mike Don: *Since I was about 8 or 9 years old, I've read, and been influenced by, nearly all the classics: everything from Edgar Rice Burroughs to James Blish, to Poul Anderson, to Larry Niven when I was in my college days. Nearly everyone who had anything good to write I've been influenced by, picked up and stolen from one way or another. The major influences: I keep floating between the poles of Ray Bradbury and Arthur C. Clarke. Bradbury more in my short fiction nowadays, although I never have written in Bradbury's style. I first started corresponding with Bradbury when I was 16, he had a heavy influence on me in terms of emulating a career, using the writer as a role model. Arthur Clarke for the thematic stuff. I've always been terribly impressed by Clarke's work. "Childhood's End". "The City and the Stars". his other novels: "2001" just jerked my head around, spun me around that I had to spend the next 15 years getting that out of my system. And outside of Science Fiction, a whole list of authors, Joseph Conrad to James Joyce. A long, LONG list of writers: Anthony Burgess, Robert Graves — we could go on and on.*

John Gribbin has changed publishers. After four successive novels with Gollancz, he has sold his latest, *Innervisions*, to Penguin ROC and he is now working on a new novel involving time travel, alternate realities and what Isaac Newton really meant by that famous expression about the shoulders of giants.

Peter Morwood recently described one of his favourite recipes in *Filklore*:

Pork with Chillies and Chocolate

Take 0.5lb pork cubes per person, sauté it, set aside and put 2 cans chopped tomatoes, 2 large chopped onions, 6 or more cloves of garlic, 0.5 pint tarragon vinegar, 0.25 pint of water, 6 juniper berries, crushed, 0.5 teaspoon crushed/ground coriander, 1 or more teaspoon HOT chilli powder and 2-4 oz unsweetened chocolate in a saucepan, simmer for 30 minutes, add the pork, cook until tender and serve with white rice and green beans.

Obituaries

Angela Carter (1940-1992)

As the obituaries of Angela Carter began to appear following her death from lung cancer on the 16 February, it became clear that the literary establishment was mourning the passing of a vibrant personality, a source of energy and inspiration that went beyond her published work. For once there was a real sense of loss — it was not just an announcement that a series of novels, loosely collected under one name, had come to an end.

Born in 1940, Angela Carter followed a grammar school education with a brief stint as a local paper journalist, before marrying and taking up studies in medieval literature at Bristol University. She developed an interest in folklore, read a great deal of psychology, anthropology and sociology, and began to see her fiction published: *Shadow Dance* (1966), *The Magic Toyshop* (1967), *Several Perceptions* (1968) and *Heroes and Villains* (1969).

One of the literary awards she won at this time — the Somerset Maugham Award — provided funds for her to travel, and she chose to spend two years in Japan. The work that followed this experience had a harder edge, bringing her powerful imagination and sense of imagery to bear on the cultural landscape of Britain as much as the personalities of her characters. Her ever-present interest in sexual experience, identity and politics became increasingly important and uncompromising, particularly in the picaresque novels *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr Hoffman* (1972) and *The Passion of New Eve* (1977). Her journalism of that time, vital combinations of the everyday and the academic, was collected in *Nothing Sacred* (1982).

She continued her interest in folk tales, translating the *Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* (1977) and re-working a number of familiar nursery themes in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979). Later, she edited *The Virago Book of Fairy Tales* (1990). In *Nights at the Circus* (1984) and *Wise Children* (1991) she wrote fables using the mythology of the 20th century — urban folk tales, dirty jokes, wind-ups and the lore of music hall, theatre and cinema.

She collaborated with director Neil Jordan on the screenplay for *The Company of Wolves* (1984), an amalgam of themes from *The Bloody Chamber*, and *The Magic Toyshop* was filmed less successfully in 1986.

Although labelled a magic realist by the literary establishment, Angela Carter more properly belonged to a collection of authors writing British Gothic — indeed, her influence on some writers in that group, such as Salman Rushdie, is considerable. This is the key to her significance to SF, for it is through British Gothic that several SF authors have found recognition outside the genre. Michael Moorcock, with his parallel histories of the 20th century, J G Ballard with his disaster fables, Keith Roberts and Christopher Priest with west-country chalk mysticism.

While few of Angela Carter's books can be claimed as true SF (*Heroes and Villains*, a post-holocaust tale, is one, while transformed flesh and sexuality might qualify *The Passion of New Eve*) there is a sympathy between SF and her writing. Many SF writers are, overtly or otherwise, fabulists, and, in exploring the "inner landscape" of sexuality, she has few peers. Additionally, she did not look down on what is popularly perceived as being a pulp genre, and, occasionally, she contributed to SF anthologies and magazines, such as the early issues of *Interzone*.

I never met Angela Carter, nor saw her read, I only knew her through her books and articles; yet when I read of her death I felt a loss, of what I am still

not sure. There are two pictures clipped from newspapers which are always balanced on or near the screen of my word processor — Montgomery Clift at a 1940's portable typewriter in the film *The Search*, and Angela Carter sitting at her desk, her chin resting in the palm of one hand, a wicker basket brim-full of screwed up paper and envelopes at her feet. Before February, these images had vastly different meanings to me. One was just an old movie still, while the other somehow represented a presence in the world. I am still struggling to find a new way to look at her picture. (Ian Mundell)

George Mann MacBeth (1932-1992)

George MacBeth was an important figure in the development of British SF/fantasy poetry. His obituary appears in full in the current issue of *Vector*.

SF to look out for

Due to various editorial changes, the Pan SF list has also, perhaps inevitably, changed in emphasis. This July, Pan will publish Terry Bisson's *Voyage to the Red Planet* — a new future where the USA is broke and NASA has been sold to the Disney corporation, but even space is boring until an independent producer takes the shuttle *Mary Poppins* out of orbit and intends to film the first location movie on Mars. Lucius Shepard assures readers that *This is one trip you don't want to miss*.

The other Pan SF release is Christopher Stashoff's *A Company of Stars*. After the "Warlock" series, which has explored pretty all the possible relationships between church, state, education and the perception of magic, Christopher Stashoff has now started a new series — this is Book one of "Starship Troopers". The future is a little more remote from Terry Bisson's Disneyland in Space, but the theme of entertainment persists. It's the 26th century and getting work is still difficult. Horace Burbage therefore decides to set up a company to make a planet by planet tour before returning to put his hit on Broadway. On Earth, though, the LORDS party is increasing a campaign against the theatrical world's "timeless repository of immortality" and the usual conflict which will take four or five books to resolve seems underway.

Pan isn't neglecting Horror though, with K W Jeter's *Mantis* coming in June. Philip K Dick once described Jeter's *Doctor Adder* as "stunning", but he is now concentrating more on Horror than SF: this particular one describes Michael, a violent man, who thinks he understands Rae's desires and can fulfill her needs. Rae's only obsession is with understanding and knowing the acts of death. Michael is, I suspect, out of his depth, however, the *New York Times* describes the book as "exhilarating".

Dublin's Wolfhound Press, seems to be exploring the SF/Fantasy boundary, and their latest book, Catherine Brophy's *Dark Paradise* details the effects of rebellion against a perfectly controlled environment. *The Arts Show* compares it to Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Mike Don, the Manchester new and second hand bookseller (233 Maine Road, Manchester M14 7WG tel: 061 226 2980) selects some new US imports all available from him on enquiry: besides Mike Sirota's *Bicycling through Space and Time* which, believe it or not, does really accurately describe the contents (though it may be humorous SF as well), there is Stephen Leigh's *Alien Tongue*, hard SF concerning first contact, besides plenty of linguistics and cybernetics, there is an essay by Rudy Rucker included. Romance seems to feature strongly, with Cynthia Felice's *Iceman*, which is straight SF plus and Kyle Crocco's *Heroes Wanted*, fantasy, humour and perhaps pleasant reading. Fritz Leiber's *The Ghost Light* contains an autobiographical essay and a brand new review of Doc Savage starts with "Kenneth Robeson's *Doc Savage: Python Isle*."

David Rivitzki, the fan and critic, also looked through new releases and recommended M John Harrison's *The Course of the Heart* coming in June from Gollancz, Jenny Jones's *Lies and Flames* coming in June, Paul Voerman's *And Disregards The Rest*, a first novel of alien contact from the Australian author coming and Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean's graphic *Signal to Noise* coming in July to optimistically decrease entropy in an enigmatic universe. Or try anyway.

Fan Funds: GUFF

Czech editor, writer, artist and all round nice lady, Eva Hauser, won this year's Get Under Pan Fund and is now as you read travelling to the 1992 National Australian SF convention held over Easter at Sydney. Voting has never been so international, reports current GUFF administrator, Roelof Goudriaan. Votes

came from Australia and the UK (understandably), but also from Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, the USA and of course Czechoslovakia. When Eva returns, she will take over as GUFF administrator, although Roelof will continue his fanzine sales lists, proceeds to GUFF.

The actual voting numbers were:

	Australia	Europe	Total
Bridget Wilkinson	6	21	27
Eva Hauser	22	29	51
No preference/Misc	4	2	06
Total	32	52	84

Roelof can be contacted at Caan van Necklaan 63, 2281 BB Rijswijk, The Netherlands and the Australian administrator, Roman Orszanski can be found via PO Box 131, Marden, SA 5070, Australia.

Empire Dreams

Kev McVeigh

Matrix 98 included a piece by Mic Rogers criticising the BSFA, and asking *What purpose does the BSFA serve?* I've been considering this for some time myself. Indeed I three times asked Mic to explain her frequently-voiced grievances to me, but instead she chose to detail them in another publication. Some of her complaints are personal, dealing with her treatment nearly 15 years ago, and at least half-a-dozen editors gone. To my knowledge, none of the present committee were even members at that time, so we cannot comment on these matters. However, Mic also made some more general remarks which need to be addressed:

1. The magazines. As I'm sure you are aware, we have made considerable improvements in the production of all the magazines in recent years. In particular, the input of Hussain Mohammed and Boyd Parkinson have made a tremendous difference. Nevertheless it may still be true that the magazines are difficult for some people to read. I don't know how widespread this problem might be or if there is any practical solution. We aim to create a balance between readable printsize and squeezing in as much content as possible. Are we getting it wrong?

2. The library. How many of you use the BSFA library, based at the SF Foundation? Can we restructure this to be of more appeal and more use? To be honest, I am amazed at Mic's assertion that she can get all the SF she wants from public libraries: I can't get all the SF books I want even with access to specialist shops, mail order dealers and friends in publishing houses. Maybe if Mic doesn't read reviews, she simply isn't aware of these books? In which case, what can the BSFA offer her?

3. How many fans discovered fandom through the BSFA. This has two answers. Firstly, a large proportion of the BSFA membership doesn't really belong to that amorphous body of fandom which reads fanzines, attends cons, etc. The BSFA is their sole contact with other SF readers, and that is sufficient for them. Secondly, I know that a large number of SF fans did discover fandom via the BSFA. People like me, like Catie Cary, like Boyd Parkinson, like Jenny Jones. We haven't been working at our best in this respect for some time, but we do still achieve successes. Mic cites the 'Tun as a way into fandom, but we don't all live in London; and we don't all know about it anyway. Local groups exist, but not everywhere. My nearest group used to be 40 miles away. The BSFA serves these people.

In 1992, the BSFA has to reconsider its aims and how to achieve them. Mic Rogers is an example of the problems we face. We must overcome fandom's natural apathy, and we must face up to longstanding grudges, such as Mic's. With several major changes forced upon us this year, we are approaching a watershed: to we scrape through on inertia, or do we take chances, make changes, and aim for the future?

I looked up the BSFA's Articles of Association, drawn up 25 years ago. They state, in some detail, the objectives of the BSFA. In brief, these are as follows:

- To promote and encourage the reading, writing and publishing of SF literature and other art forms; to heighten public knowledge, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of SF literature; to educate and improve the public taste and generally to further the development and advance of such literature.
- To assist and encourage persons interested in SF to meet and maintain contact with other such persons; to provide liaison and other facilities enabling persons interested in SF to meet and discuss SF with writers.

- iii) To stimulate, held and encourage SF writers by providing them with facilities or opportunities for learning or improving their knowledge of SF; to promote and organise lectures, courses and discussion on and about SF.
- iv) To held and encourage persons interested in SF, and the public generally, to acquire or improve their knowledge of SF, and to establish and maintain libraries and to publish and print books, pamphlets and articles of SF; and to establish and maintain scholarships and provide grants, prizes, and financial assistance to students, writers and others with a view to promoting knowledge and writing of SF.

In addition to all of this, there are several clauses dealing with investment and loans to further these aims. For present purposes, however, we can ignore those. Anyone wishing to see these can acquire a copy from me for £2 to cover photocopying and postage.

Some of these objectives are clearly no longer feasible. The world has changed considerably since 1967. Others sound pompous, idealistic or simply naive, but let us consider what we already do and from there, how this relates to the above.

1. *Matrix*. As the newsletter of the Association, *Matrix* fulfils many of the clauses relating to increasing public knowledge of SF, at least as far as details of titles, publication dates, etc. goes. The clubs column, convention news, fanzine column and letter column serve to bring readers into contact with each other; what the readers do with this after that is beyond our control. *Matrix* also serves as the in-house journal of the BSFA by publishing the accounts, advertising vacancies, etc.

2. *Vector*. If we take the view that good critical writing is vital to the development of SF from both the readers' and writers' viewpoints, then this is *Vector*'s role. As the principal out-sale, it also serves as the first promotional vehicle of the BSFA. That clause about improving the public taste may sound elitist, but surely any writer, whether it be massively popular David Eddings or critically acclaimed Gene Wolfe, will benefit from measured criticism. In consequence of this, the readers of these authors will benefit from greater awareness of the meanings of the books as much as from the increase in quality of those books.

3. *Paperback Inferno*. (This also applies to *Vector* and *Matrix*'s assorted review sections). From the basic listing of titles, to the useful criticism of those titles, *PI* acts as an information source. Again, good critical standards promote good SF.

4. *Focus*. The writers' forum. At times, *Focus* has served as a non-paying market for aspiring writers to publish their SF short fiction. Some of these have gone on to much great things, like Eric Brown or Charles Stross. At other times, *Focus* has concentrated on the critical workshop function, and again, many writers have benefited from this. Unfortunately, recent editors of *Focus* has faced considerable apathy, despite attempting several excellent new ventures. Cecil Nurse has had his own particular problems in addition, and I wonder if it might be advisable to put *Focus* on temporary hold until conditions are better, both in terms of the BSFA's financial base, and with regard to a positive direction for *Focus* to follow.

5. *Orbiter*. The postal writers workshop has been a useful device for writers, many of whom are isolated from other writers and critics, to develop their skills and knowledge of SF writing.

So far, so good. Now we come to the omissions. It has not, and seems unlikely to become, possible for us to offer scholarships or run courses. Economics rule this out for the foreseeable future, however successful we might become.

Nor can we consider printing books. Pamphlets are a possibility, but we need to determine their subjects, recruit authors and determine costs first. The upheavals of the next few months mean that this is a low priority at present.

Most of the above successes apply to people who have joined the BSFA, and by definition have a strong interest in SF. The world outside the BSFA is, frequently, also interested in SF. It just doesn't always realise it. ITV has recently screened two series based on SF/Fantasy by Fay Weldon, but nobody has used those genre terms to describe them. To most people, Sci-Fi means *Star Trek* or *Quatermass* or Anne McCaffrey, rather than the rich variety of styles, settings, qualities and ideas which we know through the BSFA. J G Ballard has mainstream bestsellers, but how many readers go on then to read his SF? Chris Priest's *The Good Woman* was described by *Books* magazine as his fourth novel, conveniently ignoring his overtly SF writings. I've seen

mentions of "novels and Sci-Fi" as if the former could never incorporate the latter.

This is the general public's view of our genre. Admittedly, there is some acceptance of a handful of SF writers of quality — Dick, LeGuin, Rymann, Vonnegut, but these are the tip of a huge iceberg. The object of the BSFA must always be, in part, to reveal more of this iceberg to the greater masses. Other than continually advertising the BSFA, which is of variable benefit it seems, what can we do?

We can raise the profiles of those projects we are involved with: the BSFA award has, I'm told, been badly supported this year with very few nominations as I write. This disappoints me because last year's winner was reprinted with mention of its success. (Thank you, HarperCollins). I hope a larger number of you will vote and perhaps next year we will be able to push the award more strongly.

The Arthur C Clarke Award also receives considerable attention, and I'm glad that the BSFA has been able to maintain a steady involvement, and to promote the shortlist in *Matrix* and in *Vector*. This year, the award seems likely to attract major press coverage, and I intend to raise the BSFA profile in this respect.

We should relaunch the BSFA London meetings shortly, but it remains impractical to attempt regular regional meetings at present. An alternative might be to approach the regional arts and literature festivals with a view to co-sponsoring an SF event at which there would be a BSFA presence. In addition, it might be possible to organise BSFA showcase events in major cities at a later date.

It seems that most of the major SF publishers in this country are very keen on the idea of a successful BSFA — HarperCollins, I've mentioned; Richard Evans (formerly editor at Headline, now at Gollancz) has put several of his authors in touch with us; and people at Headline, Legend, Women's Press, Pan and others have offered advice and/or information. So we have some support to build upon there.

Ideas, as you can see, are not a problem. What we need are people to investigate these ideas, to develop them and to implement them. Firstly, we need a *Marketing Manager* to produce advertising and promotional materials, to develop merchandising, and so on.

We also need a *Treasurer/Secretary* to take over from Brett Cockrell as soon as possible. Brett has recently married, moved house several times, and become a father. He has served the BSFA well for several years, including resolving the mess we found ourselves in a few years back.

Andy Sawyer has also asked to step down as *PI* editor. This, although a great loss, provides the opportunity to re-assess the BSFA's reviews coverage. The advent of Trade paperbacks has led, increasingly, to an overlap situation between *Vector* and *PI*. Such coverage is frequently redundant, although some books do merit additional coverage, of course. It has been suggested many times in the past that the two magazines merge somehow. This needs careful planning to avoid *Vector*'s critical features being swamped, but also has much in its favour. How would you feel about your three slim magazines becoming two, one of which has the bulk of two? I envisage no loss of real content, whilst saving on the repetition of indices, contents pages, editorial and covers. This new magazine, for which I would like to retain the title *Vector*, would need volunteers for certain aspects such as sub-editorial, production and design.

The *Orbiter* network needs a new administrator. Sue Thomason feels that a new face would revitalise the service, and allow her to be re-stimulated by serving the BSFA in a new capacity.

And finally in what must seem like an endless list, we always need people interested in writing, artwork or otherwise helping with all the magazines. Anyone with any ideas, or offers of skills, should please write to me. Thankyou.

There is one other area where we are looking to make changes: the BSFA Council may not be the dinosaur it sometimes looks, but if it is to have any purpose, then we must determine its role carefully, and then use it. I suspect that in the past we have rarely known what the Council could do, and therefore ignored it to a large degree. This needs to change. The Council exist as non-Executive Directors of the Company. This should make them available in two of two capacities: as Figureheads, well known names who provide the BSFA with credibility and a formal respectability; or as Consultants, available for advice and information. In both cases, we need people who aren't simply along for the ride, but who will, on occasion, put their name behind the BSFA

and use their talent or position to our advantage. (Bearing in mind, of course, that the question of conflict of interest may arise in certain circumstances).

At present, we have five non-specific vacancies, with the option of two others should we decide to fold *Focus* and/or merge *PI* and *Vector*. It is my belief that as a whole, the Council should aim to incorporate the following:

A publishing professional (currently Malcolm Edwards); a professional author (Messrs Malcom and White); a legal advisor; an overseas liaison (and possibly a distinct American representative); somebody familiar with non-BSFA fandom.

The advantages of having a big name backing us are obvious, but one would hope that person would, as Arthur C Clarke does, offer us more than simply a name.

And now, the bad news. Despite the projected savings mentioned above, we are going to have to increase membership charges this summer. The current price of £12 is insufficient to counter rising costs and assorted losses. I propose an increase to £16 to cover both these losses and to invest in new ventures — t-shirts, professional collating, advertising, and so on. I hope that the AGM will back me in this, and that we can work together for a better BSFA.

I will be available at Illumination in Blackpool at Easter to discuss any of this with any of you and hope to see you there. If not, please let me know what you think. This is YOUR Association. I only work here.



Wiscon 16

(Holiday Inn South East, Madison, Wisconsin, 7-9 March)

Gwyneth Jones

*But! There are no cats in America!
And the streets are paved with cheese!*

A phone call on a Sunday afternoon in February. Pat Murphy from 4am San Francisco: *Is that Gwyneth Jones? You are a winner of the James Tiptree Jr Memorial Award. It's a deadly secret, but can you come to America next month to collect it?* Now, I don't win prizes. I've never won so much as a bottle of HP sauce from the parish tombola. So I took this in my stride and waited for someone to confess to the practical joke. No one did. A few days later I got a phone call from Lisa Tuttle:

Lisa: *Congratulations*
GJ: *I thought it was supposed to be a deadly secret. Anyway, what's the weather like in Wisconsin in March?*
Lisa: *Fifteen feet of snow. Packed snow. And cold! About twenty degrees below ... Hey, we're going to be in Texas. Why don't you fly down to Austin for the afternoon between programme items?*
GJ: *Uh ... [She's serious!] Sorry, can't cope with that ...*

Madison is a city surrounded by swampy lakes. Frankly, I'd hate to be here in the summer. The Wisconsin state bird is the mosquito. There are tales of infants being carried off, certainly small birds and mammals. The state fossil is a trilobite. The state product is milk. Everything comes with cows on it and they have legendary dairy warehouse fires when the streets run with flaming butter (or cheese). Cheese is worse, it's very hard to clean it up.

I arrived with a galloping throat infection, late on the Thursday evening. American Coffee like the product of a sorely troubled liver, and a shower like a road drill. Ah yes, I remember it well. Next morning, people watched with respect as the tiny Brit put away a vast heap of pancakes with syrup and that stuff they call "whipped cream". Elspeth Krieger, "Elk" computer project-worker and non-fanatical Dead Head took me into town. I bought t-shirts with cows on them and we admired the truly amazing cover on my co-winner's hardback

[Eleanor Amason *A Woman of the Iron People*]. You thought the American cover for *Take Back Plenty* was, um, slightly insensitive? Hohoho. The temperature was in the sixties, Fahrenheit, and the city was engulfed in dense, wet, warm fog. Just like the inside of my arctic gear.

I survived the opening ceremony, a dramatic presentation of great wit and style. Then, feeling terribly throat infected, I slunk off towards my room, only to be waylaid by Suzy Charnas. She had turned up with a broken leg, determined not to miss the award. I spent the rest of the evening talking, hoarsely, to a writer I have long admired — about reincarnation, and how it feels when you break your leg (like a hot wire being unwound and pulled out from inside the bone).

Saturday I spent touting the books I'd hauled along with me around the hucksters' room, chatting in The Women's Room (no, not a toilet) and discovering Midwest fandom's love affair with FOOD — as much fun as their delightful taste for amateur dramatics. Every surface groaned under the weight of bagels pretzels corn chips tacos onion dip creamcheese chocolates popcorn and countless other varieties of goop and edible gooscoop. And then there was the Tiptree Bakesale. Oh my! The Bake Sale! Buy the book, that's all I can say. You too can put on twenty stone in a weekend. Cheese and chocolate, chocolate and cheese: these people (to appropriate a quote from Howard Waldrop's Brecht story) must have bowel muscles like steel springs. And there's no alcohol. Not quite true. The Holiday Inn South East has a bar. Drink was taken; bottles of wine were brought back from town. But the smoky pub-culture of your British Con was entirely absent. What did they do, I wondered, when Isain Banks was GoH? Then there were the panels: the strangest sight. Rows of fans with their heads down, scribbling. Booklists handed out at the end of the session. For this is the only SF con in the world with feminist programming, and people come to Wiscon to learn. Books by women, which routinely vanish without a trace (just ask me) are snagged on their way down the publishing industry's toilet; and given the informed trashing, or the praise, they will receive nowhere else.

Suzy Charnas did a reading from *The Furies*, the final part of her "Walk to the End of the World" trilogy, about to appear after a gap of 15 years. I had to rush out of the end, due to a coughing fit, and narrowly escaped being resuscitated by an enormous trekkie. Recovered in time for the panel called "Why the Tiptree Award is not called the Alice Sheldon Award". It's a shock to hear people talking with such aplomb about worldchanging science fiction. Correction. Some SF writers are always talking about changing the world — or at least the world of Science Fiction. But then you ask them change it how? Change it into what? Give details? The answer is *Woopbopalooza*. They haven't the faintest idea. These people have. Great to see so many men around. Great to see and hear "feminism" understood the way I've always understood it, as everybody's business. Social relativism: everybody's holding the baby [Ah, but babies at Wiscon? That's another story].

Now for the history. Last year at Wiscon, Pat Murphy announced a new SF prize, the James Tiptree Jr Memorial Award. It was a plot she'd cooked up with Karen Fowler, to fill a perceived gap in the SF calendar of Great Events. There was no Science Fiction prize named after a woman. There is now. And who better to name it for than James Tiptree Jr, the "infectiously masculine" writer, a mover and a master of the genre, who was revealed in mid-career to be Alice Sheldon, ex-CIA spook and feminist secret agent extraordinaire. Anyway, there was an award ceremony, with hordes of people dressed up to the nines, and Eleanor Amason and I were each given a cheque, a plaque and a chocolate typewriter, and I muttered to Eleanor *Where's our crackerjack pencils?*

Oh never mind: merely another reminder that it's time I stopped dying my moustache.

This is a kind-to-your-health cholesterol-free award, guaranteed no harmful additives. No publishing money behind it, the award was financed mainly on sales of killer brownies and cinnamon muffins. No ghostly performance with the little envelope. Eleanor and I both knew, and no one else was sweating. No cruelty to animals. I liked that. The judging sounds intense. I know there'll be some soumsour over this "women's" prize, but I don't care. In a few years' time people will be referring, with some respect, to "The Tiptree" and the crypto-fascists among us will find something else to disapprove of.

At the banquet, the midwesterners drank big glasses of milk.

Sunday morning. I walked out, briefly, into the desolate end-of-winter swamp, among the bulrushes (cattails) and poplars, and thought: *I won a prize! How odd! There at last, in the parking lot, I found the snow.*

Holiday Inn was a bit of a lost soul of a place if truth be known, out on the

far reaches of Madison's ring road. I once heard two chambermaids discussing the recent murder. The smell got so bad in the car park that people noticed, the police were called. They found the decaying body in the "trunk" of a car ... she was starting on the latest rape, but they went into a room then.

Blue Corn pancakes at the South West Deli. A discussion of the Museum of Temporary Art, which is being deconstructed at present. Did I mention Pat Murphy's story about Life on Mars? Oh yes, and her fabulous red snakeskin cowboy boots? Howard Waldrop did a bravura performance about Brecht in a 3Beach alternate Switzerland. I understood a few words here and there. Ace. I went to see the bellydancing in the con suite (a Wisconsin tradition) and ducked out early from my own panel (it was absurd) to catch the end of a spirited dissection of "Geek Love". Spent a happy hour and two observing the great CHILD CARE WALL DEBATE [Wonder how that turned out?]. At last, the wind-up. There were heartening avowals that the "feminist thing" will go on being important, and discussion of doubtful negotiations with a hotel in the centre of town. Hotel problems are the same everywhere.

Sunday evening, dazed, babbling and down to my last pack of Strepsils, went out to a fancy Italian restaurant where I had the cheese salad — talked about bats, and Dangerous Festivals of the World. And then, they took me bowling. I must have been on drugs. A zombie-mix of sleep-debt, and a strong hit of infectious Mid West friendliness. Monday, two kind people from North Carolina took me out for Even More Pancakes, and put me on the plane. In London, some timezones later, my half-life-sized chocolate typewriter and I discovered that the IRA had blown up a signal box at Wandsworth Common, and totally derailed services to the Sussex coast. Home sweet home.

I had a good time at Wiscon. It's not too big and not too small. It's run by people who care about having fun, the cabaret is ludicrous and the programme is — bizarre, refreshing, weird idea — about PEOPLE: writers, readers, humans, post humans. Get there, if you ever get the chance. You won't be horny.

Thanks to Jeanne Gonnell, Spike Parsons, "Elk" Kirsor, the Wimpz of Carolina, Diane Martin (aka JTr), Juliebath the bowling queen, the bellydancers, my fellow writers. And many more.

Contour Mapping

SilverCon 1 (May 1-3, Plaza Suite, Las Vegas, attending membership \$25, details from SNAFFU Central, PO Box 95941, Las Vegas, NV 89119, USA). Kenneth C Forman, the Committee Chairman, casually sent me (and several hundred others) a personal invitation for this and while it sounds fantastic, I must regrettably decline. It's organised by the Southern Nevada Area Fantasy and Fiction Union who celebrate their first anniversary in May. Las Vegas is full of hotels, but they chose this one because: *There's a 3 storey waterfall in the lobby, as the focal point to the central area that's open to 7 stories. All of the rooms are beautiful suites with a mini-kitchen and separate bedroom. Special convention rates only \$65 a night! It's a hotel of fantasies! Water and stone, steel and sculptures. It's a perfect size for a relaxing convention — about 130 rooms. There are receded conversation pits everywhere with comfortable chairs. The convention area is downstairs, backed by the pool and jacuzzi and although there is no gambling in the hotel, there is a casino next door.*

Inconsequential (May 22-25, Aston Court Hotel, Derby, Guest of Honour Robert Rankin, details from 12 Crich Avenue, Littleover, Derby DE3 6ES) — see separate article.

Protoplasm (June 19-21, Parkers Hotel, Manchester, Guest of Honour Bob Shaw, other guests Mary Gentle, Dean Wayland and Mike Gearing, details from Eddie Cochrane, 1 Showsmith Court, Merchant's Place, Reading RG1 1DT) — see separate article.

Hasticon (Weekend at the end of July, Hastings Main Library, Guest David Gemmell, with Colin Greenland and David Langford also speaking, cost to be decided, details from George Hay, 53b All Saints Street, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 3BN).

There's more to Hastings than 1066 and all that: George Hay is starting in a small way to explore the resident SF potential, with the use of the recently rebuilt Main Library. Unfortunately, this will only hold about 60 people, but David Gemmell (a local lad) is rarely Guest at larger conventions and with the scintillating presence of David Langford and Colin Greenland, Hastings is in for a treat.

Scone (August 7-9, Clyde Halls, Glasgow, £14 attending membership, details from Kenny Meechan, 80 Ottago Street, Glasgow G12). Guest of Honour Iain

Banks. The promotional material says accurately that in person, Iain Banks is as dynamic as his books and he has written in a range of genre styles from rock'n'roll biographies to international thrillers.

FAB 1 (August 8-9, Wolverhampton Civic Hall, details from FAB1, The Creighton-Ward Mansion, 15 Fullers Court, Exeter, Devon EX2 4DZ, with A5 SAE). You are cordially invited by Lady Penelope Creighton Ward and her guests for two days at FAB 1. As a special attraction there will be a ten week exhibition of puppets and models connected with the worlds of Gerry Anderson. This is a Thunderbirds Convention and it's all systems go.

Car-Con II (The Voyage Continuum) or (In Search of More Roadworks) (August 16, route from and returning to North London, including lunch in a flying saucer, Guest of Honour Kevin Davies, animator, registration £12.50, no size limit as there is an overspill hotel in a transit minibus as well as the space shuttle). Following the highly successful but minute Car-Con I, organiser Dave Hodges has planned a new convention with great enthusiasm. Despite the small size and inevitable mobile convoy nature, it will feature all the usual convention items, such as videos, disco, guest's talk, costume competition, auction, bar and filking (in a separate vehicle and possibly, says Dave, on a separate route). The flying saucer is quite genuine — a restaurant in that shape where the convoy will refresh themselves and have a few programme items in the car park. Details from Dave at 68 Goch Road, Barton Seagrave, Kettering NN15 6UQ.



Rec-Con (August 28-31, Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester, registration £23 until May 6, £25 after, but there are plenty of variations for individual days and for children, details from Tina Hewett, 65 Park Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 1ST). This is a Star Trek con, the 34th British, are is likely to have several ST related Guests (subject, as always, to work commitments). There will be a programme which is "fun packed" with guest talks, video programmes, games, quizzes, parties and disco. This will probably be marvellous, but sounds extremely vague. Is it so unfair to want to have a faint buzz, a sense of wonder in anticipating conventions these days?

Transylvania, Rocky Horror convention (Mount Royal Hotel, Marble Arch, October 31, attending membership £18.50 until May 31 and £25 after — this includes attendance at a midnight showing of *Rocky Horror*). Richard O'Brien, Patricia Quinnand and Sal Piro have promised to attend (subject to the eternal work commitments that dog media conventions).

Muse (October 9-11, membership £10 details from Gytha North, 35 Iwerley Road, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 3EP) Mini film based relaxacon to coincide with public gigs in Birmingham for Alchemy and Razing Arizona.

Octoon '91 produced a final post-con report with an announcement of the forthcoming **Octoon '92** (October 16-18, Guest of Honour Orson Scott Card, Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, membership £10 to Easter 1992 from 30 Beverly Downs, Knocklyon Road, Templeogue, Dublin 16, Ireland). Being the third in the series, it seems logical to call this Octoon "O," for short. The committee responds to comments from the complaints that *The special guest had nothing to do with startrek* — not quite true, since Geoff Ryman's appearance in the spoof "Spock in Manacles" playing Spock is highly unforgettable, but, in a sense, irrelevant, since that Octoon was intended to a Science Fiction convention, not a Star Trek one. The press were perhaps blinkered when publicising the convention, in their perception of the wide

range of SF. There were complaints, familiar to any convention committee that the videos weren't exotic enough, the kids were too much in evidence and that the disco music wasn't catchy enough for dancing. While disco hirers will continue to double book and/or leave conventions in the lurch and while convention attendees will have their own extensive video collections — those problems will probably crop up again. The disruptive children is a more serious problem. New legislation necessitates the services of a qualified person to chaperon the children and one person cannot possibly be left in charge of an assorted group of energetic children. This was highlighted in the otherwise successful Follycon when one person was imprisoned in a room with a tv and about ten children and had great trouble even getting to the toilet.

With regard to the 1992 collapsing of trade barriers, this might encourage British dealers to come to Irish conventions and fan tables are available free of charge for all fan groups who wish to attend or publicise themselves. Finally, the Octoon committee give a Financial Statement. Their expenditure was £4195.30, their income £5929.50, their total surplus £1434.20, which is why Octoon are able to invite US author Orson Scott Card and expand within the hotel. The committee line up is Noreen Monahan (Chair), Brendan Ryder (Co-Chair), Helen Ryder (Treasurer/Memberships), Carol Edmonds (Secretary), Robert Elliott (Programming/Dealers Room), Sharon O'Doherty (Programming/Dealers Room/Folk), Ronan Fitzgerald (Programming), Patrick Walshe (Visual Programme), Ian Sheppard (Publicity), Teresa O'Connor and Leonina Mooney (Committee).

Novacon 22 (Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham, November 6-8, Guest of Honour Storm Constantine, attending membership £18 until Easter, then £20 thereafter, details from Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 4HS tel: 021 558 0997) Helena Bowles is Chair, backed up by Bernie Evans, Carol Morton, Richard Standage, Tony Berry and Steve and Jenny Glover doing publications. Steve Jeffrey, from the Storm Constantine Information Service, says that her work is closer in its concerns with a non-exploitive channelling of nature forces to other SF authors like Rachel Pollack or Pat Murphy.

Pentatonic (February 5-7 1993, British Guest Rhodri James, US Guest Kathy Marr, attending membership £15, details from 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol BS6 6SZ).

For the 5th annual filk convention, the committee consists of Zander Nyronnd (chairbeing and intersteller entrepreneur), Chris Bell (chairbeing and fish), Janet Waite (treasurer and percussive remarks), Dave Holladay (publication, alarm and despondency) and Fox (art and panic). The 4th annual filk convention is described below by Bob Sneddon and Dave Bell.

Fourplay

Robert Sneddon

The convention was held at the end of January this year in the centre of Wolverhampton at the Victoria Park Hotel, a sympathetically modernised old building with lots of mirrors in the decor. About 110 dedicated filkers turned up for three days of music-making and socialising. The guests were Dr Jane Robinson and Cynthia McQuillin from the States, and Colin Fine as FoN (Filker of Note) from the UK.

The opening ceremony was sung by committee member Alison Scott in the manner of the start of the Rocky Horror Picture Show before we settled down to a lot of organised and disorganised filking, which often lasted until 3 or 4 in the morning. For once, the con committee didn't keep moving us on!

The American GOFs were impressed by the high standard of the leading lights of British filk, but most of the membership performed at one time or another during the weekend. Filking fans want to participate, and nearly everybody there was either playing an instrument or determinedly learning one (or more).

There were sets by the GOFs, a distinct change from speeches at more conventional cons, and also performances by the two main British filk groups, Alchemy and Phoenix. Filk is often defined as the act of hijacking someone else's song: one bunch of filkers went one better and filked the entire Phoenix group! Razing Arizona (Smitty, Minstrel, G-K and others) came on and did a set consisting of filk versions of the entire Dancing Flames album recorded by Phoenix last year. Phil Allcock, lead guitarist for Phoenix was heard later plotting his revenge. Watch this space.

The increasing quality of British filk is attracting foreign interest. Two filking fans from Germany made their way to the con, as well as a couple of American walk-ins. Mike Whittaker, one of the original British filkers, has been invited to be GOF at Consonance in California this year, and the British filk tapes and songbooks are being bought in large numbers in the States.

Filking is still a young, small subdivision of fandom, and the social side reflects this, as almost everybody knows each other. The strangers were made especially welcome, and their new music was fun to hear. The German pair laid to rest the British belief that the Teutonic types have no sense of humour. Phil Allcock and Lissa Blackburn, members of Phoenix, announced their engagement at the con, and Corwin Ashley Richard Kimberley, son of Talis Kimberley, made his first appearance at a con aged 2 months. The hotel cooperated with the con by being effectively invisible and infinitely helpful; other committees looking for a site for a small con might add the Victoria Park to their list.

Other news: Issue 3 of the British filk fanzine "Filklure" appeared at the con, with extra copies being collated on the spot to meet the extra demand. A bulletin board supplied by Minstrel (and called Minstrel's Hall) is now available as well (0273 737539 11 pm to 7 am, 1200, 1200/75 and 300 baud). Project Filk was launched at Fourplay, to collect funds for Pentatonic, next year's filk con. Filkers are being asked to colour or embroider a 5" fabric square with their own designs. These will be assembled into a "filk" (a filk version of a quilt) which will then be raffled.

It's interesting to see that the most active personalities with conventions, fanzines and, of course, singing right now, appear to be the filkers. Both Fourplay con reports above and below came soon after that convention, both full of enthusiasm and enjoyment.



...Suite et Fin

Dave Bell

When writing words about a small convention there are rules to which I really should adhere. All the guests deserve most laudatory mention, and the fun and joy should really be quite clear. Now you have given me your brief instructions, and you say you want the truth and that alone, but if I told you all I heard there would be ructions, and Gytha might do rather more than moan. So I'll write for you a con report, a full Fourplay filk-con report, with all the bits of fun and sport. You'll publish it in here?

They say the filksingers are really quite strange. Some fans try to ignore them, as if they had the mange. Which is silly because filkers seem to come from everywhere. They will run your con at Easter, or a medieval fair.

One Guest was Colin Fine, who's moved to Bradford. The others came from 'cross the USA, from where they live upon the western seaboard, to Wolverhampton on a foggy day. It was an international convention, with filkers from the States and Germany. Kenneth Bell was really worth a mention, as were Phoenix and sweet Alchemy. They sang for us so many songs, original and well-filaked songs, even sweetly rhyming songs, that we might have stayed a month.

The hotel was a pleasant one, well worth another look, though with only bottled cider it wouldn't make my book. The Victoria Park is handy for the buses and the trains, but it would be even better were it somewhere nice, like Staines.

Roger Robinson revealed a startling story, about the labels found upon *Space Beer*. Phil and Lissa, they were singing *con amore*, though Alison said "No more Fourplay here!" Dr Jane sung us two short songs about Nessie, while Ms

McQuillan sang more bawdily. There were mentions made of Agincourt and Crecy, and bold attempts were made at epoque. At least three fanzines were passed out, SF and filk they were about, which shows Joe Nicholas knows now, and we'll have a con next year.

Now some people will think this report is sounding rather odd, though it could explain why Eris might be the filker's God. But if you buy *On Filkley Moor* and check song fifty-seven, you might realise why dis-chord is heard in filker's heaven. I wrote for you a con-report, a rhyming filking con-report, using a tune that Chris Bell wrought. Don't edit it away.

Inconsequential

M J "Sumo" Simpson

As I hope you're aware by now, the theme of Inconsequential (to be held at the Aston Court Hotel, Derby, May 22-25) is "Humour in SF" and our Guest of Honour is one of the top authors in that field, Robert Rankin (*The Brenford Trilogy*, *The Sprouts of Wrath*, *Armageddon: The Musical*). Robert was due to be a guest at last year's Albuscon, but sadly had to cancel. This means that before he becomes so big he turns up at every con! Our Art GoH is David A Hardy, who has won loads of awards for illustrating books and mags (most recently issue 3 of *Far Point*).

The con's two programme streams will include a variety of startling events — largely of a participatory nature — which will make this a good con to say that you were at. Over the weekend you can expect:

Live Action Spelling Bee: as seen on DC's *Lobo* comic (an exciting, violent and dark parlour game for everyone who writes "JRR Tolkien" and then stops).

A Spoof Church Service: (NB Rumour reaches our ears that a certain musical can hold one of these recently. We hope that they thought of it completely independently, because we've been advertising this as "the first ever" for nearly a year now). This is your chance to enjoy all the dirty bits in the Old Testament and say *I thought this was a comics panel*.

The Trial of Terry Pratchett: What can we say? The charge is "Writing novels without due care and attention".

Simo Wrestling: This is definitely a first! It's such a crazy idea that it must work!

Plus: real ale tasting (courtesy of the Brunswick Inn), surreal ale tasting (!), bigotry workshop, pratchetting contest, anti-pratchetting workshop, international fish-stamping (no, really), turkey reading/listening (books and records) and even a few panels.

There will be two discos, full of the stuff SF fans want to hear, like the Blues Brothers and "Weird Al" Yankovic (also featuring Octarine's infamous alcoholic jellies).

Weird Al also crops up in the main video stream (in *UHF* and *Amazing Stories*) along with classic and/or rare stuff like *The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film* and the *Killer Tomatoes* cartoon. The second vid room will show kids' shows, classic comedy and splatter movies (on separate evenings).

There's a dealers' room, an auction (for dyslexia research), quizzes, parties, alcohol, and a train station next door. What more could you want, or could we cram in?

Attending membership is £21, rising to £25 after Eastercon, but BSFA members can knock £3 off (because you're lovely). Students in mid-exam can have a one-day membership on Saturday for £7 and still revise all Sunday. Room rates are £30 (single), £52 (twin). Send that cheque now to: Inconsequential, 12 Crich Avenue, Littleover, Derby DE3 6ES.

Protoplasm

Neil Curry

Science Fiction shouldn't become gloomy and portentous, mainly because one of the things we need most these days is a good laugh. So says Bob Shaw, the Guest of Honour at Protoplasm — a Science Fiction convention being held during June 19-21 at Parker's Hotel, Manchester.

The first Protoplasm progress report attacked Bob's book blurb for failing to make any mention of how his play *Pygmalion* became the film *My Fair*

Lady [glossing] over his starring roles in the film *"Jaws"* and TV's *"The Puppet on a String"*. Fortunately, we have now found that, in fact, Bob is an award winning Science Fiction author — his repertoire including the "Orbitville" and "The Ragged Astronauts" series of novels. These books are not "gloomy and portentous" — indeed Bob's own wit and humour frequently show through these thought-provoking and inventive stories. Bob's wit and humour are not just confined to his writing, as you will discover at Protoplasm, especially if you attend his presentation of selected Serious Scientific Talks.

In addition to Bob, we have Mary Gentle, Dean Wayland and Mike Gearing as Special Guests. All three belong to the Fight School based in Stevenage with Dean at the head. This specialises in historical re-enactment, offering training courses and even providing help to other groups wishing to set up their own re-enactment or live role playing societies. The system they employ — the patented Wayland Fight System — attempts to follow 17th century sword-fighting techniques as closely as possible, allowing only minimal force and pulled blows to ensure the minimum of damage to the combatants but without destroying the sport. They will be providing a demonstration, so you can decide for yourself. Mary is, of course, also a successful author — her last two novels, *Rats and Gargoyles* and *The Architecture of Desire* receiving much critical and popular acclaim.

The programme offers plenty of choice and variety — the serious side concentrating on biology (homing in on biotechnology and the environment), but there will also be a Friday night party, video and gaming programmes, quizzes and even a canal walk to clear the cobwebs on the Sunday morning. We will also be holding our new traditional cabaret — an opportunity to either participate (previous items include songs, both comic and serious, dramatic monologues, stand-up comedy, comedy sketches and mime) or to just sit back and enjoy yourself (like I do). And while you enjoy yourself, you will be helping to raise money for charity — about £1300 was raised at our last two conventions.

Attending membership is £16 until 1 May, then £18 until the weekend and £20 on the door. Room rates have been negotiated from £18.50. For more details, please write to Protoplasm, 1 Shoemakers Court, Merchants Place, Reading, Berkshire RG1 1DT.



Clubs Update

East Midlands SF Group meet on the last Saturday of every month upstairs at the Peacock pub, Mansfield Road, Nottingham. At the moment it is fairly informal — a drink, a chat, a quiz, a raffle and a video — but if enough people turn up, we can start inviting guest speakers. Anyone interested can contact the EMSFG at 0602 284610.

Peterborough Club: Please note the contact is Pete at 0733 242025 and that Jon Pertwee will be present at Queensgate, Peterborough on April 25, 2-4.30pm. The club is sponsoring a Fantasy Fair in Peterborough at The Crescent Exhibition Centre, Bretton (A47 Soke Parkway, Junction 16) on May 17, 11am to 5pm which will feature demonstrations of role playing and wargames, sales of books, comics, figures, toys and records not to mention a local SF author autograph session. (Which one? Ah, must maintain the sense of wonder). Organiser Bruce King guarantees that there will be at least 50 stands backed up by full advertising cover in the local press and such national magazines as *Fantasia*, *TV Zone* and *Model Collector*. It costs £1 to get in, though there is free parking and refreshments are also available. For details, please contact the club or Bruce King at 0480 216372.

In *Matrix 97*, the "Past Futures" exhibition, then at Bradford, was described as "A Brave Try". It then went to Peterborough where it is described similarly in the club magazine with the rider "B for effort, C for content and quality". They note that most of the displays are copies, that Thunderbird 2's wings point the wrong way and comment that they would recommend the V&A Museum's *Krazy Kat* archive, or one of the several *Strip Search* comic art shows, occasionally reviewed in this magazine.

The Science Fiction Group Deutschland have expanded to form a small British regional group (the first outside Germany). If you have some German, why not join — details from SFCd, c/o Michael Haitel, Kempener Str. 97, W-8901 Koenigsbrunn, Germany.

Drake SF&F Association now meet at Tothill Community Centre, St Jude's, Plymouth. Membership fees are £11 per year for full membership, for those

who attend meetings and £7.50 for associate membership which entitles members to receive *Drake's Drum*, and their bi-monthly newsletter *Drake's Log*.

The BSFA London meetings should be resuming in a couple of months, probably in the newly redecorated Old Coffee Shop in Soho. In the last issue, Maureen Speller mentioned that since she is tied up with University essays, Andrew Seaman will be organising them. In the meantime, though, a bouquet for the London meetings:

As an occasional attendee at the London meetings writes Martin H Brice I am naturally disappointed that they are in abeyance. My sincere thanks to the various people who have organised them over the years.

I was, however, rather sorry that the word "apathy" was used about the failure to find current organisers and supporters. I don't think that people outside the South East really appreciate just how difficult it is to move around London. Bomb scares, bad weather, leaves on the line and staff shortages all mean cancellation of trains and buses. After 9pm, you have to start clockwatching; it won't do to miss the last-but-one train — the last one itself might be non-existent, or only go halfway. Even getting up to London one afternoon recently from Alton in Hampshire involved an hour's delay because of signal failure at Wimbledon.

So, unless you happen to be in London that day or are very, very determined and fit, you don't always feel like struggling a couple of hours each way even though you know the evening will be entertaining and the company convivial. And if you are the organiser, it requires even more dedication and old-fashioned self-sacrifice.

Once again, my sincere thanks and congratulations to the organisers of the London meetings over the past few years. You have done a good job; I enjoyed every meeting I was able to attend.



Media File

The National Film Theatre, London, is showing a Dystopia series throughout April, the programme are follows: *Westworld* April 13-14; *1984* April 15 & 17; *Mad Max* April 16 & 18; *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* April 17 & 20; *Brazil* April 18 & 19; *Mad Max 2* April 19 & 20; *Soylent Green* April 22 & 23; *The Day The Earth Caught Fire* April 24 & 26; *Blade Runner* April 25 & 27; *Videodrome* April 28 & 29; *Silent Running* April 29.

Wheller Winston Dixon, of the Film Studies Program at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln USA, who programmed the series, describes the dystopian SF as liberating and adds that the present is better than the future, so one should enjoy the present while one can. That's a debatable point, perhaps ...

Truly, Madly, Boldly

Ian Mundell

A review of *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991, Nicholas Meyer) and the whole Trek shebang...

"Why do they number the Rocky films?" runs a rather old, feeble joke. "So that you can tell them apart".

Ask people about the *Star Trek* films, now numbered one to six (or I to VI if you want to be Baroque about it) and you get a different response. No-one knows the numbers, but everyone knows "the one with the whales", "the Khan one", "the one without Spock". *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* is pretty much certain to go down in Trek lore as "the crumbly one".

Just for the record, it goes like this:

— *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979, Robert Wise, whose credits include *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *The Haunting*, *The Sound of Music* and *The Andromeda Strain*), a newly outfitted and untested Enterprise is sent to investigate a hostile energy cloud, at the heart of which is Voyager VI.

— *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan* (1982, Nicholas Meyer) a terraforming project discovers Khan and the survivors of the Botany Bay, exiled in the tv episode "Space Seed" to a barren world. Khan escapes and comes for Kirk.

— *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* (1984, Leonard Nimoy) Spock, who

sacrificed his life to save the Enterprise at the end of the last film, left his "soul" in McCoy's brain. Kirk and the veterans go to the terraformed planet to look for Spock's body.

— *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* (1986, Leonard Nimoy) on returning to Earth to face the music over stealing the Enterprise (destroyed at the end of III), the veterans find they need some hump-backed whales to save the world. They go back in time to find some in the eco-doomed 1980s.

— *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* (1989, William Shatner) the re-built and again untested Enterprise is sent to rescue some hostages on a dust-ball world. It turns out to be a scam to hijack a starship so that a religious fanatic (Spock's half brother) can go and meet God — really just another alien weirdo.

— *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991, Nicholas Meyer) three months from retirement, the crew of the Enterprise is sent to escort a Klingon peace delegation to Earth for negotiations. However, the militarist factions on both sides contrive to keep the war going. The Klingon ambassador is killed, Kirk and McCoy carry the can, but escape from their prison world in time to stop an assassination at the peace talks.

Star Trek VI was first formulated as a prequel to the original series, showing the relationships of Kirk, Spock and McCoy as they go through Starfleet Academy. The advantage of this idea was that it would use a set of new unknown actors as the principals. The costs would be less (Shatner and Nimoy both cost \$4M per film, DeForest Kelly \$500,000, the rest of the veterans \$125,000 a piece) and it would establish a new cast which would invigorate the film series and, perhaps, allow episodes to be added to the beginning of the original tv series.

However, Paramount wanted Shatner et al for the film to cash in on the 25th anniversary of Trek in 1991, and the fans wanted the old guard. In addition, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* has managed to pick up a substantial following after a shaky start, and it looks like that set of characters will be the subject of the next movie.

As far as *Star Trek* is concerned, director Nicholas Meyer seems to have magic fingers, both financially and in terms of what he did with the raw materials available. This success largely appears to be due to a healthy disregard for the sacred: past projects include the book and screen play for *The Seven Per Cent Solution* (1976) in which he had Sherlock Holmes go into analysis with Sigmund Freud and *Time After Time* (1980) in which H G Wells chases Jack the Ripper through time to the 1970s.

He cobbled together *Star Trek II* from three or four rejected draft scripts, one of which contained the death of Spock. In the end, the producer over-ruled him, opening the way for the deeply naff *Star Trek III*, while Meyer maintained that "the opera is over, the fat lady has sung and Carmen is dead". However, with its cast of science alumni and (relatively) labyrinthine plot, *Star Trek II* remains the most Trek-like of the movies, and also the cheapest.

Meyer was also responsible for writing the 20th century sequences of *Star Trek V* (Kirk and Spock's excellent adventure), providing the contemporary pull that drew an audience that went far beyond the hardened fans. The head of Paramount at the time is reported as saying that the film would have been made even without the Trek franchise, and when it comes down to it, there is no reason why it has to be a Trek film. It could be anyone out there.

In *Star Trek VI*, Meyer has produced a fine end to the original cast movies — it feels like part of the Trek mythos, yet it looks like a cinema film. Meyer breaks up the particularly stagnant set of the Enterprise's bridge by filming the scenes with a steadycam — no longer does the only motion come from the crew leaning left and right in simulated turbulence. There is a dynamism to the camera movement which carries the viewer along.

Similarly, the special effects are used with some sort of narrative integrity, rather than for the sake of being flash, as in *Star Trek I*. Much has been made of the zero-gravity blood that floats around as the Klingon delegation is being massacred, although the implied awareness of scientific logic does not stop the Enterprise whooshing around in the vacuum of space as of old.

It's most serious fault — besides the gratuitous quoting of Shakespeare — is the attempt to set up analogies to 1990s world politics. The Klingons, who started out in the tv series as a bastardised version of the yellow peril, have metamorphosed into a Mongol-tinged version of the former USSR. The crisis that precipitates the peace mission is a Chernobyl-type accident on one of the Klingon moons, while the Klingon ambassador is a xeno-Gorbachev. All very clever, except for the fact that this is no longer news — it's history. And we all know that America played very little part in the reformation of Eastern Europe, being far too busy protecting its assets in the Arab world.

As it did with the Vietnam movies of the 1980s, Hollywood is already trying to re-write history — soon it will catch up with itself and, passing rapidly through writing the news, will issue scripts which we all have to act out.

Viewing the Star Trek films as a whole, an experience soon to be possible thanks to video and already being offered as a 13 hour marathon by some London cinemas, there is a sense of continuity not present in the original TV series. This goes further than the unavoidable accumulation of wrinkles — the characters accumulate and exhibit experience as well.

The death of Kirk's son in III carries through to his mistrust of Klingons in VI; the curmudgeonly McCoy's experience carrying Spock's soul in III gives him greater understanding of the Vulcan; and Spock's constant struggle with the emotional residue of his human genes — the cause of much blather in the TV series — finally resolves, so that by VI he is at some sort of peace with himself.

What the Star Trek films give us is the nearest cinematic equivalent of the pulp SF series of the 1940s and 1950s — with all the highs, lows and eccentricities that that implies.

But what is there about the latest SF film, apart from nearly falling off the cinema seat in case Kirk and McCoy do not, by some miracle, make it for once? A spotlight on "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" alone:

Shakespeare in the native Klingon

Ian Nathan

Perhaps not the greatest adventure for the familiar crew, now trusted friends and comrades to an audience soured on familiarity. *The Undiscovered Country* has concentrated Star Trek's most positive value. The film is a motherlode of entertainment, untarnished by the poor scripting, timid direction and lack of inner drive that scuppered many of the previous cinema episodes. Meyer, who has easily proved to be the most valid of Trek director, has enhanced high production values, inventive FX with an undertone of self-parody born of the security the cast of actors have with their well-worn roles. Humour has lifted a tale based slyly on the current global political situation into a full-wack extravaganza that never jars.

Peace is on the agenda, the Klingons are a dying race — mirroring a decline of communism — the antagonism must be put behind them. Kirk, who finds that notion of reconciliation with his nemesis a rough pill to swallow, has to convey their peace delegation to the conference. Assassinations, in a fabulous gravityless sequence, on the Klingon ship, leave the captain and his doctor framed and the rest of the crew in search of a traitor.

Meyer, who co-wrote the film, has filled the punch with a plethora of unforgettable ingredients, more than enough to leave you drunk on enjoyment. Christopher Plummer as a baroque Klingon battle commander quoting Shakespeare as he lets forth another volley of photon missiles, Kirk fighting a replica of himself in the heart of the icy prison planet, Kim Cattrall out-Vulcanising Spock and, of course, Scotty bellowing down the intercom *she canna take much more, Captain*. For the converted, there is little more to say, they'll be there no matter, for those sceptical go, be converted. What a way to say farewell, there could be no finer tribute to Roddenberry than this.

At Last, a new Star Wars film! (Nearly)

M J "Simo" Simpson

Two of the great unanswered questions in SF are *When will the next "Star Wars" movie be made?* and *What will it be about?* At last, one of these can be (partially) answered.

As you may know, George Lucas' grand plan was to create three linked trilogies, of which the middle one alone has seen the light of projector. The film we all know as *Star Wars* is actually *Episode 4: A New Hope*, with *Empire...* and *...Jedi* as parts 5 and 6. (The two *Ewok* movies were merely spin-offs). Since the last of these three was made over ten years ago, there has been much debate — and quite a few rumours — about how far the work has got on the other six movies.

Whilst in the USA recently, I visited a SF shop who supplied photocopies of

movie scripts. In amongst their stock I found a photocopy of a "preliminary draft" for the third movies in the series: *Fall of the Republic*. The title page is as follows:

STAR WARS III: FALL OF THE REPUBLIC

Story Treatment by John L. Flynn

Adapted from Part I:

"The Adventures of Obi-Wan Kenobi"
by George Lucas.

The story is laid out in a narrative format, scene by scene, over 26 pages. Here, briefly, is what happens:

Jedi Knight Anakin Skywalker finds the Kaiburr Crystal on the planet Sigma Vulcanus. This is an object which intensifies the power of the Force and could bring peace to the crumbling Old Republic, but Skywalker wants it for Councillor Palpatine, who has plans to rule the galaxy himself. Anakin's friend Obi-Wan Kenobi appears and battles him. Skywalker falls into a volcanic fissure, still holding the crystal.

Meanwhile, on the capital planet of Jhantor, Palpatine plots with his conspirators, who include Prince Valerium, Lieutenant Motti and Commander Tarkin. He has "persuaded" most of the High Council to vote for him as President, but has met resistance from Senators Tars Courtney, Mon Mothma and Bail Organa.

Captain Antilles is the pilot of a "small, saucer-shaped freighter", crewed by C3PO and a "ten year old Correllian cabin boy". On approaching Jhantor, he is boarded by Palpatine's men and his cargo is confiscated.

Lady Arcadia Skywalker is heavily pregnant and worried about the degeneration of the Republic under Palpatine's rule. When Tars Courtney is assassinated, she tries to leave Jhantor, but is arrested. Meanwhile, back on Sigma Vulcanus, Anakin Skywalker is brought back to life by the Monastic Order of the Sith, who are actually just physical manifestations of Palpatine's mind. The scene shows that Darth Vader (as he now becomes) is not just a man in body armour — he is effectively a cyborg. Somewhat against his will, he is trained by Palpatine as a super-weapon against the Jedi.

Kenobi, having consulted with Yoda about Skywalker's apparent death, arrives at the Skywalker residence on Jhantor to find it empty apart from Antilles (who is looking for Lady Arcadia to seek help from the Merchant's Guild) and one of the household droids — R2D2!

Palpatine orders Valerium to execute Lady Arcadia, then fools Vader/Skywalker into thinking that his wife has been murdered by Jedi. Vader is entrusted to hunt down and kill all the Jedi Knights, aided by captured bounty hunter Boba Fett.

Kenobi and Antilles rescue Lady Arcadia, but as they escape, she goes into labour. Valerium reports the escape to Palpatine, who punishes him and orders the immediate arrest of Mon Mothma and Bail Organa. Kenobi flies off to warn his fellow Jedi that they are in danger while Antilles helps deliver twins — a boy and a girl (guess who). Palpatine detects a change in the force, indicating the birth of a son to Lady Arcadia — a son who could be a threat. In a Herod-like move, he orders the death of every new-born male child.

Vader, Boba Fett and a squad of assassins seek out and murder all the remaining Jedi Knights except, of course, Kenobi, who arrives to late to do anything but build a funeral pyre for his comrades.

Antilles, Lady Arcadia and her entourage are taken by guards to the Alderaan Embassy where they meet Bail Organa. By now Palpatine's political machinations have guaranteed the fall of the Old Republic and have given him control of the Starfleet and the Merchant's Guild. Organa *et al* are in grave danger. They prepare to leave, but Kenobi arrives back on Jhantor with two pieces of bad news. Not only are all the other Jedi dead, but the Starfleet has formed a blockade to prevent Organa and his troops from escaping.

Antilles suddenly appears with a group of assorted Merchant's Guildmen, still loyal to the Republic. Together with Organa's Alderaan troops, they should have enough ships to blast through the blockade.

The film finishes with a massive space battle as the raggle-taggle assortment of ships under Organa's command attempts to blast through the Starfleet which is commanded by Tarkin. Not all of them make it, but enough survive to form the Rebel Alliance in later films. Palpatine, of course, is made Emperor.

Obi-Wan Kenobi and Lady Arcadia Skywalker realise that the children will

always be in danger and decide that they would be safer apart. The girl is adopted by Bail Organa as his own daughter, while Lady Arcadia takes on the role of servant in the Organa household. Obi-Wan takes the boy to Anakin Skywalker's brother, Owen Lars, on Tatooine and then waits twenty years for episode four.

Well, that's the story. Most of the characters from the middle trilogy are here in one form or another. The only major names missing are Jabba the Hutt, Chewbacca and Lando Calrissian. Commander Tarkin of course went on to rise to the rank of Grand Moff, and I suspect that Captain Antilles is Wedge's father, rather than Wedge himself (he is described as "a rugged 30 year old"). Mon Mothma later became supreme commander of the Rebel Alliance, although she only appeared briefly in *Jedi*.

The references to the "saucer shaped freighter" and the "Correllian cabin boy" are intriguing. The Millennium Falcon was saucer shaped and Han Solo was Correllian (and about ten years older than Luke Skywalker) but if these are they, why are they not referred to by name?

The most interesting sentence is in scene 9: *Boba Fett, the lone survivor of a group of commandos the Jedi defeated on Mandalore during the Clone Wars, is charged with interstellar slavery and the cold blooded murder of the Jedi Kane Starkiller (Refer to "Star Wars: Episode 2").* This is the only clear indication of what has gone before *Fall...*, although there are references to Bail Organa fighting alongside Obi-Wan Kenobi in the Clone Wars and helping Lady Arcadia Skywalker to eliminate slavery and piracy by setting up the Merchant's Guild. Clearly, Lucas has the whole thing worked out.

And this raises the interesting point that a plot outline such as this must also have been prepared for the first two films in the series, possibly for the final trilogy as well. So... does anybody out there in BSFA-land know anything about any of the other films? If so, please let the rest of us know.

Ten Years of SF Cinema in Brussels

David Stewart

The 10th Brussels International Festival of Fantasy, Thriller and SF films took place in Brussels from March 6-21. Guests of Honour were James Coburn and Dominique Sanda with Anthony Perkins, Nicholas Meyer, Nicholas Roeg and Theresa Russell also present and Clive Donner chairing the jury.

Among the sixty new films shown were twelve in competition. There were fifteen European premiers, including *Freejack*, based on the Robert Shekley novel *Immortality Inc.*, and five world premiers. There were special programmes on New Zealand SF cinema as well as a retrospective of the winners of the previous nine festivals.

Star Trek VI got its Belgian premiere on March 15. To mark that occasion — 25th anniversary and all that — the UIP Belgian distributor of *Star Trek* tried to organise a display/event in the festival foyer.

Looking forward to a retrospective covering Fantastic Cinema from 1918 to the present day will take place at the Cinema Museum, Brussels, during the entire month of April. Films have been selected from all over the world, including works from the USA, Japan, Germany, Italy, the UK and Belgium.

This retrospective promises to have something for everyone from *The Bride of Frankenstein* to David Cronenberg, from *Haxton* to Kathryn Bigelow passing by the sagas of *Dracula* and *King Kong*.

The Cinema Museum also recently organised an Anthony Perkins weekend and a homage to Robert Mitchum to mark the Belgian release of the remake of *Cape Fear*. The Cinema Museum of Brussels is at Rue Baron Horta 9, 1000 Brussels (tel: 02 507 83 70).

Skywatching

Mark Ogier

It may have escaped the notice of some BSFA members (chiefly those who have been living in a very dark cave in the Himalayas for the last six months) that a certain TV programme called *Star Trek* recently celebrated its 25th year of existence.

Foremost among these celebrations was the news that the latest movie

featuring the heroes of the original series, *Star Trek VI*, may not be the last (can the cast hold their burgeoning waist lines in through another episode?) and plans are already well in hand for a new TV series set in the same era as *The Next Generation*.

Satellite TV has not let the celebrations of the silver anniversary of this remarkably successful programme go unnoticed, with two specials devoted to the history of the show being screened in the last month or so.

Easily the best of these was the half hour programme on MTV as part of its weekly movie review series *The Big Picture*. This was a "special special" in the sense that it was made exclusively for the MTV networks, and featured original footage of the Next Generation Enterprise in space dock, with all but Counsellor Deanna Troi on shore leave. The good counsellor, you see, wished to find out more about the first crew of the good ship Enterprise and especially their last and most important mission she told nobody in particular (well, it was her "personal log" actually; i.e. in other words).

This was a rather nice way of combining footage from the original Star Trek series, the films and interviews with the cast. There was little new here for diehard Trekkers, but it made interesting viewing because of the original presentation.

Less original was the 25th anniversary special made by Paramount's TV arm, and screened on The Movie Channel in February. The major difference between this and the MTV special was its length — a weighty 90 minutes, in which it covered pretty much the same ground as MTV did in a third of the time.

I won't go into great detail about the content, because a few weeks after being screened on the Movie Channel, the same programme surfaced as a "free" gift with the boxed set of widescreen presentation Star Trek movies, and no sooner had this appeared than the show was screened on BBC2 in its Friday night early evening slot.

But the Beeb's version was radically altered — slimmer down, in fact, by no fewer than 40 minutes. This left out nothing but an enormous amount of padding that appears in the original, which features a pointless trip to Space Camp, where today's astronauts are trained, a lot of dreary messages of good will from past cast members and some guy called Dan Quayle. The highlights of the programme, the out-takes from the original series, behind the scenes interviews and special effects secrets from the new series, are intact in the edited version, which just goes to show how the Americans love to fill their tributes will all manner of boring junk, just to make them appear important.

On the movie front, the last couple of months have seen two blockbusters making their debut on The Movie Channel and Sky Movies.

First up was *Total Recall*, starring Arnie Schwarzenegger in a film loosely based on Philip K Dick's "We Can Remember it for you Wholesale". When this movie was released it earned justifiable praise for its relentless action and flashy effects. But the best thing about the film is that it is not until the end that you realise what has been going on, and the plot has a wonderful habit of playing with the viewer's expectations two or three times before we figure out the truth. In fact, if you listen and look closely, all the clues are there in the first 20 minutes, particularly as Arnie is about to have his memory mucked about with. It's streets ahead of other musclebound movies, and holds up well on the small screen. In fact, I was not at all impressed with the special effects in 70mm, and they look much more convincing in this format.

Also receiving its satellite premiere was the final part of the *Back to the Future* trilogy, arguably the best of the lot. Set in the Wild West of 1886, the film has Marty McFly (Michael J Fox looking barely a day older since the first film, made five years previously) attempting to rescue his friend the Doc (Christopher Lloyd in overdrive, as usual) from the ancestor of the series' resident Baddy.

Not only is this great fun as a piece of science fantasy, it also works pretty well as a western in its own right. The in-jokes that have Marty inventing the frisbee, and pre-empting Clint Eastwood, only add to the entertainment value.

There's also the series' first bit of real love interest, in the rather attractive shape of Marty Steenburgen as the woman Doc falls for. The ending is edge of the seat stuff, and although the film's secondary climax is a bit daft, this does not detract from the overall enjoyment.

But, like all the *Back to the Future* movies, there is always one paradox that is not addressed. In this case, Marty travels back in time in the De Laurean car that had originally taken Doc back. The good doctor hid it in a disused mine



until Marty could come along in the future and find it. The main thrust of the movie is that the car's petrol tank is damaged by Indians as soon as Marty arrives, so they need to find an alternative means of accelerating it to the required speed for time travel.

So what about the car that Doc arrived in, and which he has hidden for Marty to discover? Presumably this has plenty of fuel, so why don't they simply uncover it in the past, and transfer the fuel to the car in which Marty arrived?

That's the trouble with time travel movies — think about them too long and you risk a mental hernia.



Information Service

Phil Nichols

It feels like self-indulgence whenever I use the Information Service to write about something of personal interest. However, the last time I did such a thing — by running an interview with radio programme collector Barry Hill — there was a minor avalanche of letters responding to the article. By way of further self-indulgence, or as a means of fulfilling reader demand (take your pick), in this column I'd like to return to the subject of radio SF with !!! EXCITING NEWS !!! *Imperial Boy* is complete!

Imperial Boy was Barry Hill's personal project, an attempt to produce in a private studio (built specifically for radio production) the kind of SF serial previously made only by the mighty BBC. The ten half-hour episodes, performed by a cast of professional actors, were intended to be sold to radio stations in Britain and abroad, and to be issued on cassette for over-the-counter sale.

The story concerns Sol, who comes from somewhere (or somewhere?) else to Earth, arriving in the middle of Australia. He doesn't know who he is, where he is, or why he is here, but he is greeted by the self-assured aborigine Tommy, who seems to have been expecting him. Soon all manner of good and bad envoys follow Sol to Earth, and he finds himself drawn to Stoenhenge where he forms a strange alliance with a troubled teenager called Peter. At Stoenhenge he becomes a centre of curiosity for a variety of (deep breath) psychologists, parapsychologists, boffins and exclusive-hungry hangers.

Imperial Boy was developed by Barry Hill with scriptwriter John Garner, as the middle section of a trilogy. In my mind, I had the whole trilogy worked out, but I gave [Garner] the middle section because it would be the easiest for people to understand says Barry. The underlying "green" theme becomes particularly important in the prequel and sequel; the technocrats screw everything up for the rest of us.

The aboriginal element came from me. I was probably influenced by "The Last

Wave" starring Richard Chamberlain. I wanted to show a theme of racism, the intolerance that is suffered by the aborigines — something that's brought out even more in the sequel and prequel. By the long arm of coincidence, we went around various studios to have a look at what people were doing, and we came across the Bushigians, a group of musicians whose music is Australian-inspired; they use aboriginal themes, and kindly gave permission for their music to be used in the series. (Bushigians' "Restless Sky" is used as the closing music of each episode; other pieces are used as incidental music).

The *Imperial Boy* title theme was written and recorded by Nick Freemantle, who Barry met when looking for a multitrack tape deck for his studio. Barry says Nick really put his heart and soul into it.

For all the boldness of launching such an ambitious project — which, Barry says, is inspired by *Earthsearch*, *Star Wars*, *Superman*, *The Fugitive* and many others — it was almost never completed. Technical problems with studio equipment, lack of funds and the odd personality clash meant that the recordings were all but abandoned after the actors had done their bit. I would have been reasonably happy if there was just one complete copy of it that I had, knowing that I had done it. But frankly, it was just going to stay on the shelf and collect dust, as I had neither the time nor the money to take it further. Eventually, I would have sold the eight-track machine and re-used the tape.

Which brings me to my contribution to the saga. In 1990, about a year after the production had closed down, I met Barry to produce a video aimed at promoting his archive of radio programmes. Almost in passing, he mentioned *Imperial Boy*, a title unfamiliar to me; being an avid collector of SF radio programmes, I was curious to learn more. It transpired that not only did he have the only existing recordings of the series, but that he had been its producer! From the sampler that he played me, and from the Nick Freemantle theme, I felt that this was something which deserved to be completed and released, not abandoned to the archive shelves. After several months of cagey discussion, I finally offered to tackle the post-production of the series myself, using all the equipment I could beg or borrow.

For the best part of last year, then, I've spent more of my spare hours breathing life into the once-dead series. It's been like an archaeological expedition, identifying fragments of dialogue, splicing together each episode (scenes were recorded out of sequence, to accommodate the actors' schedules), creating and dubbing-in sound effects and music, occasionally having to record bits of dialogue myself where scenes just do not seem to have been recorded. In short, making the series live. Says Barry *The thing that "Imperial Boy" always needed, and the thing that it missed, was one person to stick his imprint on it, to direct and produce it. It's in the post-production that this has happened.*

The series is now complete, and the coming months will see it being offered for broadcast in the US and UK (it is currently under consideration by several local stations in this country). And beyond that? If there's a demand, the prequel and sequel are both planned and can go into production says Barry.

"Imperial Boy" is available by mail order for anyone wishing to sample it on cassette. There are 5 tapes, each containing 2 episodes. Single tapes are £5, the complete set £20. If you are a BSFA member, you pay only £4.50 for a single tape or £18 for the set of 5, but you must state your membership number when ordering. If you have mislaid your number, either Jenny Glover or Keith Freeman can look up the lists and let you know it. Please add postage: 40p for a single tape, £1 for a set of 5. The initial release of complete tape-sets will be a numbered, limited edition, containing a booklet on the making of the series. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to "Orion Cluster" and sent to Orion Cluster, 4 Prospect Terrace, Farsley, Leeds LS28 5ES.

Music and SF

Paul Wilson, John D Rickett, Ian Mundell, Roger Robinson, Mike Birchall

The Hegemony Consul sat on the balcony of his ebony space-ship and played Rachmaninoff's "Prelude in C sharp Minor" on an ancient but well-maintained Steinway while great, green saurian things surged and bellowed in the swamps below. That's how Dan Simmons' *Hyperion* begins and was one of the first passages people thought of when presented with the twin prods of "Music" and "SF".

Beethoven cropped up a lot: Sarah Zettel: *Driven by Moonlight* has the Moonlight featuring and there is a peculiar dissonance in *Make room, make*

room — the Beethoven in the book was his 5th symphony, but in film the 6th, (the suicide booth scene). The 6th had previously seemed to be jolly and happy: obviously someone disagreed. *Clockwork Orange* popularised Beethoven's 9th symphony, especially the "Ode to Joy", but "Singing in the Rain" can't be considered bland and rhythmic when beating up a guy to the beat.

When National Music Day crops up shortly, in a year studied with the usual weeks designated for special themes, these are the books to read: J G Ballard's *The Vermilion Sands* could be a suitable musical companion, or George R R Martin's *Armageddon Rag*, with the Nazgul band, not to mention K Stanley Robinson's *The Memory of Whiteness*, or Arthur C Clarke's *Song of a Distant Earth*, or Greg Bear's *Infinity Concerto* or Hawkwood or the *Dune* music ... But personally, I wouldn't need such an excuse to re-read *Clockwork Orange* or to see the film, allegedly filmed in the creepy carpenter adjacent to Leeds University's Education Department. To celebrate this day, Ian Mundell wrote of the search for the "Mechanical Fruit" video and Dave Gillon used Anne McCaffrey's *Helva* as a springboard for an exploration of cyborgs.

We Can Rebuild You

Dave Gillon

Cyborgs (CYBernetic ORganisms) have been a part of popular culture ever since *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *The Bionic Woman* were screened during the '70s. Developed from Martin Caldin's 1972 novel, *Cyborg*, Steve Austin and Jaime Sommers may be the most famous cyborgs of all, but they are far from being the only examples in Science Fiction. Just glancing at the field, we find Anne McCaffrey with *Helva*, *The Ship Who Sang*, the mirror-shaded and flick-clawed Molly Millions/Sally Shears in William Gibson's *Neuromancer* and *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, Sparta in Paul Preuss's *Venus Prime* series, *Robocop* in the movies, the Mechanists of Bruce Sterling's short stories and Fred Pohl's *Man-Plus*, a novel that deals more than any other with the dehumanising aspects of life as a cyborg.

Cyberpunk seemed to give the whole concept of the cyborg an adrenaline overload, the sub-genre's mutilation motif almost demanded it. Molly and her insect-mirrored shades are positively normal compared to some of the delights the cyberpunk dreamt up. Her opponent in the short story "Johnny Mnemonic" in *Burning Chrome* featured a mono-filament whip where his left thumb should be, the Lo-Teks from the same story have implanted Doberman teeth. Perhaps the most twisted concept of all is the cybernake, from Walter Jon Williams' *Hardwired*, a weapon deployed from the throat of a cyborg and capable of boring its way into an opponent's vital organs.

It is possible to split cyborgs into two groups, those with physical augmentations and those with sensory. Physical augmentation is the thing that comes immediately to mind when thinking of cyborgs: super-strong artificial limbs, enhanced reflexes, built-in weapons; but sensory adaptations can offer more subtle advantages, being able to recognise somebody purely from the scent of their body oils for instance. Molly Millions is probably the prime example of the physical route, Sparta the leading light for the sensory.

Beyond mere improvements lies the possibility of leaving humanity behind and taking on a totally new form. McCaffrey's *Helva* demonstrates this, her original body may be disabled beyond all hope of recovery, but as her Central Worlds Scoutship XH-834 she has a life that is all her own. Pohl's *Man-Plus* is another example: solar-winger, thick-skinner and insect-eyed, Roger Torrey was remade for the conquest of Mar. A new man for a new new planet.

To a limited extent physical cyborgs are amongst us already, many people lead relatively normal lives thanks to replacement joints, artificial limbs and so forth. The difference that splits these medical cyborgs from those of Science Fiction is that the replacement part is still inferior to the original. In a few cases it can come close, but we have yet to reach the point where replacement parts outperform the original. Medical science may be able to replace hip joints with metal and plastic, mimic the kidney in a dialysis machine, but it still lacks full understanding of how major elements of the body function from day to day — the spinal column is a classic example, a very high proportion of back problems continue to be classed as having no recognisable cause, though obviously one must be there somewhere.

Given that Medical Science will eventually gain the necessary knowledge, are cyborg replacement parts feasible? The answer would seem to be yes. Pacemakers and replacement joints have already demonstrated that artificial parts can be accepted by the body and we know that it is possible to hook into both sensory and motor nerves. In effect cyborg systems have passed technology demonstrator status and are ready to move into full scale

development, just as soon as somebody puts the research funding into place.

Current prosthetic limbs tend to depend on surviving muscles as much as possible, battery-packs are simply too heavy for powered legs to be feasible yet (arms can get away with less power as long as they aren't used for heavy work), but already certain plastics have been found which contract under an electric current. With improved versions of these substances — they contract far too slowly to be of use as yet — it may be possible to develop efficient artificial muscles, even ones that use the body's own energy sources and do away with the need for external power altogether. Organ replacements have further to go, dialysis and heart-lung machines are still far too large to consider implanting them — the few experiments with artificial hearts to date have depended on an external compressed air power-source. In any event, developments in transplant techniques may make research in that field of limited value.

As for the sensory organs, there have been a limited number of experiments with artificial vision systems, hearing aids are common and the cochlear implant operation is a start towards developing a true artificial ear, but the real problem is one of resolution and complexity. An analogue for artificial sensory systems can be found in the Head-Up-Displays and night-vision systems of the military, as demonstrated during Desert Storm. The best HUDs in service offer fields of view that are only 30° wide and 20° in height, night-vision goggles are marginally better in having a near circular 30° FoV that moves with the head, but the effect has still been compared to looking down a tube. This is the best that the generously funded Western military machine can currently offer, by contrast a pair of Mark I Eyeballs offers something like a 135 by 90° instantaneous field of view, resolution of around 120 million elements per eye and the potential to detect a single incoming photon of light, though admittedly not in the infra-red range of military sensors. The answer to replicating, even exceeding this performance is beyond that of micro-circuitry as the technology stands today, and may lie with nanotechnology, the microscopic machines that as yet are no more than a concept, though are getting closer all the time.

No one is yet trying to exceed human performance, but there are plenty of people out there trying to match it, and mankind has a definite tendency to tinker with his toys once he has them, to make things faster, better, smaller. We may not get there deliberately, but eventually there will be cyborgs amongst us. How human they will be remains to be seen.

Viddy Well, O My Brothers

Ian Mundell

If you go along past the lock, turn left into the part of the market that's under the arches, there's a guy there selling bootleg tapes who's usually got a copy. Directions from the Psychotronic Video store in Camden, London to — hopefully — a copy of *Clockwork Orange* on video.

The UK is the only country in Europe where the film cannot be seen in the cinema or picked up in the local video store. It's recent re-release on tape in France saw it float happily to the top of the video charts. In America, too, the video is freely available, although the film was — apparently — cut considerably for the cinema.

Contrary to what most people believe, *Clockwork Orange* is not banned in the UK. Rather, director Stanley Kubrick bought the UK rights back around 1973 and has refused showings ever since. No cinemas, no video — even a request from a tv documentary to show clips of the film to illustrate the cinematography was refused. Plans to show the film after midnight at an Oxford SF film festival in 1988 prompted injunctions.

Clockwork Orange was released in the UK at the tail end of 1971 to considerable press uproar on account of the violence depicted in the film. Anthony Burgess's book of the same name (1962) is a first person narrative by Alex, a young thing in a degenerate near-future whose main passions are ultraviolence, sex ("the old in-out-in-out") and Beethoven. When eventually caught and institutionalised, Alex is subjected to an extreme form of aversion therapy which leaves him incapable of indulging in all three. The main thrust of the novel is that if the choice between social and anti-social behaviour is to mean anything, it has to be a free choice, and that establishing conformity by force is no victory at all.

In the novel, the reader is distanced from the full impact of the violence by Alex's language — a mix of Russian, English and Cockney called Nadsat. In

the film, everything is seen and the story takes on a different tone.

Clockwork Orange got past the British censor without a cut, and prepared to launch itself on the public with a X-certificate. However, it was doing so in the middle of an already fierce debate on film violence that had been sparked by the release earlier in 1971 of San Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs*, the story of a mild American prompted to violence by repeated assaults on himself and his wife by the natives of the Cornish village where he goes to live. Home Secretary Reginald Maudling took the unprecedented step of demanding a private view of *Clockwork Orange* before its release, and the press went to work. Just what prompted Kubrick to withdraw the film is not clear — there is no official version. Some say that he and his family received death threats along the lines of "what Alex did unto others we shall do unto you" and that he withdrew for safety's sake. Although American by birth, Kubrick is resident in the UK.

Another story goes that he was appalled by the violence that sprung up around the film, dubbed "Clockwork Orange killings" by the media. A 16 year old dressed in the manner of one of Alex's gang (Droog-style comprises bowler hat, white trousers held up by braces and tucked into boater boots, cod-piece and two inch eyelashes painted around one eye) attacked a 15 year old friend, while in Oxford another 16 year old kicked a tramp to death. These apparently copycat crimes were hyped by the media, conveniently ignoring the fact that if the film's certificate was being enforced these kids should not have been able to see it. Subsequent investigation of the Oxford case found that the killer had not seen the film, but had only discussed the reports of it with friends.

More attractive is the notion that Kubrick thought "Well, if the British public does not want it, then I'm not letting them have it". The film was critically well-received and he must have known that the fuss would pass, so such a course of action has a certain long-term poetry about it. Another rumour that appears from time to time is that Kubrick is re-editing the film.

Since its withdrawal, *Clockwork Orange* has gained a certain cult status, based around the twin strands of its unavailability and its supposedly extreme violence. Before video, the only way to see the film was to go abroad. Now, not only were the majority of the cult-making audience not up to this, but is also lacked the danger that the myth suggested. Seeing it in a Paris cinema was just too safe, although some anecdotes — for instance, seeing the film at a midnight open-air screening in Crete — do have a certain buzz to them.

Some London cinemas have also shown the film, under aliases such as *Mechanical Fruit*, although the enthusiasm this generates among the public attracts a lot of attention and puts the exhibitors at risk of prosecution.

The film's career as a modern myth really took off when the film began to appear on video. Some people claim that they saw *Clockwork Orange* on tv or that tv was the source for their video copies. This is highly unlikely, since the usual time between cinematic release and a tv airing in the early 1970s was in the region of three years, which comes well within Kubrick's veto on showings. There is no record of the film being shown on tv in the UK.

Most people get hold of the film from "hearing a friend of a friend had one" and making a copy. Copies can be found in London's Camden Market, alongside bootleg videos of rock concerts and *The Exorcist* (which also did not make it onto video in the UK), and no doubt the same is true for counterculture outlets around the country.

Most copies floating around at present come from America or from Europe. The European tapes usually have sub-titles — Dutch is a favourite — but have the advantage of being the right format (PAL) for British tvs and video recorders. Hence, if the copy is not too many generations removed from the original, the picture can be quite good. This is important, since a lot of people who have seen the film stress the extreme beauty of the colours.

American-sourced tapes are produced in a different format (NTSC) to fit the differing line count of American tvs and cannot be played on PAL recorders without producing television soup. The equipment to copy NTSC to PAL is not cheap, and even then the picture quality can be somewhat off. Most look like they have been filmed underwater. However, dual-mode tvs and videos which can operate with both formats are becoming more widely available, which might make things easier.

But is *Clockwork Orange* worth the effort? It is not nearly gross enough to be a video nasty, and in that sense its status as a pirate video has disappointed some people. However, even after 20 years some scenes are strong stuff, such as Alex's tap-dance assault while performing "Singing in the Rain". Kubrick managed to bring to the surface all of the nastiness which Burgess wrapped up in Alex's Nadast narration. Bleak, and at times unpleasant, *Clockwork Orange* is an exemplary piece of dystopian cinema.



WriteBack

Letters are invited from members on any subject whatsoever, even Science Fiction. Please write to the co-editors, Steve and Jenny Glover, at 16 Avary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP. The deadline is:

May 20, 1992

Thrice vs Trekker

John E Morgan, Endcliffe, Eden Mount, Grange over Sands, Cumbria LA11 6BT

I was devastated to read in *Matrix* 98 that "Thrice" was a misprint. I had even provided the word with a satisfying etymology ("one who is able, without sleep or illness intervening, to watch a single episode of *Star Trek* three times").

However, I shall continue to use it.

There is quite a lot of *Trek* information in this issue, including the review from Ian Mundell who boldly went to see all six *Trek* films for the first time and survived to switch on his word processor. Here is a reply to Chris Bailey, who reviewed "ST:TNG" in "Paperback Inferno". As that magazine is full of excellent reviews, Mark wrote to "Matrix", to comment:

Mark Ogier, Laureline, Clos de Sept, Rue Jacques, St Sampson's, Guernsey

Chris wonders why there are only 76 script adaptations featured in the 3 volumes of "Classic Episodes". I am happy to put him out of his misery. I haven't had the pleasure of seeing the new editions, but originally the 76 episodes to which he refers were published in 12 volumes (in the days when a paperback cost around 50p)!

The "missing episodes" are *Mudd's Women*, *I, Mudd* and *The Menagerie*. The two former stories involved the original series' equivalent to *The Next Generation's* "Q", although Harry Mudd was a thick but dangerous con-artist rather than a bored but dangerous omnipotent being. The two adaptations were published after James Blish's death in the form of a novel, *Mudd's Angels* (1978). This included a third, original story written by the late Mr Blish's wife, J A Lawrence.

The Menagerie, you will be quick to spot, does seem to appear in the adapted episodes. But closer inspection will reveal that this is, in fact, a retelling of the pilot episode, *The Cage*. Any *Trekker* worth their salt will know that *The Cage* was never screened as part of the series, but had footage edited into *The Menagerie*, which was the original series' only two parter (and thus counted as one double-length episode), and which featured an elaborate framing story involving Spock and a court martial. It also won a Hugo.

In a footnote to the adaptation's original incarnation in the book *Star Trek 4*, Mr Blish explains that the script of *The Menagerie* "involves so many changes of viewpoint, as well as so many switches from present to past, that it becomes impossibly confusing [to write as fiction] — I know, I've tried!"

Thus you have 3 episodes "missing" from the new books. Mind you, I suppose the publishers could have culled the two Mudd stories out of *Mudd's Angels* and printed them as well, but I suspect there were copyright problems.

The Future for "Focus"

The last issue of *Focus* was published in October/November and several new members are wondering what has happened. Malcolm Cowen is typical since having received two BSFA mailings, there was no *Focus*. The editor, Cecil Nurse, has had several problems with production and publication, and the future of *Focus* may be one item to discuss at the Annual General Meeting. In the meantime, there are decided views on its role in the BSFA magazine stable:

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

Focus should be dispensed with. It appears so irregularly that I doubt it will be missed. There are plenty of "how to" books available for those of us with literary ambitions. The only parts of *Focus* I found indispensable were the Market Listings, and these could be supplied in some other format. If the BSFA is to support and encourage new writers that purpose might be better served by a fiction zine, perhaps featuring the best work from the Orbiter groups. This could be produced once a year; given free to members and sold at an "exorbitant" price to non-members.

Peter then continues to suggest that "Matrix" should stay as it is, that "Paperback Inferno" should be expanded to incorporate handbook reviews which will enable "Vector" to feature more interviews and concentrate on the critical work it is intended to showcase. "It seems to me recently they've been starved for the right sort of material and printed irrelevant pieces (eg Ken Lake's article on fossils)" comments Peter.

Syd Foster, 539 Gower Rd, Swansea SA2 7DS

Syd is an emotional man and a poet who is incensed at the apparent lack of coverage over the "Millizone" affair. Look below for his views on this. Here, initially, are his views on "Focus" and, by extension, on the BSFA in general.

The only real use [the BSFA] has been to me is in the form of that unfortunately pariah organ *Focus*, which hasn't been mailed out in the last year anyway, as far as I can remember. Now that the organisation could have finally come into its own as a true champion of Fans' rights (as opposed to the interminably boring dribbling of *fen*) it seems to have turned a blind eye to what has been an outrage in Pringle's abuse of his position as the editor of Britain's flagship SF magazine! The BSFA is just a glorified collection of fanzines, it would appear.

Having just read the entire mailing in less than 24 hours, with all of its shitty looking pages and needless jumbling of the sense of its texts through persistent typographical errors (which look like they've been inserted by a poor attempt at an AI word-processing program), I am writing at the edge of a pit of depression. I feel no sense of camaraderie with "fandom" as a result of reading through listless descriptions of supposed "party-mood" pointless drunken "cons" (which word is seeming more and more apt), and the whole epic feeding frenzy over Wingrove's porn-not-porn debate (which is so incestuous and overblown, being not so much about the nature of the writing or of porno/obscenity thought control *per se*, as it is about various writers' annoyance with Wingrove's annoyance over being misrepresented by an opinionated review ... hold on, Syd! The Wingrove question was widely discussed in the last issue of "Vector" ... it's unfortunate that I shall probably be long gone from the echoing vaults of the BSFA's solipsistic skull by then...

Now for Syd's main point, to which he considers Andy Sawyer had given far too little space in "Paperback Inferno". Although Syd calls the "Interzone 51" issue a "scandal" in that there was an "Interzone" cover, but a "Million" set of contents, he feels that the BSFA has missed out on an opportunity for a worthwhile crusade:

I would have hoped for some of this inordinately inward-turning energy to have been spent on a bit of a protest from the members of the BSFA over the publication of an issue of Our National SF Magazine which wasn't even remotely SF in its contents! But no, insult piled on injury goes unremarked while Mr Pringle maintains his insufferably willful refusal to even acknowledge that he served us an injustice in: A) publishing the ill-conceived "Millizone" in the first place; B) offering on the first page of the offending issue to extend by one issue the subscriptions of only those "IZ" subscribers who already subscribed to "Million"; and C) to continue to refuse to admit that this was a mistake and apologise like an honestly beleaguered person, which would have enabled me to feel a warmth of sympathy for his apparent difficulties, rather than to continue pretending that he and not I and all other "IZ" subscribers, is the injured party!

So, as I am completely disillusioned with the whole thing, I shall allow my membership to lapse next year, unless things improve remarkably. As I say, *Focus* was the only real reason I have had to enjoy being a member, and that seems to have not only been absent throughout 1991, but is even being threatened with official discontinuance. Whatever else happens, if it goes, so do I. Even more than the shambles of the reviews, the loss of *Focus* will be the final nail in the coffin for my interest in the BSFA.

The use of the BSFA

Mic Rogers asked, last issue, what use the BSFA was. It was certainly no use to her as she had ample information about and access to conventions, fanzines, SF meetings, local clubs and amateur writing groups. Mic also suggested that most people get into fandom through tertiary education connected SF clubs, besides "a little effort should be no barrier to the keen neo".

Peter Tennant (address above) opens the batting:

It seems to me that what [the BSFA] has to offer is more appropriate to people like me, who are interested first and foremost in Science Fiction as a medium of entertainment and/or artistic expression, rather than those like Mic who are heavily involved in fandom. The BSFA's failure to reach such people is the reason it hasn't grown to its full potential, I believe.

This opinion is reinforced by Liz Counihan, who edits "Scheherazade" magazine, issue 3 of which features the first part of Jane Gaskell's "King's Daughter" along with stories by Simon Ings, Matthew Dickens, Kate Morrissey and a discussion of *Fabulous Lands* by Mary O'Keefe. Issue 4 will have a previously unpublished SF story from Phillip Mann, plus a fable from Brian Sibley who did the BBC radio version of the "Marnia" books. There will also be stories from Devenick Clark and Deirdre Counihan plus an interview with Pauline Baynes who illustrated CS Lewis and Tolkien works. Further in the future, there will be a Gene Wolfe interview, and new work from David Redd, DF Lewis, Paul Dorrell and Tina Angelatos. "Scheherazade" costs £1.99 per issue or £7.50 for a 4 issue subscription.

Liz Counihan, St Ives, Maypole Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1HL

Why does Mic Rogers think that everyone who joins the BSFA wants to be a "fan"? I am in it because I want to read and write Science Fiction. I rely on *Vector* to keep me up to date with its comprehensive (and comprehensively un-Cluted) reviews of recent publication. Without BSFA, I would not have heard of Paul Park, Lois McMaster Bujold, Tim Powers and many others whose books I enjoy. Neither my local W H Smiths nor my local library stock these books. Perhaps Mic lives in a great metropolis — I don't.

I bet there are lots of people who didn't "get into fandom through school or college or variety". I had never heard of SF conventions before joining the Association, although I've always been a SF reader. To be honest, I find conventions rather intimidating affairs (lots of large noisy people who all know each other) so I don't go to many.

All the BSFA magazines are very good value (so I hope we don't have to lose any of them). If I didn't have a reasonably local SF writers' group, I should certainly join Sue Thomason's "Orbiter". You tell me of another organisation offering all this (plus the magazine chain, information service etc). The British Fantasy Society certainly does not.

Dave Gillon, 2 Watts Avenue, Rochester, Kent ME1 1RX

On the future of the magazines, my thinking would be to merge *Vector* and *PI* within one cover (semi-glossy?) while maintaining them as distinct magazines with separate editors. *Matrix* I would keep largely as it is and *Focus* might best be printed as an additional section of *Matrix* ie with several sheets over the norm on the occasions it appears. Hopefully this scheme would keep collating costs to a minimum.

A final piece of advice from Ken Lake on the uses — and the future — of the BSFA:

Ken Lake, 115 Markhouse Avenue, London E17 8AY

Just read your editorial: BSFA short of cash and members: woe, woe, what can we do? I'm tired of telling people, but will try again:

- Advertising campaign through all suitable media including Trekkie, Towellie etc. — these people are probably our future supporters, so get to them hard and fast.
- Use vastly increased membership to pay for better zines, more publicity and something else about which I feel strongly, viz:
- Professional work paid for at professional rates: we need to be able to rely on certain key people and to be able to hire and fire to ensure reliability.

We're just losing Andy Sawyer, a magnificent *PI* editor: we've seen numerous changes in the editorship of *Vector* and *Matrix*: *Focus* comes and goes (mostly it goes) and even now and then we hear complaints that 1% of the members provide 99% of the letters, articles, reports, reviews ...

Yes, I'm among that 1% and I love it, but come September I am off around the world, and then around Europe; my peregrinations will take at least 18 months during which time I'll be totally out of touch, and I do not expect to return to the UK ever (small round of applause, thank you). But even I feel that I would and could have done a damn sight more, and better, for the BSFA had my professional status been recognised and had I been paid for what people thought I could do — and sacked if I failed.

It is my firm belief that by simply raising the money for truly vast professionally-created advertising for the BSFA we could multiply membership tenfold in less than a year, after which it becomes self-financing. The magazines would begin to approach the attractiveness of *Trekkie* and other media-orientated SFnal publications and this would increase membership still more. Members would really feel they were getting value for money, publishers and others would rush to advertise in our pages in colour (perhaps we could pay an advertising manager too, and really make this go with a zing), and the only way would be forward and upward.

The BSFA does a helluva lot — for a bunch of willing amateurs, many of whom have professional skills as well as enthusiasm. No way would I wish to denigrate their sterling activities; they deserve all encouragement, and to me that means framing their work in magazines that do them proud, not cutting and scripping and wharfing and having to beg for yet more help from increasingly overloaded workhorses.

Only the Committee — all keen, willing amateurs — can take the step of admitting their acknowledged shortcomings and needs, and of arranging the necessary short-term finance to embark on the membership advertising campaign. And it's totally wrong to expect them, or anyone else, to undertake theonerous tasks and heavy load that this would involve, without financial reimbursement. On previous occasions I've been turned down because "we don't want to expand, we are a select elite group of trufen" (not in so many words, of course, but the message is clear). Not it's time we grew up and went out into the Real World and made our voices heard!

And just one more comment on possible merchandising:

**David Stewart, 1715 Chaussee de Wavre,
1160 Bruxelles, Belgium**

I see my chance comment on calendars has started a debate on BSFA merchandising. I remember Maureen [Speller] mentioning an enamelled lapel badge some time ago, but the idea was dropped because of cost. I don't know what the situation in the UK is, but lapel badges or pins have become very popular here with a number of companies manufacturing them. Consequently the prices are quite reasonable. A run of 3000 pins can cost as little as 50p each. If the BSFA is interested, I could get a more detailed estimate based on more precise specifications.

From the Glasshouse?

**Joseph Nicholas, 5A Frinton Road,
Stamford Hill, London N15 6NH**

Dear Jenny (sic),

It's a pity that David Bell and Terry Hunt couldn't read all of my previous letter, rather than the extract that actually appeared in *Matrix* 98, before they wrote their own, since the full version would perhaps have answered their questions before they needed to ask them. Hunt in particular has some very peculiar ideas of what I mean by community awareness and collective endeavour (and in addition is woefully out-of-date about me — I haven't written any reviews of British fanzines for over twelve years!) Perhaps you could send them each a copy of the letter sometime...

David Bell claims that I have a "short and highly selective memory", and that I specifically asked him for a copy of his publication because it mentioned *FTT*. (Which I note he suggests is entirely mine — he is obviously another fan who can't read co-editor's names [like Joseph Nicholas?]). However, this is just as inaccurate. He was sent a copy of *FTT* "on spec", because I'd seen his name in other letter columns; we had no idea that he was a filker or published a fanzine of his own until he responded.

Eventually, he ceased responding to *FTT*, and was dropped from our mailing list. Yet he now criticises other people for their inactivity! Bit of a pot and kettle situation here, surely?

Noticeboard

Ango-German collaborations: I am looking for the possibility of publishing German SF stories in Britain (no translations). Anyone interested, please contact Uwe Gellert, Dickebankstrasse 6, D-W-4630 Bochum 6, Germany (tel: 01049 02327 81258).

Periodical exchange: The World of Science Establishment is the centre of an international relationship, the most important part of which is to subscribe periodicals for organisations on exchange basis throughout the world. We will subscribe you to one of the most suitable periodicals that you are interested in, from a wide range including Motion Pictures, Poetry and Computer Applications, per three periodicals that you provide for one year. Further details from Majid Ziafati, The World of Science Establishment Inc., 6th Fl., 33652 Sepid Bldg., PO Box 11365-7543, Tehran, Iran (tel: 021 984920).

Contact between Chinese and British children young readers? I am in charge of *We Love Science*, a popular monthly science magazine for children and juniors, every issue includes one or two SF stories, some of which are written by the children themselves. If you are interested in establishing or exploring contacts and helping to form a friendship bridge between our two countries, please write to Yu Jun-xiong, 21 Dongsi Shieriao, Beijing 100708, China.

Missing persons bureau: **Marianne Puxley**, late of a houseboat somewhere in England? Who had a story in *Interzone* May/June issue 1989. Please contact Susanna Sturges, Box 39, West Tisbury, MA 02575, USA.

Fanzines wanted: I'm at Technical University, but very interested in British fanzines. So far, I've seen *Flickers 'n' Frames* which seemed very professional with all these interviews, but *Imagination* was best of all, the largest zine I've ever seen (our best prozine in Czechoslovakia, *Ikarie*, only has 64 pages). I'd love to see more if you can send them. Thank you. Thomas J Filop, Srobarova 33, 05801 Poprad, Czechoslovakia.

Reader's Remains? I specialise in US paperbacks (paperback originals and first editions), accept wants lists and issue an irregular catalogue. So if you have any interest in SF on my side of the water, please contact Lou Jacobs at 6245 N Inkster Road, Garden City, MI 48135, USA.



Soapbox

The Case for Space

Dave Gillon

At the time of writin, the public appear to be grabbing desperately at any trivia concerning the separation of the Duke and Duchess of York in order to evade further election coverage. Besides, by the time you read this, there will be a new government, which might attempt to evade the errors of the previous one. Still, besides being an election special, Dave raises several serious points here.

*Space, an election issue? In Britain? All right, the idea is a little radical, but only a little. Space is just a headline grabber, but *The Buck Rogers stuff* — to borrow a Jerry Pournelle quote — is a servicable metaphor for the UK's approach to science as a whole. The UK is still a world power, but in science we sometimes seem to be hanging onto that position by the skin of our teeth. Death by neglect seems to be the long term prognosis.*

I don't propose handing out my banner in favour of any one party here, this isn't the place, but I do want to make people think a little beyond what the parties are offering us, towards what they *should* be offering us. (If this whole argument seems misplaced, remember, we are a SCIENCE Fiction Association.) None of the policies offered up by the parties so far will fundamentally change the world we live in. The government's share of your pay packet may change, boundaries may even be re-drawn on the map, but face it, whether Tory, Labour or Lib-Dem, the next government is going to be much like the one before. Governments can cause social change, compare current employment conditions with those of the Eighteenth Century if you want an example, but the changes resulting from technology are far more profound. The motor car has made us a society of commuters, electricity has taken most of the drudgery from daily life and the tv has revolutionised home entertainment at the same time that it has changed news from being something that happened in the past to something that is happening now.

In this century more than in any previous, technological progress has become the driving force behind social change, but the response of government seems to have been to hide its collective head in the sand. Consider computer hacking, surrogate motherhood, or even the current farrago with computer evidence in poll-tax cases. In every case where progress has impinged on the legal system the legislature has been slow to react, and usually inert when it does. And now we hear that the Commons has sunk to the point where it is unable to find enough interested MPs to keep the Science Sub-Committee operating.

We are moving into an era of rapid change in the world, with new threats, new challenges — the Greenhouse Effect for one. We need a go vment which is pro-active, not reactive, we need a government that is — too much to hope — scientifically literate. That is why I suggest that when the hucksters come a-calling you put them on the spot. Ask them what their candidate's views on the UK Space Programme are, once they have stopped laughing over that one, ask them what his (almost inevitably *his*) views are on Science Policy as a whole. The results may be enlightening, but more likely than not they will simply be depressing.

Competition Corner

Roger Robinson

I will start with an apology. This review of the "Hidden Talents" competition will be less than complete because I have lost the file containing all the entries — I think it must have inadvertently been chucked out on the last waste collection day.

However, there is some good news — I had marked all the entries as I received them, and could remember who was in the lead when I realised the file was lost. Some late arriving entries didn't change the result. I hastened to contact the winner, Rob Jackson, and he was able to furnish me with a copy of his entry — isn't the PC a wonderful device!

The marking system was a little complicated, but was based on a variety of different factors. Firstly the complexity of the hiding — more credit for a name split over two or three words rather than using "plain" — see examples below.

The second most important factor was the relative density of the number of authors to the total length of the piece. The winning entry claimed 36 authors

in 88 words.

The number of authors ranged from about 15 to over 100, and the length of the piece from about 50 words to 2 pages of A4. Both the highest number of authors and the longest story came from John Madracki — a worthy honourable mention for a first time entrant.

Thanks to all who entered — even if I've lost your names.

Most entrants tried to get in at least one "difficult" name with such phrases as "the first rug at Sky tv" (Strugartsky) and "Liza. My! A Tiny girl" (Zamyatin) with Dozois, Disch, LeGuin also hidden in various entries. It was noticeable that a lot of short authors were omitted — I would have thought that Lem, Tem, Lee, Ley, Abe and Ing would all have been heavily featured.

As with all competitions, I tried it myself beforehand, and the most authors in the shortest phrase I could muster was 5 in 3 words with the American pub "Dallas King's Head" where Margharita Laski, Stephen King, Dean Ing, Simon Ings and Michael Shea all drink together.

Here is Rob Jackson's entry in full, with a list of authors just in case you missed any.

Bertrand Ward decamped annually. "Arbroath, o Master?" asked his roblander, Leroy. "No — yes — no, lander. Song festival in Ireland; advanced Purcell is one of, er, many a composer lingering in my mind. Use the zinc handle, rush away, Leroy". However, nearly over the moor, well, sick he was and a numb earache in Leinster lingered. Ward's sister Sal departed Oz. "O! Sal!" hissed Leroy. "O ungrateful sister, 'tis your brother Bertrand!" All enrapt females sing. Ronald is singing sweet arias I'm overjoyed by. Stop, oh listen, nerd man!

The featured authors:

Henry Ward, L Sprague de Camp, Jack Dann, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Theodore Thomas, Aldred Noyes, William F Nolan, Poul Anderson, Jack Vance, Harlan Ellison, Ed Ferman, Rob Serling, A Bertram Chandler, Bob Shaw, Jules Verne, George Orwell, H G Wells, Greg Bear, Robert Heinlein, Murray Leinster, Malcolm Edwards, Gardner Dozois, James Sallis, Kit Pedler, Robert F Young, Yarbro again, Frank Herbert, Robert Randall, L David Allen, Doris Lessing, Brian Aldiss, Simon Ings, Isaac Asimov, Frederik Pohl, William Tenn, Paul Erdman. Plus, somewhere in the middle, the archaeologically inclined reader will find Dean Ing and Bruce Sterling.

Rob Jackson laments *I now wish I'd thought to incorporate the line "You'll 'ang for dat!" but it's too late now.*

Matrix Competition #99

"Nearly There"

You are all cordially invited to write a short piece (30-50 words) about the greatest missed opportunity in SF. I am thinking of such howlers as that perpetuated by the scriptwriter who failed to kill off Kirk in the first *Star Trek* episode.

A short and I hope bitter-sweet competition to prime you for number 100 in the next *Matrix*.

Lastly a plea from the setter — could John English send me another copy of what looked like an excellent crossword. Yes, it got lost in the file as well.

All entries and comments to Roger Robinson, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex RM3 0RG by May 16, 1992.

OUR CATS REFUSE TO
EAT ANYTHING EXCEPT
FISH.

THIS WORRIES ME.

CAN IT BE POSSIBLE THAT,
IN THE WILD, DEEP SEA
TUNA IS A CATS NATURAL PREY?

