

B.S.F.A. Yearbook

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BSFA Chairman
Arthur C. Clarke

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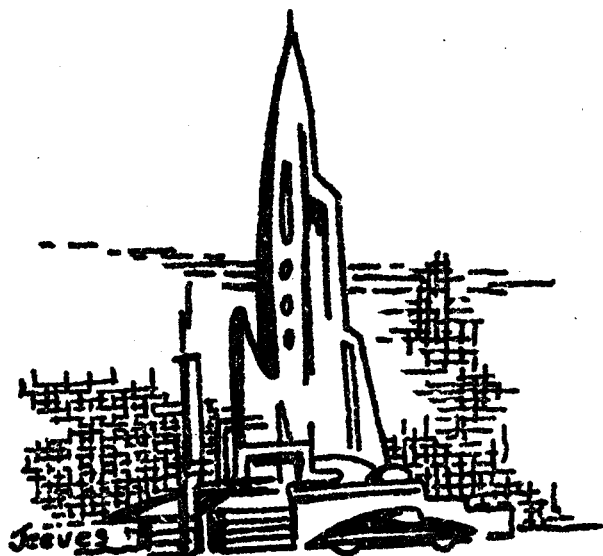
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Wrap-around cover by BRIAN LEWIS

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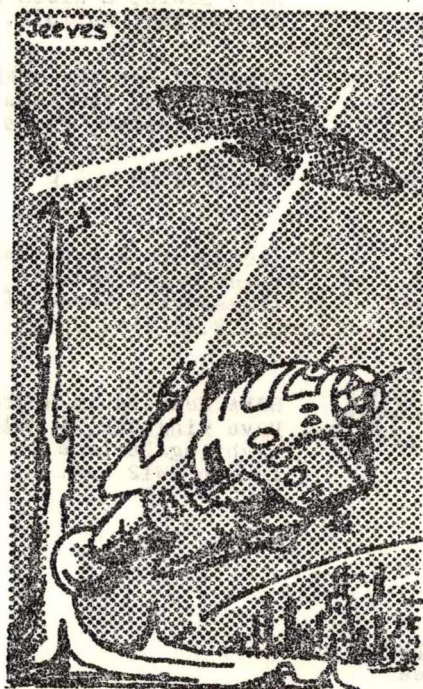
Centrespread - A VECTOR collection from Carol Gregory, Terry Jeeves, Paul Dillon

Photomontage by Sandy Brown - details are -

CHIP DELANY (Bristol '73) FRED POHL (Chester '72) JOHN BRUNNER (Chester '72)
JIM WHITE (M'chester '76) BRIAN ALDIS (M'c'le '74) JIM BLISH (M'c'er '76)
BOB SILVERBERG (M'c'er '76) BOB SHAW (M'chester '76)
DAVE KYLE (Bristol '73) HARRY HARRISON (M'c'er '76) LARRY NIVEN (Chester '72)

INTRODUCTION

David V.
Lewis



Well here is the 1977 BSFA Yearbook. Hopefully with a slightly wider scope than last year but still not perfect. Unfortunately I have not been able to include all the subjects I would have liked, mainly due to the fact I was not always able to track down a willing contributor with a knowledge of a particular subject.

I have certainly learnt a bit about editing the hard way. Much hair was removed from the Lewis cranium in trying to get the best I could.

I would like to thank those within and without the BSFA for their support plus much helpful advice given in the Friendly Tradition of Pandom. Particular thanks to Chris Fowler, Keith Freeman and Tom Jones for performing the mysterious rites of typing up and laying out (something I confess to knowing little about) and without whose expertise this tome would not now be in your hands.

I must not forget the contributors, some old hands, some new. Alison Lowe, with her first ever article, discusses the reinforcement of SF images by art and poetry. Paul Dillon gives an artist's impression of those in his chosen media. Phil Stephensen-Payne treats us to a quick romp through the myriad books published last year. The much acclaimed editor of MAYA looks at the Pandom scene in 1976. D. West turns his analytical eye to the year's crop of fanzines in his own typical style. Gra Poole reports on the celluloid capers of '76. Hartley Patterson gives an introduction to the new craze of SF and fantasy gaming, hopefully winning not a few converts to its delights. Brian Tawn and James Parker combine forces to give the definitive review of the year's Space Rock. Ian Carbutt looks at the year's output from the glass tent and hopes for better things in the

future. Roger Waddington skips rapidly through the SF magazines. Last but not least Bob Shaw is unleashed to give his own zany view of what 1976 did to him.

I hope our efforts have been worthwhile but only you, gentle reader, can be the judge of that so on with the show.....

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POETRY & ART



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In my short experience as an actual "fan" of science fiction, I have found that when you mention SF poetry to another fan, or when the subject is under discussion, the fan in question will immediately become disinterested or scornful. Most of them tell you there is no such thing as good SF poetry. Such, however, is not the case. I admit there is little good labelled SF poetry, and what there is of that is mostly confined to the odd pieces authors sometimes add to their novels. But there is a wealth of extremely good SF-orientated poetry around if only you know where to look for it. The trouble is, most people don't.

The reason I have found some of it is really due to lack of money. I was never able to afford both SF and poetry books, so the latter came from the library. I used to take home anything marked poetry, and in doing so, found a lot of SF-type poems in places I would never otherwise have seen them, had I been looking for them

specifically.

For instance POEMS OF THE SIXTIES edited by F. Finn contains some real gems, which ought to please even the most scornful of disbelievers. Take "Professor Tuholsky's Facts" by Christopher Logue - it deals with a professor lecturing to a class about a long dead species - Man, and he says of us;

Many admire human character,
But it was split - one half was called "male"
And did not want to think.
The other half was called "female"
In whom thinking was discouraged.

I certainly hope that is not how we're remembered, especially as I happen to be a member of "the other half".

Good poetry, like a good story, or a piece of art, should have the ability to conjure images in the reader's mind, images he will always be able to recall. SF poetry in particular should be able to do this, because it is not confined to the Earth as subject matter, is not obliged to conform to the laws of the universe as we know them. It can, like the SF story, wander where it will, in any time, in any galaxy; exploring the emotions of the people who find themselves on strange planets, speeding through space, or meeting aliens for the first time. However, all too often this is not the case, and SF poetry gets bogged down in long, obscure passages in blank verse, which I for one find very boring, and are for the most part incomprehensible. Some of the worst offenders, as far as I am concerned, are the "New Worlds" anthologies, which feature poems on a regular basis. I don't think I have ever enjoyed one, or understood one, and if this is all that most fans see, it's no wonder they are so scornful.

In contrast there is the type of verse Robert Heinlein writes in THE GREEN HILLS OF EARTH anthology, in which "Rhysling - Blind Singer of the Spaceways" gives us an example of what SF poetry may be like in the future. "Gawd 'elp us" I hear you mutter, but despite Heinlein's character being a purely romantic figure, guaranteed to get all we female fans sniffing, it does have a very evocative quality. It makes me picture the Earth as a spaceman might see it - "...the fleecy skies, and the cool green hills of Earth," is a phrase that easily brings a picture to anyone's mind. This is because Heinlein is writing about something we all understand, his poems rhyme and the content is easily understood. Heinlein also speaks of Mars in this anthology, and here we get a very strong image of the Grand Canal.

The trouble with most SF poetry, especially the "New Worlds" variety, is that its meanings are obscure - we don't know what the poet is talking about, he is not making images for our minds to hold, but rather is talking endlessly about comparisons, or so it seems to me. Our minds will always remember pictures better than words, so it stands to reason that a poem which evokes strong images, such as Heinlein's, will be remembered better than a long rambling comparison between the sun and an egg yolk (as in one poem I read recently).

I'm not saying all poems should be written in rhyme, some very good ones have been done in blank verse, but to be successful they must make the pictures appear in our minds, without this quality they will soon be forgotten.

A good blank verse poem is "Your attention please" by Peter Porter, again from POEMS OF THE SIXTIES. This brings out very strong images. It takes the form of a radio and TV broadcast to the citizens of an un-named city, warning them that the enemy has just launched a nuclear attack. It gives instructions concerning the old and

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infirm, pets, and what to do if the oxygen runs out before the all-clear goes. It ends -

All flags are flying fully dressed
On Government buildings - the sun is shining -
Death is the last thing we have to fear.
We are all in the hands of God,
Whatever happens, happens by his will -
Now go quickly to your shelters.

I found this poem chilling, mainly because it could so easily happen, but also because the picture I have of a deserted city, flags flying in the breeze, just waiting for the bombs to drop, is a very strong one and has remained with me.

There are numerous poems I could mention from the same book, and from other sources, all of which would prove that unlabelled SF poetry is generally better than that which is labelled. For instance LIMBO by D.M. Thomas, which could have been taken from Godwin's THE COLD EQUATIONS, or BEDTIME STORY by George Macbeth, which tells of the Earth in the far future where insects are the rulers and a mother is telling her children how the last man was accidentally killed; but the list would take too long.

Good poetry, like good artwork, should start your mind extrapolating from the base that is the poem, or picture. I like SF art because it does this. Although it may be the initial impact of the picture that attracts me I can always imagine other images from it, as if it were a story or had come to life. No other form of art does this for me.

There has recently been a sharp increase in the number of books available on the subject of SF art, some worthy of merit, some not. I recently saw a book composed entirely of artwork from SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY, and costing a pretty penny too. But I do think that SFM may have helped to spark off this sudden upsurge of interest in SF art, after all it was widely acknowledged that the only reason for buying it was the artwork. Despite its other faults it did offer a fine selection of artwork, including Roger Dean's work and a readers' painting competition.

If it is the history of SF art that interests you there are plenty of books on that subject, too, such as SCIENCE-FICTION ART by Brian Aldiss. This traces the development of the art from the early pulp covers up to the present day SFM (the book is published by NEL).

Although I am fond of modern SF art I don't think it will ever have the fascination for me that the old magazine covers do. I am too young to have been able to read the pulps, but the cover artwork, though crude at times, and laughable at others, represented the feeling of the times - the naivete, the enthusiasm, and the reason why respectable people kept them inside newspapers to read them.

Aldiss' book also contains a section entitled "Great Comic Strips" featuring Flash Gordon - who first introduced me to science fiction - Buck Rogers and Superman. Maybe the rash of books ties in with the general feeling of nostalgia that seems to be so prevalent nowadays. The future is uncertain so people seem to be turning to the past when it seems things were so much simpler. It was with a wistful eye that I glanced over the Flash Gordon strip, remembering the pleasure I had when reading it the first time, when I was younger and things were uncomplicated by such barriers as the speed of light.

This is the appeal of the old magazines, anything could and did happen, regardless of natural laws. Nowadays authors are more concerned with feasibility than wonder. The covers of the magazines

So far I have discussed SF/Fantasy art in terms of the Mancon art show, book covers and art books, but there are other places one can see it. LP sleeves for example. There is some amazing artwork turning up in the record store, in many cases the artist is given a freer reign than when working for a book publisher and this fact alone explains the freshness of many of the styles. Older SF fans and those of a classical musical leaning who normally avoid the popular music racks in their local record shop might give themselves a pleasant surprise if they spend an odd half hour flicking through the sleeves. Probably the best album sleeve of the year, and certainly one of the best series of fantasy illustrations I have seen for a long while, appears on the sleeve of an LP by Jon Anderson (of YES fame) on Atlantic Records (K50261), this artwork is credited to Dave Roe, a new name to me but one I hope to see more of in 1977, the LP by the way is titled OLIVAS OF SUNHILLOW. Another painting on a fantasy theme well worth a look is the sleeve to Justin Hayward and John Lodge's BLUE JAYS (Threshold Records THS12) by Phil Travers (these are just two covers among many worth seeing).

The saddest news of '76 was undoubtedly the tragic and pointless death of Vaughn Bode. Bode actually died in July 1975 but the news did not seep through to this country till the summer of '76. Vaughn Bode will probably be best remembered in SF circles for the Sun Pot cartoon strip that ran for a few issues in GALAXY during 1970 until the editor, worried by the earthiness of the language used by some of the characters, forced Bode to kill his creation. Bode was a cult figure in the American underground before his death and is still held in reverence by millions of devoted fans but he never caught on in this country. But such is the nature of things that I have no doubt "Cheech Wizard", "Dr. Electric", "Belinda Pump", the lizards and all the rest will one day be as well known on both sides of the Atlantic as Batman, Superman and all the other familiar comic characters are today.

Another cartoonist who died in '76 was Frank Bellamy, whose Garth strip ran for many years in the DAILY MIRROR. I was never over impressed by this strip, the drawing was always beautiful but the story line often left a lot to be desired (this, of course, was no fault of Frank Bellamy's). Probably my favourite Bellamy illustrations in the SF vion were the black and whites he did featuring Doctor Who for the BBC publications and the "Radio Times".

As the long, hot summer passed and the temperature and inflation got higher it was becoming obvious to me that being a professional artist was not as much fun as I'd hoped it would be. The buying power of my wages from the part time job had fallen dramatically and the freelance work I had confidently expected was not forthcoming. In desperation I tried many things even forgetting integrity and painting wildlife pictures, but this left me no time to work on SF - I realised sadly it had to end. By November I was looking for a job in earnest, money being so short I had to give Novacon a miss, so I'm afraid I cannot report on the art show there. Eventually in January of this year I managed to find a job managing a gas appliance retail shop, when things are quiet I can be found furtively scribbling on the back of brochures, price tickets, etc...just goes to show, as someone said; "Art for Art's sake - Money for God's sake".

See you around.

compensate for the decline in quantity. Dave Dave Griffiths, John Mottershead, Andrew Stephensen, Terry Jeeves, Carol Gregory, Edward Blair-Wilkins and Jim Cawthorne also presented work. Chris Fowler, editor of the BSFA's VECTOR, staged a VECTOR art show featuring artists who had appeared in that journal during 1975/76. This was a further example of the good work Mr. Fowler is doing for amateur SF art in the UK - keep up the good work, Chris.

All in all a very exciting and entertaining art show, congratulations and thanks are due to the unsung hero who was in charge of it all - John Mottershead. My one complaint about the show was the marked absence of some of the big names in British SF art; Chris Foss, Bruce Pennington, Peter Jones, Tim White, Patrick Woodruff and David Hardy to name but a few. I know that with the exception of David Hardy (who showed work at Seacon and the '76 Novacon) none of these names are active in fandom or for that matter are regular convention attendees, but recent events in Durham have shown how keen these people are to exhibit.

During the summer of 1975 I met the curator of the Durham Light Infantry Museum (an unlikely but successful combination of art gallery, art centre and military museum). The curator, a Miss Johnson, was interested in seeing some of my work with the view to a possible exhibition. I duly took some along and met the assistant curator Dennis Hardingham. Dennis I found was an SF collector, with a wide knowledge of the subject, and he was very keen to show some SF artwork at the museum. So keen, in fact, that he began to pick my brain on SF artists and how best to contact them, so now, apart from my small exhibition which should be staged in the late Spring of '77, the main summer exhibition which will fill the two main galleries is to be an exhibition of the work of current SF artists. At the time of writing Dennis has had definite promises of work from most of the professional British artists including the names I mentioned as being absent from Muncion. Perhaps future convention committees should take note!

Anyone interested in this exhibition, due to be staged in the summer of 1977, which will be the most comprehensive showing of professional SF/Fantasy artwork ever staged in the North East (if not the whole country) should contact Dennis Hardingham at the D.L.I. Museum & Arts Centre, Aykley Heads, Durham, telephone Durham 2214.

No comment on 1976 would be complete without mentioning one boom in coffee table books of the SF art variety, you know the kind of thing I mean, 100 YEARS OF SCIENCE FICTION ILLUSTRATIONS by Antony Frewin, Brian Aldiss' SCIENCE FICTION ART, etc, etc. I am of the opinion that although this thing started reasonably it has since got slightly out of hand. The artistic value of most pulp covers, even in full colour, is debateable, in black and white (and by that I mean half tone reproductions of colour artwork not black and white line illustrations) there is often no justification for printing them, especially when there are so many good artists working today.

There are, of course, exceptions to this, pictures by Finlay, Sharp, Edd Cartier and Paul are usually worth looking at. But I would rather see their work presented in the format that Frazetta's work was in THE FANTASTIC ART OF FRANK FRAZETTA (Peacock/Bantam) or the way Roger Dean was presented in VIEWS (Dragons Dream/Big O). In both these books one is given a biography of the man, detailing career and influences together with a comprehensive selection of the artist's work. By all means let a big name author write the introduction, but let's give the artist's name a bigger type-face on the cover.

is something that may be developed but is more commonly founded upon the example of others. I take every opportunity I can to examine the technique of other artists, even those whose style I hate. This is one way an artist develops. So the next time you condemn an artist for plagiarism consider first the ideas portrayed in the picture, if they differ from those of the artist you consider he is emulating then there may be some justification for the picture. The final word in this argument always rests with the artist, if they are happy with the picture then they will continue whatever we may say to them.

To return to the art show and Pauline Jones. She showed some very nice works, two over which, at least, have since appeared as book covers, *THE VENUS FACTOR* (NEL) and *DYING INSIDE* (Sedgwick & Jackson). Pauline is far from being my favourite SF artist but I am pleased to note an amazing improvement in her technique from the work she showed at Seacon. My main criticism of her work is the subject matter, the cover of *DYING INSIDE* is an example of what I mean; the man's face is almost technically faultless but the picture considered as a whole is hardly breath-taking in concept.

Brian Lewis was much in evidence and I am more than glad to see him more actively involved in the British SF art movement. He showed some very nice paintings, including the covers for numbers two and three of *THE HOUSE OF HAMMER*, and also a black and white interior strip from the same. What can I say apart from that he is probably one of the best British artists working at the moment. He seems able to turn his hand with equal expertise from hard SF to fantasy or horror, I even liked the two strips he did for "Super Wernet's dental fixative" that appeared last summer in the *DAILY MIRROR*. I trust that the inspiration for these was not found at Mancon where Brian suffered from toothache over the whole weekend.

David Pelham is a name that might not mean a lot to the man in the street, I must admit it is a name I was unfamiliar with before Mancon. David paints pictures more surreal than SF or fantasy. For this reason his work seems a little out of place in an art show at a science fiction convention but as he made an effort to show his work I was glad to see it there. Personally I find his theme of chunks of machinery, flying fortresses, tanks, cars, etc, half submerged in a featureless landscape just a little dry for my taste, but I do admire his draftsmanship and precision.

Another surrealist showing work at Mancon was the Karel Tholl, his illustrations have featured on the front of British and continental paperbacks for many years. In a conversation conducted in the early hours of the Monday morning this very congenial artist explained at great length his influences and ambitions, alas I made no record of our conversation and much of it I have now forgotten. But one thing he did tell me, he reads very little SF, being too busy working to read (I know what he means). Where a book cover called for an illustration depicting the theme of the book or a particular incident from it, the publishers oblige by selecting the relevant passage or sending a brief synopsis.

Josh Kirby continues to be one of the most imaginative of our British SF artists, my favourite pictures of his on show at Mancon were the portraits of Alfred Hitchcock. Among the other artists showing work were many of the hopeful relative newcomers, Eainne Cook, whose tight, precise black and white illos, usually on a fantasy theme, appear from time to time in *VECTOR*. Paul Ryan still continues to turn out material at an alarming rate, as I have told him many times if he took it a little slower and put a bit more precision into his work the improvement in quality would more than

evidently as prolific as ever. Eddie is one of the few pros with a genuine interest in fandom and I like his work. His style is perhaps more basic than say that of Tim White or Chris Foss, but is improving and what he lacks in technique he makes up for in interesting settings. Eddie makes no bones about the fact that he is painting for a living and this often shows through in his work.

Like a great many British (and American) SF artists Eddie tends to paint book covers rather than serious works of art. But it is no fault of the artist that they are forced to earn their living this way. Until the British public (including a great many fans who should know better) are prepared to recognise SF and Fantasy art as a serious art form, and are prepared to pay realistic prices for paintings and drawings we shall be forced to put up with production line techniques and the dictatorial whims of publishers. I am pleased to see that attitudes in the States are better, people recognise the value of SF art and are prepared to pay for it. In my mind this goes a long way to explaining why, at the moment, America leads the world in this field.

Jones is a name that seems to turn up time and time again in SF and Fantasy art. Apart from our own Eddie we have George, Peter, Pauline and Stateside of course Jeff. I have not yet had the good fortune to see an original Peter or Jeff Jones, but George and Pauline both showed work at Mancon. The similarities in the work of Eddie Jones and George Jones have led a great many to believe that George is in fact Eddie under a different guise. I can inform you that this is not so, George does exist and is an artist in his own right. The reason for the similarity in technique is that George is being coached by Eddie (or so I am told, I have no proof of this). To the trained eye the differences are there to see. George paints very tight, precise pictures, usually more quaint than inspiring, with the subject matter leaning towards the geology of the cosmos rather than the hardware that one day will be floating around in it. George has talent and once he begins to use it to better effect than emulating his mentor he may become more than a painter of barren, rocky landscapes.

This question of originality in art is a vexed one and often leads to misunderstanding and arguments. The two words style and technique are often used to mean the same thing. In the broadest definition I suppose they do but I prefer to think of an artist's style as meaning the subject matter of his work. For example the style of Chris Foss leans towards the hardware of the transport of the future, people or any organic matter seldom feature in his work and when they do they are usually secondary to his main theme. On the other hand Frank Frazetta is based more in fantasy than hard SF and the subjects of his work are more noticeably organic, usually human or near human. This is what I understand as style. On the other hand technique is the method by which the artist builds his picture, whether he works in inks, gouache, acrylics, oils or anything else, whether he uses soft or hard lighting. The easiest way to understand the different roles of style and technique is to look upon style as setting the scene and technique as catching the mood. What bearing has this on the argument about originality? I believe style is something that is sacred to the artist who develops it and any artist who deliberately sets out to capture the style of another, ie copying ideas, designs, etc, is unlikely to win my admiration. Technique, however, is common to all artists, original techniques are a rarer commodity than original styles, especially if the aim of the artist is to capture realism, ie to make the subject portrayed as convincingly real as possible. Style is something that should be developed by the artist, technique

reflect this. They are, in their way, more fantastic than any present day ones, because they represent a way of thinking. People bought the magazine because of the covers - who could resist the copy of ASTOUNDING with "Skylark Smith" straddling the front cover, lens shining, an expression of grim determination on his face? Today's covers though technically better don't have that feeling of wonder.

The one modern artist who comes near to making me feel this "sense of wonder" is Roger Dean with his strange and mysterious world. One of his paintings that particularly appeals to me is the skeleton on the block of ice, a spinal extension, like a stiff tail, forming a tripod with the legs - a sort of built in shooting stick. Ideas like this serve to make his artwork both haunting and elusive - I can never put my finger on the exact thing that appeals to me. Dean's work is much more sophisticated than the old pulp covers, he has advanced techniques at his fingertips, and he is not drawing simply to fascinate, but even though they are separated by such a gap the two forms of art have the same ability to make me daydream and wonder.

Both SF art and poetry have a very wide field with which to play - just as SF itself has. If executed properly the SF poem can create images that will stay with a person forever, and SF art can complement this by putting those images on paper.

Both poetry and art are an integral part of SF and as such I hope to see more and better examples of them in the future.



THE ARTIST'S YEAR

Paul Dillon

Personally speaking '76 was an interesting and formative year. It was my first as a commercial artist and, as it turned out, my last also, not perhaps for ever but certainly for the foreseeable future.

In December 1975 I managed to get a job, which for any one of the countless thousands of unemployed in the North East is a pretty formidable achievement. The job itself did not amount to all that much, two or three days a week designing letterheads, forms, posters, etc, with the odd bit of draughtsmanship thrown in. But I looked upon it as the first faltering step on the road to becoming a professional artist which was (and still is) my only ambition. But the regular pay from the job kept me in bread and butter (although it rarely spread to jam).

With my spare time I did freelance work and the occasional commission, what time being left was spent working for various fanzines, including VECTOR, TRIODE and O'RYAN. If I might sidetrack at this point, while talking about fanzines I would like to apologise to all fanzine editors who have received promises of work from me and have since heard nothing but silence. The reasons for delay are many, but the main one, as always, is lack of time. It may take me up to a week to finish a drawing, sometimes longer. Not that the actual drawing takes a week but I have a job to do and I do take the occasional evening off though as my one-day-to-be-better-half will tell you most evenings I am to be found working at the drawing board.

The problem is I have a high failure rate. It is not unusual for me to scrap a drawing half way through, after ten to fifteen hours of work. I have quite a large collection of such failed ideas; some are restarted with an altered composition or a different approach to style, others are shelved for later use and some are kept as reminders never to make similar mistakes. This may seem a tedious waste of time to some people but the better I become the fewer mistakes I make, so one day perhaps I'll achieve a level of competence that will allow me to complete everything I start. When this happens fanzine editors may receive more frequent illos. To return to the early part of '76, the part-time job at first worked quite well and I even managed to save enough to get to Mancon...

The convention itself has been much reported, so I'll spare you any lengthy views on the accommodation, etc, though being Spartan by nature and always broke I found the "cut rate and rough it" con more agreeable than paying through the nose at some over-rated hotel). The chroniclers of the '76 con as always gave scant coverage to the Artshow, which was the most impressive I have seen to date. There was work on show from most of the familiar names and some newcomers.

Eddie Jones, of course, made his customary appearance and is

ART FOR ARTS SAKE



A SHORT REVIEW OF '76

by Paul Dillon

S.F. in Sackville Street

BRIAN OUZMAN, WHO IS NOW RUNNING THE SCIENCE FICTION "SHOP WITHIN A SHOP" IN THE BASMENT OF NUMBER THIRTY SACKVILLE STREET, WRITES AS FOLLOWS:-

In August 1976 there opened in Sackville Street, London's first broad-based spectrum Science Fiction bookshop, The Einstein Intersection. In February, 1977, Sophos Press are publishing Richard Kirby's 'The Significance of Science Fiction'. We would like to say something about the implications for readers, authors and booksellers alike of these two events.

That Science Fiction is an expanding genre is hardly news, as a glance at the monthly lists of books published under this heading will show. What is perhaps not so widely realised is the spreadover from the paperback field into rare books, academic literature, art-work, manuscripts, monographs, bibliographies, microfilm material and privately published journals, and related non-fiction of many kinds. It is to meet the need for those seeking to find these latter will set out in one place that the Einstein Intersection has been set up--for that, and to meet another need, that for an information centre and meeting place for Science Fiction authors, critics and readers. Our first book lunching--for Brian Ashe's 'Who's Who in S/F' is now being programmed and Richard Kirby's 'The History' also comes under the heading of a coming event.

Though there have, of course, been many studies of this genre--mostly of American origin--Kirby's book will undoubtedly be the most thorough and authoritative to come from the United Kingdom, covering not only the purely literary aspects of the subject, but also its relevance in terms of myth, science, religion and sociology, set out by, among others, Brian Aldiss, Christopher Evans, Colin Wilson, Stanley Gooch etc., and including a bibliography and a list of world organisations devoted to the study of the subject. The work will be launched next year at the Einstein Intersection.

So much for our news. What we would like to receive from you are your views on any aspects of science fiction that you feel we are likely to have neglected. Overseas literature? U.S. critics such as Sam Moskowitz are either represented by their works, or only available from their American publishing houses via the U.S. post. Within the next couple of months a wide variety of Continental S.F. will be on sale. Details of such relevant organisations as the H.G. Wells Society, ESA 2 (the European Space Organisation) are on hand, and preparations for a Display of Artwork by leading S.F. artists are under way. Connoisseurs of Victorian and Edwardian S.F. can browse to their heart's content, as can aficionados of the early pulp magazines. Still, we may well have forgotten something--whatever it is, will you please let us know? A total service for the field is what we aim to supply and the sooner we achieve this, the better we can fulfil your needs.

The latest item of news for inclusion in this letter concerns the fact that one of London's most respected publishers of Fantasy and Science Fiction in the independent field--FERRET FANTASY--will have on sale at the Einstein Intersection its own selection of a large and diverse field of secondhand hard-cover books both ancient and modern, together with a selection of detective and mystery fiction and an area for more general items such as 'three-decker' novels.

Thank you for your interest and attention to our venture so far--and do come and visit us.

BRIAN OUZMAN GEORGE LOCKE GEORGE HAY JOHN EGLING

VISIT

THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION FOR

STANDARD WORKS OF SCIENCE FICTION

HORROR

GHOST STORIES

FANTASY

CHILDREN'S FANTASY BOOKS

MAGAZINES

S.F. CRITICAL WORKS

COLLECTORS' ITEMS

ETC. ETC. ETC.

MAYA TELL YOU ABOUT



.... all sorts of things!

In the advert for Maya in last year's SF Yearbook I described it as a magazine of wide-ranging interest to sf readers and fans. That's even more true this year than last. Contents of recent issues (all still available) have included:

Maya 10: Cover by David Hardy; "Income Taxi" by Bob Shaw; "A Real Taste of Being" by Doug Barbour; letters from Ted Tubb, Peter Weston, Chris Priest, David Hardy, Arthur Clarke; and other features.

Maya 11: "Slice of Life": Peter Weston's moving account of his first meeting with other sf fans; "The Revenant":

Walt Willis's account of his first sf con-

vention in 10 years; "The Return of the Backyard Spaceship": the original publication of Bob Shaw's hilarious Mancon speech, with illustrations by the brilliant Jim Barker; "Con Press": Tom Perry's biting look at how to improve the public image of sf conventions; plus letters by Brian Aldiss, Darrell Schweitzer, Ursula Le Guin, Bob Shaw, Bill Harry, Gregory Benford, Dicky Howett; cover by Harry Bell.

Maya 12/13: "How Not to be a Writer":

Leroy Kettle's fascinating, hilarious, yet cautionary tale; "A Bit of Smut for the Bourgeoisie": Christopher Priest reviews David Kyle's Pictorial History of Science Fiction; "The View from Titan" by Gregory Benford; fanzines reviewed by Malcolm Edwards; "Slice of Life": Peter Weston's controversial look at the life and times of Charles Platt and others; plus letters by Chris Priest, Mike Glicksohn, Martin Ricketts, Doug Barbour; stunning cover by David Higgins.

Maya 14 (forthcoming): Special Britain in '79

Issue: "The British Contribution to Science Fiction": new essay by Brian Aldiss; Gene Wolfe on British people he has known; plus Bob Shaw, Peter Weston, Mike Glicksohn and letters by Mike Moorcock, Brian Aldiss, David Kyle, and many others.

Maya has now been voted the best British fanzine three times: it is twice winner of the Nova Award, and won last year's Checkpoint poll. It has also received accolades like: "I'm not the only reader who believes that, in just a year, Rob Jackson has turned Maya into a Hugo-quality fanzine." (Susan Wood, Algol) and "No. 11 is, in my never-humble opinion, the Best Single Issue of the Year for 1976, and I intend to vote it that way on next year's FAAn Awards... Extremely well-designed, superbly illustrated and brilliantly written... I can't recommend Maya too highly." (Mike Glicksohn writing in Title).

For three issues of Maya send £1.00 to the Editor, Robert Jackson, 71 King John St., Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 5XR. Or send 40p for a sample copy. Also available for letter of comment, contribution or your own magazine in trade; details of U.S. and Australian Agents and rates available on request.



The TOLKIEN SOCIETY

The Tolkien Society was formed in 1969 to provide a focal point for the many people interested in the works of Professor J R R Tolkien, and most especially in **THE HOBBIT** and his epic **THE LORD OF THE RINGS**. Membership is now worldwide, and growing fast.

The Society issues a bulletin, **AMON HEN**, containing news, short articles, book reviews and members' letters; longer articles, book reviews and illustrations go to make up the content of **MALLORN**, our journal, and pamphlets are also published from time to time on some aspects of Tolkien's world. In addition, we maintain a Library for members, containing books (mainly paperback) by or about Tolkien and allied Fantasy writers, and publications from Societies with whom we have contact: Mythopoeic Society, American Tolkien Society, British Fantasy Society and the Lewis Carroll Society.


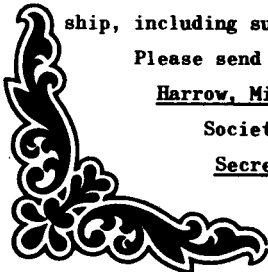
In June 1972 Professor Tolkien honoured us by agreeing to become our Honorary President, offering any help he was able to give. Since his much regretted death he remains our Honorary President 'in perpetuo', at the suggestion of his family, with whom we continue to enjoy friendly relations. We also maintain close contacts with his publishers, George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Each year at least 2 national meetings are organised: the AGM and Dinner, and 'Oxonmoot' - a weekend in Oxford, spent visiting places of interest to the Society. The London group also meet on the first Saturday of each month at the Carpenter's Arms, Whitfield St, W1 (near Tottenham Court Road).

Annual subscription currently (Jan 1977) stands at £2.50 (\$6 US, \$4.50 Aus) which covers all regular Society publications issued during the year of membership, including surface postage. Airmail sub. rates are \$12 US and \$10 Aus.

Please send subscriptions to The Membership Secretary, 11 Regal Way, Harrow, Middx, England, with cheques etc payable to 'The Tolkien Society'. General enquiries should be addressed to The Secretary, 110 Breakspears Rd, London SE4 1UD England.

Please enclose SAE.



just had to have a bigger house where I could have a proper place in which to work. There followed some weeks of all that nausea associated with house-hunting, which is very distracting for a writer, during which the BBC came along and made a short film about me for "Look North". This was flattering, but I desperately needed to be left alone so that I could write - and all kinds of weird things kept happening

For example, one morning I was sitting in my little office, determined not to let anything swerve me from my appointed course, when I heard this booming, growling sound, rather like somebody trying to start a motor cycle inside an echo chamber. My neighbour had just bought himself a moped, so I tried to ignore the sound, but it got louder and louder, and closer and closer, and finally I had to accept the astonishing fact that it was coming from above.

I dashed out of my office and looked up in the air, and found myself staring - at a range of only a few yards - into the anxious face of a hot air balloonist who was desperately trying to give his contraption enough lift to get it safely over my house.

Following in his slipstream, if balloons have slipstreams, was yet another huge balloon which was beautifully painted with a scene showing ancient Greek philosophers strolling on the steps of a temple. The science fantasy associations of this sight were reinforced when I saw a whole line of balloons drifting in from the direction of Morecambe Bay, all losing lift, and proceeding to settle down behind the roofs, chimneys and TV aerials all over my little section of sunlit suburbia. The scene was pure early Bradbury.

I tell you, when a writer gets that sort of interruption he begins to feel that the persona from Porlock are gunning for him in earnest.

Struggling manfully onwards, I finished MEDUSA'S CHILDREN, bought a nice roomy old house which needed an awful lot of work done to it, moved in and got down to work on the next book, my first ever "comic" novel, which is entitled WHO GOES HERE? A nice thing which happened around then, in the autumn, was that I got word that ORKITSVILLE had received a John W. Campbell Memorial Award. Also the BBC broadcast my "Light of Other Days" as the morning story on Radio 4, but the backbreaking work on the house dominated everything else for week after week. Keith Freeman tells me he is thinking of calling his new place Voltmeter, because everybody who sees it says it has a lot of potential - well, I'm thinking of calling mine Dramatis Personae, because it is so full of character.

This charming phrase, "full of character", can be loosely translated as meaning, "If you don't work your guts out the place will fall down around you". But by Christmas I had broken the back of the job - in the process, almost doing the same thing to myself - and the year drew fairly peacefully to a close. My birthday falls on New Year's Eve (so do I sometimes) and I celebrated it with some good friends during a visit to Dave and Ruth Kyle's home at Weybridge.

All in all, 1976 was a memorable year. I'm just pleased that I managed to make it into 1977.

— Payne Stephensen



1976 was again a good year for SF, particularly in British paperback, despite inflation pushing the prices up to 80-90p by the end of the year. There were cutbacks in the hardback market as prices of £3 - £4 had an adverse effect on sales and more and more books went straight into paperback publication.

Despite this, one hardback firm did show signs of expansion - Millington, who announced that they were planning to publish all of Harlan Ellison's books in Britain and have already published a half dozen titles in the series, as well as a handful of other SF. Eyre Methuen, who had just settled into the hardback market, launched into SF paperbacks in 1976, producing - as previously with their hardbacks - a small number of high quality books. Also new on the paperback scene was Star Books, an imprint of "Howard & Wyndham's", who also published only a handful of fairly good books (eg Russ's *PICNIC ON PARADISE*, Trout's *VENUS ON THE HALF SHELL* and Moorcock's *BEFORE ARMAGEDDON*).

Among the established paperback publishers Futura/Orbit continued the climb they had begun in 1975 and were soon well established as the British leaders in the field. Their list of authors expanded in every subgenre - Robert Howard, Michael Moorcock, Harry Harrison, Joe Haldeman, Star Trek... - and were in a position in November to celebrate their second anniversary with a vast publicity campaign

of exhibitions, author signings and the publication of books like *THE NOTE IN GOD'S EYE* and *HELL'S CARTOGRAPHERS*. The first of their original anthology series, *ANDROMEDA*, proved a great success, as did their arrangement to distribute choice Ballantine titles in the UK, and early in the year they even managed to publish the Awards winner for 1976 long before the awards were announced.

Quartet faded from the scene in 1976, particularly when Futura took over the distribution of their paperbacks under the Orbit imprint. For a while it looked as though the long standing Sphere Books would also fade into oblivion. From early in the year they were seen to be struggling more and more, and by July were mainly publishing old H.G. Wells and other reprints, while several of their stock titles (such as the Harrison/Aldiss *YEAR'S BEST*) began to appear from other publishers. By the end of the year they were showing some signs of recovery, but had fallen far from their former glory.

Coronet again showed the same slow improvement through the year, and announced that Silverberg would be on their list in 1977. The other British paperback publishers continued much the same policy as ever, the one new venture - the NEL "Master SF" series - turning out rather a damp squib.

During 1976 the series novels seemed even more pervasive than before on both sides of the Atlantic. Perry Rhodan passed the 100 mark in the USA (Ace) whilst reaching 20 here (Orbit) and the indefatigable Doc Savage reached volume 83 (Bantam) followed, surprisingly, by Dr. Who who has reached number 26 (Target). NEL alone started off 3 new series in 1976 - Satan Slente (?), Spider (4) and P.A.P.E./Cap Kennedy (6) - although it seems to have dropped the erstwhile (?) book. Orbit continued the Perry Rhodan and Space 1999 series, but, thankfully, not the Callisto or Scorpio ones.

The nostalgia craze that had swept the genre in 1975 suffered some setbacks in 1976. Avon's "Equinox" series began to falter and, towards the end of the year, died. Orbit's "Classic SF" series never got beyond the first volume (George Smith's *VENUS EQUILATERAL*) and the new "Master SF" series from NEL turned out to include several recent books (such as Harrison's *TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL*, *HUMAN!*). The general trend of reprinting earlier novels outside such specialist series continued apace, and 1976 saw the return of such old favourites as Piper's *LITTLE MUZZY* (Ace), Vance's *BLUE WORLD* (Mayflower), Leiber's *THE BIG FINE* (Orbit), Fredric Brown's *MARTIALS*, *GO HOME* (Ballantine) and Elish's masterpiece *MR. MIRABILIS* (Panther). H.G. Wells proved very popular in Britain with editions of *MEN LIKE GODS* (Sphere), *THE FOOD OF THE GODS* (Sphere), *THE WORLD SET FREE* (Corgi) and *A STORY OF THE DAYS TO COME* (Corgi) all appearing. The British market was also subjected to another spate of Robert E. Howard with the publication of *WORDS OF SHARAZAR* (Orbit), *LOST VALLEY OF ISKHANER* (Orbit), *WOMEN OF THE EARTH* (Orbit), *THE SKULL-FACE ORPHAN* (Panther) and *KING KULL* (Sphere) - all surprisingly not available in American paperback at the time although the output there stayed high with Zebra publishing *THE BOOK OF ROBERT E. HOWARD* and *THE SECOND BOOK OF ROBERT E. HOWARD* as well as several other volumes of less interest.

The *PUMP OF...* series continued to expand apace with editions now appearing from Ballantine, Pocket Books and Paperback Library in America and from Orbit, Sphere and Corgi in Britain, with no definite links between any of them. Among others were volumes from Anderson (Pocket Books), Harrison (Orbit), Hamilton (Ballantine), Forbush (Ballantine), Campbell (Sphere), Pohl (Orbit), Leinster (Corgi), Leight (Paperback Library), Vance (Paperback Library) and Silverberg (Paperback Library). As usual the interpretation of the

More frantic speculation... Has he reached retirement age and gone home? Have they, in the time it took him to go the length of the street, built a new by-pass and shunted him into the next town? Has he died? Is he in bed with Mrs Arbuthnot on No. 39?

Then there are the awful mornings when you're sure you're going to get some goodies in the post, and the mailman blithely walks on without delivering anything. I usually convince myself he has made a mistake during that complicated shuffling process they all go through, and that he'll turn back when he finds my letter. One morning, about five years ago, this actually happened - thus "justifying" hundreds and hundreds of manhours spent at the window.

The first of the snags I was going to mention when I got sidetracked onto postmen was that I had just finished writing a novelette called "Skirmish on a Summer Morning" and was deciding what to do next, when I received a phone call from Amsterdam. It was from the PRO of Fokker Aircraft. He needed a glossy brochure for a jet airliner written in a hurry, and he wanted to know if I would fly to Amsterdam, stay for two or three days, and write the brochure on the spot. The money he offered was good, I'd never been to Holland before, and in late February the tulips should be sprouting - so I packed a bag and took a plane to Amsterdam the next day, looking forward to the change of climate and the change of pace.

I got both with a vengeance, as they say.

The climate was exactly like Siberia. The canals were frozen solid, with silent, lonely hooded skaters flitting along them like ghosts every night, and there was a thin freezing fog permanently blanketing the city. The place was covered with snow which was both old and dirty - a sure sign that one is in a hostile climate. I wrote the brochure and got back to England as quickly as I could, glad to be returning to the beta District's temperate weather.

The change of pace I had been anticipating actually constituted coming to a dead halt in my work, which I suppose is the most dramatic change of pace possible. My three days in Tulipville without snowshoes and a heated space suit had given me a kind of bronchial 'flu which laid me out for three weeks. My doctor very grudgingly gave me an insurance line for five days after extracting a vow that I, who could scarcely stand up, would not take advantage of the system by writing a book while I was being supported by the State.

Eventually, however, I got back to my typewriter - which had been languishing in the "office" I had constructed at the bottom end of my garage - and promptly discovered that the 'flu was a pernicious kind which lingers in the system and pounces again. Robust though I am, it knocked me over for another two weeks, allowed me to go back to work, and as a final gesture of defiance struck yet again, leaving me with a hacking cough which hurt the people who heard it almost as much as it hurt me.

Somehow, I managed to write a story called "Small World" for a Penguin collection George May is editing, and another called "Amphitheatre" for a book Chris Priest is editing for Faber, and stagger off to the Mancel. The nicest thing that happened there was that the BSFA, perhaps suspecting I was not long for this world, gave me an award for ORBITSVILLE.

Back home again I got down to work on a sort of way-out science fantasy called MEDUSA'S CHILDREN, but now - in that fierce summer of '76 - my garage office was too hot, and it came to me that I

disease, which is occupational among free-lance writers, manifests itself as an obsession with the morning post.

The sufferer's day begins with the trauma of receiving - or not receiving - the morning post. Being an author is a very satisfying business, but it's also extremely lonely, and the postal service is your main link with the outside world. It's quite amazing how neurotically dependent some authors (me included) are on the first delivery. Some of them (me included) find it very difficult to settle down to the day's work until we've had our mail. In fact, my very first thought on waking up each morning is, "Has the post arrived?" (Well, usually it's my first thought of the day - it depends on how much beer I have drunk the night before.) And as soon as I've had that thought I can't relax again until I've gone down to the hall and had a look. I think this is called being hounded from pillow to post.

I hate Sundays for lots of reasons, and one of the main ones is that there's no post that day. If we had any sense we'd abolish Sunday and have two Saturdays instead. No, that's not such a good idea - because there's only one postal delivery on Saturdays. An extra Friday would be better.

The neurosis over the morning post isn't helped by the fact that the service is becoming wildly erratic, and that today's postmen are an entirely different breed from what they used to be. Then I was a neofan the postman was a dependable, reliable figure who had been on the same beat for decades, and who always came around the same corner within a minute or two of the same time every day. They were dedicated professionals in those days. Now - where I live - we get a really weird selection of individuals, some of whom last only a week on the round. They don't even come from the same direction any more, which makes watching for the postman doubly difficult. They mustn't be made attend the same GPO Academy any more, because they all have different techniques.

You get the zigzagers, who weave up the street, trying to do both sides at once. You get the ones who try to work both sides of the street in sections, and whose motion is infuriatingly like that attributed by Wordsworth to the outer planets - "now progressive, now retrograde, now standing still." You also get the disappearing artists. Because the post is so important to me I don't like to stand at the window and gaze eagerly at the postman as he walks up the path to my door - that would be giving away too much about myself. So as soon as I see him half a dozen doors away I cower back out of sight and wait to hear the mail plopping into the hall.

But sometimes five minutes, ten minutes go by, and nothing happens!

I go to the window and look out... and there's no sign of him anywhere! What has happened? Has he fallen down a manhole? Is he in bed with Mrs Arbuthnot in No. 39? Or, more likely, is there an unsuspected rift in the space-time continuum just outside No. 37?

Worst of all are the slow disappearers - the sort, usually an elderly man, who comes very slowly and laboriously along the opposite side of a very long street, gradually passes out of sight in the distance, and you calculate it's going to take him an hour and a half to work his way back to you. So you dither around for that hour and a half, trying to convince yourself you're working, trying to convince your wife you're working, but you always manage to be standing near the front window at zero hour...and, again, nothing happens!

title BEST OF has varied from its grammatical meaning down to "Unpublished stories be".

Yet again the awards were marked by their uniformity. THE FOREVER WAR by Joe Haldeman (Orbit) won the Locus, Hugo, Nebula and Ditmar International awards. The John W. Campbell award was not given (instead a retroactive one was awarded to Wilson Tucker's YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN), the World Fantasy Award went to BID TIME RETURN by Richard Matheson and the new Futura Award for best SF published in Britain went, surprisingly, to Ian Watson's THE JONAH KIT (Gollancz). The runners-up for the awards were not so uniform, partly at least because of eligibility differences (INFERNO was a runner-up for the Hugo and ineligible for the Nebula for instance).

It is unfortunate that INFERNO by Niven and Pournelle (Pocket Books) was just eligible for the Hugo last year, as there were probably few voters who had read it. It certainly stands out as one of the best books of 1976, excelling their earlier NOTE IN GOD'S EYE and stands a good chance for the Nebula. In its absence the Hugo, and possibly the Nebula, could well go to Frank Herbert's CHILDREN OF DUNE (Gollancz). After the disappointing DUNE MESSIAH, this third volume was awaited with some trepidation but, fortunately, it proved to have much of the power and imagination of the original, together with some of Herbert's best writing. It would be unusual for the first and third volumes of a trilogy to win awards, but in this case it could be deserved. The third outstanding book from 1976, but one unlikely to win an award, was Brian Aldiss' MALACIA TAPESTRY (Jonathan Cape), an unusual novel about the imaginary, pseudo-Renaissance country of Malacia. Despite the superb writing, the book's dense style and unusual theme are unlikely to win it sufficient support.

As usual there is a handful of other books liable for nomination that might sneak past the winning post. One is Larry Niven's new solo novel A WORLD OUT OF TIME (Holt, Reinhart & Wilson), a very competent but unexceptional expansion of his novelette RAMMER. Robert Silverberg again churned out a disappointing novel, SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE (Random House), that is bound to accrue some votes despite its quality. It's possible that the ever increasing hordes of Marion Zimmer Bradley fans will vote her latest, and arguably best, Darkover novel THE SHATTERED CHAIN (DAW) into prominence, or that Chris Priest will persuade enough people that THE SPACE MACHINE (Faber) isn't just an inept Wells rewrite, but if so then the award structure is even shakier than was thought.

As last year, one might wish for an award for Best Collection. Two in particular stand out in 1976. Ursula LeGuin produced an original collection entitled ORSINIAN TALES (Harper & Row), a series of stories based in a mythical mid-European country, which has deservedly won high acclaim. Also Asimov finally produced a good collection of his stories, topically entitled THE BICENTENNIAL MAN, which contains most of his best recent fiction. British authors also had a field day, with long-awaited collections at last appearing from Moorcock - MOORCOCK'S BOOK OF MARTYRS (Orbit) - Ballard - LOW FLYING AIRCRAFT (Jonathan Cape) - Cowper - THE CUSTODIANS (Gollancz) - and Shaw - COSMIC KALEIDOSCOPE (Gollancz).

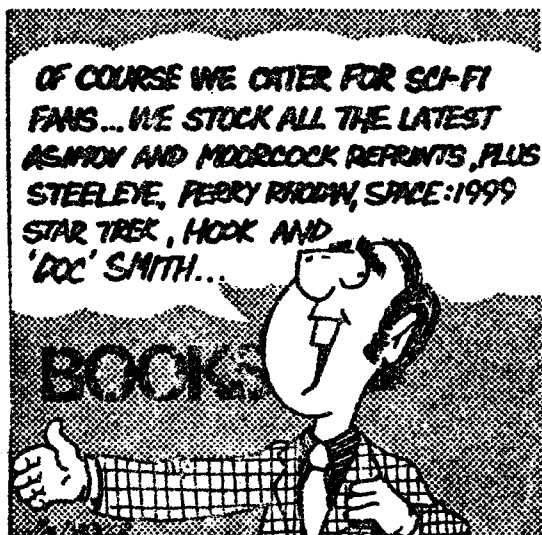
As always there was a good supply of good books that will never get near the awards, but are worth noting nevertheless. After several years of relatively low output, Piers Anthony published 3½ books in 1976. There was PHTHOK (Berkeley) a dense and interesting sequel to CHTHON, OX (Avon) a brilliant sequel to OMIVORE and ORN, as well as a curious novel about Genghis Khan, STEPPS (Millington)

and an above average collaboration with Robert Coulson in the Laser Books series called BUT WHAT OF EARTH?

Michael Moorcock was also very, but less surprisingly, prolific with the conclusion of his DANCERS AT THE END OF TIME trilogy, THE END OF ALL SONGS (Hart-Davis, MacGibbon) and a collection of novelettes in that series, LEGENDS FROM THE END OF TIME (W.H. Allen); the first of the rewritten Elric series, SAILOR ON THE SEAS OF FATE (Quartet), the conclusion (sic) of the Jerry Cornelius quartet, THE CONDITION OF MUZAK (Allison Busby), a bizarre unclassifiable novel called THE ADVENTURES OF CATHERINE CORNELIUS AND UNA PERSON IN THE 20TH CENTURY (Quartet) and a rock-SF novel, in collaboration with Michael Butterworth, THE TIME OF THE HAWKLORDS (Star).

Isaac Asimov produced an unexceptional - except for a few snide Asimov/Allison jokes - detective novel AUTHORIZED MURDER (Collanz) and Fred Pohl returned after a long absence with his rather disappointing MAW PLUS (Collanz). Roger Zelazny finally produced the 4th Amber book - HAND OF OBERON (Doubleday) - with promise of more to come, as well as a rather slight novel called BRIDGE OF ASHES (Signet). Other notable books included Simak's SHAKESPEARE'S PLANET (Putnam's), Harrison's SKYPALL (Faber) and Lloyd Biggle Jr's THIS DARKENING UNIVERSE (Doubleday).

Fantasy-lovers rejoiced at the appearance of Katherine Kurtz's CAMBER OF CHULUL (Ballantine), a new edition of the Deryni series, and Bradley's THE SPATTERED CHAIN (DAW) mentioned above. Anne McCaffrey released a juvenile in the Chronicles of Pern, DRAGONSONG (Sidgwick & Jackson) but gave no sign of producing the long awaited third adult novel in the series. She also produced a very good romantic novel, THE KILPERMAN LEGACY (Millington), as did Andre Norton, THE WHITE JADE FOX (Pawcett).



THE WRITER'S YEAR

47

Bob Shaw



1976 was a notable year for me as a science fiction writer, mainly because it was the first complete year of my life in which I was required to do nothing other than write science fiction for a living. After years of writing and holding down a full-time job as well, the prospect seemed one of luxurious, leissurely contentment. After all, in October and November of 1975 I had written a novel called WREATH OF STARS, attended the Novacon, spent the first two weeks of December typing the book out, enjoyed a Christmas break, and got myself mentally fighting fit to begin the next book on the first day of January, 1976.

I duly got down to work on the next book and things went quite well during January, but then the smogs began to crop up - just as I was beginning to get over a nasty spell of millingering. This

dominate another three issues with SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE. So went more than half the year! Ben Bova kept the magazine on a slow evolutionary course, printing stories and authors that JWC might not have entertained (though certainly he would have defended Bova's right to print them). Several of the old guard regulars made an appearance; Joseph Goodavage, Harry Stine, Norman Spinrad in the realms of factual science; George O. Smith, Randall Garrett (THE IPSWICH PHIAL - a new Lord D'Arcy story) and Christopher Anvil in the realms of fictional latter-day Campbellians (if, as I do, you regard the JWC ANALOG as a continuing presence, an ever present entity) in the shape of Bob Buckley, William Cochrane, Herbie Brennan (see his story in WOMAN'S OWN?) and Hayford Peirce - who with his tales of Chap Foey Rider (DOING WELL WHILE DOING GOOD, etc) seems to be taking that niche of story plus message plus entertainment that Christopher Anvil made so uniquely his own; together with writers who have inhabited the F&SF end of the spectrum until now, viz. C.L. Grant and Gordon Eklund (THE PRINCE IN METROPOLIS, EMBRYONIC DHARMA); so ANALOG at least has the means for survival.

And goodbye SF MONTHLY; or Whatever Happened to SF DIGEST? And was it such a great loss to SF? True, it did mean that we were without a true-blue British SF magazine for the first time since the inception of NEW WORLDS, but even traditions have to come to an end. It really aimed too high. It could have been one of the popular and short lived poster mags (and paid less VAT!) featuring TV shows and SF movies with the occasional one theme issue, instead it admirably decided to do that much more, and fell neatly between two stools. One the one hand the casual, basic reader who'd have been satisfied with something just this side of adulation for Dr. Who and Space 1999, and on the other the long established reader who grew up on a diet of thick, 160 page digest magazines with six stories and a serial, and to whom the poster pages were an expensive substitute for the stories! SF DIGEST was a scaled-down step in the right direction, but a step that came too late.

SFM's one great achievement was that it gave an impetus to the rediscovery of SF art in this country and from which we might yet see Chris Foss nominated for the Hugo!

+++++

(WARGAMES Continued)

SPI: Simulations Publications Inc.
 MC: Metagaming Concepts.
 AH: Avalon-Hill.
 P&F: Pact and Fantasy Games.
 TSR: Tactical Studies Rules.
 SP(UK): Crown Passages, Hale, Altringham, Cheshire...SPI's UK Agents.
 GAMES WORKSHOP: 97 Uxbridge Rd, London W12...TSR's UK Agents.
 CPT-15 HARVEY: 11 Woodside Way, Aldridge, W.Midlands...stocks most of the small companies' games.

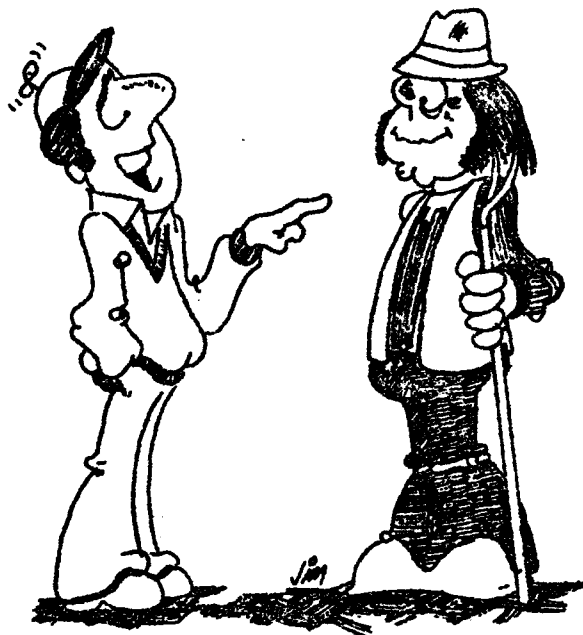
For miniatures check the latest issue of MILITARY MODELLING, in most good bookshops, for addresses. 20p to any of the above should bring their latest catalogue.

New authors did quite well in England in 1976. There were two new original anthologies, ANDROMEDA (Orbit) and SUPERNOVA (Faber), both of which contained several stories by "new" authors. Faber published Rob Holdstock's first SF novel, EYES AMONG THE BLIND, Panther began Stephen Goldin's continuation of Doc Smith's D'Alembert story with THE IMPERIAL STARS, and Orbit produced William Ellern's fairly competent sequel to the Lensman series, NEW LENSMAN, and there were a few others that have thankfully sunk without trace.

The major piece of non-fiction was Dave Kyle's PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SF (Hamlyn), which would have been more impressive three years ago before the flood. Peter Nicholls edited an interesting anthology of SF criticism, SCIENCE FICTION AT LARGE (Gollancz) and Mike Ashley published the third volume of his HISTORY OF THE SF MAGAZINES (NEL). The spate of art books subsided a little, although Orbit did produce a disappointing collection of Chris Foss' art and Ballantine a delightful book of early magazine covers with many by Frank R. Paul.

In all a prosperous, but unexceptional year. The gap between American and British publication is narrowing continually, and 1977 should see British paperback editions of many recent American books, particularly from Orbit, who now seems to be hitting their stride. The original paperback market seems likely to expand and we may well see more publishers producing paperback imprints to cut production costs.

"Not Solid Fertiliser, Science Fiction !!"





News from Bree

The fanzine of Science Fiction and Fantasy Games. Litho 8-12 pp with pretty pictures. Reviews of games, miniatures, magazines, fanzines, books, rules, etc. Currently about 50% D&D with new monsters, tricks and traps and general mayhem - would you believe D&D Rollerball? We also run a section on large scale postal games and another on Diplomacy variants. Sample issue free from: 7 Cambridge Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks, HP9 1HW, United Kingdom.

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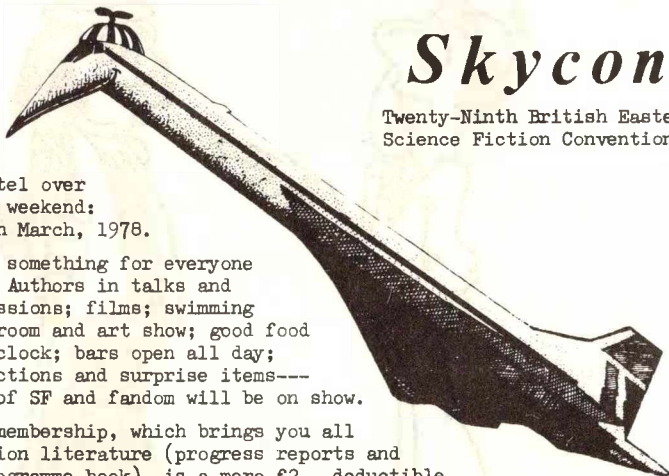
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DOBSON S.F. '77▶

D ean R. Koontz	The Time Thieves
D oris Piserchia	Mister Justice
J ack Vance	The Many Worlds of Magnus Ridolph
J ohn Rackham	The Anything Tree
T om Purdom	The Barons of Behaviour
B renda Pearce	Worlds for Grabbing
K eith Laumer	Night of Delusions
C olin Kapp	The Survival Game
G ene Wolfe	Operation Ares
J ohn Rankine	The Thorburn Enterprise
J ack Vance	Monsters in Orbit
D oris Piserchia	A Billion Days of Earth
P oul Anderson	Shield (reprint)
D onald A. Wollheim	Two Dozen Dragon Eggs
T erry Carr	Universe 4
P eter Weston	Andromeda 1 & 2

Dennis Dobson

received the Hugo!

AMAZING & FANTASTIC continued their careers under Ted White's all-embracing policy of If It Moves - Print It! giving space to some worthy experiments in the name of speculative fiction, though distressing the old guard by keeping the name of science fiction on the masthead and giving new writers like Jack Dann, Linda Isaacs and Howard Waldrop a showcase for their work. Though the new approach had to give way to the more traditional when AMAZING came out with its 50th anniversary issue, and authors like Isaac Asimov, Lester del Rey and Robert F. Young (once again the saviour of the two magazines) chowed what an all star issue used to be like. What might yet prove to be a chilling omen for the rest of the field, and long forecast, came about, in that they both went on to a quarterly schedule, thus making it more difficult to decide whether they can go on being viable entities. One result of this being the loss of the very saleable serials, though Ted seems to have overcome this problem by instituting the concept of "connected stories", viz Jack Dann's STARHIKER/THE DREAM LIONS, and for the ultimate, SEARCH by F.M. Busby which started off as PEARLSALL'S RETURN in a long ago issue of IF, and which will be continued in the "very next issue", but "each can be read on its own". Oh well, it does mean an end to the traditionally long and boring synopsis! He also attempted to whip up more interest by expanding the name and cause of "scientific-fiction" for his product, which to this reader at least smacks more of the juvenile and goshwow of Tom Swift and Captain Future rather than the college-bred variety finding space within his pages. Stories by L. Sprague de Camp, Avram Davidson, Karl Edward Wagner and Brian Lumley among others seem to suggest that he places more import on the survival of FANTASTIC than AMAZING. I am still looking for Roger Elwood to save the two, even after the disappearance of his ODYSSEY (Every American store I wrote to, Not Distributed Here... was there ever an issue or was it, as one of its promised stories might suggest, A Prisoner of New York Island?).

FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION lost one of its mainstays with the death of Joseph Pberman, who, unlike the Elwoods and Silverbergs of this world, shunned publicity and instead furthered the cause of SF by making his magazine such a leader in the field; and this year seemed like one of the best. There were novels like MAN PLUS from Frederik Pohl, his best to date; MICHAELMAS from Algis Budrys set firmly in the world of the not-so-distant-future (and see A SCRAPING AT THE BONES for another aspect of the milieu), and shorts from such able practitioners as Michael Bishop (THE SAMURAI AND THE WILLOW), Joanna Russ, Paul Darcy Boles, Michael C. Coney, Thayer Waldo (THE STILLNESS AT SORDERA) - all expert in the F&SF art of mixing literacy with entertainment; in fact, some of the stories did seem to be too highly literate to be entertaining. Stephen Tall (though with copyrights under the name Crompton N. Crook, one begins to wonder...) seemed to be developing into the resident writer, typifying all the virtues from "new" treatments of classic themes to not so affectionate parodies. The Kilgore Trout theme continued with stories from his favourite writer, Jonathan Swift Somers III; what could be called an in-in-joke! Not forgetting further excellent stories from Richard Cowper, their discovery of the year; though having been discovered by Dobson Books and then Gollancz and now by F&SF he must be wondering who'll be next!

ANALOG started off with a scoop, the serialisation of the last of the Dune epics, CHILDREN OF DUNE, and took four issues to pack it all in. Then Robert Silverberg returned after 16 years to



It's been a good year for science fiction fans; they seem to have been sprouting up all over the place - in fact, there seem to be more people involved in SF fan activities than ever before - and they seem to have been enjoying themselves doing the things they do. (Which, after all, is the object of the exercise.)

I know I've enjoyed myself! I've been to 4 conventions, helped a bit with my local group, published a couple of fanzines, made a bit of progress with a novel...I've even had time to read some SF in between that little lot!

Let's cover the Year's events in the various fields of fan activity in roughly that order.

Conventions

It's been a mixed year for SF cons in Britain; what is traditionally the major science-fictional event of the year, the Easter Convention, was generally felt not to be up to the standards of previous years, but on the credit side the next most important event, the Birmingham SF Group's *Maycon* (in early November) is thriving, and no less than three new conventions were held in the British Isles: Harry Harrison's First World SF Writers' Conference in Dublin in

September, and two small informal social conventions, Faancon and Silicon, were held for the first time, enjoyably enough to make the organisers and attendees have no compunction about deciding to repeat them next year.

Let's take them in order of size:

Mancon 5, this year's Eastercon, was less successful than previous year's for a few reasons, of which the most fundamental was the choice of venue; as an experiment it was held on a university campus, Owens Park in Manchester. Many people found the bedrooms and bar very spartan for their tastes - it's not easy to have a relaxed conversation when perched on a hard, cold, badly shaped plastic chair - and the campus staff were less than universally friendly: for four or so barmaids to let out a loud spontaneous cheer when their boss tells them they can close down the bar for the night doesn't improve the social atmosphere much. Secondly, there seemed on occasions to be an attitude of inappropriate nonchalance in the face of chaos on the part of some of the con committee (fiddling while Owens Park burned, as depicted by Eddie Jones on the cover of the programme book?) - though there were committee members who worked their guts out. Perhaps the most important failure of Mancon as far as this SF YEARBOOK is concerned was the lack of sparkle about the programme of events, both science fictional and fanish. The discussion panels weren't given interesting enough topics, and there was a lack of behind-the-scenes organisation which resulted in too many confusing programme changes (eg because the committee hadn't checked that one of their panellists would actually be there on the day of the panel!).

On the credit side, though, were a superb convention hall, a well-sited and pleasant book dealers' room, and evidence that commendably successful efforts had been made to interest SF publishers in the event (there was more publishers' publicity material than I've ever seen before). Mancon was attended by a British record for a science fiction convention - over 600, with 700 registered, I believe, though exact figures haven't been released. (I'm not sure that this increase is a good thing - it leads to the massive overcrowding which makes American cons less enjoyable nowadays.)

Novacon 6, though slightly less ambitious, was more successful in doing what it set out to do - provide a less intensive programme of SF discussion, but still feature a book dealers' room and art show for serious study, and the banquet, a late BAR, ROOM PARTIES and all the other evidences of cheerful debauchery that make up the lighter side of all SF conventions. The Novacon people know what they're doing by now - they should, as they're almost the same lot of people every year.

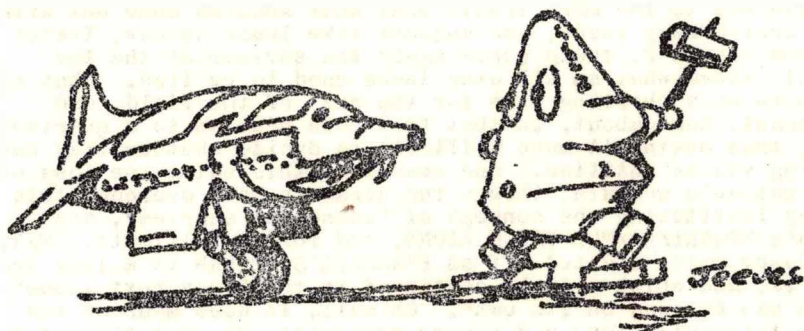
I wasn't at Harry Harrison's First World SF Writers' Conference in Dublin, worse luck; from what Rob Holdstock reported in CHECKPOINT the event seems to have been worthwhile for any serious writer of SF, with some very high quality discussion, and (considering the attendees were all writers) an even more fascinating and stimulating set of fellow convention members than one meets at the more usual sort of convention.

Finally, there was the innovation of the two more purely social conventions, Faancon in February, and Silicon over August Bank Holiday. At Silicon, the SF discussion and film provided short breaks in the otherwise nonstop talking and socialising, but then so did the beach ball game in the swimming pool, the TV football competition and the Dungeons and Dragon games...

Despite the mixed nature of the year for the British conventions,

THE MAGAZINES

Roger Waddington



Original anthologies apart the magazines seem to have held their own while taking several knocks from reduced sales figures and the American distribution system, but somehow they just keep on going in this pre-packed original age. Maybe it's due to a sense of tradition, maybe due to faithful readers; but then again, maybe a sense of immediacy, of straight-from-the-presses, that the anthologies can never hope to emulate.

GALAXY had a very chequered year. Jim Baen did his best with the *seriats*, like the first novel in years from Joannus Russ, *WE WHO ARE ABOUT TO...*, Roger Zelazny's Amber novel, *THE HAND OF OBERON*, Larry Niven's epic *CHILDREN OF THE STATE*, but there were too many second-rate shorts to mute the effect, too many stories that should have gone elsewhere. Due most of all to the "Worlds of IF" title, logo and slushpile; it should have been allowed to die quietly and mourned by its readers, not promised to live again in a new, unified-with-GALAXY apotheosis. Galaxy has sacrificed its position as one of the Elder Statesmen of the field, in going all out for a lower, more popular approach, with more of the slam-bang and less of the cerebral; it had to print the pulpier variety such as the Hammer's *Slammers* series from David Drake (*THE BUTCHER'S BILL*, etc) and acquire a book reviewer in Spider Robinson, who would have been suited to the lighter, less intellectual pages of IF, but with past history such as it is, we can only point to what might have been! Certainly it seemed long past its former glory (Robert Sheckley? Cordwainer Smith? Frank Herbert?), and even Ejler Jakobsson with very little more in the treasury did give an air of establishing new frontiers, of publishing significant stories; but for keeping it alive, for trying to attract new readers, Jim Baen should have

fixed - Space Opera authors might well consider buying the game for the board alone! With about 37,000,000 spaces to move around in combat generally takes place at solar systems rather than in deep space.

The other worthwhile strategic game is STELLAR CONQUEST (?;MC) in which four players set out to colonise planets and eventually come into conflict over living space. A Research and Development system enables one player to build say bigger warships while another concentrates on planetary defences.

The same company also produces THE YTHRI, based on Poul Anderson's PEOPLE OF THE WIND. The coup of last year was Robert Heinlein's sale of STARSHIP TROOPERS (Rnady Reed:AH), which comes out as a tactical game of bughunting quite faithful to the novel and enjoyable as well, with the Arachnid player drawing up plans for secret tunnel complexes from which to surprise the Terran MI. We await the game of BILL, THE GALACTIC HERO....

Fantasy games have concentrated on LORD OF THE RINGS, out of copyright in the USA; possibly the best of these is SIEGE OF MINAS TIRITH (Richard Jordison:P&F), a fairly accurate portrayal of the Dark Lord's assault on Gondor. More original is WHITE BEAR: RED MOON (Greg Stafford), a tactical game set in a world of the designers own invention.

Star Trek naturally has its following; for those wishing to manoeuvre the USS Enterprise around the living room floor try ALIEN SPACE (Lou Zocchi).

Miniatures. Middle Earth has proved something of a bane in the model soldier hobby, with each manufacturer entering the field starting with yet another set of elves, orcs and dwarves: seven so far by my count. On the more positive side Hinchliffes have a nice Barzoo range, Green Martians, banths and the like, while Minifigs have just finished a large group of Hyborian figures. Several SF ranges exist featuring many weird creatures mostly of the sculptor's invention (sorry authors, model soldier manufacturers never pay royalties) - though I've yet to discover who buys them or what they do with them!

Role Playing. The most promising new developement has been in the "role playing" games. They all require a referee who draws up scenarios in which the players take the parts of characters from sword and sorcery or space opera. Of these DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS (Gygax: TSR) was the first and remains the most popular, having been taken up by many SF fans - all SF conventions seem to include marathon sessions of D&D nowadays. D&D has players descending into the ruins of old castles in search of loot, guarded by fearsome monsters from mythology, fantasy and SF such as the Brian Burgess that charms one into buying pork pies at 100 Gold Pieces each and the Jimkirk, always trying to beam up before the players steal his phaser.

Similar to D&D is EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE (MARBarker:TSR), set on an alien planet with humans struggling against the local fauna. TSR's most recent product is METAMORPHOSIS:ALPHA which is the old multi-generation-starship-gone-wrong plot as in Heinlein's UNIVERSE, it looks well detailed and thought out though I've not had a chance to try it out yet.

It's interesting to note that like a previous craze, postal Diplomacy, it is the SF fans with their access to mimeographs that are running the fandom that is emerging - there are two D&D APAs so far and about a dozen fanzines, all busy adding to and adapting the rules.

the good points out-weigh the bad; any depression about the future of Eastercon after Mancon should be temporary, as the Birmingham SF Group organising the 1977 event should get us back on the right track, and for '78 there are two competent and enthusiastic groups bidding! Whether the '78 con finishes up being called Skycon or Channelcon, we'll be lucky either way, as both committees have already done their homework.

The overseas convention scene has also been thriving this year, with more conventions than ever before both in America and elsewhere. The 1976 World Convention was Midamericon, in Kansas City; I wasn't there, but as a supporting member I do know that their publications (done by Tom Reamy) set a new and flabbergastingly high standard. By all accounts there were the usual set of minor problems at the convention itself, but it still seemed to go off OK. People say it seemed better because it wasn't so crowded - there were only 2700 people there. Yes, only 2700! (The last Worldcon to be held in the States attracted 4000+). Any trend away from crowds that size is a good thing, and I take my hat off to the Midamericon Committee for their courage in implementing their first-come cheapest-served policy on convention membership so effectively. (They charged \$50 for those who joined at the door).

As for other overseas conventions: I can't even begin to count them, let alone tell you how they all went. Suffice to say that people had fun at them, and sometimes even talked about SF. Just like British conventions, in fact.

Local Groups

Groups have been thriving this year in Great Britain; every 4th fanzine or letter I receive contains a mention of a new group or club, it seems, and all of them arranged differently - some meet in universities, some in pubs, some in private homes; some have eminent speakers or expensive films, some just talk science fictional shop amongst themselves; some are straight-laced, others are bon viveurs; but if I went into detail about each club I'd be here until Doomsday.

One hint, though: if you want to arrange expensive events for your club, why not pool your resources with a neighbouring one? My own local group, the North-East SF Group, was on its last legs financially until Rob Carter and Robert Day, the organisers of the Newcastle University and Polytechnic Groups respectively, and our own committee all realised we were trying to arrange exactly the same type of meeting for three separate small audiences (and incidentally rather overtaxing the available speakers - Rob Shaw now knows the road to Newcastle so well his car gets there by itself) - but with financial help for NESFiG from the student groups we are now able to hold joint meetings which are livelier with larger audiences, without worrying about whether we'll be able to pay the speaker's train fare! So our group isn't in imminent danger of folding, and I hope the same can be said of your local group.

Awards

The professional Hugo Awards this year were unexceptionable, even if there was a tendency below novel level to vote for the most widely known name or most widely read story rather than the finest. This problem with the popular vote system, that of if-I-don't-know-it-I-can't-vote-for-it, was far more acute with the fan Hugos, where the results were an absolute travesty.

I've got no particular quarrel with the fanzine result; all 5 nominees are very fine fanzines. It was to be expected that one of

the higher circulation nominees should win; LOCUS (the winner), SF REVIEW and ALGOL print more copies than more enjoyable fanzines such as OUTWORLDS or DON-O-SAUR. LOCUS is required reading for all interested in the SF world (as opposed to the fan world), even if it is really a service publication.

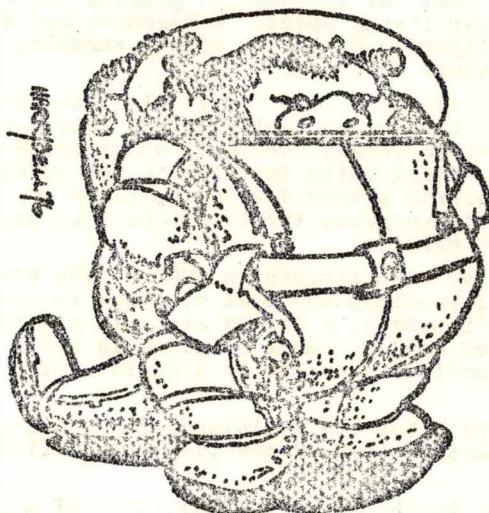
The really silly results were in the Fan Artist and Fan Writer categories. For Tim Kirk to be voted best Fan Artist when 99% of this year's output has been professional and the only fan art or his that I can remember this year has been three or four little doodles (good doodles, but doodles nevertheless) on the back pages of LOCUS and the reprinted bits in SPR. Tim got as many votes as the other four nominees put together, which shows how daft the system is. Phil Foglio came second, largely because of his comic slide show THE CAPTURE and his big pieces in the Midamerican Progress Reports, Midamerican Funnies. (It was Midamerican members who voted for the Hugos, of course.) These are okay, both very amusing, but there are better artists than Phil Foglio! (Some of them weren't on the final ballot at all, naturally.)

The Fan Writer category, which Dick Geis won, was the most ridiculous of all, in that after Dick came Susan Wood - and I hear No Award came third! This is a serious insult to the other people on the ballot, Charlie Brown, Don D'Ammassa and Don C. Thompson. Dick Geis and Susan Wood have both appeared professionally in major prozines - Dick in Galaxy, Susan in Amazing. (Charlie Brown has also appeared in Odyssey and as an editor of various anthologies, but the other two have made very few large-circulation magazines of any form, and most of their work has appeared in small circulation fanzines (ie less than 500) and their nomination is a recognition of their wide popularity among those fans with at least a smidgeon of real knowledge of the US fanzine scene. But come the voting, lots of idiots who'd only read AMAZING and GALAXY got their pens lodged in their front hooves to vote and said to themselves "I haven't heard of him - he can't be any good!" and voted for a name they had just about heard of. No way were they capable of actually assessing fan writing ability. (No insult to Dick Geis or Susan Wood meant here, they're both very fine writers - I voted for Susan myself - and deserve all the recognition they get; my quarrel is with the No Award idiocy.)

It seems that the fan Hugos as they stand at present are almost beyond redemption; perhaps the only way out is to print a stern admonition on the final ballot telling people not to vote in any category unless they are thoroughly familiar with all the nominees in that category.

Personally, I feel the FAAn Awards are a better system; to nominate someone, you at least have to have done some fanzine work yourself in the category in which you nominate. It's a good system, a good award, and would only be made better if more people outside the US would vote and make this an international rather than simply American award. There were three British people on the final ballot this year - better than last year, but still not a true reflection of Britain's contribution to English speaking fandom. The best British showing was from Harry Bell, who came second in the Humorous Artist category, largely because of his many fine contributions to American fanzines. Very creditable, Harry - but do better next time?

Anyway. To British Awards. The Ken Slater Award for artwork went to Paul Dillon for his cover for VECTOR 73/4. I'm certainly not qualified to grumble about the CHECKPOINT Poll results this year, as the Art Editor of MAYA (Harry Bell) walked off with their award for best fan artist, and MAYA just squeezed ahead of three uncommonly



The association between SF and games goes back to H.G. Wells, who in *LITTLE WARS* produced the first book on wargaming with toy soldiers. Another exponent in both fields was Fletcher Pratt, who devised rules for WWII Naval combat still in use today.

The idea of producing games actually based on F&SF subjects is quite new however. Possibly the craving for respectability that afflicted wargamers just as strongly as SF fans caused this.

Since this is the first piece on games in *THE YEARBOOK* - come to that the first piece the RSPA has ever published on the subject - I propose to cover some of the best games and products that have appeared up to the end of 1976 rather than confine myself to the past year. Some useful addresses will be found at the end.

Boardgames generally have a hardbacked or stiff paper board, die-cut cardboard counters, and a rules booklet. These and miniature metal figures moved on a table top form the two main streams of wargaming, with "role playing" games that use pencil, paper and imagination constituting a growing third force.

Boardgames. Of "Conquering the Galaxy" games the most visually impressive is *STARFORCE* (Redmond Simonsen:SPI) which uses an ingenious three dimensional display of local space with stars accurately



familiar to those of *THE INVISIBLE MAN*, *GEMINI MAN* is more successful due, I think, to the personality of the leading man; Ren Murphy. The show follows the same old cops and robbers themes but is scripted and produced in such a way that it is never boring. Casey's watch, for instance, is a novelty in itself, running off in seconds the time he has left when turning invisible, so don't be surprised if there is a big boom in digital watches this year.

Finally, one programme which must be looked at even though it is not strictly SF is *THE NEW AVENGERS*. I say must be looked at because in its heyday many, many episodes were directly concerned with science fiction. The new series contains many immediate changes but basically it is as eccentric as ever. One of the major differences is the line up of characters; instead of just having John Steed and a dolly bird we now have Steed, a dolly bird and a gun toting young agent who goes by the name of Mike Gambit. The dolly bird is just plain Purdey. There is one old character, however, who is not in this new series and who is badly missed. I am, of course, referring to the crippled Mother who added greatly to the atmosphere of the show, partly because he had each of his headquarters situated in strange places such as under rivers or, as on one occasion, in a London bus.

Generally, this new series contains little in the way of SF plots, being no more than the old criminal and coppers format. One episode, however, did see the return of the cybernaut, the big metal robot which almost killed Steed ten years earlier, but apart from that it's still pretty bland. However it has a solid background from which to develop and should, hopefully, start improving soon, though whether this improvement will be in favour of SF or not remains to be seen.

Well, that's it for this year; a pretty varied if somewhat poor collection. Now what'll 1977 bring.....

fine London fanzines (STOP BREAKING DOWN, TRUE RAT and WRINKLED SHREW) for best fanzine. It (ahem) also won the Nova Award for the second year running (Thanks, folks). Roy Kettle deservedly won the CHECKPOINT poll as best Fan Writer, and Pete Nicholls equally deservedly won Best Single Article for his long report on Seacon in WRINKLED SHREW 4. (There, it just shows what Big Name Pros like Kettle and Nicholls can do when they turn their hand to fan-writing, doesn't it?)

Fanzines

I've found 1976 a good year for fannish fanzines, as you'll probably gather from the complimentary remarks above. In Britain the revival begun in 1975 has shown no sign of abating; the boom has been fuelled by the return of Greg Pickersgill to the fanzine scene with STOP BREAKING DOWN and the emergence of Dave Langford as our finest new fannish writer particularly in his own DRILKJIS and TWILL-DOO. (He's not bad at SF criticism and short story writing either.) Perhaps I shouldn't be picking out anybody in particular; once I start it's awfully tempting to go on and on and make a comprehensive and very boring list - boring because I'd have to go on for so long! There are plenty of good British zines now, and we no longer need feel inferior to the Americans' superb fannish fanzines.

The American continent continues to produce enthusiastic and talented new (or newish) fans (like Victoria Wayne whose incredible SIMULACRUM 3 has flattened me - physically and mentally; it's over 100 pages long of flawless mimeography in one envelope all told, and fine funny material therein too) as well as old masters like Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins (SPANISH INQUISITION 7/8, another enormous and superbly produced zine), the Minneapolis crowd with NUNE, whose 46th issue was Fred Haskell's swansong as its editor and also demonstrated that the art of handcutting illustrations onto stencil is alive and well and living in Minneapolis; and Mike Glicksohn's and Susan Wood's personalzines...The only disappointment is the non-appearance of Bill Bowers' OUTWORLDS after issue 27 in January 1976; it was truly the brand leader of fannish fanzines for years. (He'll shove out another issue now to prove me wrong.)

One area in which the Americans lead us is in serious, thoughtful SF criticism. There are only two magazines in the UK that consistently publish SF analysis of any depth - FOUNDATION and the BSFA's VECTOR, both of which have a great advantage over the legions of American critical magazines - an ability to combine readability with depth of analysis in a fairly consistent way. American critical magazines tend to be either shallow or at best intermittently penetrating (SF REVIEW, SF BOOKLOG) or impenetrable (RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY, SF STUDIES etc).

But we still lack three factors over here.

The first need is for a magazine which can combine a light, humorous, human touch with depth of analysis; a touch of the kind that makes Dick Geis' SF REVIEW compulsory reading as soon as it arrives. (Even when Chris Fowler in VECTOR is being human, he's usually abtracting from some depression or other. Exorcise demons, Chris, it's more cheerful.)

The second is for a truly independent fanzine which specialises in SF analysis and discussion, not simply one financed by an organisation like the SF Foundation or the BSFA. (SPECULATION, CYPHER, where are you?) The official nature of the magazines put out by organisations inevitably imposes constraints on the editor, who can't exercise his personality properly. An independent fanzine can range more widely and be more anarchic (SF REVIEW again). (SPEC and CYPHER



suffered from rigidity too, but there it was self imposed.)

The third need is simple, obvious and stems from the above: more criticism! I know there is a limit to the amount of really good penetrating yet still penetrable criticism about, but it hasn't been reached in Britain recently (though in the States it seems to have been both reached and exceeded, so that even good editors have to publish cruddy criticism sometimes.) A good new market for criticism will generate new enthusiasm on the part of the reviewers and critics, and work will be produced. (I know, I've commissioned reviews by Chris Priest and an essay by Brian Aldiss recently that would not have been written had I not asked for them.)

I admit that I publish a rather fannish genzine myself, but I still find it a bit sad that all our most talented fans are so busy enjoying themselves being fannish that there's no one to spare to put out a fanzine of SF criticism.

The market's wide open, people. You too can publish a critical magazine. See if you can make it a good one.

Whether you'll be able to influence a publisher is in doubt, though. Does anything written in a small-circulation magazine really effect a publisher's opinion? Can we really bring the Perry Rhodan series to a halt by shouting "YUUK" in unision? I doubt it; but I do believe that thoughtful comment well expressed is of inestimable value to authors. We can indeed influence the field by planting new thoughts, new doubts and certainties in a writer's mind; though who can say if the result would really have been any different - if we could predict what was going to be written in 5 year's time, SF wouldn't be the fascinating field of study it is.

The story then goes on to show how the couples fare on the different worlds. An exchange of hostages is supposed to take place but Adam and Shem have escaped from the authorities and are continually dodging the police; so until they can be found and handed over the two Earthpeople have to remain on Medusa.

This is the basic storyline but the producers pad things out by including episodes which deviate from the main plot. The scripts are relatively weak but are sufficient to make the show interesting. The sets and special effects employed are extremely good and not altogether dissimilar to SPACE: 1999, if of a somewhat slightly poorer quality. Altogether visually spectacular but without much meat to it. If you don't like watching the series then you can always spend your time looking at the dolly birds who include Dawn Addams and slit-mouthed Judy Geeson; but the contribution this show makes to the SF field is virtually non-existent.

Science fiction and horror, mixed together and presented as plays form the basis of BEASTS a series written and produced by Nigel Kneale and, as you might have guessed, using animals as its theme. Kneale is not a newcomer to writing such shows, he was the creator of the famous QUATERMASS series from the early 1950s, and the more recent but just as excellent play, THE STONE TAPE. The idea of the series was to present stories which were designed to "disturb" and not simply frighten or shock the viewer. I only managed to catch the first play in the series, "During Barty's Party" and in this episode, at least, Kneale manages to achieve his aims. The story is about a couple trapped in a country cottage by a horde of super rats who have become immune to the strongest poison man can devise and who therefore no longer have any reason to be afraid. The only way the couple can communicate for help is by contacting a radio show called "Barty's Party" and this perhaps leads to the most terrifying and disturbing aspect of the whole show. The rats are missing for an attack and the tension builds as the couple go almost hysterical in their attempts to get their plea for help over to the jovial Barty who insists on treating everything like a joke. The tension is also increased by the fact that the rats are never actually seen, only heard - though in one sequence you can see holes being chewed in the door. The characterisation and acting was superb; in the beginning the woman is hysterical and the man calm and assuring, by the end the man has broken down and the woman taken command of the situation. Altogether a captivating play and though it may not be strictly SF it certainly makes a distinct contribution to this field.

1976 also seems to be a year for repeating themes. Invisibility struck again in the form of GEMINI MAN. I fail to understand the title in relation to the show but the programme is certainly superior to its predecessor, THE INVISIBLE MAN. It concerns Sam Casey, a special agent working for a government organisation called Intersect, who gets rendered permanently invisible by an underwater accident. The only way Casey can regain visibility is if he wears a stabiliser, constructed in the form of a watch which can be switched on and off. However things are not as simple as that. Casey can only remain invisible for a total of 45 minutes after that he goes into a coma and virtually fades away - permanently. But this isn't the only difference in his invisibility as compared with that of the Invisible Man. Casey's invisibility is a field which stretches all over his body making anything within it invisible also. This, of course, means that his clothes can't be seen and therefore gives him much more flexibility than his predecessor.

This is the basic gist of the show, and though the plots are

Looking at this show in general perhaps Majors was right for it seems to be a female carbon copy of his own show. In some episodes we even see Jamie Sommers doing exactly what Austin did in his series. A classic example being when, in their respective shows, they both lift a metal post out of the ground and throw it at a mobile radar guiding system. In any case the series was a bad flop, probably, I suspect, due to the fact that Miss Wagner's personality just doesn't match that of Lee Majors. Not surprisingly THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN made a rapid comeback and this series sees a new Steve Austin complete with snave, flashy suit and moustache which, I'm afraid, only contrive to make him look older. However the old magic is still there and the current episodes have certainly been up to the standard of the original ones.

Although DR. WHO can not exactly claim to be classed as a recent SF show there have been several significant changes and developments taking place which must be mentioned here. One of the trademarks of DR. WHO is its apparent tendency to rewrite its own history, and this certainly seems to be evident in the more recent series. The Tardis interior, for instance, has undergone one of its most nauseating metamorphoses imaginable, changing from its slick and modern layout into a dark, gruesome, medieval and extremely depressing effort which is a huge blow to nostalgia and completely spoils the atmosphere of the thing. This reminds me of the annoyance I used to feel when the Cybermen kept changing in appearance (so far they have had 5 changes). I suppose I should at least expect some changes over the many years but for goodness sake not the Tardis! That's one of the foundations of the whole show.

Despite this, however, there is still much that remains the same. The special effects remain the usual unbelievable muck but, to contrast this, the programme remains as entertaining as ever and still manages to produce the occasional classic, the most recent being "The Beady Assassin".

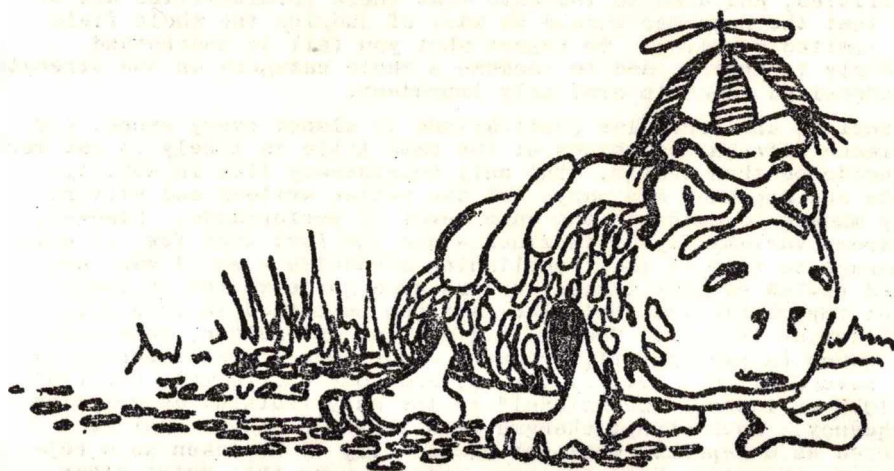
Going back to the changes: the worst thing of all is that the doctor has finally ditched his companion Sarah-Jane. Now there's no longer any really interesting thing to look at in the show. I don't know whether he'll be getting a replacement but he's managed quite well so far without one.

Returning to more conventional trends Space Opera struck again in the form of THE STAR MAIDENS, a half hour co-production from German and Scottish television companies. So far, to my knowledge, this programme has only been shown in Britain on STV which covers the Strathclyde and Central regions of Scotland but I am writing this in the possibility that it might be screened on other channels.

The story concerns the planet Medusa which once contained a bustling, prosperous civilisation until disaster struck and it was torn from its solar system. The surface of the planet was totally destroyed and the inhabitants forced underground, but the reason it is called STAR MAIDENS and not, say, "Wandering Planet" (or Space; 1999?) is because the Medusian culture is a female dominated one where males are merely domestic slaves who are kept under constant check. The planet eventually attaches itself to Earth's solar system. Meanwhile on (or rather in) the planet two male slaves, Adam and Shem, have had enough of their female masters and decide to escape in an ancient spacecraft they have found. After leaving the planet they find they have nowhere to go but Earth, closely pursued by a Medusian craft. On landing the fugitives are picked up by the authorities and attempt to seek sanctuary to which the authorities initially agree. The Medusians are rather peeved at this and kidnap two Earthpeople taking them back to Medusa as hostages.

FANZINES D. West

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Any estimate of the number of fanzines published in Britain during 1976 must be arbitrary. Are publications devoted to fringe interests such as Fantasy, Sword & Sorcery, Comics, Star Trek, Doctor Who and Perry Rhodan to be included? Is it possible to define a fanzine at all, let alone what constitutes a science fiction fanzine?

A fanzine is a publication produced at personal expense (ie not subsidised by any organisation, whether commercial or non-profitmaking) without the object of financial gain for publishers or contributors. Other than that, anything goes, and all classifications are arguable. (The above definition applies only to British fanzines; US fandom and fanzines are omitted from this article since there are considerable differences.) Taking the average, however, anyone actively involved in fanzine publishing probably received about a hundred issues of forty or fifty different titles; something over a thousand pages in all. A real enthusiast who covered the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and the rest of the world could find himself receiving a new fanzine every other day of the year.

It's a lot of literature - a whole sub-world of communication - and something of a puzzle to outsiders. A newcomer is likely to find himself altogether baffled, and even veterans are often forced to admit that it's easier to recognise a fanzine than to define or explain it. This article is an attempt to convey some idea of what fanzines are about and also - perhaps more important - what they are not

about. It's a very personal view. Fanzines are very personal things. The anarchism of fandom is one of its great attractions - assuming you have a temperamental inclination that way. Certain vague traditions and notions of acceptable practice do exist, but there are no effective sanctions available to impose uniformity and any restraint on individuality is more of a self imposed inhibition than an outside force. There are no rules - only opinions. The views expressed here, therefore, should not be taken as representing any generally accepted orthodoxy. There is no formula for a quick understanding. I am not attempting to explain fanzines so much as to display some of their possibilities, and also to indicate that these possibilities are so varied that the newcomer should be wary of judging the whole field from a limited sampling. To reject what you fail to understand immediately is unwise, and to condemn a whole category on the strength of preconceived ideas is similarly imprudent.

Fanzines are irregular publications in almost every sense. Any resemblance between two issues of the same title is likely to owe more to coincidence than design. The only consistency lies in ability: contents and approach may vary, but the better writers and editors usually manage to maintain the same level of performance. However, the extreme variability of fanzines - and the fact that few, if any, ever manage to keep to their publishing schedules - would make any detailed review of past titles useless as a guide to the beginner. It's not improbable that half the fanzines published in 1976 will fail to appear in 1977. Some will disappear altogether, some will change names (a particularly frequent occurrence - most experienced faneds have published several titles) and some will simply hibernate until 1978 or later. "Occasional" is the only truthful description of frequency. Such abrupt changes mean that each issue must be considered as a separate work not necessarily to be taken as a representative example. Some editors, indeed, make this point clear enough by publishing every issue under a different title.

Advice to the beginner is simple: try as many fanzines as you can lay your hands on. Be patient. A sample copy is usually obtainable on request, but most fanzines have short print runs and you may have to wait several months for a new issue. The first details of current names and addresses can be obtained from the BSFA and thereafter from the fanzines themselves, many of which run reviews or listings of other titles. The judgements of fanzine reviewers should initially be disregarded completely. They are often wrong, frequently fatuous, almost always debatable, and invariably misleading to newcomers. Don't take my word - don't take anybody's word - on the value of a fanzine. See for yourself.

In the first stages many difficulties and obscurities will be encountered. British fandom is not so small that everyone knows everyone else, but the most visible section - those people active in fanzines - does tend to give the impression of being an exclusive club. The consequent lack of formality and frequent use of private jokes and references may seem a barrier to the outsider. Fans are frequently accused of being in-groupish. Undoubtedly this is true of certain fans - those who treat the new fan with the haughty disdain of a seigneur approached by a particularly smelly peasant - but in general such elitist snobbery is more apparent than real. The fact is that joining fandom is more a matter of being converted than being recruited: you can't just pay a subscription and expect to be accepted; a whole series of ideas and attitudes have to be modified. The saying FANOL (fandom is a way of life) is not entirely a joke. Experienced fans tend not to bother with newcomers because they know that the communication gap is too wide. Until the neo has recovered from the



1976 has, for the most part, been a relatively poor year as far as new original science fiction shows are concerned. There have been one or two new programmes but nothing really significant has appeared. *SPACE 1999* and *SURVIVORS* bowed out gracefully at the beginning of the year, and as they have already been amply covered in other articles I won't make any comments on them here. What I will do, however, is look at the various movements and tendencies taken by current SF programmes.

1976 seems to be the year of the bionic craze. *THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN* remained a more or less permanent feature during 1975 and the first half of 1976. It was relatively popular but unfortunately carried the seeds of its own (temporary) downfall in the form of Lindsay Wagner, later to become *THE BIONIC WOMAN*. Lindsay appeared as Steve's fiancée, Jamie Sommers, who gets injured in a parachute accident and put back together again with various bionic bits and pieces. When Jamie first appeared in *THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN* she was only intended to last the length of two episodes before being killed off. But she proved so popular and boosted the show's falling ratings so much that the producers decided to shelve *SIX MILLION...* for a while and give her her own series. This caused a great deal of argument and controversy both on and off the set for Miss Wagner's demands for money were high. Lee Majors, who plays Steve Austin, was incensed at the producers decision to go ahead with the show and titled Lindsay "The Bionic Ripoff", however the project was nevertheless forwarded and soon the first series of *THE BIONIC WOMAN* hit the screens.

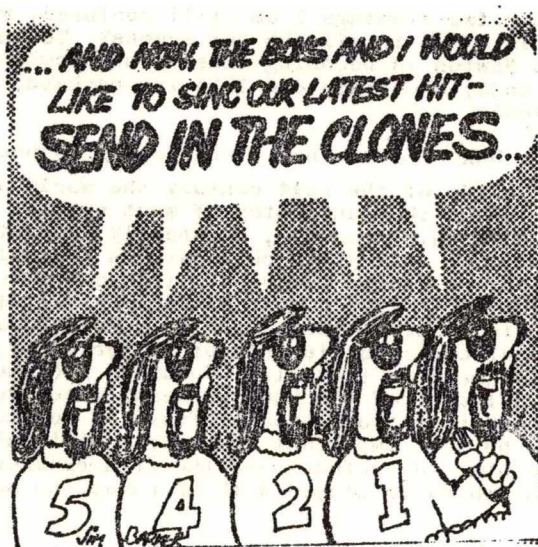
no time limit.

This was a marvellous movie - visually very exciting but also making a valid point...the futility of an individual fighting a system. This film is similar to A CLOCKWORK ORANGE in its treatment of violence, showing it not for its own sake but to show how bad things could become. Already sports are becoming more and more violent and if we are not careful ROLLERBALL type games may soon become a reality. The tragedy is that a large number of people went to ROLLERBALL especially to see the violence, joining in the mass hysteria.

THE STEPPFORD WIVES USA 114 mins Director: Bryan Forbes
 Producer: Edgar J. Scherick

In an attempt to escape the bustle of New York City a young couple (Katherine Ross & Peter Masterson) move to a sleepy Connecticut town called Stepford. Beneath the slow moving life of this town there is an unnatural feeling that is immediately noticed by the young wife. All the women are models of beauty, devoted to their husbands and to housework. The reasons behind this state of affairs is gradually revealed to the young wife and the audience.

Although shown at the London Film Festival and being well received by the critics this film has received very poor distribution. It has been described as the most chilling essay in the Things Aren't Quite What They Seem theme since Hitchcock's PSYCHO.



first culture-shock and made his own mental readjustments even the most detailed explanation of what-it's-all-about will not necessarily bring understanding. As usual, there's no substitute for experience.

So what are all these crazy people up to, fooling around with their amateur publications, their so-called fanzines? What's the point of it all?

"No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money," declared that bottle-scarred veteran of the 18th century literary scene, Samuel Johnson. Johnson was a professional: a Grub Streeter, a hack.

And yet - like every writer who ever lived - he must have known that the money was of secondary importance. A writer is a species of obsessive lunatic; the fact that he may receive cash for his efforts is no more than a convenient excuse that can be used to make the whole process understandable to outsiders. Like any man helpless to overcome his own compulsions Johnson cursed and swore, called himself names - and resignedly accepted that since he had this kink for literature he'd better make some money out of it.

Things haven't changed much; tacitly or openly the view that Art is to be measured by the value of the rewards that come to the artist - cash or commendation, royalties or reverence - is still the general opinion. A writer who writes but does not sell is like a man who practices snooker shots all day; a fool, a no-good bum, a waster and a layabout, a person irresponsible and blind to the stern duties of real life. But let the same writer and the same snooker player begin to make money - the one to pick up advances, the other to win tournament prizes - and a sudden respectability descends upon them. Virtually any activity done for money acquires a measure of approval, however despised and disregarded it may be when done for nothing. The amateurs are just idiots messing about, but the professionals can be taken seriously.

Semantic troubles? Searching in the dictionary for an official definition of "Professional" I came across another word: "Procrustean; tending to produce conformity by violent methods (from Greek Prokroustes, lit. stretcher, name of fabulous robber who fitted victims to his bed by stretching or mutilation.)" This seems a very appropriate word for the efforts of a fanzine reviewer or anyone else who tries to formulate general theories of fandom. Fact can be - and is - made to follow fancy very nicely by such methods, particularly when the meanings of certain key words are cut or expanded to fit within the limits of the Great Plan.

The key words in the case of fandom are "amateur" and "professional", both of which have different associations for every person who uses them. Perhaps the formula found in certain commercial literature should be employed: "The terms used in these descriptions shall be taken as having the meaning generally understood in the trade." After all, everyone knows that an amateur is simply a person who does for love (ie nothing) what a professional does for money.

Used with this strictly limited meaning (as I intend to use them hereafter) the words offer no great difficulties. Unfortunately, no one ever does use them like that. "Amateur" is taken as a term of mild contempt, signifying a dilettante, a dabbler, a person whose talents are too slight to be taken seriously. This is far removed from the meaning the word possessed in times when knowledge of - and participation in - the Arts was not considered solely the province of "experts" and those who made their living by such pursuits. "Professional" has fared even worse. Quite apart from the peculiar undertones of snobbery ("professions" are occupations with social

standing; the rest are just jobs) it has taken on a spurious glamour of the kind that clings around the unsavoury figures of notorious criminals. Nowadays "professional" is frequently used in a sense which is nothing more than a glorification of the crassly mercenary. Innumerable spy-stories, thrillers and the like have employed the word with a respectful admiration suggesting that any sordid deed of violence, treachery or deception is somehow attractive and praise-worthy if done strictly for the cash with no emotional or moral involvement.

And hence the Great Curse of fandom and fanzines; the open declaration that fanzines are amateur; the unspoken belief that this non-professionalism means that they are not to be taken seriously and cannot aspire to any level higher than that of imitating work which has been paid for.

Now, indisputably fanzines are amateur in the sense that they are not produced for money, but all other associations connected with the amateur/professional dualism should be discarded. A fanzine exists as a thing in itself - as an original. It is not a copy of something else. As with the primitive uncivilised artist who produces his work without thought of measurable reward, so with fans and fanzines: they are operating outside the money system and value judgements based directly or indirectly on financial considerations are irrelevant and inappropriate.

Fanzines are Art. And before total incredulity overwhelms you at the thought of putting some of the backstreet abortions called crudzines into such a seemingly exalted category it must be added that very many fanzines are very bad Art. Sturgeon's law rules, as usual. As for the Art with a capital A - the reverential awe-struck culture bit - that is simply the usual insider/outsider con laid down by the people who got to the goods first and want to promote themselves some exclusive status. Art is not something floating round in the stratosphere, accessible to only a chosen few with wings of genius. It's nothing more high flown than ordered creativity. Most people are able and willing to recognise Craft (skillful execution), but a prolonged overdose of the nonsense of critics has caused them to fall back on financial reward as the only reliable and understandable measure of merit. What the hell, if it makes money it must be worth something.

And if it doesn't make money - or advance your career or status - it must be a waste of time. Hence the sense of inferiority which holds back fan writers and editors. We're only amateurs, what can you expect?

Well, much more than we usually get. Since I rejected the notion of the intrinsic superiority of work which is paid for I do not favour the cop-out implicit in the acceptance of a supposedly amateur status. An "amateur" for too many fans is not someone whose commitment is based on an enthusiasm which owes nothing to financial reward; it's someone who's in it for a different kind of payoff - or ripoff, since the system hinges on unearned mutual admiration - and who has a ready excuse for not making any real effort. Some people are turned off by the apparent self-indulgent weakness of fandom; others are attracted by the same quality. Fandom can, in fact, be a very soft option: a last asylum and refuge for those who can't raise the ego-massage they crave in any other sphere. Such persons tend to be patronising to newcomers - their own rank being more the result of seniority than of talent - and resentful of those who refuse to fall in with the cosy all-ham-fisted-pals-together routine.

The notion that you mustn't be hard on the poor little fans

crystal set in your hand begins to flash and you are called to "carrousel". Some people do not want to die and they become "Runners". Runners are hotly pursued by "Sandmen" who, on catching them, kill them. Logan (Michael York) is a Sandman who is ordered to find a semi-mythical place "Sanctuary" - a place all runners head for. Logan has one lead, Jessica (Jenny Agutter), and together they begin their flight, tracked by Francis (Richard Jordan), Logan's former friend.

What a lot of time, money and effort were lavished on this simple minded film. A half-way decent novel has been changed, for the worst, by altering the whole concept and adding an utterly ludicrous ending. Unanswered questions (such as why are the people living in the domed city in the first place) litter the poor screen-play. Only someone who has read the novel will begin to understand the events that occur during the flight from the city; who Box (Rescue Lee Brown) is, what he does, who carved the ice-birds...Old Man (Peter Ustinov) was totally out of place and plunged the film into the realms of the ridiculous. Sets looked pretty, however, and a large number of people seem to have enjoyed the film.

THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH GB 140 mins Director: Nicholas Roeg
Producer: Michael Deeley & Barry Spinkings

An extra-terrestrial, Thomas Jerome Newton (David Bowie), comes from a dying, drought stricken planet to see if Earth can support his people. He takes on human form and uses his superior knowledge to amass the fortune necessary to finance the space project which will take him home. The financial and governmental establishments become suspicious at his success and begin investigations which lead to murder and Newton's capture and interrogation.

This was, perhaps, one of the best films to emerge in 1976 - a tour de force of visual imagery and intellectual concepts. The gamble of casting Bowie in the leading role paid off handsomely with a thoroughly convincing portrayal of alienness. There are, however, faults; there are enough new ideas in this film for 6 different films and this all tends to confuse the viewer as he struggles to fit the pieces of the jigsaw together. Because of the lack of explanations, subtleties and implications in this film it really requires a second viewing.

Even after two viewings I am still confused, what relevance, for example, is there in all the sex scenes? To show what man is like and what Newton is becoming like as he slowly assimilates our emotions? I enjoy an enigma and this is, perhaps, why I found this film so enjoyable.

ROLLERBALL USA ? mins Director/Producer: Norman Jewison

By the first decade of the next century the world as we know it has changed. Following the bankruptcy of most nations there are a series of Corporate Wars which resolve, apparently, pollution, poverty, war and corruption. Six major corporations now rule the Earth, men work a three day week with frequent holidays. Diversions, for the workers, include Multivision with an endless variety of entertainments and sports. One of these sports is Rollerball, a brutal action game that combines elements of roller derby, motorbike racing, ice hockey and American football. Jonathan E (James Caan) is the battle scared leader of the Houston team, a ten year veteran of the game. The Corporations become afraid of Jonathan E - the game itself should be more important than any individual player - and try to retire him. He refuses and the film reaches its climax in the final game which is played with no rules, no substitutes and

discovery to a grasping businessman, Bensington (Ralph Meeker), who arrives on the island with his assistant Lorna (Pamela Franklin) with the intention of making vast profits with the "food". On the way home Skinner's car is attacked by giant rats and Mrs Skinner's house is being attacked by giant worms. The occupants of the house are joined by another young couple and they begin to fight for their lives as the giant creatures attack.

This was another silly film, out to make a quick buck on the current vogue for excess. The film is "based on a portion of H.G. Wells' novel" it says but I am sure the novel is far better and this ridiculous movie only serves to denigrate the man's reputation. The characterisation, acting and script were all very poor and the only area of the film that had any merit was the special effects of Reginald Morris with impressive larger-than-life rats etc. It was a pity that the drowned house scene looked too much like a film studion set and the breaching of the dam scene also let down the special effects.

FUTUREWORLD USA 104 mins Director: Richard T Heffron
 Producer: P N Lazarus III and
 James T Aubrey

After the disaster of the supposedly fail-safe robots running amok in WESTWORLD the brains behind Delos, the futuristic holiday centre, devise new improved robots. Every whim is catered for in Delos Futureworld, simulated space travel, skiing on Mars, robotic play companions that fulfil guests' fantasies. It costs an exorbitant amount which is why the rich and influential flock there. Chuck Browning (Peter Fonda), a journalist, and Tracy Ballard (Blythe Danner) a TV reporter, are included in a group of VIPs invited to sample the delights and see for themselves that the revised safety precautions are foolproof. They soon become suspicious that the people leaving Futureworld aren't quite the same as when they went in.

People's opinion of this film vary tremendously - some saying it is better than Westworld, others saying it is lacklustre in comparison. The film is, however, of interest and the special effects are lavish and convincing.

KING KONG USA 134 mins Director: John Guillermin
 Producer: Dino de Laurentiis

An expedition to an unexplored island is led by Wilson (Charles Grodin) who expects to find oil. A stowaway, Prescott (Jeff Bridges), reveals himself and says he is searching for a giant ape which he believes is on the island. After a fierce storm a castaway, Dwan (Jessica Lange), is picked up and they get to the island. They retreat before hostile natives who capture Dwan for their marriage ceremony with Kong. Kong is intrigued with Dwan but is captured by money seeking Wilson who takes Kong back to New York where... well, you know the rest of the story.

What does one expect of a remake? I expected something abominable but was pleasantly surprised by what I did see - excellent sets and a workable plot although the characterisation was stereotyped. I found myself saying "So what, I've seen it all before, why do it again?". The answer is obvious - loot. Why take the risk of using an original idea when you can use a sure-fire commercial success of an old idea. Very sad.

LOGAN'S RUN USA 120 mins Director: Michael Anderson
 Producer: Saul David

It is the 26th century and everyone seems to lead a life of luxury and pleasure. There is only one snag, life ends at thirty when the

because they're only amateurs who aren't getting paid for it is a denial of all self-responsibility. Is it to be assumed that fans are spoiled brats who have to be bribed with sweets before they'll do anything for themselves?

The criticism that is carefully kind - searching out good points, however small, and glossing over faults, however large - is the sort of pap that inadequate and incompetent faneds love to feed upon. Such people drag down the critical standards of fanzines to the lowest common denominator: everybody has to win a prize, so the mediocre is ranked with the good and the rubbish is declared to show promise. In such circumstances it's scarcely worth making a great effort - you'll get your lollipop and pat on the head just the same. The real winners feel cheated - the fakes enjoy the puff to their self-esteem - and everybody loses out. Self-delusion and self-indulgence are narcotics most people use now and then; to encourage the switch from an occasional blow to mainline addiction is not to do any great favour. Those faneds who complain of "destructive" criticism are often like the school kids who refuse to learn their lessons then howl when they get caned for their ignorance. They should ask themselves not only whether or not the merit they see neglected in their work has any real existence but also whether or not when they do get constructive criticism they ever take any notice of it.

Ruthless fanzine reviewing - operating on the basis of calling a cretin a cretin and recognising pretentious drivel as pretentious drivel - is a fairly recent phenomenon in any widespread form. It really dates no further back than 1970, the year Greg Pickersgill and Roy Kettle published the first issue of FOULER, a fanzine that discarded every last one of the self-imposed taboos of fanzine publishing. The daisy chain principle - mutual gratification all round - was thrown out. FOULER was nasty, with a callous disregard for faneds' amour propre. Its influence - disrespectful, iconoclastic, satirical and serious - is still being felt today.

And that's the way it should be. A fairly substantial part of fandom is composed of people who can be described either truthfully or politely, but not truthfully and politely. The existence of these dolts and nincompoops - to use the polite description - would be of no importance but for the corrupting and obstructive influence they exert upon the more worthwhile section of fandom. Fanzines and fan writers are not given the heavy critical stick in any hope or expectation that they will repent and reform; they're taken out and shot pour encourager les autres. It's worth giving even the incorrigibles a quick stomping once in a while just to remind other readers that if they produce similar inept garbage themselves they needn't expect shouts of joy and hearty congratulations.

But what about the new fan? Inevitably he makes mistakes - frequently the same mistakes that have been made every year by the new intake of fans. This is one of the reasons why fanzine fans often drop out of the BSFA: they weary of the monotonous repetition of errors.

In the beginning the new fan sees a fanzine as either an amateur fiction publication or a "little" magazine of literary criticism. This reflects the general view dividing non-technical writing into either fiction or essays - the first being recreation and the second self-improvement. (Since students usually have enough essays to write it's not surprising that the publications of college groups tend to favour fan fiction.) Fanzines by new fans tend to be heavy going. Fan fiction is usually awful, and always useless (writing fiction for fanzines leads to nothing but a talent for writing fiction for fanzines) and earnest criticism is extremely tedious to all save the most rabid devotee unless done by a competent critic. The number

of critics consistently capable of holding the attention of the reader - let alone arousing his interest is small. The general standard of SF criticism in British fanzines - new and old - is deplorably low. It's a sad state of affairs but one might be more tempted to offer encouragement rather than insult save for the feeling that much of this wearisome stuff is a result of the authors doing what they feel is expected rather than what they have a real interest for. Such submission to received ideas runs counter to the first principle of fanzine writing, which is to do what you're good at and what you enjoy doing. (The second and equally important principle is that what you write must also be enjoyable or interesting for your readers. Otherwise you might as well leave it lying in a drawer.)

It's an observable fact that wholly serious (Serious and constructive) fans don't last. Sooner or later they realise that fan fiction is a waste of time and that the school essay type of criticism is equally pointless. Some of them make it to higher levels of erudition before realising that the thesis-mongering of academics is also sterile. Disillusioned, they drop out. After all, what's the point, once the lack of utility becomes obvious? For the departing serious, fanzines just aren't worth a damn. Those who stay, however, more discover a little more.

SF fandom is not the only fandom. There are innumerable other special interest groups concerned with some particular hobby, sport, pastime, political, social or moral ideal: everything from collecting stamps to swapping wives. Many of these bodies have what could be called fanzines: spottily duplicated bulletins and magazines devoted to spreading news, information or propaganda; promoting social contacts; advertising buying, selling and whatever other dealings may be involved. Such publications are readily understandable to the outsider since they fulfill obvious purposes and are clearly nothing more than specialised versions of forms which are already familiar in other contexts. The newcomer expects SF fanzines to follow this pattern. Indeed, the serious end is cast in this mould. Book reviews, bibliographies, biographies, interviews and critical notes all make up a whole that is immediately accessible and meaningful to anyone who knows his SF.

But Science Fiction fanzines are a unique phenomenon: not so much a symptom as a disease; less a means than an end. Fanzines aren't for anything in any primary sense. They represent one of the few areas of communication of which it can be said truthfully that the medium is the message.

And that, of course, is not much help to anyone trying to penetrate beyond the superficial pen-friend and social-club aspects of fandom. This nonsense is what it's all about? The trouble is that no wholly appropriate analogue exists and the paradoxes of fandom and fanzines being both trivial and important, laughable and serious, have to be taken on trust.

A five-minute look will make the weaknesses and inadequacies of fanzines fairly obvious (and I don't mean the print quality) but what are their strengths and virtues?

These are less readily visible. One point which might appeal to the newcomer (though it might be rejected with scorn as irrelevant by the more experienced) is that in fanzines one finds the work of the next generation of SF writers. Many SF writers - from Arthur C. Clarke to Michael Moorcock - have been involved with fandom at some point in their careers. A number have remained faithful to the amateur/professional dichotomy and have allowed their connection with fandom to fade away once they've reached certain heights of fame and fortune, but there are others who are prepared to subscribe to

OF THE WOLVES, THE TEXAS KRAIN SAW MASSACRE, TO THE DEVIL A DAUGHTER, VAMPIRES (a silly female vampire film), and THE WEREWOLF OF WASHINGTON. Many of these films I haven't seen.

To cover all these films in detail here would be impossible so I have selected a few films for more detailed comment.

AT THE EARTH'S CORE

GB 89 mins Director: Kevin Connor
Producer: John Dark

Dr. Abner Perry (Peter Cushing) has invented a giant mole that can tunnel through the Earth and carry passengers. On its maiden journey with David Innes (Doug McClure) and the Dr. the machine goes out of control and burrows its way to the centre of the Earth where they find the land of Pellucidar. This world is ruled by Mahars, lizard like birds, who control half-human Sagoths and feed off primitive human slaves. Innes and the Dr. are captured by the Sagoths and taken to the Mahar city to become slaves. Innes meets Dia (Caroline Munro) and together with the local populace they set out to free the slaves.

I suppose a film like this should be looked at on two levels. On the one level it is highly enjoyable, colourful, exciting, on the other it is silly and preposterous. The first level is, of course, the kids'. I reckon this film has no appeal to anyone over the age of ten. It's not as if Burroughs was a particularly brilliant writer in the first place (and he's certainly very dated) and neither is the track record of Amicus very special...the two together spell disaster.

DEATH RACE 2000

USA 78 mins Director: Paul Bartel
Producer: Roger Corman

By the year 2000 the people of the United Provinces of America are emotionally exhausted by the horrors of war and the lingering after effects of the Great Depression of 1979. The only event that can stimulate them out of their apathy is the Annual Transcontinental Death Race sponsored by Mr President, their ruler. The aim of the race is to get from one side of the country to the other scoring points for mowing down pedestrians (100 points for anyone over 75, 70 for children etc). The race portrayed on the film features 5 competitors driving their lethally equipped cars: Calamity Jane (Mary Woronov) in her stud bull, Mathilda the Hun (Roberta Collins) in her Buzz Bomb, Nero the Hero (Martin Kove) in The Lion, Machine Gun Joe (Sylvester Stallone) in his Peacemaker and the fabled Frankenstein (David Carradine) in The Monster. To add complications a set of revolutionaries opposed to the race set out to sabotage it and assassinate Mr President.

Take a brutal sport, mix in a large dollop of humour, a dash of irony, stir with vigor and flair and you end up with a marvellous meal of unpretentious nonsense that costs only a fraction of the budget of, for example, ROLLERBALL. However, I found the humour and slapstick destroyed any real message that the makers of the film wished to convey and for that reason found ROLLERBALL preferable. Still, on its own level, the film is very enjoyable and has been so successful that a follow up is in preparation called DEATH SPORT 2000.

THE FOOD OF THE GODS

USA 90 mins Director & Producer: Bert Gordon

Morgan (Marjoe Gortner) and Brian (Jon Cypher), two footballers, arrive on a remote island where, to their horror, a colleague is killed by a giant wasp. They stumble across the house of Mrs Skinner (Ida Lupino) whose husband has discovered a spring oozing a white sticky substance which, when eaten by animals and insects, causes them to grow to an enormous size. Mr Skinner has revealed his

FILMS Graham R. Poole

*HIFTY NOVEL YOU GOT HERE, SON, COURSE
BEFORE WE FILM IT, WE'LL HAVE TO CHANGE
THE PLOT, CHARACTERS AND CONCEPT
AND GIVE IT A NEW TITLE, BUT WE'LL
REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE ORIGINAL...*

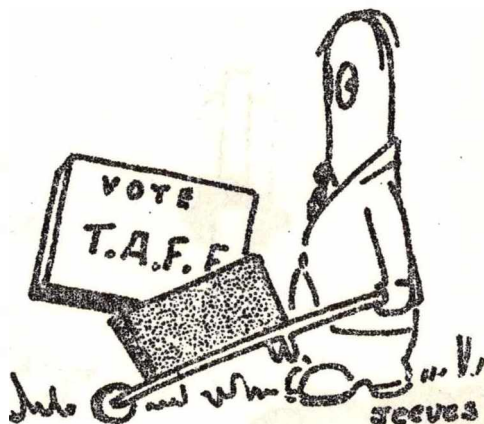


1976 was a fairly remarkable year for the SF film buff with the emergence of a number of first class SF films, the best of which were *THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH*, *ROLLERBALL*, *THE STEPPORD WIVES* and *DEATH RACE 2000*. The rest fell into two categories - the abnormal and the ridiculous.

Abnormal films, the in-thing now that the vogue for large scale disaster epics has momentarily waned, started the year with a giant killer shark in *JAWS* and ended with an overgrown ape in the remake of *KING KONG*. In between there was a marauding bear in *GRIZZLY*, giant parasites in *SHIVERS*, incendiary beetles in *BUG*, carnivorous worms in *SQUIRM*, supersized hens, rats, wasps and worms in *FOOD OF THE GODS*...and this obsession with giant or strange behaving beasts shows no sign of stopping yet which is a great shame. It will take a really good film to top the best example of this genre, Hitchcock's *THE BIRDS*, and I do not foresee it coming.

Many of the films in the abnormal category can also be classed as ridiculous - there was another Japanese Godzilla abortion *MONSTERS FROM AN UNKNOWN PLANET*, another typical low budget cheap looking Amicus production *AT THE EARTH'S CORE*, and another filmic misinterpretation of SF, *LOGAN'S RUN*.

For the horror and suspense buffs there were *THE ANTICHRIST*, *DEVIL WITHIN HER* and *THE OMEN* riding along in the wake of *THE EXORCIST*. There were also *DEATH WEEKEND*, *THE DEVIL'S RAIN* (a mediocre film), *GARRIE* (received good reviews), *FAMILY PLOT* (Disney-esque Hitchcock - not one of his best), *HOUSE OF MORTAL SIN*, *LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF*, *OBSESSION* (slow moving but excellent), *PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK*, *RACE WITH THE DEVIL*, *THE REINCARNATION OF PETER PROUD*, *THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW* (double billed with the excellent *PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE*), *SCHIZO*, *SEIZURE*, *THE TENANT*, *TENDERNESS*



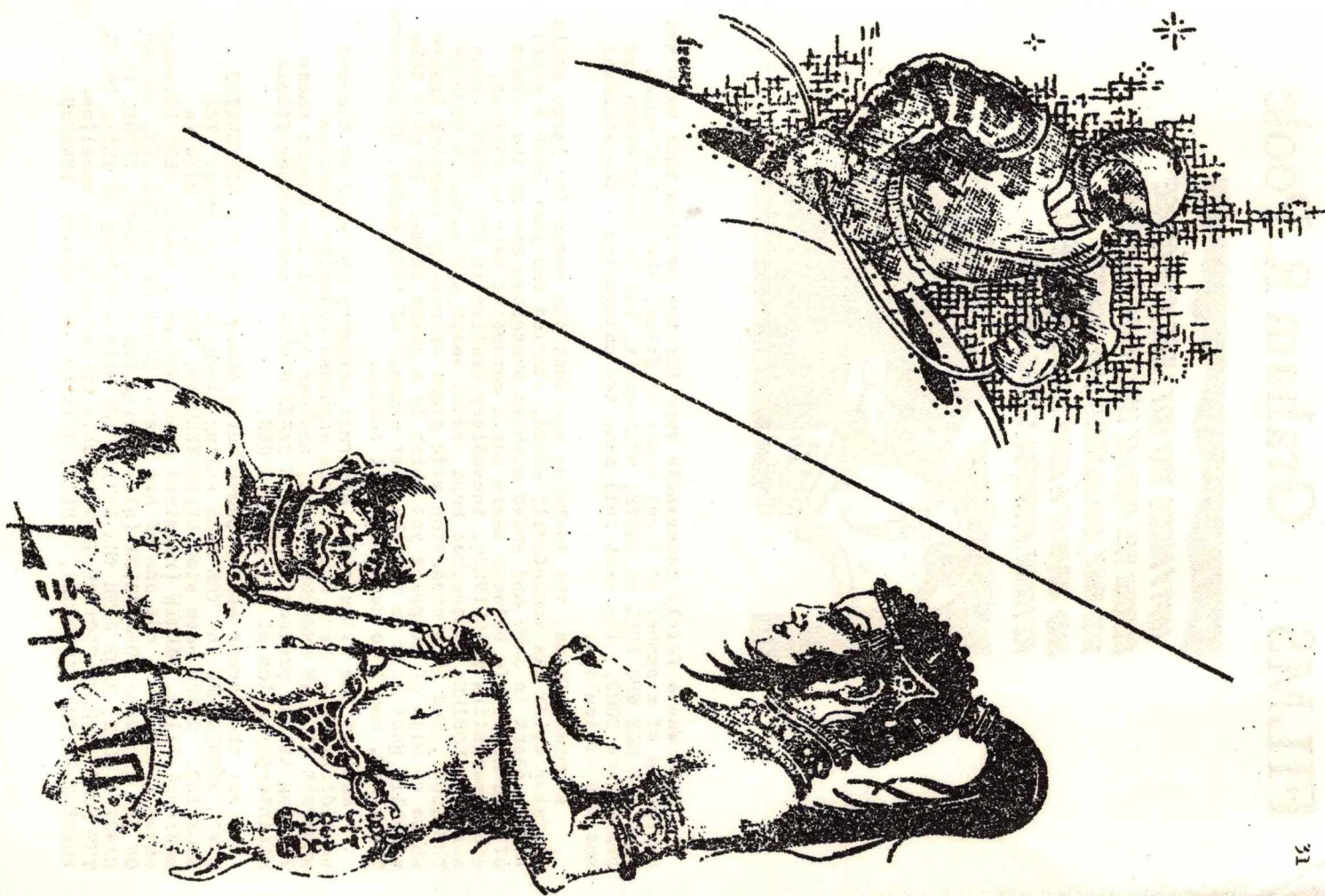
the concept of the Whole Scene - fanzines as a complementary extension of SF rather than a parasitic growth - and maintain contact. Some of the best British fanzines and the best British fanwriting come from people who have already made at least some money out of SF and will in all probability provide many of our future writers and editors. Some of them are professionals or near-professionals already.

That's a come-on for those who are unable to divorce merit from money, who cannot see that cash is no guarantee of quality. There are also good fanwriters who will never sell a thing, but who nevertheless make their contribution to the SF scene in the form of some additional ingredient for the ferment of argument and mutual stimulation that makes up the background.

Books do not appear out of thin air. They are a product of the lives led by those who write them, and - particularly in the case of SF - of the intellectual influences to which they are exposed. This process can be watched working in fanzines. It's a uniquely fascinating study. Many of the best fanzines seem to have only the vaguest connection with SF, simply because the writers are so far inside that they no longer need to prove their knowledge by writing about SF directly. The SF is taken for granted. They're writing about their lives - their thoughts - of which SF is inevitably and naturally a part.

And there's the understanding of the whole business. Fanzines are not for people who regard SF as a hobby. They're for those who regard SF - or that state of mind that accompanies SF - as an important part of their lives. This commitment does not have to be explicit, any more than a preference for the permanent possession of your good right arm. The thing is there, and it will continue to be there. No further proof of existence is needed, no self-justifying muscle flexings are necessary. A fanzine is another extension of yourself, and what you accomplish with it is dependant only on your own skill and ingenuity.

As with SF, so with fanzines: all things are possible.



VITAL STATISTICS

HUGOS

Novel

FOREVER WAR - Joe Haldeman

Novella

HOME IS THE HANGMAN - Roger Zelazny

Novelette

BOARDERLAND OF SOL - Larry Niven

Short Story

CATCH THAT ZEPPLIN - Fritz Leiber

Dramatic Presentation

A BOY AND HIS DOG

Professional Editor

BEN BOVA (of ANALOG)

Professional Artist

KELLY PREAS

Fanzine

LOCUS

Fan Writer

DICK GEIS

Fan Artist

TIM KIRK

THE JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD

For best new writer

TOM REAMY

THE GANDALF AWARD

L. Sprague De Camp

THE BIG HEART AWARD

RON GRAHAM

FIRST FANDOM AWARD

HARRY RATES

NEBULAS

Novel

THE FOREVER WAR - Joe Haldeman

Novella

HOME IS THE HANGMAN - Roger Zelazny

Novelette

SAN DIEGO LIGHTFOOT SUE - Tom Reamy

Short Story

CATCH THAT ZEPPLIN - Fritz Leiber

Dramatic Writing

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN

Nebula Grand Master

JACK WILLIAMSON

THE B.S.F.A. AWARD

ORBITSVILLE - Bob Shaw

AUGUST DERLETH FANTASY AWARDS

Novel

THE HOLLOW LANDS - Michael Moorcock

Short Story

THE 2nd BOOK OF FRITZ LEIBER

Film

MONTY PYTHON & THE HOLY GRAIL
- Terry Jones & Terry Gilliam

Comics

THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN

WORLD FANTASY AWARDS

Novel

BID TIME RETURN - Richard Matheson

Short Fiction

BELSEN EXPRESS - Fritz Leiber

Best Colledtion

THE INQUIRIES OF DR. ESTENHAZY

Special Award - Professional

DON GRANT

Special Award - Amateur

CARCOSA

Life Award

FRITZ LEIBER

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