

VECTOR 82

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1977

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publication 100

**Special
Issue on**

**STAR
WARS**



Michael Moorcock's WIZARDRY & WILD ROMANCE

1978 Calendar interpreted by Rodney Matthews



The collaboration between Rodney Matthews and Michael Moorcock began in 1976 with illustrations for book jackets—'The End of All Songs,' 'Legends from the End of Time,' 'The Transformation of Miss Mavis Ming.' At the same time, a series of twelve pictures was devised, drawn from earlier Moorcock work.

The first six pictures were published as posters and cards last autumn and received their deserved acclaim.

Rodney then decided that his series could naturally be encompassed in a calendar using the typeface he had already designed for his Moorcock work.

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from the *Star Wars*: (Copyright) (c) 1977 20th Century-Fox Film Corp. All rights reserved.)
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Contents:

<i>Star Wars</i> / Steve Davey Chris Fowler Roger E. Wolf.....	4
<i>Half-Life</i> / Jim Barker Chris Evans.....	11
<i>The Infinity Box</i> / John Clute Andrew Darlington Chris Evans Robert Gibson Brian Griffin Chris Morgan Brian Stableford Ian Watson.....	12
<i>British SF: A British View of An American View</i> / Mark Atland.....	17
<i>Letters</i>	18
<i>The Bernoulli Triangle Mystery</i> / Bob Shaw.....	24

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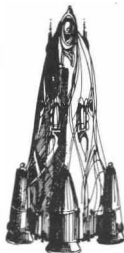
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GEORGE LUCAS'S SPACE FANTASY EXAMINED BY:

1. STEVE DIVEY: "A MASTERPIECE OF THE GENRE. DO NOT MISS IT."
2. CHRIS FOWLER: "A STUNNING VISION OF THE UNLIMITED FUTURE.."
3. ROGER E. WOLF: A COMPILATION OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE FILM AND ITS MAKERS

When I was eight I religiously attended Saturday morning pictures with hundreds of others to be thrilled by the adventures of Flash Gordon. These cheap thirteen part serials were by then twenty years old now still entertained the pomp to right legions of young and starchy kids to their seats for fifteen minutes an hour. I still remember the pomp to right. Today they are getting on for forty years old and still manage to make me set my alarm clocks on a Saturday morning so as not to miss the showings on BBC-TV. My interest in Flash Gordon's Trip To Mars is not completely academic. The charm of these serials comes from the fact that their excitement and thrills were almost completely purified of extraneous paraphernalia like plot, depth of characterisation, morality, acting ability, wit, wit of dialogue, significance of sets or technical scope of special effects by the economic exigencies of production. Had they been able to afford any of these luxuries, they would most likely have lost what charm they now have and become dated morality plays, or platforms for primitive technical trickery. Almost all other escapist-based science fiction films have suffered this fate.

George Lucas, the writer and director of Star Wars, the last of the Flash Gordon serials, is the youngest of the comic-strip end of the spectrum leads him today to run a New York book-shop specialising in sf ephemera as a sideline to his day job. His idea in making Star Wars was to reconstruct an imaginative piece of escapism, to perpetuate and update the tradition of Flash Gordon and to "provide a playground for fantasy and imagination, for the exercise of vicarious adventure". His total success with this film is due to the avoidance of pretension and the pitfalls listed above. Where Flash Gordon suffered from cheapness, Lucas has been able to afford a superbly glossy look to Star Wars. It cost ten million dollars yet Twentieth Century Fox permitted his sufficient independence to fulfill his original intentions without betraying the essentials of the genre.

The plot of Star Wars is fairly minimal: a rebellion is afoot against the might Galactic Empire, and a motley group of humans and non-humans get drawn into the battle against the repressive Empire's secret weapon, the planet-destroying Death Star. The morality of the struggle is unquestionable, the Empire forces are clearly unsympathetic and bad, and the rebels are heroic, attractive and young, and have no options but to fight to defend themselves. These points are cleverly established in the opening five minutes and thereafter you can sit back and enjoy the action and effects. As a balance for the scenes of adventure and excitement, Lucas has interwoven a series of subtly delineated themes of interpersonal relationship between the main characters. The film has six and a half heroes and two major villains with a multitude of supporting forces. The relationships between the main characters are unemphasised but allowed to develop with a naturalness so that each character emerges with three dimensions. The audience themselves are able to provide the fillings in the sketched characterisations without being bored by redundant screen time. Lucas' mastery of film-making lies in this point. His previous success American Graffiti (1973) had almost no plot, yet captured the relationships between his characters with the same charm and naturalness he has used here.

George Lucas cast his film with the intention of finding actors who already corresponded approximately to the characters he wanted them to play. The old system of writing a film specifically for a certain star, tailored to his capabilities and limitations, has thankfully almost died out now. The main character, Luke Skywalker, apparently based on Lucas' perceptions of himself, was played by Mark Hamill in his big-screen debut. Luke is a young man with ideals whose past has been destroyed and who has freedom of choice about his future. He possesses all the heroic qualities of bravery, honour, fidelity and energy. He also has naivete and inexperience, but is willing to learn. He becomes the eager apprentice of Ben (Obi-Wan) Kenobi, played by Sir Alec Guinness

in his first of role, at the age of 62. Kenobi is a world-weary recluse, ex-Jedi Knight of Republican times before the dark ages started, and former comrade of Luke's father. He is a master light-swordman and mystic: a cross between a Samurai warrior and Merlin the magician. Han Solo, played by Harrison Ford, is a veteran space smuggler, cynic and interstellar ne'er-do-well in his early thirties, who becomes their ally when offered money. His assets and guiding forces are a souped-up, clapped-out starship, bravado and overwhelming self-interest. He is prepared to venture where angels fear to tread, shoots first and doesn't bother asking questions. His co-pilot and general assistant is Chewbacca, a Wookiee. Chewbacca, played by Peter Mayhew, who is seven feet two inches tall, is very hairy, basically genial and obedient, but capable of tearing your arms out if you beat him at chess. He will be very popular with all fans of the Muppet Show. The two characters providing most of the comic relief and a great deal of the film's warmth are robots. The same device of giving endearing qualities to machines was successfully used in Douglas Trumbull's Silent Running (1972) and provided the main strength of that film, overcoming the poorly articulated ethics which marred its plot. Star Wars' two prominent robots provide routines reminiscent of Laurel and Hardy whilst remaining crucial to the plot's development. See Threepio (C3PO) is a humanoid robot played by Anthony Daniels, trained as a diplomat with a total recall of hundreds of languages at his disposal. His refinement, elegance, delicacy and nervousness scarcely qualify him for the dangerous jobs he is involved with. R2-D2 is a small, droid-shaped computer on legs, played when not in motion by seven foot eight inch Kenny Baker. The bullet-headed doggedness characterised by his shape, his fidelity to his master and invincible determination to carry out his instructions almost prove his and Threepio's undoing.

Each of these characters is involved in the central theme more or less by chance, and their degree of motivation is consequently dependent on their individual characters and ideals. The remaining personalities are full-time professionals and their future careers and ambitions, as well as their lives, are staked on the outcome of the events at issue. The commander of the rebel forces in the field is the beautiful Princess Leia Organa, played by Carrie Fisher. She is a superbly capable revolutionary, possessing enormous courage and dedication. It is nice to see Lucas eschewing the hackneyed sexist device of helpless heroines twisting their ankles to reinforce the machismo of the hero. When the action is at its hottest Leia fights shoulder to shoulder with the men, and uses her brain with as good effect as her laser-blasters, which is more than some of the men do. Her opponent is Grand Moff Tarkin, Governor of the Imperial Outlands region. His role is custom built for Peter Cushing. Tarkin is ambitious, devious, gentlemanly and very sinister. He is ruthless and unscrupulous in his furtherance of the Empire's cause as a means of improving his own interests. His subordinate is one of the best screen villains for years. David Prowse, the gigantic ex-weightlifting champion, plays Lord Darth Vader. Fully encased in bizarre black armour, Vader is also a Knight of the Jedi, but gained his position by treachery. Lacking the code of honour of Ben Kenobi he is a supreme exponent of the fighting skill and supernatural abilities of the order he has debased. Peter Cushing and David Prowse have worked together on innumerable Hammer horror films and make a formidably evil team. It is perhaps a pity that as a result of the heroic nature of Star Wars and the large number of heroes it contains these two are restricted to a fairly small amount of screen time to perpetrate their villainies. The

interplay of these characters hints at a variety of subplots, which all contribute to the story without slowing it down. The skill to do this so concisely lies at the heart of good space opera.

I have left consideration of the technology used in *Star Wars* until now in order not to over-emphasise it. It has been calculated that in one way or another Special Effects are visible for more than half the film's running time, yet it is a tribute to Lucas' direction and the acting ability on show that the film is not dwarfed by them. The effects are brilliantly used by Lucas to enhance the excitement of the action and to give realism to the sets and backgrounds. The whole look of *Star Wars*, costumes, sets, locations, effects and photography, is however a vital strength of the film. Much of this is based on comic-strip and sf artwork over the years which has been better realised for the screen here than I have ever seen before. Each futuristic setting is intended to look lived in and used; as though the scenes, however fantastic, were actual locations with an existence beyond their use in the story. There is a wealth of alien beings, machines, animals and landscapes that are far better seen than described. A succession of magnificent cameo scenes, such as the rough space-port tavern populated by a staggering variety of alien species, will be familiar to all readers of classic sf yet still take the breath away.

Where *Star Wars* goes far beyond what has been done before is in the model-work and animation of the space-flight sequences. It has been justifiably said that the special effects in *Star Wars* make 2001 look amateurish. The advances of technology since Stanley Kubrick's 2001 (1968) have allowed the use of computer-controlled cameras figuratively to fly and soar with the starships. The carefully choreographed space battles, based on aerial movement patterns of World War II dog fights, put you right in the middle of the action rather than grounding you as an observer watching things fly past. The list of technical credits at the end of the film go on for a long time, yet the anonymous army that created this film's amazing and unique appearance deserve all the praise they get.

Twentieth Century Fox are already making colossal profits from this film, an encouraging sign because it will tend to produce a shift away from the disaster and demonic possession trash, of recent years in the cinema, towards sf themes to cash in on a large and eager market. There is no reason why a few of the follow-ups *Star Wars* is bound to engender shouldn't approach its quality. It is even possible that sf themes or more serious subjects may emerge, although departing too far from broadly-based popular appeal in the subject matter will discourage the financial backing necessary for the gadgets and hardware. *Star Wars*' appeal is broadly based. It is a family film but by no means a children's film. It is perfect for young people of all ages and resembles at times a cross between a roller-coaster ride and a complicated electronic TV game. It is very pleasant to relax and enjoy the exhilaration and adventure without the fear of impending nastiness that so many films like to use these days. By providing far more than the minimum necessary for a Flash Gordon space opera without losing his way amongst the technology and characterisations, George Lucas has created a masterpiece of the genre. Do not miss it.

Flash Gordon (1936) appeared as a newspaper strip cartoon created by Alex Raymond around 1933. The film version of about 15 episodes (1936) had some quite amazing Master Control in the title role. (1936)

Flash Gordon remade by Frederick Stephani (1936)
Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars directed by Torin Heuer and Robert Hall (1936)
Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe directed by Ray Taylor

A film called *Flash Gordon* directed by Bill Osco came out in 1975. This is a sex film parody of the original. It boasts surprisingly good animation and is very funny, notwithstanding if you have seen the original. The video showing in this country is eight minutes short. All the same you can enjoy its sexual content. (1975)

Steve Dwyer is a cinema aficionado and reviewer, living in Bracknell. He lists his favourite director as Federico Fellini. He is periodic adviser to the Reading Film Theatre and has recently taken up film-making.

STAR WARS: A PERSONAL VIEW BY CHRIS FOMLEN

Star Wars is a space fantasy adventure film, and like all good fantasies it has a beautiful princess as its heroine. But in Princess Leia Organa, George Lucas has created a heroine with a distinct difference, giving her a winning lead over her competitors: she has guts.

Most heroines of fantasy epics are the kind of women whom I would not cross a busy street to rescue from a puddle, let alone fly off across the galaxy to save from the awesome power of Darth Vader and the Imperial Death Star. Yet, were I Luke Skywalker, called upon to risk all in this romantic mission, I would not only do it, but gladly repeat the adventure a dozen times over. For whereas the usual fantasy heroines faint at the sight of violence, fall over at the hint of a chase and wouldn't know one end of a laser pistol from the other, Princess Leia is the opposite. When we first see her, she is lasering an Imperial Stormtrooper, and even when captured by superior force she resists torture to conceal her secrets. When rescued from her prison cell, and with a gun at her disposal, she proves herself to have as steady a hand and a somewhat better head than her male companions. Leia Organa defies all the sexist stereotypes of (generally male) science fiction and fantasy writers. She's a winner all the way, and as such is one of the great strengths of *Star Wars*.

Writer-director George Lucas undoubtedly knew exactly what he was doing when he created Princess Leia. He says of the beautiful Senator that he wanted someone very strong: "I wanted someone tough because I didn't conceive of the Princess as just a damsel in distress. I wanted her very young, younger than Luke, but I knew that she had to be able to stand up to the bad guys. She's actually in charge of the rebellion. She's gotten caught, but she's fighting. That's why I chose Carrie Fisher".

Although Carrie Fisher's co-star Mark Hamill is full of praise for her: "Carrie's like Carole Lombard. She's beautiful and has the greatest comedy talent of any young actress in the business today": her role was not without its difficulties. Of facing up to the clash between the off-screen charm and the on-screen nastiness of villain Peter Cushing, she says: "I had to say to him lines like, 'I recognise your foul stench', but the man smelled like linen and lavender. I couldn't say that to this nice English man, whom I adored. So I substituted in my mind the one person I hate". Judging by her fine performance in *Star Wars*, Ms. Fisher was eminently capable of overcoming such difficulties, despite having made only one previous screen appearance, in *Shampoo*. She manages to convey the mixture of toughness and with which is the essence of the Princess's character with great adroitness. There are some delightful little touches of humour - as when she bumps into the huge Wookiee, Chewbacca, whilst hurrying down a corridor and remarks to Luke Skywalker: "Will someone get this animated carpet out of my way?" - which the film has in just the right proportion. Mr. Fisher is particularly adept at the fast line in repartee which the script has provided between herself and Harrison Ford (as Han Solo).

If the characterisation of Princess Leia is a major strength of the film, then George Lucas has achieved another strong point in the casting of the other main characters. In a sense, these are all space opera cliches, from the hard-bitten, cynical space pilot Han Solo to the world-weary fighter-for-justice Ben Kenobi. Yet the script, the direction and the acting all have a nicety of touch which never overplays the characters of their stereotypical idiosyncracies. The characters are sketched by the script, filled in by the aptness of the casting - each of the actors fits the role he/she has been called upon to play - and given depth by the ease with which the audience is able to identify with them. Just as Lucas has chosen well in his casting of Carrie Fisher as the heroine of his fantasy, so he has done equally well with his hero, played by Mark Hamill. A woman friend, shown a photograph of Hamill, pointed out that although she didn't normally like blonds, she would make an exception in his case. "Yes," she said. "I like him." As with Mark Hamill and the role of Luke Skywalker, so with the others:

* *En passant*, perhaps it is fair to note that my intense admiration for the Princess is not entirely uninfluenced by the fact that I have recently met a woman every bit her courageous equal. If we ever found ourselves in the classic sf post-disaster situation, I would head in the direction of my friend with the copper-coloured hair: she'd know how to cope a damn sight better than I would...

This lightness of touch, the resolution never to over-play any of the elements, is what allows the audience to suspend disbelief and enter into the fantasy world that George Lucas has created. On the face of it, the plot of *Star Wars* is simple and basic enough: it could be readily translated out of the space opera genre into, for example, the detective thriller, or any other recognised cinema genre. The hero - young, idealistic Luke Skywalker - is restless, ready for adventure. He learns of the danger into which the Princess Leia has fallen; simultaneously learns of the true nature of the struggle which is going on in the galaxy between the forces of the repressive Empire - exemplified by Grand Moff Tarkin, the Imperial Governor, and his accomplice, the personification of all evil, the black-masked Darth Vader - and the Rebels who seek to re-establish the democratic Republic, led by the Senator-Princess; and to complete the process, meets the old Jedi Knight, ex-guardian of the Republic, Ben (Obi-Wan) Kenobi. These elements come together not only to provide the mission and the motivation to fulfil it, but also, via Luke's inherited powers as the son of a Jedi Knight, the might to achieve it. Armed with the combined force of his father's light saber and Ben Kenobi's knowledge and advice, Luke sets off on his mission: first to rescue the Princess, then the forces of democracy. The adventure that follows is replete with all the images of the archetypal space opera: space battles (straight out of World War II dog-fights), planet-busting weapons, a power-hungry Imperial Governor, lovable robots, a pirate space pilot who will do anything for money, and hordes of Imperial Stormtroopers (a beautiful touch, this: the Stormtroopers, in their white thermo-plastic armour, are totally anonymous, as well as almost insect-like, so that when they are lasered down one can cheer without any feelings of guilt). The Princess is rescued, of course, and once out of her cell takes over an equal role with the men. There is a wonderful climactic battle in which heroes and heroine combine to destroy the ultimate weapon of the Imperial Death Star. And, with a display of Hollywood commercial cunning, the arch-villain Darth Vader is left alive and escaped, so that there is room for a sequel.

Stated baldly, the story - of a heroic quest to save a beautiful woman and defeat oppression - hardly seems adequate for all the superlatives which have been heaped on *Star Wars*. It looks very much like the kind of thing which dozens of science fiction writers have been churning out in Ace Doubles and Planet Stories serials for the last thirty years. It is certainly true that Leigh Brackett, for example, was capable of writing a space opera novel as enjoyable, as thrilling, as wonderful as *Star Wars* is a space opera film, back in the fifties. But it is in the contrast between the written form of science fiction and its cinematic version that George Lucas's achievement can be seen in its true light. A science fiction writer can, if he wishes, describe a space battle in a few hundred or a few thousand words, and because the place where the battle is taking place in actuality is inside the reader's head, he does not have to build the space-ships or show them wheeling and dodging in conflict against a stellar back-drop. The cinema, however, is a medium which has to show us things: thus the science fiction film maker has to realise his space battle in a visual form. He has to take those space fighters off the printed page and put pictures of them up on the screen. And if he wants us to really enjoy his creation, he has to make the whole thing look realistic. He has to make us believe that what we are seeing is a battle between Imperial fighters and Rebels, and not a lot of little models being manipulated by a special effects team. In the same way, Frank Herbert can take us to his alien planet of Arrakis by the (admittedly skilful) use of words on paper; George Lucas has to show us Tatooine, Luke Skywalker's desert of a home planet; he has to show us strange, alien creatures; he has to show us a band made up of miscellaneous aliens playing in a bar with as many strange species as one would find in anything by van Vogt or "Doc" Smith. It is Lucas's success in doing this - in realising on the screen what sf readers and writers have been collaborating to produce inside their own heads for years - that makes *Star Wars* such a signal achievement, not only in science fiction cinema, but in the development of cinema as an art-form.

John Dykstra (Effects) Photographers Effects) and John Dykstra (Special Production and Mechanical Effects) have done superlative jobs, and if there is any justice in the film world they will pick up the Oscars they so richly deserve.

Time has referred to *Star Wars* as "the year's best movie". When applied to a field of artistic endeavour as diverse as the cinema, I feel that the term "best" is pretty well meaningless. But if I cannot for that reason say that *Star Wars* is the best movie of the year I can say this: that *Star Wars* is the most enjoyable, most truly wonderful, most unadulterated fun film that I have seen for a very long time. It is totally unpretentious - which is a great virtue in an adventure film - and it is also completely without any of the sick line in sexual and perverted exploitation that has made up so many recent fantasy offerings. *Star Wars* shows what can be done with the space fantasy genre when a talented director not only gets the money he needs to provide first-rate special effects but also the freedom to cast his film in the manner he wishes.

With *American Graffiti* George Lucas created a brilliant vision of the past of American youth: with *Star Wars* he has created a stunning vision of the unaltered future of the American dream.

It is a pleasure to regard the announcement of meeting it. I have no doubt that *Star Wars* is going to be delighting audiences in this country for a long time after its release on 27th December. To this conviction I can only add the hope that any sequel will be every bit as enjoyable as *Star Wars*. If George Lucas is in charge of it, I am sure that it will be.

STAR WARS - THE BACKGROUND COMPILED BY ROGER E. WOLF

Luke Skywalker.....Mark Hamill
 Han Solo.....Harrison Ford
 Princess Leia Organa.....Carrie Fisher
 Grand Moff Tarkin.....Peter Cushing
 Ben (Obi-Wan) Kenobi.....Alec Guinness
 See Threepio (C3PO).....Anthony Daniels
 Artoo-Detoo (R2-D2).....Kenny Baker
 Chewbacca.....Peter Mayhew
 Lord Darth Vader.....David Prowse
 Uncle Owen Lars.....Phil Brown
 Aunt Beru Lars.....Shelagh Fraser
 Chief Jawa.....Jack Purvis

Rebel Forces:

General Dodonna.....Alex McCrindle
 General Willard.....Eddie Byrne
 Red Leader.....Drewe Benley
 Red Two (Wedge).....Dennis Lawson
 Red Three (Biggs).....Garrick Hagon
 Red Four (John "D").....Jack Klaff
 Red Six (Porkins).....William Hootkins
 Gold Leader.....Angus McInnis
 Gold Two.....Jeremy Sinden
 Gold Five.....Graham Ashley

Imperial Forces:

General Tagg.....Don Henderson
 General Motti.....Richard Le Parmentier
 Commander 1.....Leslie Schofield

Production Staff:

Written and directed by George Lucas
 Produced by.....Gary Kurtz
 Production Designer.....John Barry
 Director of Photography.....Gilbert Taylor, B.S.C.
 Music by.....John Williams
 Performed by The London Symphony Orchestra
 Special Photographic Effects Supervisor.....John Dykstra
 Special Production and Mechanical Effects Supervisor.....John Stears

Film Editors.....Paul Hirsch
 Marcia Lucas
 Richard Chew
 Production Supervisor.....Robert Watts
 Production Illustration.....Ralph McQuarrie
 Costume Designer.....John Mollo
 Art Directors.....Norman Reynolds
 Leslie Dilley
 Makeup Supervisor.....Stuart Freeborn

Filed in Panavision. Colour by Technicolor.
 A Twentieth Century-Fox presentation of
 A Lucasfilm Ltd. Production.

Certificate "U". Length: 121 minutes.

Star Wars does not open in London until December 27th, when it will begin a run at the Dominion and Leicester Square Theatres. It may therefore seem strange to be devoting so much space in *Vector* four months ahead of this date to the movie. Yet the reasons are clear to anyone who has his eyes on the media, especially those emerging from the United States, where the film opened earlier in the year. For *Star Wars* has taken America by storm. It is reported to be the biggest box office grosser of all time, having taken more money than any other film in history, over a comparable period. It has already made in excess of \$60 million in the USA. The phenomenal amount of money taken in by the movie is credited with having caused a doubling in the value of its parent company, Twentieth Century-Fox, in terms of its shares. Already, the spin-offs from the film have started to appear. Ballantine have brought out in paperback in the USA George Lucas's novelization of his own screenplay, and *Locust* reports that the book has run through eight printings with over 2 million copies in print. By comparison, Arthur C. Clarke's 2001 (from NAL in the USA) sold 2 1/2 million copies in 25 printings over a period of nine years. In a letter to Louis Ford of Del Rey, editor at Ballantine, claims that 2.2 million copies of *Star Wars* are in print, and that "we're setting a pool on how many copies we'll sell - and our marketing director estimates close to 5 million. Also on the *Star Wars* front: we have a 1978 colour calendar, *The Making of Star Wars*, a *Star Wars* Sketchbook, *Star Wars* Blueprints, an art portfolio of Ralph McQuarrie's original paintings - and a lavish *Star Wars* Artbook (hardcover and trade paperback) that will include the final shooting script". Sphere will be releasing the book here at the end of November, and Maxim Jakubowski reports that it is presently being translated for the French market. Reports elsewhere suggest that by Christmas shops in both the USA and the UK will be flooded with all manner of *Star Wars* items. *Star Wars* is turning into a cultural phenomenon, and has already stolen the market which the producers of *Star Trek* hoped to capitalise on with their long-delayed and even longer rumoured movie. Unsubstantiated reports reaching this office suggest that George Lucas is already at work on the script for not one but two sequels, with the return of the arch-villain of the original film Darth Vader, returning to attack the new Republic. A direct spin-off in the movie business has been an upsurge of interest in science fiction, and 1978 will undoubtedly see the release of an increasing number of sf movies.

Why is it that *Star Wars* has proven so enormously successful? How is it that George Lucas has managed to create a movie which appeals to such a wide variety of people, many of them uninterested in science fiction? For example, how is it that the two reviewers in this issue of *Vector*, who would number amongst their favourite directors such people as Fellini, Godard, Bergman and Altman are so captivated by what is, essentially, an adventure fantasy?

The only way to answer this question properly is to see the film for yourself. Reading the reviews in this issue of *Vector* give some clue as to the strengths of the film which *Time* called "the year's best movie". But only by actually seeing the film can the science fiction reader understand how perfectly George Lucas has captured the wondrous spirit of the space opera and brought it to the screen.

ranch in Modesto, California, his two passions as a teenager were cars and art. Determined to become a champion racing car driver, he worked at rebuilding cars at a foreign car garage, also working in pit crews at races throughout the country. Following a serious car accident a few weeks before his high school graduation, he gave up any hopes of becoming a racing car driver. He attended Modesto Junior College for two years and majored in social sciences. By chance, he met cinematographer Haskell Wexler, who encouraged him to study film-making and helped pave the way for his admittance to the University of Southern California Film School.

At the Film School, Lucas quickly turned out eight films. Subsequently, he became a teaching assistant at USC for a class training US Navy cameramen. With half the class assisting him, he made a science fiction short entitled *THX 1138:4EB*. The film won the Third National Student Film Festival in 1967-68 and many other awards.

After films such as the making of Karl Forman's *Schindler's*

George's film, Lucas then went on to work for

director of Francis Ford Coppola. While working as Coppola's assistant on *The Rain People* he made a forty minute documentary about the making of the movie, entitled *Filmaker*, which has been recognised as one of the best films about moviemaking.

George Lucas's first professional feature motion picture was *THX-1138*, which was an expanded version of his student film. Francis Ford Coppola acted as executive producer of the film. The film starred Robert Duvall and Donald Pleasence, and was enthusiastically received by critics when first released and has since become a cult favourite among audiences. It regularly crops up in seasons of science fiction films and at conventions. A bleak vision of a future in which the whole of humanity is drugged into submission, their sex drives suppressed totally, filmed in a blinding white-on-white, the film was visually impressive if somewhat lacking in consistency of plot. It did little to prepare one for the space fantasy of *Star Wars*.

In 1973, Lucas co-wrote with Gloria Katz and William Wyck, and directed *American Graffiti*. Gary Kurtz and Francis Ford Coppola co-produced. The film was nominated for five Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Screenplay. It won the Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture - Comedy, and both the New York Critics and the National Society of Film Critics Awards for Best Screenplay. *American Graffiti* was a great commercial as well as a critical success, and it was undoubtedly Lucas's proven track-record that aided him in persuading Twentieth Century-Fox to back *Star Wars*. *American Graffiti* is even more minimally plotted than *Star Wars*, detailing as it does one evening in the life of a group of teenagers in a small California town in the early sixties. The teenagers cruise around the neon-lit streets of the town until dawn, interweaving adventures and relationships in a kaleidoscopic vision of what it was like to be young in America at the time. It has strong elements of nostalgia about it, even for those of us raised at the same time but in a different culture, in the UK. This is no doubt aided by the soundtrack's inclusion of many of the classic teen hits of the time, which are universally familiar throughout the English-speaking world.

Star Wars: Behind the Scenes:

As early as 1971, George Lucas had wanted to film a space fantasy. "Originally, I wanted to make a *Flash Gordon* movie, with all the trimmings, but I couldn't obtain the rights to the characters. So I began researching and went right back and found where Alex Raymond (who had done the original *Flash Gordon* comic strips in the newspapers) had got his idea from. I discovered that he'd got his inspiration from the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs, and especially from his 'John Carter of Mars' series of books. I read through that series, then found that what had sparked Burroughs off was a science fantasy called *Gulliver of Mars* written by Edwin Arnold and published in 1905. That was the first story in this genre that I have been able to trace. Jules Verne had got pretty close, I suppose, but he never had a hero battling against space creatures or having adventures on another

"I had the *Star Wars* project in mind even before I started shooting *American Graffiti*, and as soon as I finished I began writing *Star Wars*, in January, 1973 - eight hours a day, five days a week, from then until March, 1976, when we began shooting. Even then I was busy doing various rewrites in the evenings after the day's work. In fact, I wrote four entirely different screen-plays for *Star Wars*, searching for just the right ingredients, characters and storyline. It's always been what you might call a good idea in search of a story.

"I wanted to make an action movie - a movie in outer space like *Flash Gordon* used to be. Ray guns, running around in space-ships, shooting at each other - I knew I wanted to have a big battle in outer space, a sort of dogfight thing. I wanted to make a movie about an old man and a kid. And I knew I wanted the old man to be a real old man who has a sort of teacher-student relationship with the kid. I wanted the old man to also be like a warrior. I wanted a princess, too, but I didn't want her to be a passive damsel in distress.

"What finally emerged through the many drafts of the script has obviously been influenced by science fiction and action adventure I've read and seen. And I've seen a lot of it. I'm trying to make a classic sort of genre picture, a classic space fantasy in which all the ingredients are working together. There are certain traditional aspects of the genre I wanted to take advantage of.

The first step after completing the basic script concept was to visualise the new world. George contacted Colin Cantwell who had worked on 2001 to design the initial spacecraft models. Alex Tavoularis started preliminary storyboard sketches of the early scripts. Production illustrator Ralph McQuarrie began to visualise the basic ideas for characters, costumes, props, and scenery. Over a period of time Ralph went from simple sketches and line drawings to a handsome series of production paintings which set a visual tone for the production.

In the meantime, producer Gary Kurtz worked out a budget and logistical plan for the complex job of filming on three continents. For the desert planet, Tatooine, all American, North African and Middle Eastern deserts were researched and explored. In southern Tunisia, on the edge of the Sahara desert, the ideal locations were found: a dry, arid landscape with limitless horizons filled with bizarre but real architecture.

It was decided the interiors would be photographed in London, because of the close proximity to North Africa and also because of the availability of a pool of top technical people at the EMI Elstree Studios, in Borehamwood. It was the only studio in England or America that could provide nine large stages simultaneously and allow the company complete freedom to handpick its own personnel.

The script called for a large number of miniature and optical effects. In June of 1975, George Lucas and Gary Kurtz contacted John Dykstra with regard to his supervising the photographic special effects. No commercial facility had the equipment or the time to accomplish what *Star Wars* required, so John Dykstra worked out the plans for a complete in-house effects shop. Appropriately named "Industrial Light & Magic Corporation", the shop was set up in a warehouse in the San Fernando Valley.

In the first weeks, ILM executed the 300 separate special effects shots in the film. At the same time, the background and special effects were visible for half the running time of the film. The various departments of ILM included a carpentry shop and a machine shop, which had to build or modify the special camera, editing, animating and projecting equipment required by the special effects. A horizontal 35 mm double frame format was utilised on all the special effects filming in order to get a larger negative that could sustain the quality of the images filmed in live action. A model shop was built to execute the prototype models of the various land and space vehicles.

Other departments were optical printing for putting layers of film together, a rotoscope department, which provided matte work and also generated original images to be used in explosion enhancement. The electronics shop devised special cameras for a self-contained camera and motion control system. There was also a film control department for overseeing the filming

The trouble was all this time, for some reason the film is measured as against the special effects in 2001, which appear positively pedestrian by comparison. For space scenes, Kubrick used composite opticals: one part of a scene, say, a spaceship, was put on film, with the background blacked out. Then the spaceship was covered, the film was again run through the camera, and another part of the scene was put in - for example, a moon behind the space-ship. This multiple exposure process was enormously expensive and time-consuming, as well as being limited in what could be achieved.

Ten years on from 2001, George Lucas and John Dykstra had the advantages of much advanced computer technology. By linking the camera they used to a computer, they were able to record in the computer memory each shot. By reference to this record they were able to add new elements to their scenes much more quickly and easily than Kubrick had been able to. Dykstra is quoted in *Time* as saying: "We have space-ships crossing over planets all the time, and Kubrick never did. His ships are almost invariably linear and can be seen only from one angle. Ours are seen in all conditions and from all angles". In comparison to the 363 different effects in *Star Wars*, 2001 had only 34. For whereas 2001 cost \$10 million to make *Star Wars*, despite the inflation which has considerably reduced the value of money in the intervening ten years, cost only \$9.5 million.

The special effects crew also cannibalised over 300 model kits and collected parts from old tanks and World War II planes. As may be seen if one bothers to look closely at the final results, all these bits and pieces were roughened up to give them a patina of age and make them look used.

Instead of the shiny, new-looking architecture and rockets normally associated with sf movies, the sets and props for *Star Wars*, like the materials used for models, were designed to look used and inhabited. John Barry commented: "George wants to make it look like it's been shot on location".

The life features more than a dozen robots, in fact, but the two major ones are C-3PO (Astroboy) and R2 D2 (Astrocat). The robots were designed and built by production illustrator Ralph McQuarrie, art director Norman Reynolds and sculptress Liz Moore. The job of making the other robots fell to John Stears who devised the production and mechanical special effects. Besides the dozen robots he built for *Star Wars*, he also came up with light sabers, land vehicles and a myriad of explosions.

George Lucas began a three-month period of casting the unusual roles in November, 1975. He, casting with the same approach as he used in *American Graffiti*, chose new, fresh talent for three of the five major roles. In the other two, he cast British veterans Alec Guinness and Peter Cushing.

When asked what drew him to the actors he chose to portray the characters in *Star Wars*, Lucas said: "They're good actors and they're more or less by nature like the characters in the story. The important thing about a movie like *Star Wars* is that it is believable to an audience and that they identify with the characters. And these actors, because of who they are, bring believability to the situations".

In March, 1976 a film production unit and cast descended on Tazer, a sleepy little oasis town in Southern Tunisia, where North Africa and Arabia meet and the Sahara Desert begins. The construction crew worked for eight weeks to turn the desert and towns into another planet. Filming began on the salt lake of the Chott el Djerid not too far from Tazer. Other locations included the Tunisian desert a few miles outside Nefta and the rocky grandeur of a great volcanic canyon outside Tazer.

near specially applied goggles. Camera and film in the

rigorously cleaned out every evening.

The cast and crew moved to Matmata, one of the most unusual towns in the world. Matmata is largely inhabited by troglodytes, who make their homes in caves cut from the sides of the crater-like holes in the ground. These underground homes evolved as a means of protection from the weather, which is scorching hot in summer and bitterly cold in winter. Interior sequences of the hero Luke Skywalker's home were filmed to great depths in the Sidi Bou Briss, which is larger, but typical of local Matmata dwelling, consisting of an open central hole surrounded by various cave-like rooms gouged out of the earth.

Following two and a half weeks filming in Tunisia, the *Star Wars* cast and crew moved to EMI Elstree Studios. It took all nine sound stages to house production designer John Barry's thirty sets of other planets, starships, caves, control rooms, cantinas and the vast network of sinister corridors on the Death Star. For the enormous rebel hangar scene filled with a squadron of X-wing and Y-wing fighters, the set was no huge task – it had already been done on a large scale in Europe, located at Shepperton Studios, in *Midworld*. The scenes with the actors took 143 weeks, to film in England.

Against this background of massive use of special effects and exotic science fictional scenery, the actors sometimes experienced difficulties. "They don't exactly give you a course in acting in a science fiction movie. At one point I'm supposed to react to seeing my planet blow up. You know, there go my parents, my record collection, everything. What do I do?" After waving to tell the where to look, says Carrie Fisher, "In time, I got to this point most of the cast found difficulty in actually saying the lines which George Lucas had written for them. Says Carrie Fisher: "I thought I recognised your foul stench when I was brought aboard, Governor Tarkin' is not everyday conversation". Harrison Ford remarks: "There were times when I issued a threat to the George up and make him repeat his own dialogue. I told him: 'You can't say that stuff. That's not the type of man I'm writing'." And indeed, as the success of the film has shown, the dialogue and the acting of it does work.

iv South Valley and Faen Jungla natural was photographed in the Hutan rindang at Truhl, National Park Gunung Gajah.

in South Valley and Faen Jungla mountain was photographed in the Hutan rumah of Tebbi, National Park, Gunung.

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original sound

Robots and weapons were collected and created by Ben Burtt. The final elaborate stereo soundtrack was mixed at the Samuel Goldwyn Studios in the Dolby system of noise reduction for the ultimate motion picture high fidelity.

Gamrie Fisher.

Gamrie Fisher was born on 21st October, 1930. The daughter of Delia Harpelle and Gamrie Fisher. She arrived in Beverly Hills at the age of 20 like many but first unimpressed appearance at stage with her mother during a summer tour and surprised everyone with her singing, deep playing voice. She continued singing unimpressed with her mother during another tour and night she was 27.

Deciding to work seriously at a career in show business, Carrie Fisher left Beverly Hills High School to join the chorus of the Broadway revival of "Irene" starring her mother. She remained in the cast for its year-long run in New York. When it closed, she appeared in *Shampoo*, for which she was nominated "Newcomer of the Year" by *Photoplay*.

Declining subsequent film offers, Ms Fisher decided to study acting seriously. After making a guest appearance in her mother's act at the London Palladium in 1974, she enrolled in London's Central School of Speech and Drama, where she studied for 18 months.

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"I wanted to do the role of Princess Leia because I wanted to have real conversations with pe-ple with bubbles on their heads. I just wanted to be those about someone sitting across from me being a 'small person' or some strange looking person who was hired through the Big Agency. I can't tell you how thrilled

up it was didn't we have three-headed and three-eyed? I wanted to get guys on machines, which are tall, half-man, half-ape creatures, jaws, which are tiny shrouded creatures with glowing eyes, and all kinds of robots.

The people in the restaurant wouldn't react. I thought that was terrific. And we were in Borehamwood, which is the English equivalent of Crazyland, Wyoming. If I saw someone who was seven foot two, like Peter Mayhew, who plays Chewbacca that looks like, with a massive neck, it's really not it, and all the rest of the weird looking cast, I certainly would react. We looked like a Fellini! congregation entering this little Chinese restaurant. ... I think people are getting jaded. It's sort of easy now to do all that fantasy stuff on the screen and not drawing too much attention to it. Which is a shame."

was further aware that she employed during some periods
and returned to 04048 Date - 0404 0104079 470 15 I told
like my body was being ventilated from the inside.
But it was a different kind of terror. And I knew it
was also going to be fun to do. I was really afraid
of doing something wrong. I was also afraid my hair-
piece would fall off. Despite the fears, I was sort
of sorry we got it right on the first take. Once I
got over the initial shock of doing it, I wanted to
do it again. I still do. And that's why I hope they
do a sequel with lots of swings across chasms in it.
I do not want any silliness in the sequel. It looks
like it could be a lot of fun. And lots of space travel.
I like space planes."

08-00000-0000

Mark Hamill:

Mark Hamill was born on 25th September, in Oakland, California, the middle son of a retired US Navy Captain. Mark Hamill grew up in California, Virginia and Japan. He finished his last two years in high school in the latter country. His formal education was completed by two years as a theatre arts major at Los Angeles City College. He began to pursue an active career in professional acting in 1970. He made his acting debut on TV in an episode of "The Bill Cosby Show". He has appeared in a variety of TV series and movies-for-television, amassing over 100 TV credits. Despite all this experience, he never thought he would be lucky enough to star in Star Wars.

"I thought if they were making a big space fantasy movie, I'd be satisfied just to watch part of it being shot. I even asked my agent if he could get me onto the set. I wanted to see some of the special effects being done. I wasn't thinking in terms of acting at all. I've always been interested in science fiction and space fantasy. Those were the big things in the films I went to see. If I had to pick the kind of movies I always went to see as a kid it would be films like King Kong and horror and western movies. The special effects really intrigued me. When we lived in Brooklyn, I saw King Kong on television every afternoon for a year. It used to give me out every time. My

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THIS IS A LOUSY, CON, HACK!
NO-ONE'S ASKED ME FOR
MY AUTOGRAPH YET!!

HEARD ANY GOOD JOKES, LATELY?

WHY IS THE STARSHIP
ENTERPRISE LIKE A
TOILET ROLL?



I DON'T KNOW...

BECAUSE THEY'RE BOTH
GOOD AT WIPING OUT
KLINGONS!!

I'M NOTED FOR MY SOPHISTICATED
STYLE OF HUMOUR!



HALF-LIFE

The life & times of
ELMER T. HACK

THIS MORNING I HAD A
LETTER FROM MY FAN-CLUB
SECRETARY

HE SAYS I'M THE
GREATEST WRITER
IN THE WORLD

HE SAYS I MAKE
ISAAC ASIMOV LOOK
LIKE ENID BLYTON

NOID
NOID

HE'S READ EVERYTHING I'VE WRITTEN--
64 NOVELS AND 427 SHORT STORIES

OF COURSE, HE DOESN'T KNOW
ABOUT THE POEM I DID UNDER
A PSEUDONYM

I WOULDN'T WANT A KID OF
THIRTEEN READING
THAT STUFF!



"Three Unites"

A terse, hard-minded, rather horrifying book, this, of desolate arctic backwaters, executed in hieratic style (appropriately, my dictionary tells me, of such as bishops).

THE DRUG IN by Eric C. Williams; Elmfield; Leeds: 1977; £3.95; 166 pp; ISBN 0-7067-0064-

Reviewed by Chris Morgan

Despite George Hay's enthusiastic recommendation on the jacket flap, this is a trite and unconvincing novel which makes Dr. Who look subtle. Though written and set in the present day it could easily pass for the book-of-the-film of a British alien-invasion "B" picture from the

Many familiar ingredients are present. This two-mile-long alien spaceship lands on a Sussex village, squashing it. The ship has regular lines of rectangular openings in its six-foot-thick steel hull (which are highly convenient for humans to walk in and out but must make atmospheric re-entry fairly exciting). Businessman John Wendip is traveling home from London when the ship lands. Believing his wife and daughter killed by the impact he rushes inside to wreak vengeance.

armed only with a wooden spear and accompanied by a small terrier dog - one of the few survivors. But their leader, a tall, white-haired man, has a dagger tucked into his belt and communicates through him. (It does sound familiar, doesn't it?) Meanwhile the army, which is made up of a mixture of men and women, is unwilling general. The latter, accompanied by a couple of huffins, gets himself stuck inside the ship (inside the aliens, in fact) and the aliens come from Jupiter and are engaged in a war with the inhabitants of Saturn. Also in the vicinity are John's hysterical wife, a young woman who has been married to a middle-aged pensioner who eventually sacrifices his life for the views of Earth and Jupiter from space and a tough and arrogant sergeant who is a little bit of a British and un-

I had imagined this type of sf to be extinct,
so much for wishful thinking.

DRAGONSLINGER by Anne McCaffrey; Sidgwick & Jackson; London, 1977; (3.95; 264 pp; ISBN 0-283-98401-5

Reviewed by Chris Morgan

Let's get one thing straight. Of Anne McCaffrey's four dragon books, Dragonflight and Dragonquest are good-adult novels, while Dragonsong and Dragonshifter are juveniles. It's a pity Sidgwick & Jackson don't trouble to make this clear.

How can one tell they're juveniles? Well, the protagonist of both is Wenolly, a teenage girl, but more importantly the tone of the writing is softer, simpler and more sentimental than is the two adult novels. Also, the plot of both juveniles is concerned with the relatively unimportant doings of Wenolly and her boy or nine fir lizards, largely ignoring Fern's political bickerings, technological advances the life or death struggle against falls of Threat.

[illegible]

All in all, Dragonsinger is a good, entertaining juvenile novel, though not in the same class as The Earthsea Trilogy or WaterShip 1. But if you let your wife or children read it they are bound to want fire lizards for Christmas. You have been warned!

STARDUST by Alfred Bester; Pan; London; 1971
60p; 156 pp; ISBN 0-330-25111-2

It annoys me when collections of short stories are published without a title page - like this one. There's no excuse for it; it indicates that the publisher is either too thick to realise that this is a collection rather than

a novel, or else doesn't give a damn about the readers anyway.

and having got that off my chest I can reveal that Starbuck is a collection of eleven old stories from the 1930s, mostly dealing with the American West. The title is taken from the "Act" for example, is set in a future in which the US, under the supreme command of General Carpenter, has taken over the world and the "Organization of Culture, Poetry and the American Dream." But the means become the end: living is vast underground cities the only way of escape is through the use of technological experts, so that the general can call on any speciality he requires for the war effort. Consequently, the general is a very different man from the "Starbuck" but, extinguished, and when the general is recommended to call in a poet to try and understand why some people are so different from the rest, the general himself owns he finds there are no poets left. It's an allegory, of course, but it sets the tone of the book. The section and is the outstanding story in the book.

In "Obedy And I'd" we come up against a case of unstoppable personal wish-fulfillment - the man who gets whatever he wants because his wishes are so strong that he can't help but be revealing. "Star Right, Star Bright" is a rather more restrained version of the same theme. The man in this story is constantly asking the question, if a child can all its wishes fulfilled, even unconsciously, how long will it take to grow up? And how long will it track his dream? Both "Robson's Choice" and "The Starcatcher" show that wish-fulfillment is a two-edged sword, full of traps. The man in "The Starcatcher" is chasing your bank on the twentieth century and going back to live in some other age, "Robson's Choice" will show that the man who gets what he wants (and travel does exist.) And just to demonstrate that the good guy sometimes has his wishes frustrated, we have "The Man With The Yellow And Third Avenue", in which a promising young attorney gets a hint of a rose future

As with any collection of old stories, some of these have "weathered" two decades very well. Technology has caught up with them, later imitations by other authors have made some of the ideas appear hackneyed. I enjoyed re-reading the book, though.

THE CAVES OF DRACH by Hugh Walters; Faber;
London; 1977; 136 pp; £2.95; ISBN 0-571-11037

Reviewed by Brian Gritz

This one is OK for those of you who are parents of kids in the 11-14 age group; for this is obviously the market it is machine-tooled for. Juvenile AF, it seems, has changed about as much as the Bundy and Beano: here we have four abstract business who talk like Harry Wharton, Bob Kray and Co. in the Bunter Saga. We have even a bewhiskered ex-RAF type who goes on about "That last little dust-up with Jerry". As to characterization, The Caves of Drach com unfavourably with Frank Hamble's Can Have comic strip.

On the other hand, Hugh Walters' basic plot is pretty good if, when you think about it: it is a story of a young man, a poor orphan, a "billionaire's grandson" - spoiled, of course - gets lost in the epicurean caves, which are the "underworld" of the "Surface World," and employs the four astronaut buddies (who are the "Surface World's" "underworld") to help him discover the boy, perfectly content in the middle of a secret subterranean civilization. The boy - like all the Outsiders who preceded him - is perfectly happy in his "underworld" on the Surface World. The Inside World is run by fearslike beings, age-old, and virtually immortal. They are the "Surface World's" "underworld" and took refuge inside when the Terran ice age came. They are "underworld" beings who have a highly advanced but perfectly static technology, are sensitive, and are generally "underworld" beings. They are the "Surface World" from outsiders; but, as they are "underworld" beings, they are "underworld" beings and self-division at the Surface, they do not allow newcomers to leave. They

By the time the story is over, Chris Godfrey, leader of the astronaut buddies, becomes - potentially, anyway - a bridge between the inside world and the Surface. Indeed, he may be the beginning of an ultimate bridge between Outside and Inside, outer space and the subterranean world. The inside world is a trap; but only through such a reconciliation between ultimate Inside and ultimate Outside can the war division on the Surface be transcended ---.

All this is delicately hinted at, in very simple language. I quite enjoyed the last half of the book; and it could, perhaps, real fire some "juvenile" imaginations.

THE BLACK BEAST AND OTHER VOODOO TALES by
Henry S. Whithead: Waxflower: St. Albans:

Reviewed by Brian Griffiths

Source: *Author's calculations*.

called Adventure; the other four came from

Spurred Tales (Vintage 1924-32). They're all set in the superstitious-ridden West Indian, with the first, "The Story of the Old Man and the Sea," a story of a fisherman's knowledge (Whitehead lived a good part of his life and studied the fish in the Caribbean). "The Seven Turns is A Hangman's Hope," taken place in the 1820s, and though most of the others take place in the 19th century, the last, "The Drawing-room style" (rather like Anthony Trollope always seems to express the spirit of the novel of the century. The combination of this title with the last, "The Drawing-room style," for the most part, piquant and fascinating: Whitehead is a real old-fashioned storyteller, and in this collection, he's got a lot of good stories, in my opinion, a dud. It's all about the exchange of souls between a man and a beast, and ends with a man's soul being taken over by a woman, and lacking in conviction.

The other stories are fine, of their kind. "Seven Turns Is A Wagonman's Rope" has, as its basic voodoo idea, the one about a man's life-spirit being caught on canvas; and though it is 50 pages long there's no superfluous detail and the gradual working-out of the idea is fascinating. It's a swashbuckling tale of piracy, with lashings of local colour, all of it rather splendidly unified by the central voodoo idea.

"We Lorricker" is about a little old gentleness who acquires a disturbing secondary personality that of a four-mouthed card-sharper and voodoo master. Whitehead's Anthony Trollope manner - the narrator always sounds like a Barchester cleric - suits this perfectly, and the climax is unexpected. In this story, the most interesting of the collection, the action occurs on what Lyell Watson (see *The Roman Reader*) would call the Bioplasmic Level, and Whitehead is really good at invoking a sense of this.

"The Projection Of Armand Dubois" (as related by another of Whitehead's little old gentlemen) is just what the title advertises it to be, and has some really authentic-seeming moments. "The Lips" introduces a ghoulish idea I'd never thought of before; we're back on the high seas, on board a black trader, for this tale. In "The Fireplace" we are among Southern gentlemen, some of them living, some of them in places (places? I think it's really good at bioplas presence?), all of them talking like Anthony Trollope, even when discussing a murder of Poe-like gruesomeness. Good stuff.

Holiday-reading, I'd say, but somewhat above-average. The background detail, emphasising the contrast between the white colonial population and the native coloureds, is really good.

SID TIME RETURN by Richard Matheson: Sphere;
London: 1977; 85p; 255 pp; ISBN 0-7221-5894-7

Reviewed by Brian Griffin

This is a readable mixture of time-travel, wince-inducing fantasy and metaphysical soap-opera. The time-travel involves an American TV-screenwriter who, while dying slowly of a brain-tumor, is able to hijack his own body in 1949, where the girl of his dreams - Elise McKenna, a celebrated actress of the day - is even now giving a performance of *Bartle's The Little Minister* at the New York Metropolitan Opera. The scriptwriter later dies. The scriptwriter deduces, from historical evidence, that a mysterious stranger (presumably himself) entered the actress's life on November 18th, 1949, and that he was the cause of her death. So, he knows he has to make the trip anyway —

The self-hypnotism bit has to be built up gradually to be effective, and it works - for the reader, I mean. But it makes for a sluggish start to the novel. As the action proceeds, however, it becomes compelling enough.

Richard Matheson works himself out of the basic time paradox by suggesting to J. B. Priestley that "while the main outlines of history must be unchangeable, tiny human pockets of it can be changed. This is put over effectively with some help from Priestley's Times 1, 2 and 3. At its best, *Big Time Return* compares quite well with the illuminating power of Priestley's *Time Plays* and stories. It concerns, a critic might say, a minor, less interesting, and less convincing of three "times" (passing time, eternity and the intermediate Time Two in which everything happens).

The difference between Matheson and Priestley is that Matheson's characters are made of his quality cardboard. You could say the same, of course, of Joe Hadenland in Aldrich's *Franklin's* ~~character~~ ^{character}, who travels into the past to ~~save~~ ^{save} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~country~~ ^{country}. Shelley, but Aldrich has an erratic brilliance that is wholly lacking in Matheson. All Matheson has to offer is a steady competence and a lot of painstaking local colour, which is not to be sneezed at, of course.

The comparison with the central chapters of Frankenstein is indeed worth pursuing. Both Walton and Aldiss are trying to convey a creative confluence of Past and Future. In both novels the heroine is an artistic Woman-Libber-before-her-time who is totally liberated (as bed) by the hero from the future. In both novels there is a kind of a "pre-emptive" climax in which the hero and heroine awake by an intruding Prince from another dimension. In both novels the hero is a representative of our disoriented present, caught up in a tremendously solid 19th

Century reality. Matheson used this solidity over by sheer weight of detail, right down to the gargantuan Eberk and its crew, and while his scriptwriter-hero is a shadowy member of our mass-society, his Edwardians are all of themselves, visible, vibrant, and physical. On the other hand, these Edwardians are all caught up in their social roles: they're essentially making wooden caricatures of themselves. In fact, they're no more fully alive (in *Times 1, 2, 3*) than the scriptwriter. As for the plot, these middle-appearance types are chiefly represented by the actress's brutal, violently-adoring marriage to Robinson. There's a predictable conflict between Robinson and the scriptwriter: this is where the soap-opera come in. The main point is this: only in the creative confluence of the TV scriptwriter, and the 19th Century actress - this is the ideal symbol for the Edwardians - can the vital spark of life be given to these walking waxworks.

Er: the One, the Power whom the Valar themselves served, who created the world (Arda, Middle-earth) and its peoples, and whose wishes were obeyed by the Valar in all things.

right through

Quenta: ...but in Eldamar, in the Undying Lands, the Eldar were unaffected by the changes of mortal lands, and after many years of world-wide wandering to record their Ancient Speech in writing, using the Tengwar (Eldaric script letters) of Numi ---

across mountains, forest, wasteland and battle-lands, they came to the ends of all the world, giving, including those of the Noldorin high-elves against Morgoth the Enemy, finally reaching their familiar hobbit country.

Seal: A translation of the original hobbit-word *Irda* ("burrow") ---

The *Companion* is not really a dictionary, of course: it is full of biography and pseudo-history, all of it written in the Tolkien manner, and there are tables, family trees, diagrams. But the dictionary-type schematization of the book inevitably draws attention to the synonymy of words like *Elendil*, *Elionor*, *Elendil*, *Eledorin*, *Elendur*, *Elenna*, *Elentari*, *Elenta* and so on. A typical entry is

Elentari "Star-Queen" (Q) The high-elf form of the Grey-elven name *Elendur* in the Third Age. This lady was more usually known to the High-elves as *Varda*, "the Exalted".

See also TAR-.

Memor: ...Varda, Arda ... it really does all fit together. (Full details of the Star-Queen's life, including her marriage to Elendil, with more cross-references to *Tintale*, *Familio*, *Galithiel*, "A Elbereth Galithiel", "Namarie", etc.)

Briefly, then, this seems to be a really helpful and clarifying book, and well as it massive labour of love. It's a good bedside book, too. Best of all, it sends you right back to Tolkien with the relevant quote.

MISSION TO THE STARS by A. E. van Vogt; Sphere; London: 1976 (original date, 1952); 189 pp; ISBN 0-7221-8775-0

Reviewed by Robert Gibson

Somewhere in the Galactic Empire, Joseph M. Dell invented the Dellian border: physically and mentally tougher than humans, they were more creative. Riots and massacres of the Dellians followed. Some, helped and accompanied by the "Star Cluster" commanded by Grand Captain Lath, the Greater Magellanic Cloud. There they formed a civilization known as the Fifty Suns.

The Mixed Men were born of mixed Dellian and non-Dellian parentage. They had two minds, one of which they could use to control another person. The government of the Fifty Suns distributed them to the Mixed Men, and they fought civil rights, tried a coup and failed. Worthy, their hereditary leader, was captured and brought up among the Dellians and non-Dellians; this came to suit both sides, but resulted in ethical quandaries for him.

Twenty years past, then, fifteen thousand years after the flight to the Magellanic Cloud, Imperial Lath reappears on the scene with the discovery of a Dellian by the mapping ship "Star Cluster" commanded by Grand Captain Lath. Here the story starts.

Despite the confrontation of supermen with the super-ship of a super-state, the novel is not obsessed solely with power. The problem one of trust: the Fifty Suns believe that Earth's pretensions of tolerance and equity may be sincere (and in fact they are), but they feel they need at least a decade to find out. Lady Laurr is their ally: it is their duty to defend the harbour prejudice against the "Robots". As for the Mixed Men, the minority within a minority, it is their time on the scene that can be prepared and allowed to coexist peacefully.

This is a reasonably subtle background for the space opera into which Vogt plunges without delay. He has a good thing. The "Star Cluster" is described as the "Space ship with a 'cosmic ray bomb' and 'tractor beam fields'". It is a matured concept, and it has been held around it: it is several thousand feet long, and it can split into nine thousand separate sections and then rejoin. It can travel at travel several light years per hour. Fortunately van Vogt emphasizes the hugeness of the multitude of stars and thus saves space from being annihilated by speed.

I would rate this book slightly below *The Voyage Of The Space Beagle* and *The War Against The Null*, but it is on level with *Planet Of The Apes* and *Of Inher*. Somewhat lacking in *HEM*, but exciting, imaginative and unconfusing.

THE UNIVERSE MAKER by A. E. van Vogt; Sphere; London: 1976 (original date, 1953); 189 pp; ISBN 0-7221-8773-5

Reviewed by Robert Gibson

(This volume includes, besides the title novel of 136 pages, a 1968 novella called *The Proxy Intelligence*.)

By the 24th Century, there has been a population explosion and the planet is in a state of anarchy. People the "Planicians" have taken to the sky in "floaters". (This is one of the best ideas and this varied and colourful book has a great left on the ground have divided into "Shadows" and "Teenagers".)

The Shadows can "alter the atomic pattern" of their bodies. Van Vogt, who likes to leave himself a free hand, gives them an exhaustive definition of their powers. They can certainly know the past and the future, and they can change the past. They do so with the object of nullifying people's "ancestral shadows" of injustice and this is brought into the story with the help of Morton Cargill, a 20th Century man who by criminal negligence had killed one Marie Weaneth in 1931. In the 24th Century, the "Shadows" Society for Psychological Adjustment in order to help the children who were killed in front of Betty Lane, descendant of Marie Chanette.

The Shadows are not an exclusi v group; they recruit as much as they can. But many Teenagers are too stupid to be recruited. The Shadows and want civilization to be led away from its new direction and back into the old path of technological advance. They also want the Planicians to be forced down from the sky and compelled to continue to live on the ground. The Shadows in turn consider the Teenagers fair game for slave-taking.

But this is not all. A group of Teenagers is opposed to war with the Shadows. And Grannie the Shadow's leader, in playing a double-double game, using Morton Cargill as one of the pieces. Weaneth is brought into the story with the help of Merlica in the year 7301 are trying to ensure that the Shadows are destroyed in 2301 in order that they themselves may exist in 7301!

This idea of people "trying to exist" did not seem ridiculous to me. I don't doubt, because of this and other ideas, the book does not make logical sense. But it is a good story, readable and interesting. The book is a good example of one of those years (van Vogt has written many) which send me to the ground. The book is filled into shape by the reader, and which contain enough suggestive potential to make such a reader's participation worth one's while. I was impressed by the climax: a closed temporal circle, of the kind so neatly described in principle by my friend, the author, in *Planet Of The Apes*, and an attempt is made to force it apart, whereupon tribulation follows.

The Proxy Intelligence is an unworried sequel to the novella *Anglim*. Both novellas concern the Drethos. The Drethos is a form of life, in a manner of speaking, have become vampires: ...It was discovered that only continuous blood transfusion and the use of other human beings could save us. For a while we received donations from the Drethos, but they were all destroyed as hopeless incurables. We were all young, and in love with life, of course. ...We hundreds of us had been killed in the sentence, and we still had friends in the beginning. We escaped. ... (Anglim) At the time, the Drethos was a "Great Galactic" who disguised his power by splitting his personality. So far so good, van Vogt used to be a master at evoking the Blackness of space and the loneliness of monsters. And there is also the unforgettable helplessness of an ordinary human in the face of the vibrant power of a Drethos. But then we came to the sequel.

It turns out that all the Drethos were defeated after all. A late ship is about to arrive, containing nine Drethos for whom no trap has been set. The Drethos best known to us is van Vogt. The Drethos can cure all Hanady can cure a cure for them, which makes them immortal.

Surely, if one can't have logic or credibility, one should at least be granted poetic justice.

THE SECRET GALACTICS by A. E. van Vogt; Sphere; London: 1976 (original date, 1974); 189 pp; ISBN 0-7221-8773-1

Reviewed by Robert Gibson

Damon Kinn was right to call van Vogt a "cosmic jerry-builder". Sometimes, as in the good old space opera of the 1950s, van Vogt writes with his hands tied behind his back. *The Secret Galactics*, which after a promising start, ends with a disappointing anticlimax. It's a lot of stuff like "Marie" have just this minute while we were talking. Programmed now, it's a time phenomenon, and will cover certain past moments. It'd take too long to explain to you how it was done (see page 148). The reader waits in vain for elucidation.

The plot provides plenty of excuses for complication: Deeno, Hleeno and Luino are three "Alienoid" races who have infiltrated Earth and are jockeying for position with respect to humans and to each other. It seems that the humans are the most powerful, because they've got a big battleship arriving from Deen with overwhelming firepower. They would have argued in openly by hand had it been had it the Luino, who taught them how to infiltrate

and it seems in the end of the book, it is not

THE Tolkien Companion by J. E. A. Tyler; Pan: London, 1977; 331 pp; £1.50, ISBN 0-330-24993-7

Reviewed by Brian Griffin

Over the last 100 years or so, during which western civilization has been so disintegrating itself, concerns has grown over the structure and nature of language. Nietzsche thought that language was a private parlour game played by Man, primarily to distract himself from the ultimate reality of a meaningless universe. The same sort of idea lurks behind the writings of Wittgenstein: he thought that language was a "game" contained within a "game" which was inseparable from words: words, for Wittgenstein, do not have meanings, they are meanings. Any attempt to go beyond this language-game and say something about metaphysical absolutes is foredoomed to failure, because there is nothing beyond the language-game, which is a sort of acausalistic intellectual gymnastics for Cambridge dons. Later, John Chomsky said to hell with all that: words must have meanings, discrete atomic concepts that can be separated out and not through a computer, thus introducing the possibility of a new global language for the future. We, in the 21st world, have Ian Watson.

Meanwhile, while this argument proceeded, the man called Tolkien was exploring the nature of language in his own way. He was the only way to find out about language was to view its workings from the inside. He was the only way to do that was to invent one's own languages and observe their development through the catalytic stages of a world one "sub-created". The whole of Tolkien's hobby can be regarded as an unusually elaborate work, but then, so was *"Finnegan's Wake"*.

In *Finnegan's Wake*, Joyce was celebrating the breakdown of all languages into a final inchoate stream of consciousness in the mind of Anna Livia Plurabelle, the final woman of the natural world, dragging the Logos down into its depths, where everything is the same and nothing matters any more. It was the end of the former and of the latter and of their holocaust. (Allen.) *Finnegan's Wake* marks the end of the age of Western literature.

In *The Lord Of The Rings*, Tolkien built up a series of languages, together with the realm in which they operated: he was constructive. In *Finnegan's Wake* he was destructive, so, he demonstrated the true nature of the language we all use from day to day. This is the case: we now use an insoluble chaos unless we admit the existence of a reality corresponding to Tolkien's Endless Lands, and as these reality corresponds to the world of the Lord of the Valar). Unless we admit all this, we are left with a language which can neither explain the natural world, nor explain its own existence. All that is left to us is, in that case, is a device, the purely natural gibberish of Anna Livia Plurabelle, the final victory of the natural world over mortal men ---

I've been visited by these thoughts while dipping into the encyclopaedic *Tolkien Companion*, which certainly makes the subject seem clearer to me than ever before. The alphabet ordering of the entries, with their prefixes and suffixes of Tolkien's languages, and brings out the bonds uniting the sounds of intermedial *Tengwar* with the substance of Er's Creation:

Finco: The Quenya or High-Elven word for "metal", but more properly the title of *Tengwar* number, which represented the sound about universally among users of the Fearanor Alphabet.

Everything in Tolkien is systematically presented here, in a way that is leisurely enough to be read with pleasure: it's the primordial beginnings

Neither does he exploit more than a fraction of the potential of his material as basic theme, that of the humanisation and immolation of aliens by women.

Finally, here are two further reasons for not reading the book:

(1) The lack of good storytelling (after the first few chapters, and the lack of basic interest (it is difficult to care a damn what happens to any of the characters), and the bewildering presentation of a complex plot (van Vogt ought to take lessons from Philip K. Dick), ensure that there is nothing left to distract the reader's mind from the fact that the writing is often atrocious: "Several hard-to-read men" (page 59); "This, alas, falsehood" (page 72); "The scores which her eyes, significantly, devoured" (page 135).

(2) The extraordinary is not made to seem real. The global First Contact is allotted a mere, 0 one-and-a-half-page of unconvincing narrative.

THE ICE SMOOKER by Michael Moorcock; Sphere; London, 1977 (originally 1969); 65p; 156 pp; ISBN 0-271-02212-9

Reviewed by Robert Gibson

In order to come up to expectations a novel of ice should be icy: this one is icy enough, with the narrative clear and bleak, and fairly passionless. Emotions are described vividly enough, but sparsely and objectively. Many of the characters are taken forward to an icy port north of Nirvana in balls of ice where the ice mother holds court. Their worry, based in eight ice-left-cities on the Mattis Grass, is descended from Antarcian survivors of a world whose climate has gone haywire, and by now all of them love the ice, whether the traditional or not. The ice mother believes that the ice is waxing or that it is waning. Both Konrad Arlfane, the central character, and his optical acquaintances are recruited by the idea of green things sprouting out of naked warm earth. But there are facts to be faced: the climate is getting gradually warmer and the land-whales on which the city's economy depends are scudding away southwards. The ice mother is not a mother. She knows to the Antarcians, their livelihood is being undermined by Arcticans with ancient scientific knowledge. It is this setting that the explorer reveals to Konrad Arlfane the location of New York, legendary home of the Ice Mother, where reassuring answers might be found. The hopes of the voyagers are unlikely to be shared by the reader, and for me the key note of the book is futility, thus, although it is well-written and imaginative, I do not think I shall want to re-read it.

THE BURNING SWORD by Robert Anderson; Sphere; 1977; 65p; 204 pp; ISBN 0-7221-1150-3

Reviewed by Robert Gibson

Perage Paul Anderson was born 1,000 years too late, he might have been a good bard. The countryside and weather are described with eerie beauty, more so than the inhabitants of Faerie were, and there is plenty of grey matter, doom, and gathering darkness. Thor has broken the sword Tyring left it strike at the roots of Yggdrasil, but later the sword is used to save elvish Alfhelm from the trolls, who are friendly to the Jotuns, the ice-giants who are the ultimate foe of the gods. It is the sword as a naming-gift to Skafloc, a human child fostered by the elves, for, unlike the Asir or the elves, the man stands a chance of persuading Bolver the Jotun to make Tyring his sword. But after he has named the sword Alfhelm, Skafloc must not be allowed to keep the sword, lest his further exploits rouse the Jotuns for Ragnarok.

Thus Skafloc is a pawn of higher powers. Both elves and trolls, and their respective allies, are anxious to avoid this fate, and for the most part of the book they manage, whilst fighting bitterly amongst themselves, to keep Asir and Jotuns hovering in the background of the storylines. Another threat to the order of things is the "new white god". With so much fate around, it is not surprising that even the villain has their sympathetic moments, especially Valgard, the changeling who is tormented by the knowledge that he is merely the soulless shadow of Skafloc.

The various Powers and characters, and their interweaving with the human world, are diverse and interesting, garnished with circumstantial detail such as the leather worn by the trolls

to avoid contact with iron. And for me, what seemed an unexplored-for bonus in this fantasy-adventure story was a certain implicit philosophical depth. Apart from pagan fortitude the Christian virtues also get a look-in, and the Prince of Darkness hints at the many-sidedness of truth. Also there is a feeling that mortals have a greatness which is beyond the gods. It is a little better a life like a falling star, bright across the dark, than a deathlessness that can be caught above or beyond the gods. Christendom is portrayed as being in one sense territorial and in another sense ubiquitous; and it is this interesting paradoxical situation that has been further explored, the book would have been even better.

THREE HEARTS AND THREE LIONS by Paul Anderson; Sphere; London; 1977; 65p; 156 pp; ISBN 0-7221-1145-5

Reviewed by Robert Gibson

Given a large enough number of universes, one of them is bound to fit any pattern. Holger Deane belongs to two universes, one of them our own, the other more covered, and both arriving at a simultaneous climax in the endless struggle between law and chaos. Over here, Holger lights Naga, over the other, he fights Morgan le Fay. This book is likely to be enjoyed by those who aren't expecting another like it. It is less good. It has some magnificent, and more humorous. Holger tries to win through a maze of myth and magic, and he cannot stand static light; lycanthropy is inherited as a set of recessive genes; and in a riddle battle with a giant he asks: "Why did the chicken cross the road?"

BRITISH SF:

A WRITING VIEW OF AN AMERICAN VIEW

by MARK ADLARD

St Chausin invited me some time ago to write about what I had called the "Other Tradition" of sf for his own magazine. I wasn't able to do that, but now that he has invited me to write about these shores I can't escape commenting on what he says.

The way I see it is this. There has been a European tradition in the writing of speculative fiction, at least since the Middle Ages. This tradition acquired renewed vigour (and some additional literary respectability) in the last half of the 19th Century, in response to a variety of new pressures which could be discussed at great length. I summarise these briefly as a belated reaction to the Industrial Revolution (which has been virtually ignored by the great Romanticists) and to the implications of Darwinism. Then from about the 1920s the American magazines took it up with such energy that they transformed it into a recognisable genre. From that time speculative fiction has been predominantly American, so much so that new British writers wrote primarily for the American magazines and a number of them (like Michael Chabon) felt obliged to imitate the American idiom.

The possible reason why American readers and writers should seize upon this kind of fiction so avidly are an interesting guide to the nature of the genre. I would put it like this:

(1) The shortness of American history has meant that Americans find it easier to shrug off the past and embrace the new. There are mountains of evidence for this statement in psychological studies of American business managers, but disregard for the past is more general than that. Henry Ford is the best example. He said: "History is bunk" but I prefer to call it "Serious". The American mind is not averse to the concomitant is an inevitable lack of the historical sense. There are mountains of evidence for this, too, but I'll mix it up with another quotation from an American, Edmund Wilson, in a consolatory letter to Scott Fitzgerald, explained that it would take time for artists to have any effect on a commercial society that had "only one layer of 18th Century civilisation".

(2) The Americans place a much higher value on technology and science than we do, and there is ample evidence for this statement in the development of American business, and the consequent has a much higher value on science than we have. The Americans place a higher value on technical education: a higher proportion of their general population, and of their writers have received some kind of higher technical education. And the Americans delight in gadgetry: has its obvious counterpart in the kind of writing that is actually called nuts and bolts sf.

(3) I have the impression that a disproportionately large number of Americans of writers were first and second generation immigrants, and any rate were conscious of a lost ancestral culture. They were severed from their native culture, and put in an environment that was itself without any long established culture. It seems likely that the new sub-culture of sf might be just the thing they were looking for: a homey sub-cultural analogue to Bartholomew's big state. And the obnoxiousness of some of the "aliens" must have made an appeal at some level.

(4) This point overlaps with the previous one. I also have the impression that a disproportionately high proportion of Americans of writers are Jewish. Sociologists assure us that Jewish millennial yearning was a potent factor in the morale of New York's Lower East Side. It may be that writing of sf to Campbell's formulae was the star-at-home equivalent of growing giant red peppers in a kibbutz. I am less inclined to reduplicate this supposition by the possible details of Jewish writers in sf, than by a consideration of the dominance of Jewish writers outside of sf.

is a well-known fact that the English language is a mixture of many different languages.

of within the male literary tradition. The writer uses of techniques from time to time (like C. S. Lewis) or all the time (like Staple). He has decided that such techniques will help him to say what he wants to say. If you don't understand that then you come up with meaningless assertions that Orwell didn't write of because he was really interested in politics, or some such.

I don't suppose anybody, except perhaps for a few of the very young, need be reminded that that comes from a famous essay by T. S. Eliot. Eliot expresses an ideal which is attained by few, if any, but more to the point it would be difficult to find a statement of purpose that is further removed from the aspirations of a writer in the Genre Tradition.

(Orwell) influencing each other. This is precisely one of my main contentions.

Within the Genre Tradition there is evidence of direct and personal influence on every hand. Even if you didn't know we could guess that the writers know each other, write to each other, marry each other's husbands and wives and so on. They pool their ideas and techniques, as it were. The writers of the Other Tradition didn't influence each other in this individual way, because they were influenced by something much more substantial than a generation of individual talents. You have only to read, say a page of Asimov and a page of Lewis to discover the difference. The answer is in the texture of the prose. If you can't see it then you can't see it.

I can't say much about New Worlds. A good deal of it was just silly: the kind of thing that should have been thrown away as undergraduate jokes. I stopped reading it when it published a computer print-out from a moon landing game. The short story was good. But I think some writers knew that the universe wasn't invented in 1926.

First, if I didn't mention the short story and the novel as typifying the Genre and the Other Traditions respectively, it wasn't because I was unaware of it. In fact the short story continues to be the basic genre form. Most of the genre novels are essentially expansions of the short story, and even when they are written as novels from the outset they usually lack the unitary structure of true novels.

definitely an introvert. I read a lot. I had only a few dates. I felt inferior and awkward. Some years later, a girl told me that many girls would have been glad to date me then, for I was an athlete, tall, not ill-favored. This came as a surprise to me, but even if I'd known it then, I probably wouldn't have done anything about it. I didn't drink, smoke had a ridiculous conception of the purity of most girls at the schools, and I didn't believe in Christianity or any religion by that time. I couldn't stand religion or "community." I think that's why and puritanical!

The type of statements that Farmer made as well as his interview are frightfully unfair as he is being inaccurate, because people aren't read then and never read. He reply or they use them for their own purposes. This happened when P. Schuyler Miller reviewed everything about it. I didn't drink, smoke and claimed that there were "errors" in the H. G. Wells article. My reply appeared some months later pointing out that they were not errors, and he responded incredulous at these new discoveries he had not been aware of. Jim Blinn kept quoting that review for years to show that there were "errors" in the book and Jack Williamson picked it up. They wouldn't let them out of the shelves in 1960, even though the book was listed the statement would be appended that "it has error".

Phil Stephenson-Payne, Kingston, 1 Lowell Avenue, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

VECTOR has another nice glossy issue. I couldn't see much connection between the cover and sf, nor was it up to the standard of the last two in other artistic merit (though it obviously had other merits) but it was glossy and eye-catching, which is half the point. Whatever else you said, VECTOR certainly looks impressive these days.

Nor are the contents of a much lower standard. Dave leads off with a very good analysis of the book, some interesting quotations (though I'm sure Jim Goddard said 4004 BC for the creation, not AD - there's quite a difference), but very little in the way of an evaluation. To quote Mr. Ricketts' thesis, his treatment was a good basic one, but "James Blinn's talent is too subtle for that" - there is a vast amount in this series that Blinn took a lot of effort over, and which Mr. Ricketts ignores. A shame. It was a good start.

Even less happy was I with Brian Griffin's article, which felt like an unhappy amalgam of reviews of *Frankenstein Unbound* and of *The Survival of English*. It is quite possible that there is something to his thesis - that Aldiss to some degree refutes the thesis that Robinson puts forward. Unfortunately, he nowhere makes this point successfully, or even comes close. Instead the piece waltzes along in a vast unnecessary mass of irrelevant sentiments. OK, so Griffin doesn't like Leavis, but there are better places to complain than in VECTOR. After all, Leavis has nothing to do with sf, and I imagine a large number of VECTOR readers will have never heard of him, and most of those who have will have little idea of what Griffin means by "lit Crit (Leavis-style)". Added that in a rather confused way (especially when words like "de-christened" appear when "de-Christianised", horrible though it is, really what fits) and some ludicrous comments (I am no lover of NEB, but its style is hardly dedicated - I have come to my garden, my sister and bride, and have plucked my syren

Presumably your composition went wrong, or something, but an interview starting on page 28 and continuing on page 29 is ludicrous. Still, I imagine you'll get a lot of flak on it, so I'll leave off for now. The interview itself was very interesting, and Dave Bringle proved himself a competent interviewer in this context. Of all the features in VECTOR that I enjoyed most, I would have to say the interviews would come at the top of the list.

((Remind me to take you aside some time, Phil, and explain my errors of lay-out occur when tired and inadequately experienced editors managing an interview on the set up magazines at four in the morning. - Ed))

So to book reviews, and again John Clute seems to have lost that magic sparkle. (Whatever happened to the review of *The Disinheritance Party* by the way? I was looking forward to that.)

((We have a slight technical difficulty on the review of John Clute's first novel, Phil. But patience, it is coming... isn't it Dave? - Ed))

His plot summary of Shakespeare's *Plaint* left me rolling in the aisle in laughter and dying to read a copy, and then he finishes with a confused last paragraph that seems to praise Blinn. From the book I saw the same time - I was left with no clear impression of his final feelings on it. His *Lantern* review was better, though I felt he could have improved somewhat on the disorganised last paragraph, but with *Pisces* he again stumbled, spending far too long plodding through a book that in his own admission, is not very good. (Although his concluding comment on the failure of the book "Gibson exits it" was marvellously apt.) I don't think straight book-reviewing is really Clute's forte, how about an article from him?

Brian Stablesford gets off to a good start, with a very competent and enjoyable review of the Small Press whatcha bits, I felt, skimmed somewhat on the *Heater* review. Admittedly I was a little disappointed that the *Heater* suggests have appeared in other *Heater* collections, and two of the remaining three seemed in paperback recently, but I think it still deserves rather better than the couple of inches it got.

Conversely, Doug Barbour seems to have ingorrornea of the worst kind - viz. rambling plot summaries. Neither of the reviews really says much about the book being reviewed, other than its plotline, and I couldn't even see any reason for the first appearing in VECTOR - a poor review of a, reportedly, bad book.

Griffin's might have been a good review. I don't know, he lost me in the first couple of paragraphs and I had not the enthusiasm to persevere and work out what he was really saying.

Chris Morgan starts out competently enough, but, again, what was the point of putting the first three reviews in VECTOR? The Simak and Williamson were lousy books, and the NEB was very much the mixture as before. The other two reviews were far better, and of better books, though I felt that Chris had somewhat of a tendency on plinkiness here. The first paragraph of the Tucker review was really unnecessary, and the vague plot summary of the Zelazny rather wasted (as Chris points out, the book has no real plot, and this summary would only frustrate those who know the series and mean nothing to those who don't). I felt he over-rated the Zelazny somewhat. I too found it "impossible to put down" (after 50 pages, anyway - they took me 21 months to read!) but did not agree it was "intelligible on its own". The whole book (almost, anyway) was a shifting clarification of the political situation in Amer and it would be meaningless and, even worse, boring to someone not knowing the other two books.

Nike Dickinson's Vance reviews were interesting, and certainly competent enough. Finally (for now) I thought Dave Wigmore gave far too long on *Charisma*. I added to him in feeling that the book was not up to Corey's standard (see my review of it) and that it would be better not to be taking up space in VECTOR seeing as it has already been reviewed there once (Tom Jones, VECTOR 72). I felt that Dave said an awful

(Continued by the

mail, and 2000

As might be expected, a lot of response to the Wigmore's article. Sorry most. But to read Richard Smith de-fending *How to* and then a column later to read Andrew Nair doing *How to* the same, with just about the same points, makes me feel that perhaps the editorial pencil should have been wielded a little more. Now Malcolm on Elwood was vaguely interesting, though I find myself unmoved to comment. Tony Richards I have corresponded with separately, and Doug Barbour's comments are out of date (VECTOR 78 was six months ago!) that any feelings I might have had on the issue are long gone.

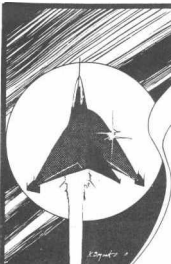
On the whole a little disappointing for a little time. More on the letters is NEXUS 3 later, but I reckon a little tightening up of the

Brian Stablesford's "Icaromnippon" article was quite interesting - particularly as Chris Morgan has been enthusing to me recently on the "Today and Tomorrow" series. I thought his thesis went a little ragged at the predictions, though. I agree that pulp and mainstream of will probably flourish, but I don't see any danger of the middle decaying. Analog is still the only magazine in the field that is going strong, and the majority of the "respected" authors are still quite definitely within the middle sections. Still, never mind, an amusing article.

Which is more than could be said for Cy Chauvin's piece, which I felt was ramblingly inconclusive. He talks a lot, saying nothing. A better article could be made out of the single thesis that American sf is more subject to dogma than British sf (compare, for instance, Heinlein's *Time Enough For Love* and Cooper's *Winning Men* which were roughly contemporary) - a point Chauvin doesn't even allude to.

And so, finally, to layout and repro. The print was nice and clear, and the layout straight and clear - though the relatively high incidence of typos became very irritating after a while. (I know you're under pressure, Chris - I mention it only because, with the best will in the world, I still find it detracts from my enjoyment of VECTOR.) Artwork in general was fairly good, although I thought the outside covers rather substandard, and the inside back cover abysmally poor (I wonder who did it?). Mind you, now for the shock. I thought the filler on page 28 by Judy Watson was superb. Obviously the girl can draw, the only question left is why doesn't she?

(Patently, Phil, we are destined to disagree about many things - not least of them the quality of Judy Watson's artwork. I think she is an exceptionally fine artist - not to mention very fine person - and so long as I hunch in the editorial chair her artwork will grace these pages. - Ed)



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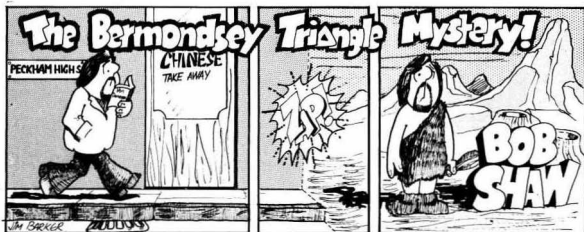
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Pardon me if I don't seem my usual robust self today. I was round a few posh parties last night, living it up — some I'm trying to live it down again. The night started to go a bit wrong when I found myself at a sophisticated room party, which wasn't quite what I had planned on. I'm not saying the host was unkind — but that was the Great conversation party I'd ever been to where I was expected to buy Tupperware.

I got out of there in a hurry, because we've got all the Tupperware we need in house this night. The party all the neighbors, are filled with Tupperware. There's no room for food — just three huge and huge of plastic boxes which break your soul when you try to open the lids. When I die I'm going to be put away in a Tupperware coffin — I think I ordered it last night — and the worms just won't be able to get near me. When these super-beings land on the deserted Earth in a few thousand years from now and start looking around for a human being to reverse-engineer, I'll probably be (much) in a hurry to share. The only trouble is, the alien super-beings probably won't be able to get my lid off...

Anyway, by the time I got to a proper room-party I hadn't been a drink for about half an hour, and you know how it is with booze — a long period of abstinence like that really whets your appetite for it. I think I may possibly have imbued a little too much, because this morning I had a bad headache, and there was no Alka-Seltzer or aspirin. Luckily, one of the comedians was kind enough to step out and get me some pain-killers they make in a little shop just around the corner from here — it's a local anesthetic — stuff that enabled me to come here as planned to tell you all about the Bermondsey triangle mystery.

Now, to me, one of the most horrifying and sinister things about the Bermondsey triangle mystery is that nobody has ever heard of it.

I mean, practically everybody has heard about the old Bermondsey triangle mystery, and it's even got to the point of popularity where the mystery is self-perpetuating. Did you know that the last three ships to disappear in the Bermondsey triangle were carrying cargoes of booze about the Bermuda triangle mystery? There's so much demand for them in that area that whole fleets loaded up with the booze are chartered about all over the Caribbean, running into each other, getting stuck, and adding to the legend. They're believed about all over the seaboard and most wateries are in that pulp paper is terribly absorbent. One of these days we're going to have a loud slapping noise — and the Caribbean will disappear! And Castro will become it on the CIA...

There's even a new TV series about the Bermondsey triangle — called *The Fantastic Journey* — which combines the scientific authenticity of *Space: 1999* with the gripping story quality of *Lost at Sea* — a visit to Bodice. I mustn't start being sarcastic about *Space: 1999* again, though — last time I did that I offended the show's regular viewers, and they both wrote me and said, "And I think one of them had even gone to the expense of buying a new crayon! Because of *The Fantastic Journey* reminds me that one of my problems with the show is that, after all those blots of the *Ann* programmes, I can't bear to look directly at Roddy McDowall any more. All I see is Galen... silence! It's hard to think of anything more revolting.

Well I was talking about the self-perpetuating nature of the

Bermondsey triangle mystery, a mystery which I find interesting. A vaguely parallel case has occurred up in the Lake District, where I live. There's a local community called *Kendal* told called *Witch*, for some reason, is always through along by climbing who are lacking Everest. The manufacturers get great ideas by this, put on the way everyone always has the *Kendal* mountain climbing expeditions of the last fifty years which captured themselves on difficult, which by using *Kendal* milk cans. What they carefully don't mention is the fact of the *Bermondsey* Everest expedition of 1998, which was great guy on the south face, and by accident... but by an accident of discarded *Kendal* milk can newspapers.

This shows the dangers of being a little lost. It really is so-called to go around throwing down old tin tins and old champagne bottles — except, of course, on the coastline, where they have a much better class of litter. One of the things that appealed to my boss last night was my first trip across the Channel — it was no day trip in Calais — was that even the garbage was in French.

But this is getting away from the Bermondsey triangle mystery, which is my main subject today. What is the Bermondsey triangle mystery? "You must be kidding yourself. If you aren't, I've been waiting my time up here throwing our three remaining teeth, placing fish-bones. There's something that makes me, you know. They go around placing fish-bones. Other people plant seeds, others plant fish-bones. It's really stupid — because you're always eating from fish-bones. I think the worms came along and got them, especially if they're worms like the ones I've got in my garden. The soil in my garden is so poor that the worms go around in gangs sucking birds. One of them savaged the postman last week.

I know, I know! This is getting away from the subject of the Bermondsey triangle mystery, as well. In fact, some of you are saying I can't get away from the subject of the Bermondsey triangle mystery when I haven't even got near it. Some of you may even be entertaining doubts that there is a Bermondsey triangle mystery.

Well, let me tell you... There's another funny thing —



that business about understating doubts. Why do we always understate doubts, while the best that can happen to more disastrous cases are as beliefs and convictions to that they'll lie firmly hold? It had all seemed fair.

Now... what was I talking about? Oh, yes — the Bermuda-triangle mystery. This first came to my attention about twenty years ago, and I want to emphasize that I'm talking about direct, first-hand experience here — unlike those literary charlatans who write sensational books based on old newspaper clippings which were probably all wrong to start off with.

My first tour and apparently insignificant clue was... You know, I love the way all tales of scientific discovery start off with a day and apparently insignificant clue — though I suppose it has to start that way. When James Watt was getting ready to invent the steam engine the only thing he had to inspire him was the boiling up and down of the lid of a hot bottle, and his genius lay in seeing the potential. I mean, if he had been watching the kettle boil and suddenly it had gone ~~hot-hot~~ and shot off in the direction of London, striking up passengers and collecting mail-bags, anybody could have got the idea of the steam locomotive from it. Though James Watt, being a true genius, might have jumped up and said, "If only we could harness that energy to make him!"

Come to think of it, perhaps that's what actually happens — this secret or Bermuda-triangle cause lies in the cause of the origin, though only a few consequences like Lindbergh could be absolutely certain, in view of that fact. I feel as glib about telling you the method I have devised for getting from sea to shore journeys. They require a two-man system when they're bringing the sea across — the first man comes along sailing who goes sea, and if anybody stops he takes his money and gives him a plastic cup, which acts both as a tea container and a receipt. A few minutes later the second man works his way along the coast, filling all the cups. So all you have to do, before leaving home, is to make sure you pack a few plastic cups, and set one out in front of you on the appropriate moment...

But all this is straying away from the subject of the Bermuda-triangle mystery. I don't know why it keeps happening — must be something I wrote. This time and apparently insignificant clue I started to tell you about was a strange aberration in the otherwise fairly remarkable journey of James Watt. Jim, of course, is a writer whose name is well-known to all readers of journals such as *Amazing*, *New Worlds*, and *Stable's Gazette*.

He is also, as everybody knows, a very simply reported-to and other person — compared to many other science fiction writers, that is. Additionally, he has done a few odd things to his life. There was that time when he worked for a tailoring concern, and an encyclopedia salesman called at his home one evening... Jim brought him in and sold him a suit!

But occasional lapses like that apart, he lives a very even sort of life — which is why my curiosity was aroused when Jim abruptly disappeared for four days. I remember the occasion very well because it happened one Easter — a time when you would expect a man like him to be at home with his wife and family. Helping the children roll eggs down hillsides, and appling the white thing for them by becoming about the mechanics of isolated planes, and about how it was just another way of demonstrating Newton's ideas about inertia and gravitation. All authors who have been in *Amazing* tend to go on like this.

Unlike a ship or a plane which disappears in the Bermuda triangle, however, Jim reappeared in his old home a few days later — but he was a changed man! He was tired and shabby, his eyes were glassed over, there was a strange apologetic smell from his breath, and he was ignorant about what had happened to him. He had obviously been through some traumatic, mind-warping experience which was too awful to talk about, perhaps too awful to comprehend.

I have to admit that I didn't investigate the matter fully at that time, because I was busy with other important scientific researches — namely work on my perpetual motion machine. I stored away that machine for three years before reluctantly giving up. In the end I was forced to admit that — no matter what ingenious mechanism I invented, no matter what clever refinements I tried — there was just no way to stop the blasted thing. Thus was a big disappointment to me, but at least it gave me more time to push Jim Watt's behavior, which had steadily grown more mysterious and intriguing.

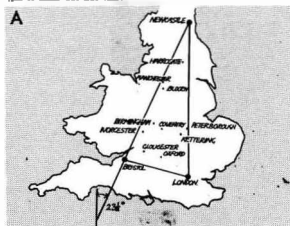
He kept on vanishing every Easter — always returning in

the same comatose condition — and then, to my horror, it began to happen in November as well! My attention was obviously disconcerting. I began following him on these strange excursions, regardless of my physical danger involved — as dedicated researchers are like that, you see — and found that the same thing was happening to hundreds of other apparently normal men and women. Twice a year they were *gone*, lamming-like, to some mysteriously rearranged world, where they walked around for several days — often having to run throughout the entire period — before returning and settling to their normal lives.

What, I wondered, was it all about? What occult power was influencing these people to make them behave so this fashion?

Well, the first thing a scientist does when encountering a widespread phenomenon like this is to organize the data and impose some kind of order on it. Actually, that's not quite true. The very first thing a scientist does in a case like this is to apply for a Government grant, to keep him in beer and whiskey during his labors. But I knew I couldn't get any money from the High-Comptons. There had been all right barmen and the authorities ever since I reported a smuggling gang, run by a chap named Leopold, in the Customs and Excise and they had failed to do anything about it. It turned out that the gang were being financially clever — they only smuggled stuff there was no duty on! The authorities are powerful against me like that... so naturally they resented me for exposing their incompetence. They covered up their embarrassment by threatening to prosecute me for wasting their money, so I knew there was no point in applying for Government money.

Instead I drew a map of the country and plotted out all the locations where I knew the strange man hysteria had occurred. And it came out like this:



Note the significant shape of the plot! A triangle! Can this be a coincidence? I ask you, CAN THIS BE A COINCIDENCE? Or CAN IT NOT?

Because this is just a rough diagram I can't show the precise trigonometries I calculated, but suffice it to say that the bottom right-hand corner of the triangle is positioned in the London borough of Richmond — hence the name I have given to the entire area involved. On actual fact, the corner of the triangle proved to be located a little further south... To be locally precise, it is to the back room of a Chinese take-away in Peckham High Street... but who in his right mind would wish to hear a talk about the Peckham-triangle mystery?

Now, as soon as I got an inkling of what it might be on me, I realized I needed expert help in unravelling the mystery involved, and I began looking around for somebody with the necessary intellectual qualities. My first choice was I, Ron Hubbard, but I had lost touch with him soon after he joined Scientology and... I have to be careful about how I say this... made a cult of himself. I then contacted a friend who shall be nameless, because he is on the Secret 10 "35" scale, but he had the right sort of mental stimulation. He was too busy getting Brighams ready for his first conversion. In fact, when he heard I would be addressing him, he contacted me to pass on a message to all of you who have asked questions about Brighams in general, and in particular about the famous Brighams paper.

Talking about the Brighams paper, he said, "This criminal

...AND I'D LIKE YOU TO JOIN THE
GREEN OF MY NEW SPARKS...



JIM BARKER

himself, who operates from the southeast of tall buildings in central Brighton — thus forcing people to wear umbrellas at all times of the year — has not been apprehended at the time of writing. But the local police are confident he will be hauled from his lair. There is some doubt about which party he will equally be hauled, but a close watch is being kept on all licensed premises in the area. A new show about his identity has come from a tip-off that he is an East German who defected over the Berlin Wall. 'That is a superman feat, considering the height of the wall,' said a spokesman for the Brighton police, 'and shows the valour of the man we're up against.'"

That's getting away from the Bermoodan triangle again, but I thought you deserved the break — after all, none of you has done me any harm. I was saying that I was at a loss about who to turn to for help in writing out this mystery. But I thought of the perfect man for the job... that great German-slash-writer, popular and scientific researcher — Van Dongen!

I had trouble finding Van Dongen, because he moves around a lot — even the sort of books he writes he knows is impossible to find his various clubs — the Playday Club, Boy's Book Club, the Billingsgate Club's on train club but he won't say of those places. I was getting desperate when I remembered reading that you have only to stand in Piccadilly Circus long enough and you will eventually meet everybody in the world. This seemed a good logical approach, so I went and stood there and, sure enough, I did meet people from all parts of the globe, and some from the One Tun as well.

Piccadilly Circus really lived up to its reputation, because one of the first people I met was a genuine Bolivian Indian! He told me he was in England to research a science fiction novel he was writing about the Wason. Then I was approached and propositioned by a lady of the town, but when she pulled out BSFA badge she made an excuse and left. I have often since wondered what she thought BSFA meant, but possibly figured out that the BS stood for Bob Shaw, but the mind boggles at what she might have made of the rest. The next person to come along was Ian Watson, who told me he was a bit worried by a new debate he had about being followed everywhere by a Bolivian Indian.

And finally just as the immediate loss of probability could be worked, along came Van Dongen. To those of you who don't understand the mathematics of chance this might seem as unlikely coincidence, but probability math is a wonderful thing. For instance, if two people meet each other in a large department store the laws of probability say there's no guarantee they'll ever meet up again unless one of them stands still. When you think of it, this is not a very helpful statement. In fact, it makes the poor lost person's dilemma even worse — because now he doesn't even know if he should start searching around or just stand there. And if you stand around too long some other accident will come along and start bothering you. This could be quite good too, except that that always starts my detaching your mind and nose.

Anyway, I was talking about me, squawking with Van Dongen. Strangely enough, he didn't seem all that pleased to see me. He was frowning and with a distant expression on his face when I stopped out of a shop door and grabbed him by the lapels of his raincoat. He stared at me... and he stared for a while... then he said, "Are you following me?"

"Certainly not," I said.

"Thank God for that," he said, "I must be losing my mind — I keep thinking I'm being followed by another science fiction writer and a bloody Red Indian."

"Bolivian," I said.

"No, it's true," he said.

I took him into a nearby pub to steady his nerves and ordered two large gin-and-tonics. He grabbed both bottles of tonic and poured them into his own glass.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"Drinking the gin," he explained. "I always use two bottles because I'm part German — that's my typical two-fold efficiency."

"That's a good one," I said, trying to humour him. "What accident will a police take your whisky glass and make an accurate remark?"

"I don't know," he said.

"Can't you make it?" I asked. "Do you get it? Can't you make it?"

"My God," he said nervously, "and I thought I was going mad — I know I should have been advised inside the Bermoodan triangle."

"That's what I wanted to talk to you about," I said, getting the opportunity. I ordered two more gin, and three tonics, and over the next hour or so got the scientific explanation for the Bermoodan triangle mystery out of him.

The story goes back some two million years, or it might be two million years — Van Dongen didn't want to be pinned down on such a precise date — and it turns out that the Bermoodan triangle was, in fact, the cradle of civilisation on Earth. For all that still about Lake Victoria and Lake Rudolf and Mesopotamia and the Valley of the Nile — this is where it all happened. Right here!

And not only did the human race start all here, but the group was inhibited by no less than four non-human civilisations. So well! There's one thing you can say for Van Dongen — he certainly gives value for money.

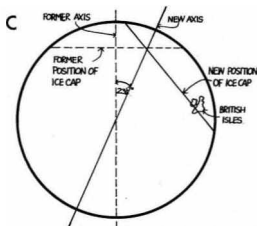
This diagram (Diagram 1) shows the British Isles as they were two million or two million years ago. There was Ireland on the west, looking pretty much the way it looks today. Then there was the high ground of Scotland and Wales close by. The reason was are as close to something to do with the ancient of plate tectonics. At one time — it sounds ridiculous, I know — all the continents were whirling about all over the place on plates!

And at one stage, America and Canada came shooting across the Atlantic and crashed into Ireland — which must have played hell with their so-called bones. As well as pushing Ireland closer to England. One some collision formed the mountains of Wales, the Lake District and the Scottish Highlands — that's what I call typical increase efficiency. America and Canada, having done all that damage, then started back to where they had come from, without even having a note with their names and addresses.

At the time I'm speaking of, the whole east and lower side of England was covered by a shallow sea. The waters of which were warm and clear — and which provided an ideal breeding ground for a very large and intelligent species of snail. The civilisation of the God People flourished here for many centuries. They were a happy, contented sort of race, whose only vice was that they liked to get a big heavy Saturday night on their native drink — which was known as oystershop.

The only there is their side was that a short distance to





the want to the fertile plains of prehistoric Ireland and Wales, another intelligent race had sprung up. They had quite literally sprung up, because this was a species of *Homo* I don't know as Tennyson, I have spoken on a previous occasion about the ability of vegetation to develop intelligence, and this new race had such extra-sensitiveness. The civilization of the Tatars flourished about 100,000 years ago. It was... (This is just like the bit from *Lam and First Men*, isn't it? Old Shapleton, more exactly... and their culture reached some degree of sophistication, with a well-developed caste system. The evidence indicates that the ruling caste of agriculture were known as King Edwards, and there is even a legend that a young, high-born female Tatar died up to her middle one day, her eyes shining... all of them... and said, "Alas, I'm engaged!")

But neither said "What is? Remember you're a King Edwards, and you can't just marry anybody who comes along. And the girl Tatar said "It's Debra Davies, of 'The World of Spies'."

And her mother said "You can't marry that common

Archie, and to relate, comedy developed between the Cold People and the Tatars, it was mainly on grounds of the Cold People's ability to disappear every day or night - and if you've ever been near a cat and when it has got a big hole you'll have some sympathy with the Tatars' point of view. They started attacking the Cold People, who responded by lurching a long way - and then running northwards - along the western edge of their domain so close to the Tatars. This reinforced the status quo, and the two races might have eventually learned to co-exist in peace - but at this point Nature played a grim joke. (I don't know if it was as grim as game of my jargon, but it was pretty nasty.)

At this critical point to come - the Earth tilted on its axis! It tipped over by 23 degrees.

Those of you who have looked at Ireland, Atlantic islands - as well as quietly vomiting into your convention basket on-stage - have looked ahead of me at this point, and realised the significance of the 23 degree angle I marked on Diagram A.

The effect was catastrophic! Even bigger, would you believe, than the upheaval caused by the recent reorganisation of the BBPA!

All the water that had been covering eastern England swelled away into the North Sea, leaving the Cold People floating about in puddles dying horrible and protracted deaths. And, in addition to injury, all the Tatars were thrown with great force against the wire mesh fence... were sliced up by it... and shattered down on top of the dying Cold People to the form of being *McIntosh* prunes.

The violence is almost too horrible to contemplate - even while had some good points which are the thinking of at eye. This I pulled together constructively mixed up together.

At that stage, Nature - as though ashamed by the mass reproaches of her own dirty handwork - drew a shroud of ice and snow over the scene of carnage. (What a pity that *Scientific Storyline* had to cover publication. I could have said that well to them for a moment!) The writings of Nature's cover-up job are explained by Diagram C. The Earth was tilted by 23 degrees, but it was done with such a jolt that the polar ice cap slid on a bit further - rather like a *fried egg* in a new anti-stick

frying pan - and ended up with its broken edge across the southern part of England. The line marking the lower limit of the ice cap - as can best be shown on Diagram B - passes, not without prominence, exactly through Bournemouth. (Actually it passes through the back room of a Chinese take-away in Parkham High Street, but we've already decided not to go near that, I got late enough trouble through going into the back room of the Shanghai in Newcastle.)

What, you must be asking, is the date starting revolution to this tale of Earth in the hours of scientific upheaval?

Well, I'll tell you - otherwise there would be much point in the setting up here like a back when I could be in the high country myself. The main thing that happened was that a race of alien beings descended from the stars and, because they came from a very chilly planet, settled around the North Pole. Van Dongen has already dealt extensively with these invaders, whom he identifies as the *Shogun*. The *Shogun* is the *Code* but that is a slightly misleading title because the *Shogun* actually went down in huge self-powered ships.

These bizarre vehicles, which could only have been the product of an alien mind, operated on an ingenious principle. Each one had a large ball-shaped moored in front of it. The ball was shaken down on to the ice which promptly melted, creating a small hole which the ship slid down. And the process was continuously repeated. Ah, I can see that the technically-minded people at the audience are objecting to this method of solid engineering principles - and I know what your objection is. You're saying the ships would never be able to carry enough salt to go any distance. Well, the *Shogun* thought of that naturally, and they maintained salt dumps, for refuelling, all over their territories which extended to the southern extremities of the ice cap.

However, the audience rolled towards assembly, the ice cap retreated from England and returned to its proper place, and the cosmopolitan *Shogun* withdrew from the stage of world history to be left over to the swirling Arctic snow. (You know, this must be the point for *Scientific Storyline* - if I polished it up a bit I could find it to be *Shogun*'s theme.) It would have well to have inside all these articles about how getting caught by a *Shogun* quite enjoyable. My favourite article from *Shogun* 'Chivalry was the end of the world' for the first time.)

As I was saying, the *Shogun* gradually disappeared leaving no traces of their existence except for numerous mounds of salt all over the place - but then a new lot of alien invaders came up from the south. (I don't know about this second wave of invaders, partly because Van Dongen hasn't had time to cook up much archaeological evidence about them, partly because their empire was confined to areas of the world where the top layer was composed of limestone or chalk. The reason for this seemingly arbitrary limit to their movements is that they used vehicles which were even more ingenious than self-powered sleds - they used winged-powered hovercrafts.)

Ancient Mesopotamia on the walls of caves near Dover - which Van Dongen is hoping to finish carving before he goes on his holiday next month - clearly show these beings sitting on their little hovercraft, which worked by spraying steam and on the chalk ground and landing on the clouds of carbon dioxide which were given off as a result. He gave them the name of *Sar-*

JIM BARBER



some — not to be confused with Saracens — heavily thick-lid was remarkably popular in a well-known strip of vineyard.

For a brief period the Saracens rained over that part of Britain which has a top stream of chalk or limestone, as a few whom disaster edge is a fairly straight line turning seawards from Newcastle through... you're greeted with... the back room of the Casino take-away in Dockland High Street.

And there you have it! The Bermuda-ey triangle clearly defined, for all to see!

In case you haven't already worked it out, I should mention a general lee Age was coming and their technology was a sufficiently advanced to enable them to invent a satisfactory anti-freeze for their vineyard. They returned to the south, the lee Age held sway for thousands of years, and when the glacier finally retreated Home Sagittas had at last appeared on the scene. Who said "Bleedily near home" down at the back there?

Anyway, life was very difficult in time for this guy, hairless creature with his intellectual tooth — this was long before the National Health Service provided him with wig and glasses and dentures for need to holding. It was even before the British tribes had started to write scribbles for Charles the First, and early man would have died away in short order had he not found the one place on Earth where survival was easy. Pioneered in the pyramid of the Bermuda-ey triangle was a historic place of fish and chips, ready-sprinkled with salt and vinegar.

When conditions were too harsh for intelligence the through-out the rest of the world, the diab-and-eych stream of the Bermuda-ey triangle was supplying the living communities of well-nourished human beings, who — once or twice a year — gathered at the largest diggings to replenish their supplies and to give thanks to their deity.

Small wonder, then, that deep-rooted racial prejudices cause some of these descendants to flock to the same places and go through hell-underwood rituals. Large numbers of them, from themselves into small ponds at night and drink with confidence of slightly heavy, much to the surprise of those in neighboring rooms — thus setting out the rule of the Cat People among tanks up on celebration and worship the Waters.

Many small blocks of duplicated paper are thrown around.

placed on Tatars. And a tall, primly, imposing figure, economically robed, or sometimes anomalously dressed, pants among the pilgrims, distributing pork pies which are symbolic of — and notch at old — the primordial fish and chips.

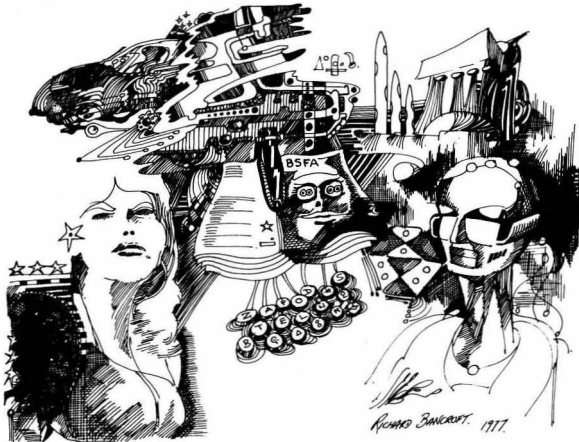


Jim Barker

Mr. Morgan believes that the large amounts of alcohol drunk during the day at these strange congresses represents the devil and which the British sprinkled over everything from their Sovereign — which certainly is the I have led a large strong-and-robust out in the light...

Paul Shaw, April 1977.

Firm heard to a talk at Eastham '77; first published in the June 1977 issue of Morgan, number 14.



Richard Zancroft. 1977.

Vector

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58: Jan/Mar 1976: Exhibitor Science Fiction

59: Jan/Feb 1977: Alternative Technologies

60: March/April 1977: A Grog To the Dapir

61: May/June 1977: Jargonised - A Child's

KEY TO BACK COVER PHOTOGRAPHS FROM "STAR WARS"

(All STAR WARS photographs Copyright © 1977 20th Century-Fox Film Corp.)

Top left: Han Solo (Harrison Ford) settles into one of the main lower decks; he has just arrived on the planet Tatooine.

Middle left: An Imperial Star Destroyer, one of the enormous warships of the Galactic Empire. (Note the Imperial insignia on the hull.)

Bottom left: Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) is attacked by a Death Star.

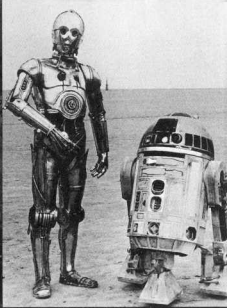
Top right: Chewbacca and Han Solo are seen on Owen Lars' farmstead on Tatooine.

Bottom right: Chewbacca, the hundred-year-old Wookiee, co-pilot of the Millennium Falcon, a Corellian star-ship.

Inside back cover, top: Darth Vader and his minions (also known as the Sith) battle with light-sabers on the Imperial Death Star.

Inside back cover, bottom: Governor Yoda's great-grandson, Yoda, is seen with the help of the enormous Death Star.

Front cover: Princess Leia Organa (Carrie Fisher) escapes herself against the Imperial attack aboard her Rebel blockade runner.



STAR WARS



