

No. 33

December 80 / January 81

Shap... III

Now, if I was superstitious, I would not continue to type this 'editorial', because this is the fourth attempt at a beginning - must be a bad idea, bad sign, I should say to myself - start again with a different plan of attack - (woops, nearly gave the game away).

On one hand, I could tell you how long it took to type up this issue (yawn, yawn), on the other hand, I could go to the other extreme and prognosticate and divulge my inner-most thoughts on the future of mankind (etc, etc), as exemplified by Dave Pringle in his editorial for Foundation. (Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not taking the rise out of his article, quite the reverse - it could well prove (in retrospect) to have heralded a new era in SF criticism. It will probably turn out to have proved only a new era in terms of foundation itself. A great pity, since it is a masterful and brave article.)

I could use this forum to tell you about the very wonderful Eastercon in Leeds next year, but I have no wish to write like Alan Dorey, and what's more, it would be extremely un-ethical of me as I am Secretary of that convention. (Now, this is not a slight on Alan's writing, merely a statement that I have a different style from his.)

So, you see how careful I have to be in order not to offend anyone.

I am quite sure that MATRIX could continue to exist for many years, going round its clubs, and hearing all about why Arth Pudor thinks Isaac Astral is a cretin.

But what actually what members want? I could guess that 97% of you couldn't give a shit what MATRIX contained, but 3% of members would write in and tell me that I was either right or wrong, thereby proving my point.

I think Chris Priest, in my interview with him, sums it up just about right when he says that (Vector) shouldn't be a personal fanzine, but, at the same time, the editor should bring his or her personality to it. I think the same should be said of MATRIX.

intro

Of course, a major function of MATRIX could be said to be provoking a response but that would be approaching the subject from the wrong angle. Would I appear too idealistic if I said that MATRIX shouldn't have to provoke a response - there should be sufficient issues of concern/interest on which members should be able to, or want to, write?

I said in my first issue that I intended to keep to much the same format as the Harveys, and that remains, largely, my intentions: but, at the same time, I must bring my personality to the zine and that, inevitably, must mean that if I intend to fulfil my original notion to keep MATRIX for roughly the same time as John and Eve, then there will be some changes.

Ah, now for the difficult bit - what should those changes be? I'm certainly not going to impose any, but equally, I'm not going to act on the strength of half a dozen people telling me that they do, or do not, like this or that column.

Several people have already told me that they wish to see a 'meaty' letter column (so would I) - now, maybe I should tell you that I would like to see MATRIX become far more of a focal point for fandom - and the fan-nish side of fandom at that: VECTOR fullfills the so-called Sercon side so it is right for MATRIX to satisfy the other side.

And how is this achieved? Well, for a start, it means far more fans taking an active part - be it by sending contributions, news, or writing a letter.

A forlorn hope? - we shall see in the next issue.

Interview with CHRIS PRIEST

by GRAHAM JAMES

The following interview took place at NOVACON this year. I had been keen to interview Chris Priest, the fan, as opposed to Christopher Priest, the writer. Naturally, the two personae overlap but the major part of our conversation does cover Chris' attitude towards fandom, and an account of his early associations. Despite the obvious distractions and interruptions in the setting of the Convention Bar, Chris spoke openly and fluidly and virtually no 'tailoring' was required in transcribing the interview.

GJ When did you first get to know of fandom, Chris?

CP I bought a copy of Brian Aldiss' Penguin Science Fiction Anthology back in the early sixties and in the 'prelims' it said that Brian was The President of The BSFA. I assumed that it meant that The BSFA was an organisation for SF writers - so I didn't do anything about it, but thought - "Gosh, how marvellous it must be to be a member of The BSFA!" One day, there was a review of a John Christopher novel in the now late unlamented Evening News, which said, basically, that ...'This is a good book - what a pity it is Science Fiction, because all Science Fiction is rubbish.....'

About three days later they published a letter from Brian, in defence of SF - I'm sure you're familiar with the arguments - but the point was that the newspaper printed Brian's address; so I wrote to him, saying "Yes, I agree with all you said, can I join the BSFA please?" Brian wrote me a smashing letter, saying "Yes, come on in." So I did.

So, it was through The BSFA! How old were you then?

About eighteen - just a few years ago! After that I got involved in writing bits and pieces for VECTOR - I can't remember them all - but there was an article published under a pseudonym - I was very shy at that time. And then, through writing things for VECTOR, (I use the word 'things' because I'm not going to admit to what my first published work was)I got on to something called the BSFA Welcomittee - I don't know if that still exists, but the idea was that you wrote to unsuspecting new members and sort of pounced on them. I did this, and one of the people I wrote to was Charles Platt (applause, laughter, groan...). He wrote back and said that he was proposing to publish an SF magazine to pay his way through college (he was just off to Cambridge) and it was going to be called 'POINT OF VIEW'. It was to be sold for 6d and I thought this was jolly enterprising of him; he sent me a copy of the first issue, which was full of short stories under various pseudonyms and they were actually better than some of the stuff being published professionally - although they were still pretty awful. I then got involved with writing for POINT OF VIEW and then, through that, writing for ZENITH as it was then. I got gradually more involved in fanzine fandom and from there, I got involved in fandom and then started going to conventions.

You weren't writing SF at the time, I presume, so did your writing of fiction develop from writing for fanzines?

That's right. Fanzines were always looking for material and one of the things I started doing was writing fiction for fanzines. I published something like 10 short stories in fanzines in the early years: the first one was published, under a pseudonym, by Roy Kay in his fanzine CHAOS.

In those days there was a thing in existence called The E J Carnell Blacklist (I wrote about that in DEADLOSS), and the only markets for SF were NEW WORLDS, SCIENCE FANTASY, and SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES, all published by Ted Carnell - so to sell SF, you had to sell to Carnell. I had this quite simple belief that he had a blacklist - in other words, if you sent him a story that wasn't good enough, he not only rejected it, but he wrote your name down and made sure that he never bought a story from you. I didn't want to enter that blacklist so I never sent anything in; consequently, for a long time, I was an unsubmitting author. Then Carnell gave up and Mike Moorcock took over and it wasn't long before the Mike Moorcock Blacklist came into existence, so I didn't submit to Mike either. I might have gone on like that for ever.

This was in 1964/65?

Well, I wrote my first short story in 1963 and I began writing quite a lot in '64/65 - it wasn't until January 1965 that I plucked up courage to submit a story to Moorcock.

So those early fanzines you refer to contained a lot of fiction (I won't call it 'fan-fiction'); nowadays, this seems to be frowned upon, but at that time you were contributing fiction rather than 'fannish' articles?

Yes, that's true, but it was much the same then as it is now. People hated fan-fiction; a lot of people wrote it; few fanzines published it; and hardly anybody read it - it was just a way of getting in to print. But the value is, that if you can find a fanzine that will publish your fiction (and I know that FOCUS is more than a fanzine, but it fullfills the same purpose), you do, at least, have the advantage of submitting it to an editor, getting his opinion on it, and seeing it typed out and produced in a different form from your own. As it were, it has passed a certain kind of test and I benefitted a hell of a lot from that.

One of the advantages of the SF world is that, if you are a beginning writer, you can get material published in fanzines - people may turn their noses up at this, but it is good and well worth doing.

I'm pleased to hear you say that your writing benefitted and developed from your activities in the fanzine field. However, I've also heard it said that people who have got involved with fanzines and who are aspiring writers at the same time, tend to get diverted from their writing - so it's a sort of double-edged sword.

Yes, a classic dilemma, or syndrome. You get so busy being a fan that you don't do anything else. I sort of escaped that: I've always seen my life as being very fortunate through my native laziness - I'm always too lazy to get that involved in fandom - for me, writing is the easy option.

You mention that you did submit to NEW WORLDS, yet you're not generally regarded as having been part of that school. What were your first associations?

Well, actually, my first sale came about through The BSFA. I was editing TANGENT at that stage and, like FOCUS, I could never get enough material. I thought of using this story I had written called THE RUN. I had sent it to Moorcock, who had rejected it, and to Carnell, who had done likewise: so I had sent it to Bonfiglioli. In those days, sending a manuscript to Bonfiglioli was tantamount to dropping it in the waste paper bin, because it was legendary that he never answered manuscripts. The story went round that when a Ms envelope arrived at his office, he had this sort of Pavlovian response and threw it over his shoulders on to a heap of unopened Mss. I gather to this day that the heap is still there. Whenever he did an issue, he would pick up something from the pile, weigh it, and when he thought he had enough for an issue, he would send the Mss, still unopened, to the printer.

My only copy of THE RUN was with Bonfiglioli, so to put it in to TANGENT, in order to make up the issue, I had to get it back from him. I decided to ring Bon (although I didn't know him) and tell him of my story. After some conversation, he went away for about half an hour, came back out of breath, and told me that he had just discovered it - it was going to be included in the next issue! That's how I sold my first story.

But, still no nearer to NEW WORLDS?

Well, Mike was a better editor to submit to, for many reasons, but since those days, I've got to know Bon a hell of a lot better. He's a great writer by the way - he writes terrific novels. With Mike, you always got a very positive response; I mean a lot of the ignorance about the New Wave movement, as it was called in the sixties, came from people who weren't involved in it. For people who were, like myself, in the sense that I sold to NEW WORLDS, it was extremely exciting - one always got a strong feedback from Mike, and that was worth a hell of a lot. So, you tended to submit to him first. I did, in fact, sell two stories to him at that time (I sold a third a few years later).

Can we turn back to the beginnings of your association with fandom. Do you recall your first Convention?

Yes, Peterborough, in 1964.

And who were your contemporaries at that time - Graham Charnock?

No, No. Charnock was but a gleam in somebody's eye then. My two particular friends at that time were Dickie Howett, who is still a friend and who was known mostly in fandom for his fan-art, cartoons, and caricatures: and Charles Platt, with whom I later fell out (mainly because he's an extremely boring person). So I spent the convention going round with those two, which was difficult, because they disliked each other. At that Con I met Pete Weston. Rog Peyton, Roy Kay, Ron Bennett - in fact many of the people who still come to conventions.

You found it easy then, to get acquainted with fans?

Yes, gradually. I think the reason why many people are put off

by conventions is that they make the mistake of thinking that they are going to get to know everybody at once - which is impossible in any environment. One gets to know just a few people at one's first Con, but by the time you've been to about five cons, you will be on friendly terms with 20+ people. If you're at your first con, on your own, by far the best things to do are, either go to the scheduled programme items, or sit down in the bar, with a pint in front of you and wait for someone to sit next to you - someone will soon introduce themselves. I mean, at this convention, I've already met 2 or 3 people for the first time because it's their first con - in fact, this is, I think, the first time I've spoken to you, properly, at a convention(Laughter).

As an anecdote, there was a piece written by Walt Willis, a few years ago, for NEBULA: he was writing a fan column ('Diary of a fan' I think) and it starts off with this really bumptious neo-fan (as he portrays it), who's got all these great plans to get Heinlein to write a short story for his new fanzine, etc. - in effect, the Charles Platt syndrome - and he never gets an answer. "Don't think much of fandom..." he says. And then, the last but one entry in the diary says...."Got a fanzine the other day from some crud neo - not bad, bit stupid, there's a few letters that I quite enjoyed; maybe I'll write to one or two of those people."

The last entry in the diary (some 6 months later) says.... "...Haven't had much time for this column lately, I've been organising the next Eastercon, I'm running the next TAFF race, and I'm Fan Guest of Honour at such and such a con".....and so forth. And, of course, this is the way you get involved in fandom - simply by making friends with people.

An apt story, I'm sure. Was fandom organised (if that's the right word) in much the same way in the sixties as what it is now? Were there similar groupings, for example, such as we have today, based on particular groups of people or parts of the country?

Oh yes, parts of the country - people have always tended to do that. In those days, there was the London Group, the Liverpool Group, the Manchester Group, and so on, much the same as now. But what has changed is the emergence of single interest groups, for example, Games fans, Sword and Sorcery fans, Star Trek fans, and Dr Who fans and that sort of fragmentation. I feel really left out of all that and I don't understand it - people going around saying obscure things to others in their group.

Of course, one of the features of the groups you mention is that they don't tend to mix, either together, or with the mainstream of fandom: there is a fair degree of alienation. Maybe at Eastercons there is some cross-over but, for example, at this con I doubt whether there are any 'trekkies' - in fact they do have their own conventions. Should these groups mix, or doesn't it really matter if everyone goes away and does their own thing?

I think that in the long term, something like Blakes 7 fandom is ultimately ephemeral because when the TV series stops, unless there's something really strong about it (and I'm sure there's not) - it will eventually die. I would have said that once about STAR TREK, but that's clearly a phenomenon, beyond my comprehension. Maybe if they do continue long enough, they'll probably inergrate with the mainstream of fandom, as it were, because people don't go around and assess others merely on the basis of them being a BLAKE'S

7 fan or whatever. Personally, I find the programme not very interesting, but that's not a condemnation - it's just not my taste.

I remember that after my first convention, I came away with a burning desire to publish a fanzine, did you feel the same after Peterborough?

Not really; I think I'd already published my first fanzine before the Con. I came away from Peterborough with the distinct desire not to publish any fanzines - I was fed up with the whole thing. In fact I went back with Platt and wrote a one-shot fanzine called BANG, which was an attempt at a loud Convention Report(!) I've still got a copy of that, with which I intend, one day, to blackmail Platt, because it's got his name on it, not mine. But soon after, I'd got over that and I was doing my second issue.

Did you then become very active in the fanzine field and publish a lot, or were you mainly a contributor?

I don't know what you mean by 'very active', but I published about 7 or 8 fanzines over the period '64 to '66. In fact, I've probably published more fanzines in the last two years than in my so-called early fannish period.

Was the subject matter of fanzines in the mid to late sixties any different to what it is now?

Sort of, much the same: there were fanzines about Science Fiction, there were fanzines about fandom. They obviously crossed over; Charles Platt did a sort of fannish fanzine, and left fandom Pete Weston did a sercon fanzine and became a fan.

What I was thinking of, was whether the spirit and radical mood of the sixties was reflected in fanzines at that time.

Not really. But there was Graham Charnock's first fanzine, called PHILE, which started as a fairly conventional fanzine, but as the sixties advanced, Graham was actually working as an associate editor on NEW WORLDS and this obviously rubbed off onto PHILE. He didn't do many issues of PHILE with the new wave, but I think that the last two issues were really quite new wave in their own way. On the whole, Fandom has always been very conservative: there were underground magazines which I was regularly reading at the time, and fanzines which I was also reading, but the two were quite different.

I mentioned this because there does seem to have been some impact on fanzines from the Punk/New Wave movement in the last few years; some editors have attempted to import ideas and approaches on layout and design from the Punk magazines into SF fanzines.

I'm very interested in this aspect because people have been doing things like Xerox fanzines and paste-up fanzines - people such as Cyril Symms and the guys who do SECOND HAND WAVE. It's interesting that the word Fanzine has enlarged in this time - fanzine now applies to comics and Punk/music magazines; I don't know whether people are coming into fanzine fandom, mistaking its identity - this is probably not the case. Personally I prefer fanzines to be mimeographed and on duplicating paper, but that's

just me; I don't share the view that a fanzine is not a fanzine just because it has been Xeroxed and not duplicated. In fact, many of the 'new wave' fanzines are actually very well written.

So, in addition to your fanzine activities, you also got involved with the BSFA itself; did you do anything other than TANGENT?

Well, I never edited VECTOR - they wouldn't let me; it was always a secret desire, but they never asked. I won't do it now - pride and all that! (laughter)

You will have seen a number of different editors of BSFA publications over the years; do any periods stand out in your mind as having been particularly outstanding?

I can't really answer that - it would be unfair. People look back at Archie Mercer's regime with great fondness - some say that Malcolm Edwards' period was the great time ((at this point, Malcolm actually walked by....))..."Hello Malcolm".... - much laughter.

But, for me, the best editor of VECTOR is someone who fulfils two requirements: one, is that it must always be an Official organ of the BSFA - it must not be a personal fanzine. But having accepted that, and the strictures it might imply, the second point is that the editor must bring his or her personality to it. The best editors have been those who have managed to succeed in the two, and the worst have been those who have neglected one or the other. For example, there was a period in the sixties when VECTOR really was dire. In fact, I once tore up a copy of VECTOR and threw it away in anger, because it was such an illiterate, dull and tedious magazine - I won't mention who did it, that would be unfair. I left the BSFA in protest at that time because it had reached such dire straits; throughout the seventies it picked up and, I think, I joined again around '71/72 when Malcolm was doing VECTOR - a lot was going on then, and VECTOR became more literate.

Were you surprised to see Rob Holdstock getting involved with FOCUS, since he is a full-time writer?

Yes, I was very surprised actually, from one point of view, in that Rob and Chris Evans are both full-time writers and they don't have that much time available; FOCUS takes a great deal of time. There is that aspect, but on the other hand, my first introduction to Rob was through a magazine called MACROCOSM which, I think, he was editing whilst at Oxford. It was a fiction Magazine, and it was extremely good, so Rob's interests have always been in that field, and Chris as well. So, in that sense, I wasn't surprised at all - they're by far the best people to do it.

I would like to conclude by talking, a little, about the future direction of the BSFA. The last few years has seen quite a significant change; a lot of new people have taken over positions on the Council, with declared aims of changing/improving the BSFA; to what extent do you consider that these aims are being achieved?

It's really odd that the people who most enliven the BSFA are the people who first start by attacking it, or working outside it. Back in the sixties, at the very first con I went to, Ken Slater got up during a debate and said that he got more information about Science Fiction from ZENITH, Pete Weston's fanzine, than he did from VECTOR, and this was a criticism of VECTOR. The next issue of VECTOR was edited by Rog Peyton, who was the guy who was supplying all the information to ZENITH - he was thus, by far, the best person at the

competition

Competition M32: 'Clerihews' Dave Langford reports

The competition called for BSFA members to write a clerihew, or even as many as three clerihews, dealing with SF personalities. (This numerical restriction did not halt John Brunner, who was dragged foaming from the typewriter after completing his ninth.) I was pleased to receive no less than 14 entries, from Michael Ashley, Chris Bailey, Mike Brain, John Brunner, Lawrence Dean, Malcolm Edwards, T.P. Filby, Rob Freeth, Colin Greenland, Nic Howard, Rich Philpott, Kevin Smith, Allan T. Sutherland and Mike Wigley. Good on you all... though a mild 'tut-tut' goes to those who (perhaps deluded by the fact that one of the two examples quoted last issue used a fairly outrageous rhyme) fell into the assumption that the last two lines of a clerihew need not rhyme at all. Wrong! Herewith some samples:

James Blish
cried 'Tush!' and likewise 'Pish!'
and maintained that STARSHIP TROOPERS
was full of bloopers. [Brunner]

Frank Herbert
Would probably demur, but
He's God-Emperor to all the ecosphere
Freakos here. [Greenland]

Kilgore Trout
Came to call while I was out.
Is it Kurt Vonnegut Jr.
Or me who's getting lr.? [Sutherland]

Harry Harrison
Whose DEATHWORLD has no comparison
Also produced the Stainless Steel Rat:
The prat. [Filby]

Arkady hit Boris Strugatsky
On the head with a long, wooden, flat ski
To end their discussion
Of SF in Russian. [Smith]

Joseph Nicholas
Considered it ridiculous
That prestigious awards
Should be voted by the vulgar hordes.

Without revealing which Langford wrote that last item, I proceed to the Winner. The only way to choose, alas, was to consider overall standard for three entries: too many people produced one good clerihew, but only Malcolm Edwards seemed to hit the right libellous tone three times in a row. The editor of *Matrix* and the setter of this competition both deny all responsibility for the following...

L. Ron Hubbard
Finding no new ideas in
his cupboard
Took old sci-fi stories
and without apology
Republished them as
Scientology.

David H. Keller
Was a wonderful, warm
and admirable feller
His stories, however, were
thoroughly rotten
So nowadays he's totally
forgotten.

John Norman
Is not an alias of Martin
Bormann
The only former Nazis writing
SF as far as
one can tell
Are Robert Heinlein, Jack
Chalker and Jerry
Pournelle.

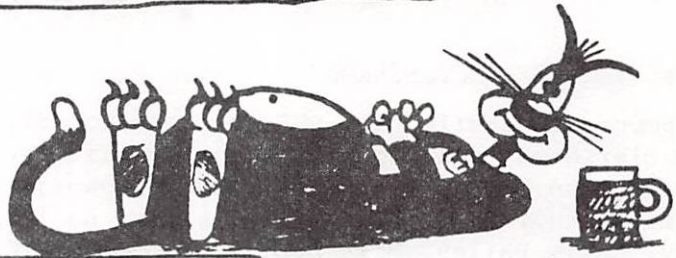
As I said before, the editor and the competition-setter are wholly irresponsible... Though I don't handle that department, Malcolm will doubtless be receiving a trophy of incomparable magnificence, such as a book token. Congratulations, boss. Thanks, too, to everyone else for an excellent turnout. Keep it up!

Competition M33: set by Dave Langford

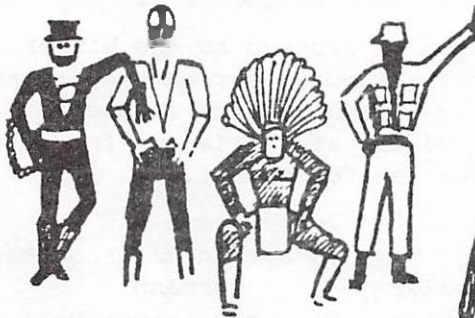
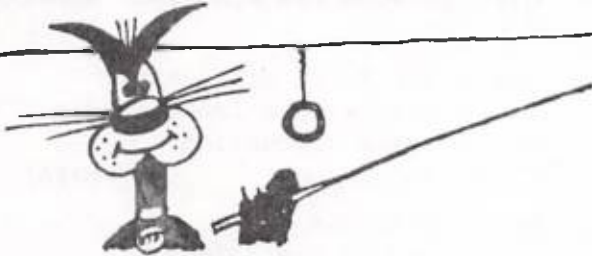
I think it was Edmund Crispin who invented the game 'Awful Lines From Shakespeare'—which involves seeking out such delights as the celebrated "O poor Gloster! Lost he his other eye?" Now let's have a game of 'Awful Lines From SF', preferably sentences of excruciating awfulness from at least moderately respectable authors. An example to start you off: "Feelings played flopdoodle in my guts." (Zelazny: "The Doors of his Face...") Entries on a postcard, please; not more than three awful lines per entry for the sake of my sanity; deadline is 24 January 1981. Send your entry to the Usual Address: 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks, RG2 7PW. ☆

LIMP JOSEPH'S IMMENSE RANDY GINGER TOM CAT in.....

IF...



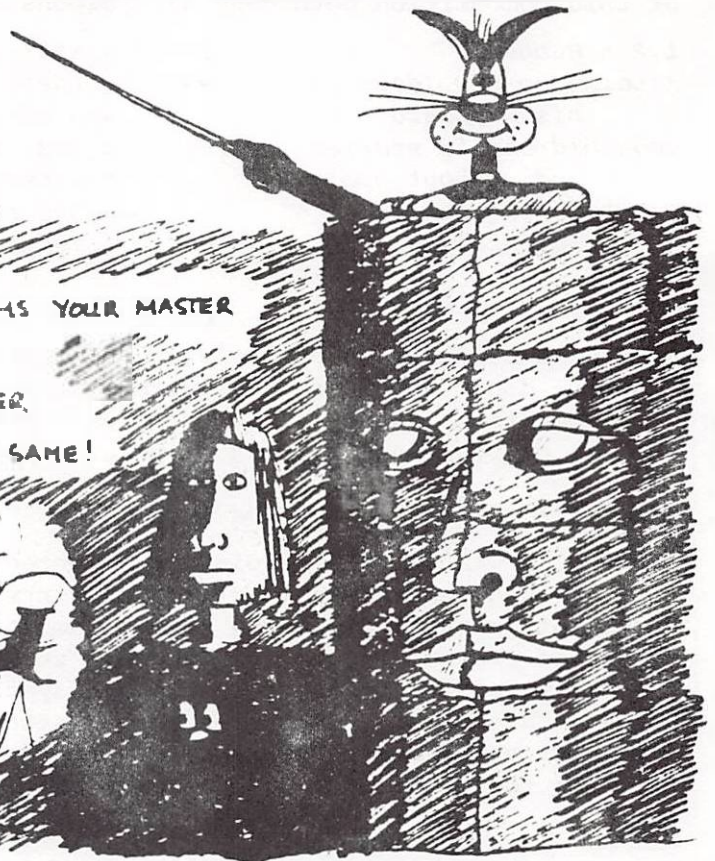
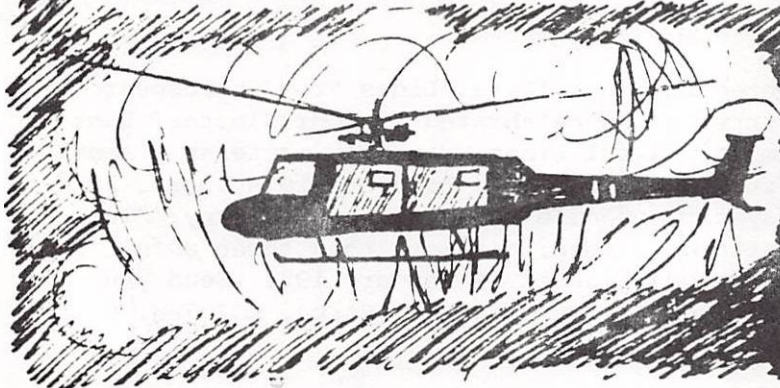
IF YOU CAN KEEP YOUR HEAD WHEN ALL ABOUT YOU
ARE LOSING THEIRS AND PRAISING ARTHUR CLARKE,
IF YOU CAN TRUST YOURSELF WHEN ALL MEN DOUBT YOU.
(THEY'LL SAY YOUR BITE IS WEAKER THAN YOUR BARK)

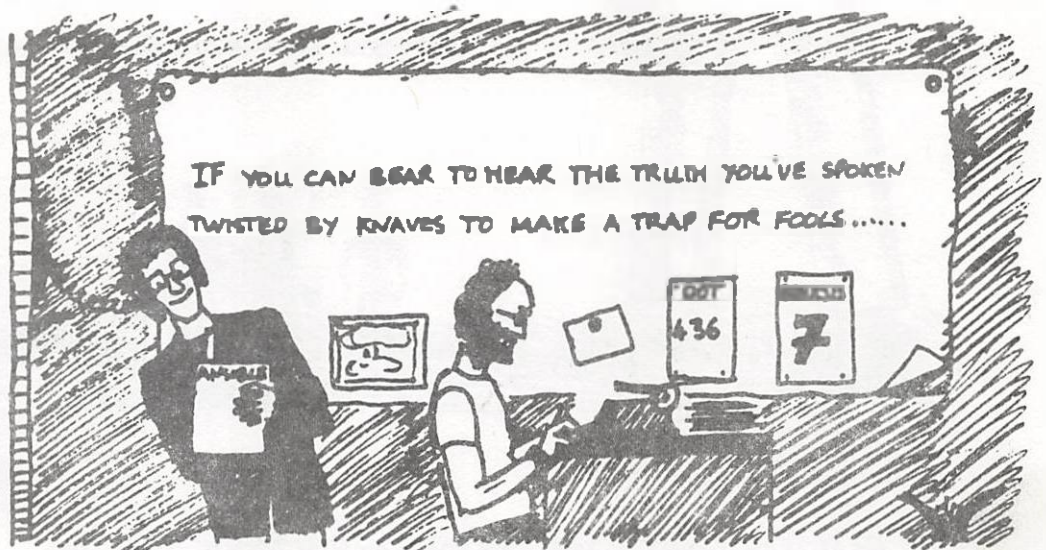


IF YOU CAN DRESS IN CLOTHES BOTH BRIGHT AND FANCY,
WITH CHIFFON SCARVES AND COLLARS MADE OF LACE
AND LET ALL THE OTHERS SAY THAT YOU'RE A NANCY!
BECAUSE THEY CANNOT COMPREHEND TRUE GRACE.

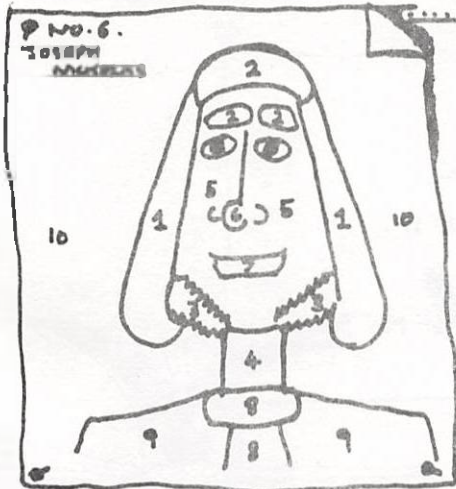
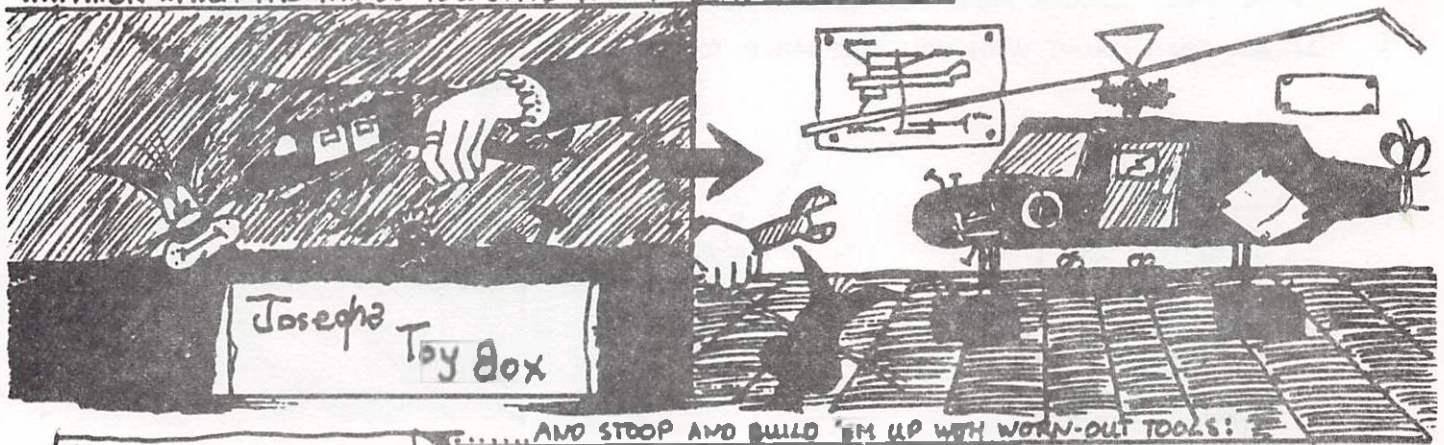


IF YOU CAN DREAM - AND NOT MAKE DREAMS YOUR MASTER
IF PITY NEVER EVER SPOILS YOUR AIM.
IF YOU CAN MEET WITH TRIUMPH AND DISASTER,
AND TREAT THESE TWO IMPOSTORS JUST THE SAME!

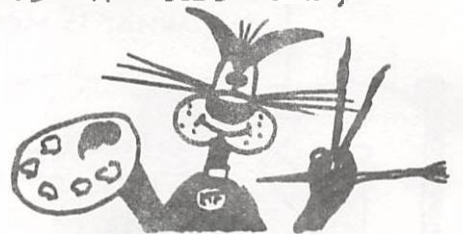




.....OR WATCH THE THINGS YOU GAVE YOUR LIFE TO, BROKEN.....



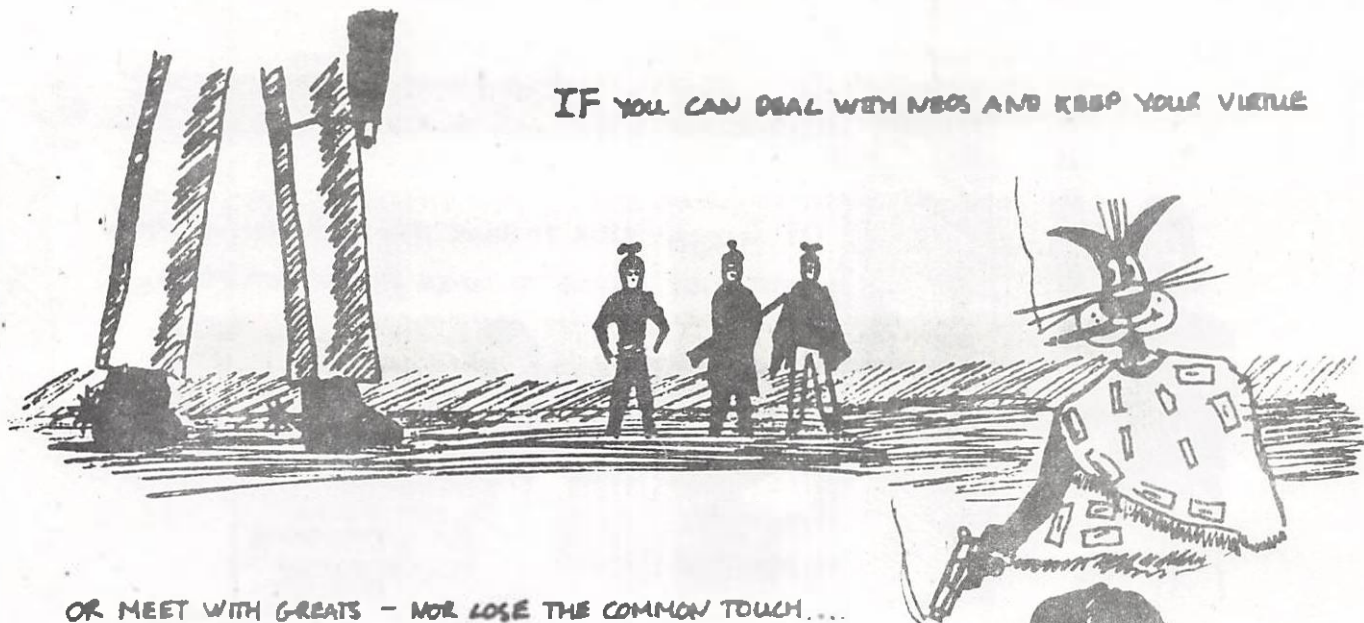
IF YOU CAN DRINK YOURSELF INTO A STUPOR,
AND LET THE CRETINS SCRIBBLE OVER YOU,
KNOWING YOU WILL NEVER LOSE YOUR TEMPER
IF THEY USE FELT-TIP PENS AND SUPER-GLUE;



IF YOU CAN FORCE YOUR HEART AND NERVE AND WALLET
TO SEND YOUR MAGAZINE TO EVERY FAN,
AND WHEN THEY SAY THERE IS NO MERIT IN IT
FIGHT BACK THE TEARS AND DO ANOTHER ONE!!!



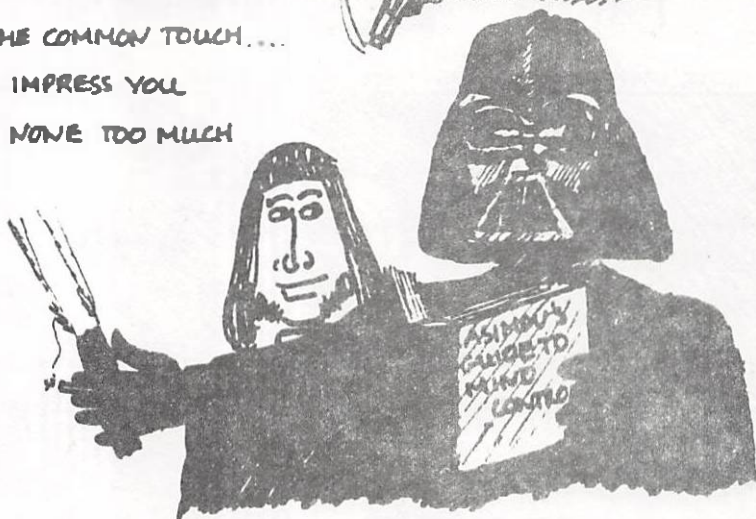
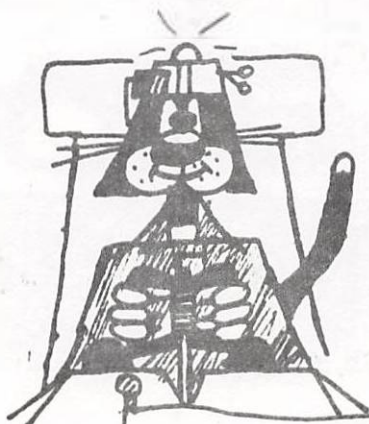
IF YOU CAN DEAL WITH NEOS AND KEEP YOUR VIRTUE



OR MEET WITH GREATS - NOR LOSE THE COMMON TOUCH...

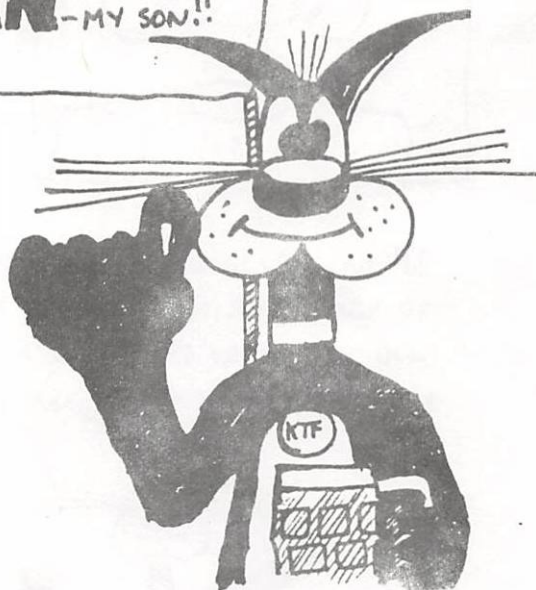
IF NEITHER CLARKE NOR ASIMOV IMPRESS YOU

IF ALL FANS COUNT WITH YOU, BUT NONE TOO MUCH



IF YOU CAN FILL THE UNFORGIVING MINUTE
WITH SIXTY SECONDS WORTH OF DISTANCE RUN,
YOURS IS THE EARTH AND EVERYTHING THAT'S IN IT!
AND WHAT IS MORE - YOU'LL BE A

FAN - MY SON!!



DRAWN BY

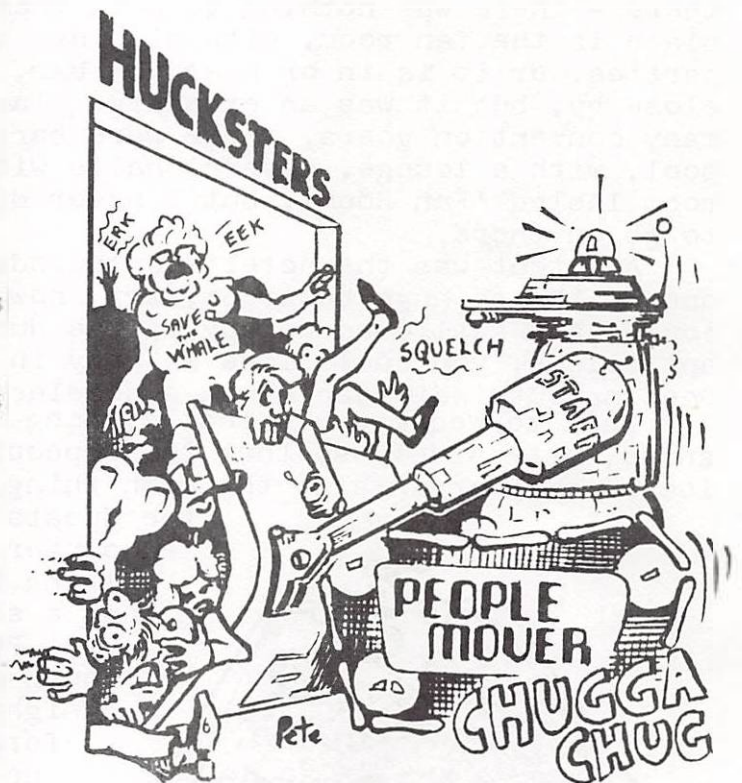
JOSEPH NICHOLAS SUPREK
JOHN COLLUCK 1980

ARTIST OF
THE EMPIRE

Noreascon 11, the 38th World Science Fiction Convention, was held at the Shearnton Hotel and Hynes Auditorium, Boston, Massachusetts, from Thursday 28 August to Monday 1 September. There were a hell of a lot of people there, I'm not exactly sure how many and I don't really care; suffice to say, there were more than enough, and that's as near to the statistics as you'll get from me.

I was staying with Selina Lovett who was in charge of VIP relations. That was why I found myself paying for bed and board by spending the con wearing a little ribbon proclaiming STAFF. It was also why I arrived at the con on the Tuesday, since Selina had to be there then.

A convention hotel before the con is just like any hotel anywhere - hushed lobbies, guests arriving and departing. It looked spacious at first glance and it was expensive, although I was beginning to get used to American prices by now. Selina and I hurriedly found our way up the escalator, then up another flight of stairs into a tiny office with people shifting tables around, answering phones, papering the walls with scribbled notes, and taking early registrations already. This was the headquarters of the con, the sweat-box where all the organisation was carried out. And the con was certainly well organised. There was a band of characters by the name of 'People Movers' who went round pinning STAFF or HELPER ribbons on just about anything that moved. At times it seemed that every second person I met wore one of these badges - they were worse than SEACON Gophers. The result was that the con ran extraordinarily well, programme items actually seemed to start on time and there were no major hassles that I was aware of. Somehow, it wasn't enough.



Some time later, in the evening, after having seen the sights of Boston during the day, I arrived back at the Hotel, and I was immediately whisked up to the Convention Suite on the 7th floor. Now the Convention Suite is a strange American invention, a sort of SFWA Suite for the whole con. The room next to it was a pitiable site: settees and armchairs and any other odd bits of furniture were occupied by people chained to typewriters and press release paper. My English accent contributed to my downfall and 2 sheets of closely-typed paper were thrust into my hands and I was instructed to check that a press release on David Langford Esq., the TAFF winner was correct. I made sure all the usual lies were included

and said it was O.K. But my ordeal was not over yet; a pad and pen now replaced the typescript and I was told..."Write a Press Release on English Fandom."

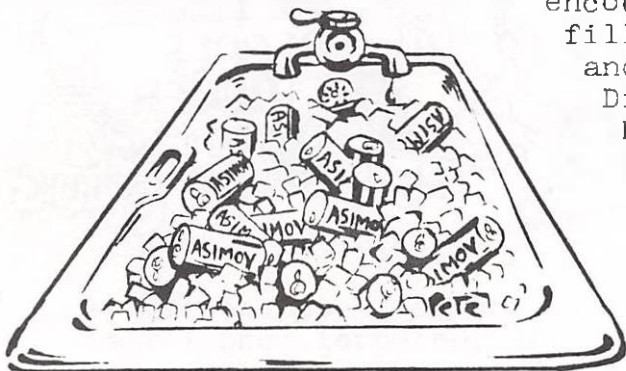
Argh! If you want to know what Hell is, try writing a one-page introduction to British fandom for the American press. Alone in a scene from Hieronymus Bosch, the only sound, the scratch of pen on paper, the clank of chains and the hysterical outburst as one or other of the people around me finally cracked - tuesday night fades from my memory.

Wednesday morning I finished off the press release, then went to Cambridge for the afternoon. That evening Selina had to pick up the Guests of Honour, Damon Knight and Kate Wilhelm, so I had to be around in case there any problems on the part of the Pros. There weren't, but I spent four hours wandering round the hotel not doing much of anything. I found out that evening just how inappropriate a convention hotel it was. Of course it had to be big to cope with an attending membership of 6,000 or more, but there was no focal point, no one place where you could be sure of meeting people. On the first floor (the ground floor as we would call it) there was a large lobby but, apart from a cocktail lounge, nowhere to sit. Upstairs there was a large hall used for registrations, a bar, and between the two an open area lined with notice boards and a scattering of seats. Everbody passed through here, it was the nearest thing to a central meeting place, yet, with few exceptions, no-one stayed there - there was nothing to hold them. At British cons the meeting place is the fan room, with displays and programme items and parties, or it is in or near the bar. Not here, there was a bar close by, but it was an expensive place with a tame pianist and not many convention goers. There were bars on other floors, a swimming pool, with a lounge, several halls with programme items, and even a room labled 'Fan Room', but I never did work out what was supposed to go on there.

And that was the hotel - onthursday the Hynes Auditorium would open with its huge bookroom, art show - the sort of place that could have swallowed up any of the Nuremburg Rallies! To employ an apt cliché, you could lose an army in the Sheraton-Hynes complex. Seeking out individuals was a hopeless task.

Back to Wednesday - that evening there was a party in the con suite, ostensibly so that those people who would spend the con locked away organising the damn thing would have a chance to meet

the Guests of Honour. It was my first encounter with the American habit of filling the bathtub with ice-cubes and a scattering of cans of beer, Diet Pepsi and Coke. God help the hung-over person who spends the night in that room and, in a forgetful doze, decides to wake up with an early morning bath. Anyway, I had already sampled American beer, so I decided to start off with Coke. I stood around in a doorway for a while - at parties I always



seem to find myself in doorways - not really knowing anyone and I was amazed at how strange a room party is when you're a stranger. Then Selina came in, escorting Damon Knight with his wild grey mane and Kate Wilhelm with a pleasant smile that she seemed to manage to retain throughout the weekend. Like visiting royalty, a path through the rabble opened up, chairs were found and positioned in the centre of the room, and they held court, the still centres of a maelstrom of people trying to make their obeisance to the Big Names.

I said hello to Damon and Kate, talked with Selina about what I had done during the day, which must have taken all of 5 seconds, and was standing around again wondering what to do. Then I noticed a couple of red shirts disappear into the bathroom.

"Funny," I thought, "they looked like Harry Bell and Jim Barker."

Closer investigation revealed that they were, indeed, the terrible twosome, and the evening started to cheer up. From the icy depths of the bathroom we dredged up some beer that almost tasted like a not-too-watered down version of the real thing; we decided that this party wasn't exactly the liveliest we had been to, and wandered along the corridor to another party. Here I remember Harry emerging from the bathroom with a can of beer called by some outlandish name like Narragansett, which he claimed was not bad, but which was also the last they had. Jim, meanwhile, was initiated into the strange American art of back-rub. Wednesday night drifted into Thursday morning and the true start of the convention. I remember Jim saying to me, "It's like being a neo again. I don't know anyone and they don't know me."



It seemed that things were improving on Thursday - familiar faces that are an indispensable part of a con started arriving: TAFF delegate Dave Langford arrived with Hazel, Chris Priest turned up with Lisa Tuttle, Graham England, Terry Hughes, it was beginning to feel comfortable. Then Greg Pickersgill appeared with Linda Kahr. Mike Glicksohn and I converged on the couple at the same time, and we were introduced to Mike's lady. "And this is Paul Kincaid," he concluded, "a famous British fanartist." Someday I must find out what fanzines Mr Glicksohn is reading.

We retreated to the bar for the afternoon; this place, all mirrors, classy barmaids and a piano that was mercifully untenanted at this moment, was studiously avoided by most of the convention. This curious phenomenon is, perhaps, because of the high prices in hotel bars in America - though these were not noticeably different from hotel prices in Britain - or perhaps it is because American fans do not drink (understandable when you sample U.S. beer); they prefer, instead, Diet Pepsi that is not noticeably doing its job.

I was then summoned in my official capacity, VIP Relations. It seems there was some problem with the Guests of Honour's suite, and I had to sort things out. I started by escorting Damon and Kate, accompanied by Joe Haldeman, his wife, and Judith Lawrence and her husband, to the bar where I ordered them as much alcohol as they could consume, charging it to the convention, of course. Apparently there was some unexplained problem with the water supply and they had to move to another suite. In between sorting out the problem, I spent some time talking to Kate Wilhelm; I have long been an admirer of her work and following this it turned me into just as an enthusiastic admirer of the lady herself.

After leaving that group I cannot, now, really remember much of the detail of the following days, incidents do stick out, but not

Rob Jackson's regular look at recent SF and fantasy-related small press publications, including fanzines. This issue, because of the creeping advance of Matrix's deadline, only zines received during October 1980 are covered. For review post to: Rob Jackson, 8 Lavender Rd., West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT19 9EB.

ON THE CARPET

Abbreviations and symbols used:

- A* Recommended zine with outstanding art, graphics or visual production.
- C* Recommended zine mainly about SF in comic or visual art form.
- F* Recommended fannish fanzine (i.e. about fans' personalities and social lives).
- Fic* Recommended fiction zine (i.e. largely containing stories and/or poetry).
- G* Recommended genzine (i.e. about a variety of subjects including SF and fantasy).
- N* Recommended newszine.
- P* Recommended personalzine (i.e. largely editor-written fannish zine).
- S* Recommended zine mainly about written SF or fantasy.
- V* Recommended zine mainly about SF in the visual media (film and TV).

"The Usual", page sizes and printing methods: see last issue.

Explanations Dept.

(1) From last issue, I have arranged with the Harveys (who, of course, continue to work hard on Matrix as its printers, despite having handed on the editorship) for extra copies of my fanzine review pages to be run off so I can put them together as a separate fanzine review zine to be sent out to fanzine editors whose work is reviewed, as well as to other people to whom I owe fanzines. (The extra pages are, of course, run off at my own expense.) So if you BSFA members hear from non-BSFA members about a Rob Jackson fanzine they've just received called On The Carpet, and think you should be getting a copy too, don't worry. You're only missing extra copies of bits of Matrix.

(2) I'd like to repeat that it is my policy not to review sales catalogues, convention flyers, progress reports or programme books. (If a con publishes a booklet for a special purpose, such as to honour or commemorate its GoH, that's a different matter.) I've received a few unsolicited sales catalogues from book dealers and flyers from small cons with explicit requests for publicity. Tough. Convention listings and reports are in a separate part of Matrix, and if book dealers wish to advertise there is either the free small ads service in Matrix or, for more prominence, paid display ads in Vector. For small ads, write to Graham James; for Vector, write to Trev Briggs at the address on the inside front cover of each issue.

(3) Recently (since the cut-off date for this issue's fanzines) I got a fanzine from someone who hadn't sent me his previous fanzines as they didn't deal primarily with written SF. This made me realise that the paucity of comix, visual arts and visual media fanzines I review is possibly quite a significant gap for people in the BSFA who are interested in those areas. So I decided to introduce the new categories of recommended zine above. If any editors of such zines would like them reviewed, please send them to me. I can't guarantee that my comments will be as well-informed as on written SF or fannish fanzines, as these are what I know most about, as well as being most central to the BSFA's active membership. If you don't see recommended visual media zines listed here, it's not that they don't exist; their editors haven't sent them. I can't afford to buy every zine!

SMALL PRESS PUBLICATIONS

S* Locus 236, 237 (ed. Charles N. Brown; in UK, 12 for £6.00 seairmail or £9.50 airmail from A.C. Atkinson, 28 Duckett Rd., London N4 1BN; USQ RL; 24pp. each.) News of the US professional SF field, with occasional human touches. Award nominations, editorial changes at publishers, forthcoming cons (mainly American), and in 237 the Hugo results and a long Noreascon report by various hands with many photos. Charlie Brown must be somewhat fannish — one of the photos is of Harry Bell and Jim Barker, and a sinister, shadowy thing it is too. No.236 has a preview of a Carl Sagan TV science series called Cosmos, and each issue has complete listings of the month's new books. Nearly a hundred per month: can you read them all?

FANZINES — United Kingdom

Evenstar 3 (ed. Geoff Boswell & Steve Berrington for West Midlands SF Group, c/o 59 Somel Walk, Stour View, Brierley Hill, West Midlands DY5 2QG; the usual or group membership; A4X, onesided; 12pp.) More legible issue of the West Midlands clubzine. Editorial, long article on community action in nuclear safety, rambling unedited letters, and a vignette by Ian Wright on an alien following its instincts.

P* Napalm in the Morning 2 (Joseph Nicholas, Rm 9, 94 St. George's Square, Pimlico, London SW1Y 3QY; the usual; A4 D; 10pp.) Good personalzine proving that Joe doesn't spend all his time bombastically using contorted logic on books and fanzines that don't live up to his standards, as his image would have it. Extremely well-edited lettercolumn — an object lesson, in fact — which was only possible because last issue was interesting enough to provoke lively response. This issue's original content, on his job as a DHSS legal aid grant assessor, fascinated me not least because his job and mine (psychiatry) both at times involve assessing truth at interview.

G* New River Blues 3 (Abigail Frost, 63 Queen's Drive, London N4 — coedited with Roz Kaveney, but write to Abi alone: "— saves funny looks from landladies"; the usual or 25p; A4 D; 22pp.) Erudite, passionate and wideranging fanzine. Roz describes appalling mainstream novels (SF doesn't have a monopoly on rubbish), her adventures at Noreascon, the risks of warfare, and the civilised way writers quarrelled 200 years ago. Abi writes a terrible Laurel and Hardy Feghoot, comments on letters received and the antics of an ugly, aggressive Scot scared of Joe Nicholas at Albacon, and lets her imagination run riot on the for-sale small ads in the Evening Standard. Fascinating.

Scottish 80 (Ethel Lindsay, 69 Barry Rd., Carnoustie, Angus DD7 7QQ, Scotland; 50p, \$1 or trade; A4 D; 22pp.) Two more issues only after this, Ethel announces; but she's maintaining her standards meantime. Lots of brief book and fanzine reviews and "Natterings", the whole illustrated excellently by ATom (Arthur Thomson), who is the past master of handcut stencil illustration and of distilling the humour out of the written contents (he does an illo for each letter). I hope he doesn't disappear from the scene when Scot does.

SF Horizons 3 (Keith & Rosemary Walker, 6 Vine St., Lancaster, Lancs (note new address)); the usual, I think; A4 D; 4½pp. + flyer.) Behind the typically Walkerian (cramped) production style is a literate and sensible if brief collection of articles about teaching SF, the major one being by Keith on the principles one should follow when choosing material for a course. Also a review of recent children's fantasy by Jessica Yates. (By the way, Keith tells me his re-use of Aldiss and Harrison's SF Horizons magazine title was deliberate, an act of homage.)

Science Fiction and Fantasy News 1 (Simon Bostock, 18 Gallows Inn Close, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 4BW; 12p stamp; A5 D; 4pp.) Lively first issue, with bits and bobs from all around the SF world from fannish fandom to film and comic news, as well as con and

club news. My only complaint (which actually could be made about Ansible as well) is that stringing lots of little bits of news together without so much as a paragraph does reduce impact. That's why I leave gaps in my fanzine reviews, like this...

United States & Canada

N* File 770 22, & Noreascon Report (Mike Glycer, 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar, CA 91342, USA; 4 for \$2 ((US)) seaimail or \$4 airmail, or "Hot News (try and sort this out from stale bidding propaganda)"; USQ D; 12pp each.) The main US fannish newszine. No. 22 has, apart from con listings, reports and bidding battles, wedding reports, a request for someone to board out a cat, and news of Freff's decision to devote himself full-time to management of a few of his rock artist friends. The Noreascon Report is just that, with statistics, lists of Hugo and competition winners, business passed, controversies, incidents, and the decision of one fan to stop holding big chili parties.

G/A* The Monthly Monthly 12 (The Gang of Four, c/o Robert Runte, 10957-88 Ave., Edmonton, Alberta T6G 0Y9, Canada; the usual ((2 copies of your fanzine in trade)), \$9 per year or \$1 per copy; USQ D; 18pp.) Lively genzine, with stimulating layout as usual. Subjects include Canadianism, a riot when an audience argued with a punk group, Fuller's film The Big Red One, Charnas' Motherlines reviewed by Jeanne Gomoll, and letters — including one by me which indicates how much I didn't want to be cut off their mailing list.

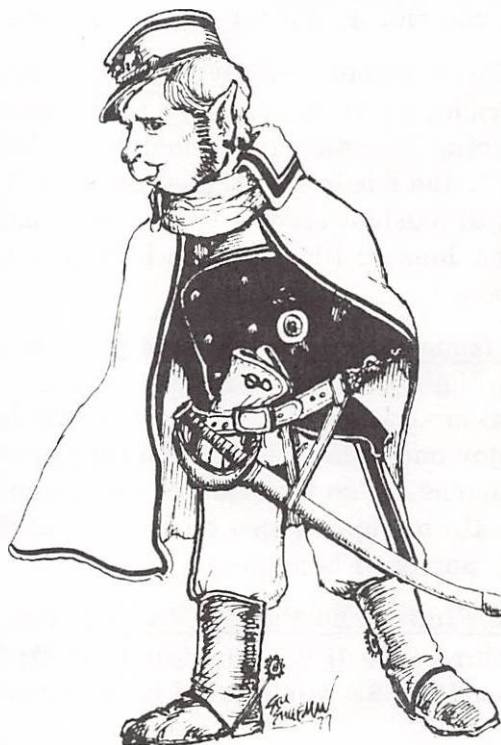
A* Red Shift 7 (Taral, 1812-415 Willowdale Ave., Willowdale, Ontario M2N 5B4, Canada; available "at whim, or for the gift of shape changing"; USQ D; 22pp.) Strange personalzine, with lots of utterly fascinating and revealing bits if you dig deep. On being cheesed off with fandom and suddenly reversing the feeling, on model aeroplane kits, on cartoonists, and on an LP and Fabulous Faanish Fanzine produced in Taral's fantasy by his unreal alien friend/companion/alter ego, Saara Mar. Fascinating experiments in art — printing different pieces on top of each other.

Space Junk 4 (Rich Coad, 251 Ashbury St. #4, San Francisco, CA 94117, USA; the usual of \$1; USQ D; 28pp.) Formerly a rather punky fanzine, now in serious danger of becoming very well produced. Rich tells of the start of a San Francisco fannish rock hand with him in it, and Bill Gibson writes of his life under real Fascism; but the main part of the issue is Joe Nicholas reviewing US fanzines (read that "US" how you like) at his ranting, raving, destructive, chauvinistic worst, claiming any fanzines which he sees as any good to be British-influenced. Illogical, Captain. The fanzines aren't all by any means brilliant — I've been uncomplimentary about some here — but Joe destroys a sound case by overstating it so ridiculously.

The Whole Fanzine Catalog 16 (Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Rd. #207, Detroit, MI 48219, USA; 50¢, 4 for \$2, or trade; half-USQ D; 24pp.) Fanzine reviews like this, but less detailed at times. Well worth getting if you want more American fanzines. Also a very complete COA (change of address) listing.

Other Countries

None this month... Illo at right courtesy Stu Shiffman and the Maya/Inca art file.





Not many new groups at NOVACON, but the old ones were out in forth. Aren't typos funny things? Yes, the Edinburgh mob were there, clustered in a predatory circle round a table in the bar, waylaying innocent passersby and thrusting copies of their new clubzine RA BRIG into their trembling hands. Well, I can't complain; I mean I actually lost my first copy and went back to ask for another one. Shows you what conventions do to the brain doesn't it? - it's left my grey cells so depleted that I can't even work out what RA BRIG is an anagram for. The best I can come up with is BAR GIR which as far as I know doesn't actually mean anything but it does sound vaguely rude which is very much in the spirit of the zine. Apart from lots of con reports and the soon-to-be-obligatory Pete Lyon illos, there's an article in defence of swearing plus a short piece about placing a STAR TREK story. Evidently this guy, one Chris Anderson, got the thing rejected by the Star Trek Action Group because of pre-marital sex. In the story, that is. (I guess we can't all have the open mind of a MATRIX editor).

My own experience of STAG is attending one of their conventions in Leeds. Looking for a traditional sf convention room party, I came across a Star Trek Discussion group, at which the attendees sat around drinking coffee, discussing their favourite Star Trek episodes and listening to the theme tune on a portable cassette player. I was ill for a week with culture shock.

Anyway, enough of such horrid thoughts. Back in the saner atmosphere of NOVACON, I was chatting to Jimmy Robertson, Sandy Brown and Bill Carlin, all itinerent attendees at FOKT meetings. They were telling me how the Glasgow group (which gets about fifty people at every meeting) is now quite firmly split into a number of sub-groups, each with their own particular interests; all of which sounds very much like the One Tun meetings in London and is bound to happen, I suppose, in any big group. Whether such large clubs miss out because they don't have the interplay between the various factions which you would necessarily get in a small group; or whether their members are lucky not to have to deal with the bunch of cretins over the other side of the room with whom they have nothing in common is a debatable point, I suppose. Anyone out there got any ideas? Do you secretly hate and detest the other 50% of your group? If so, please write and tell me - I could do with some scandal.

Speaking of the bunch of cretins over the other side of the room, Jimmy, Sandy and Bill are of course members of the Glasgow sub-group cretin fandom and now have their own clubzine DRYGULCH (which is so full of in-gossip that we poor southerners can scarcely understand it. Damn, and we thought we had the monopoly on elitist fandom.

As for the rest of Scottish fandom - Aberdeen was represented solely by William Goodall, but he made up for that by being everywhere you looked. He was telling me that the Aberdeen group is coming along nicely, the latest influx of members having got into sf via heavy metal music, of all things. Hawkwind lives!

Keele were there of course, fresh from the success of UNICON 1 this summer, and planning UNICON 2 for next year, with John Sladek as guest of honour (a worthy choice) and Alan Dorey as fan guest of honour (who?). I bumped into P.D. Wright of Harrow, whose first name I still can't recall for certain, but I bought him the drink I owed him from the Tun so I guess he won't be too bothered. And then there was the Imperial University Group, a new one this, who seem to have sprung overnight out of the loins of Steev Higgins (yes, him again). Steev became a student there this autumn and the group are now publishing his serconzine PERIHELION as its official clubzine. (Good wheeze, Steev). I hope to have some info on the group from Mr. Higgins in the near future.

Meanwhile, I shall leave the heady memories of NOVACON aside and turn to my mailbag. Letters are a bit sparse this time - either you lot are getting lazy or I'm running out of groups: more news and anecdotes please! - but I've heard from Duncan Lunan of ASTRA, the Association in Scotland To Research into Astronautics. They meet every Saturday afternoon from 2.30 p.m. on the first floor, 49 Almada Street, Hamilton, Lanarkshire. Post directions are 'opposite Bell College of Technology' and practical ones are 'above the Kentucky Fried Chicken'. Membership costs £5.00 p.a., £2.50 under 18, and includes a quarterly newsletter called 'Spacereport'. The main object of the society is 'to stimulate and further public interest in all aspects of space research and all related subjects' by lectures, discussions, book projects (4 to date), exhibitions etc.

ASTRA's Astronomical Section meets every Friday evening from 7.30 p.m. in Airdrie Public Library, where it manages the Public Observatory on behalf of Monklands District Council. There is a rota of supervisors so that observing sessions can be held when there's a clear night!

ASTRA also manages the 'High Frontier' spaceflight exhibition which is available for booking: contact Robert Livingston, Third Eye Centre, 350 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow (041-332-7521). For ASTRA information contact Duncan Lunan, c/o A. Graeme Adam (Solicitor), 158A, High Street, Irvine, Ayrshire. Telephone Irvine (0294) 72350.

I've also heard from one Dave Langford about the Reading pub meetings - "Despite occasional resolves to move to another pub, these still take place on the third Thursday evening of each month in the lounge bar of the Osborne Arms. Time: 7.30 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. onwards. The place is reached by turning right out of Reading General Station (BR), left after the Alder Valley bus station just down the road, and walking a little way up the hill. Neophytes are welcome and may make themselves known to the group by making The Sign -- placing a fiver on the bar and saying 'What's yours, Dave?' in ringing tones.

"The Reading Group does not have a leader, a constitution, a formal procedure for debate or indeed anything much besides a title arbitrarily chosen for the convenience of Norminalist philosophers. The name of this title is called 'Glomerule'. The title is called 'The Title of the Reading SF (Reading) Group'. The title is ... but this becomes derivative".

... And also incomprehensible. Thanks Dave. If anyone can explain the foregoing letter to me, they will win the Special Prize of having their name mentioned in this column, no mean achievement for the ordinary mortal.

Of course, if you're like Geoff Boswell of the West Midlands Group and publish a regular newsletter on the subject of your group, then you're likely to find yourself in almost every issue. According to Geoff's Laserheart 4, the group's fanzine EVENSTAR, publishing fiction and criticism, is appearing regularly and apparently coming along very nicely, while the group's first meeting is provisionally fixed for Friday 12th December. The time

is 8.00 p.m. onwards and the place is the lounge of the GEORGE & DRAGON in Ryder Street, Wordsley, near Stourbridge. This is an Ansells pub with draught or Keg beers, an SF Group poster in the lounge, and a pool table, a dart-board and a Space Invaders machine. Geoff can be contacted at 59 Sorrel Walk, Stour View, Brierley Hill, VY5 2QG.

Another group starting up in the near future is Steven J. Green's Solihull Group. Things should be happening roundabout now; the group will be meeting in a local pub - contact Steve for details. His address is 11 Fox Green Crescent, Acocks Green, BIRMINGHAM, B27 7SD (Tel. 021 706 0091).

David Penn has written from 23 Queen's Approach, Uckfield, Sussex, TN22 1RU, and would like to start a group in Sussex, provisionally based in Brighton. He would like to hear from anyone in Sussex who's interested, and although he already has a few ideas of his own, any constructive suggestions about the club, specifically what to do with it, howto organise it, and where to meet would be welcome.

Finally, Keith E. Rice would like to know if there's a club in Bradford; he lives at 4 Selbourne Grove, Heaton, Bradford, BD9 4NL. If you don't know of a group in Bradford but would be interested in attending one, why not get in touch with Keith in any case. Maybe you can start one up.

Anyway, that's all the news, except to say that the posters are now ready at last - available NOT from me but from Alan Dorey, although those of you who wrote to me should have received some by this time. If you haven't please let me know. Also, some of my more astute readers may have noticed that the letters re the proposed 1981 Club Directory haven't gone out yet. Apologies - this is merely due to me being grossly overworked in real-life as well as moderately busy in the fannish world. They should be going out real soon now, but to allow for the delay I'm extending the deadline for replies to the end of January.

Some of the info I've given above was sent in for the directory, and it will of course appear in there as well. If you'd like an entry for your group (you don't have to wait for the letter to arrive), or have got some interesting info for the normal column, write to me at the usual address, 13A Cardigan Road, Headingley, LEEDS 6.

So that's all for this time. Keep meeting!



LETTERS



Many thanks for your response to MATRIX 32 - quite a bumper mailbag which provided me with some ideas, tips, and subtle hints on the general form which members would like this magazine to follow.

I must confess that I thought that the front cover would elicit some protest, although I don't necessarily set out specifically to be controversial (well, not always). I also anticipated that there would be sufficient comment-hooks to stimulate comment (rightly it would seem). But, what I didn't expect was a hail-storm of protestation from two individuals in the PFMA over what was, to me, in any case, an innocent remark in the members' noticeboard! I'm not so worried about what they had to say (I answer it in full below), but more concerned with what appears to be their conception of what the BSFA is supposed to be all about.

As far as I'm concerned, MATRIX is THE members' magazine - that means that everyone is entitled to voice his or her opinion, and there are no 'taboo' subjects or BSFA policies which prevent comment. If this seems a little obscure at the moment, you'll see below what I mean.

I am still experimenting with the format, to a certain extent, so this Letters column has been reduced slightly - it does not mean that the column takes second place (other articles will also be reduced). I have no intention of censoring the mail - I will edit where necessary, but I will not censor.

Anyway, enough of me, your comments first on the direction of MATRIX:-

R. NICHOLSON-MORTON
235 WEST STREET
FAREHAM
HANTS
PO16 0HZ

Congratulations on your first issue of MATRIX. It was a good mix of information and humour, without any vitriolic infusions at all.....I'll be interested to see how the recommended readings letters, poll - whilst recommendations are admittedly subjective, they are nevertheless positive and can only be of advantage to new possibly tentative imbibers in sf. It is laudable that fans adhere to certain sf

writers and castigate others - perhaps? - but really all popular writers write poor or inferior work and do not deserve to be placed on high or castigated (well, the later, possibly, when it warrants it).

It would seem that Clive Woodley and I are at loggerheads, joint winners of the last comp and disagreeing over the above idea....Ah, well, I still think a recommended book usually has something to offer any reader - but the one way to safeguard new readers of sf would be for the editorial office to collect recommendations and print a selection, about the same author, so it is no longer an isolated recommendation, a few words, but a reasonable cross-section. Detractors can comment next edition if they will

MICHAEL R GOULD
67 SOMERHILL ROAD
WELLING
KENT DA16 1PF

With regard to the reading list idea, in theory this would seem a good idea. However, the only way to prepare a viable list would be for as many people as possible to suggest titles for inclusion. As usual, the problem with this would be to induce people to take part. Many people agree to good ideas, but don't bother when it comes to the

crunch (I've been guilty of such things in the past). If the idea is instigated, I hope some of the fans out there who don't usually take part will make an effort to produce a broadly based list which could help to promote all that's best in SF. After all, I'm sure there are no plans afoot to dispose of people just because their opinions don't agree with the committee, are there?

DAVID LANGFORD
22 NORTHUMBERLAND AVE.
READING
BERKS RG2 7PW

Congratulations on your first MATRIX, boss. It looks good and neat and cleanly printed, so of course I shall instantly ignore all the good qualities and get in the Suggestions for Improvement instead.

The typeface is too bloody large. Combined with the lack of pages, a mere 32, it makes the zine seem much less meaty than under the old regime. There may be a case for using the large face for substantial articles, the editorial &c, but 'Members Noticeboard', competitions, club

snippets, news bits and letters are all candidates for photo-reduction. It works well on Rob's piece....

(Dave goes on to make a number of other 'helpful' suggestions, including offering to do the preparation work for his own competition - this offer has been gratefully accepted!) He concludes:-

As far as I'm concerned, recommended reading lists are a waste of space - I've read enough sf to have opinions, and I think most people interested enough to join the BSFA probably have too. Recommendations among new books are another matter, and what the reviews should be doing.

Well, my view is that the Reviews column of VECTOR, together with PAPERBACK INFERNO offer sufficient scope for recommendations and I don't propose to fill MATRIX with reading lists. I might occasionally include something, provided there is sufficient material to work on, but in the meantime, I shall be starting a section on the 'best sellers' in the SF market, with information provided from a selection of SF Bookshops. Rog Peyton has offered to co-ordinate this, and further details will appear in a later issue. Meanwhile, and before the subject is finally closed, Andrew Sutherland adds some comments on the matter, along with some other strong views:-

ANDREW SUTHERLAND
32 HILLVIEW TERRACE
CULTS
ABERDEEN AB1 9HJ

The various recent articles on book reviews make it painfully clear that, for many BSFA members, literature begins and ends with science fiction. This is a great pity as it must mean that many people read a lot of bad SF while ignoring the wealth of excellent material available outwith the genre. It can, I think, be taken for granted

that all members of the association have a fairly detailed knowledge of the truly worthwhile classics of SF, and so the proposed recommended reading list could be used to give a selection of non-SF novels that established personalities consider reading. Arthur C. Clarke, Brian Aldiss and others might be persuaded to contribute.

I have only recently joined the BSFA, and although I have been impressed so far, I am worried that there is little science fiction in the publications. Surely in an association of such prolific output, there is room for some real SF rather than reviews, debates and features. FOCUS does publish occasional short fiction, but that does not seem enough to me. The ORBITER service must have some sort of outlet, as must the numerous other writers in the BSFA ranks. In these times of decline, openings for young SF writers are very few and I consider it a duty of the Society to provide a show-case for them. It would not be necessary to increase the bulk of the mailings since a lot of space is wasted on pointless material that deals not with SF itself, but with the affairs of the hierarchy of SF fandom. By avoiding repetition of material in the various publications, room could easily be found for fiction, which should play an important part in the output of a literary society.

Finally, one of the worrying aspects of the Hugo/Nebula/Campbell system is the way in which the 'Winner of the X Award' tag is abused by the publishers. These comments should be reserved for the actual volumes which win the awards and not for every minor collection, juvenile or early failure that the winning author has penned. Many small bookshops stock only the work of major writers and their shelves contain books, of which, about 75% carry the 'award winning' stamp. Surely, the award committees, the publishers, or the fans can do something to change this situation so that the paying public is not deluded by the blurb.

On your second comment, Andrew, the point is developed in an exchange of correspondence later in this column. I don't know if I would call the BSFA a 'literary society' - people join for all sorts of reasons, including the 'goings-on' in fandom. As to what should be included in BSFA publications, the floor is duly opened for comment. As regards the 'cheating' Award tag, I fully agree with you. Action is called for!

And now, on to even more serious matters, such as the front cover of the last issue. What was it really all about? Dave Langford said, "More D. West covers! Not wild about the other art-work." Steve Ince stated, quite categorically, "I didn't like it." Blake Hoyle, who wrote a combined letter with Steve, from the same address, added "It wasn't that bad." Simon Bostock thought that it was that bad, and continued, "Where did West learn to draw like that?" Arnold Akien tries to answer that one below, and Chuck Connor claimed that he didn't want to comment on the front cover as he's, "Been accused of being sick and tasteless, well competition at last." But, enough of this gay banter, some people got quite worked up about the whole thing:-

L. GATHERCOLE
51 SUDBURY HOUSE
ARNDALE CENTRE
WAINDSWORTH
LONDON SW18

The cover of MATRIX 32 was very offensive to me. In the past, anyone fornicating with an incubus devil was treated as a witch and the punishment for witchcraft was death. This serious matter is dealt with as a sick joke.

There are very few thoughts of God in modern science fiction but to illustrate this vile act is surely more pleasing to the Devil.

Decency should be as much sought after as culture. I hope you bear this in mind when editing future issues.

ALLAN SUTHERLAND
64 WOOLEY HOUSE
LOUGHBOROUGH ROAD
LONDON SW9

I was filled with anger when I saw the cover of the current MATRIX. I knew SF fandom was heavily male-dominated but I did not expect to find Matrix ever displaying the kind of rugby club boorishness that thinks rape is a fit subject for joking about.

It astonishes me that it should be necessary to explain that a cartoon of this sort is implicitly condoning rape, stating that there is somehow something acceptable about rape, that it's not anything to be taken too seriously.

There is nothing acceptable about rape whatsoever. Rape is not a jolly romp in the hay, it is women getting attacked, beaten up, humiliated, sexually molested with bottles and other objects and sometimes killed. These things happen to women because we live in a society that treats women as objects with a culture that treats that process as acceptable. A cartoon of this sort contributes very heavily to such attitudes.

If you reckon that this doesn't have much to do with SF, I suggest you think again. All good fiction, of whatever genre, reflects the society and the times in which it is written, and I like to think that in some measure it also influences that society. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that the ideas prevalent in the BSFA have some influence on the SF that is being written in this country, the condoning of something as major as the oppression of women can not do anything but harm to British SF. If I want to read propaganda for sexism, I'll go out and buy a newspaper; I look for a little more from SF, and from Matrix.

Allan adds a PS to the effect that if I received other letters from women on the subject, then I should include them in preference to his. That, in itself, seems to me to be a sexist remark; letters get printed, regardless of gender. I am actually sorry that L. Gathercole was offended but I fail to see the point that Mr Sutherland is trying to make. I fully agree with his sentiments about the exploitation of women and sexual degradation - both of which figure heavily in the genre of science fiction. Rape is another 'popular' theme in pseudo SF novels and I am sure that most citizens are appalled by it. How many covers of SF novels depict sexual degradation of women? Why does it take the front cover of this humble magazine to provoke comment on the subject? And what on earth makes you think that the cartoon itself condones rape? Does a photograph in a newspaper, depicting a scene from a war, actually mean that the photographer is in agreement with violence?

As to the points about the BSFA being a propagandist for sexism, and this having an effect on SF, I shall leave members to draw their own conclusions. Personally, I thought that the cover made a moral point completely opposite to the conclusions drawn by Allan - and a far deeper one, at that. Strange how I can be in complete agreement and disagreement with Allan at the same time. Anyway, the next correspondent was inspired by D.'s art-work.

ARNOLD AKIEN
8 DUNELANE ROAD
SEABURN SUNDERLAND
TYNE & WEAR SR6 8EU

The Captive will be sorely missed - it was my favourite feature in Matrix - and it will be damn near impossible to replace. But, it does present an opportunity to find new material. You've made a good start in maintaining and raising the standard of art-work in Matrix by using D West's lovely cover illustration. Incidentally, anyone who thinks D. is capable of doing only ingenious and deceptively simple cartoons, in which his brand of dry, ironic humour predominates, should get hold of a copy of Rob Jackson's INCA 1, which has a superb cover illustration by D. in a totally different style.

(Arnold continues by suggesting that more artists should be encouraged to contribute to Matrix - and not just the 'established' fan-artists. He asks members to put forward names and he, himself 'nominates' Pete Lyon, claiming that ANSIBLE has upstaged MATRIX by using Pete first. Damn it! ANSIBLE getting the best of this eminent zine - never! In any case, as you will have noticed by now, Pete does feature in this issue, and just wait until you see his cover for Matrix 34 - it's bloody ace. I consider that art-work is every bit as valid as prose in Matrix and I welcome contributions - I've already had a good response to my request in the last issue. I don't go a bundle, though, on 'heavy metal' space-ship stuff.) But now, some serious SF:-

GWYNFOR JONES
34 BRYN GWYNT
AHLWCH PORT
ANGLESEY, GWYNEDD
NORTH WALES

Although I was aware of the minor transgressions in the TV adaptation of Ray Bradbury's MARTIAN CHRONICLES, I think that a collective view of the series more than redeemed these iconoclastic deviations mentioned by Terry Pyle in his article in the last Matrix.

It's all so easy to point out mistakes; either artistic or technical. I think that Terry was being rather petty and pedantic about a production I thoroughly enjoyed.

One point I would like to raise, and you can correct me if I'm wrong: the encounter of the Holy Fathers with the Martian Elders - isn't this a short story from the ILLUSTRATED MAN, entitled THE FIRE BALLOONS? A story which is significant by its absence from my 1977 Panther edition! (Ed. Correct! David Pringle, my learned SF advisor, tells me that THE FIRE BALLOONS came out after the MARTIAN CHRONICLES, but was later incorporated into that.) Gwynfor added that Bradbury, in an interview with John Dunn, stated that he was very pleased with the TV version of MARTIAN CHRONICLES.

TIM PICKARD
TRIGON
St. KATHERINE'S ROAD
TORRE TORQUAY TQ1 4DE

Congrats on becoming editor of Martix. It looks rather nice lithoed, and much easier to read too. However, I hope the next issue (and the letter column) is longer.

Terry Pyle, in his review of the MARTIAN CHRONICLES, raises some very valid points, but he expects too much from a production which has to aim for an audience of

people who have read little or no SF - it has to pander to them or commit commercial suicide. I got the feeling that the whole of the review was just support for the statement he ended on, ie that adaptation of pre-existing work for TV or the cinema is a waste of time.

I disagree. At least the producers have the opportunity to start out with something worthwhile, even if they do mess it up a bit (and I don't mean Buck Rogers, which wasn't any good to start with). Battlestar Galactica is 'original work' so was Star Trek, U.F.O., Space 1999, Blake's 7 etc. Are these all examples of good SF? I think not.

I liked the beginning of Martian Chronicles, with the Viking lander, just an amusing little 'but if...' , I thought. Anyone who took it seriously to imply that Bradbury's Mars and Viking's Mars are one and the same, would be the type of person who wouldn't be interested or couldn't care less anyway. Bradbury's Mars doesn't even start out with earth-like atmospheric conditions as Terry implies. Not until the story THE GREEN MORNING is there a thick warm atmosphere like our own.

Admittedly, the first part was rather slow and as a consequence a bit boring. But it did stick fairly closely to the book. Other features were also close, but as for the "banal lines..", most of the script for the martians was straight from the original Bradbury.

What worried me was the fact that the outdated 1940's attitudes expressed in the 3rd expedition (4th in the book) and elsewhere, were preserved, so that for people who hadn't read the book and didn't know when it was written, would find themselves at a loss as to how such a bunch of unstable lunatics could have been allowed near Mars anyway. Of course, to have removed these things would have destroyed the basic story, and so it goes....

Overall I would give the production 6 out of 10, not brilliant but certainly better than most of the crud we've seen on the small screen in recent years. Perhaps, if someone could get Harlan Ellison to write the screenplays for UBIK, DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP? or even DHALGREN, maybe Terry would like to direct them?

Hmm, what with Joseph Nicholas claiming all your letters on the subject of reviews for himself, and Kev Smith intending to do likewise with VECTOR, I'm not going to have any REAL SF (sorry Andrew) to include in Matrix. Poot, as they say! There's still the subject of PROJECT STARCAST to entice us. Michael Gould thinks that one of the best ways to stop the commercial exploitation of fans (which concerned me in the last issue) is to attract new fans into the BSFA. Chuck Connor, in one of his three letters to me, said, ".....On the point of STARCAST and SPACE-EX, surely no publicity is bad publicity? To shout about it and slag it down will only be giving space to tell more people about it, and those who have signed up, will start to level fingers in your direction - blaming the BSFA for adverse criticism and bringing the whole thing down." But, let's hear first from Ken Mann, who makes some pretty valid points which have broadened my outlook on the matter. Simon Bostock also chimes in on this subject, and that of EUROCON, which John Brunner expands on, in detail, on the next page.

KEN MANN
22 PENNETHORNE ROAD
PECKHAM
LONDON SE15 5TQ

It was with some amusement that I read your remarks on STARCAST and SPACE-EX. Neglecting the latter (as most sensible people seem to do), STARCAST has apparently put the fear of God into you. Let's forget the argument that any publicity - good or bad - is good for a shaky organisation, and concentrate on the BSFA's possible involvement.

Or not. STARCAST is an SF media-orientated event. The BSFA has consistently denigrated TV and film SF with very few exceptions and - more important in this context - SF media fans. This (apparently) overnight reversal of 'policy' fills me with a sense of wonder.

My credibility is stretched even further when you put out a personal call for advice on how to stamp on the event... You need not fear, Graham, the media fans are taking care of business in their own inimitable style. You should consider what made STARCAST move from its original site at Harrogate to a much smaller venue. Certainly not the BSFA.

You may have heard of STARCAST's idea of organising small cons prior to the big one. This amounted to getting various stalwarts from STARCAST onto existing con committees with the intention of claiming the Kudos afterwards. However, the committees were not impressed with the calibre of those people offering their (unwanted) expertise.

Apart from the difficulty of gaining the confidence of media fans and its obvious lack of experience in related matters, the BSFA would be blundering onto a battlefield to get caught in the crossfire. The media fans have their own grapevine; informal but effective. Perhaps the BSFA should have the Chairman of STAG on its committee as the next editor of Matrix?

(Your editor knows of no such plans!)

SIMON BOSTOCK
18 GALLOWES INN CLOSE
ILKESTON
DERBYSHIRE DE7 4BW

Project Starcast organised another con, PSYCON 80, which was held before the main event, on November 22nd in Manchester. It concentrated around the special guest, Mat Irvine (responsible for the Dr Who and Blake's 7 effects). Throughout the day (it was a one day con) were exhibitions, a dealers room, Video room and all the kind of stuff to make every fan steer clear of it. I didn't attend. If anyone wants to praise the STARCAST folks/tear them to shreds/etc, their 'phone number is in FANTASY TRADER 48!

The idea of the BSFA organising the 1984 EUROCON is a particularly good one. Not only would it improve relations with other fans around the globe, but it would, as Alan Dorey says, attract more fans than an Eastercon could ever do. I hope that Britain can set up a con which would out-class the worldcons.

JOHN BRUNNER
THE SQUARE HOUSE
PALMER STREET
SOUTH PETHERTON
SOMERSET TA13 5DB

Thanks for the reference to the 1984 Eurocon project in the last Matrix. But I want to pick up on a couple of important points.

I don't think anyone is suggesting, even for a moment, that the con should be anything other than a British-style event - because this would undermine the whole idea! The essential notion of the Eurocon movement is to give fans from other countries an insight into what SF people, and SF cons, are like abroad. Obviously, therefore, trying to turn a British Eastercon into an imitation of what happened at Stressa, or Poznan, or wherever, would defeat the purpose of the operation.

But at the same time one cannot expect a British con to be much fun for someone who speaks little English, who can't laugh at Bob Shaw's speech or follow a lecture by Jack Cohen or even follow the dialogue in a Blake's 7 episode.

This is why I'm proposing not a change in the format of the 1984 con, but simply some additions thereto. They boil down to three:

First, people in fandom - and even people out of fandom who happen to feel like dipping a toe in fanish waters for once - who also speak a foreign language, should be invited to act as guides or couriers or whatever in order to help our overseas visitors get the most out of what's happening;

Second, some form of access to the main programme events should be arranged for non-English-speakers, either by circulating translations in advance or by laying on for the two main days (Saturday and Sunday) interpretation facilities of the sort used at e.g. business conferences, with bleeper-style radio units - if the italians and even the Poles can arrange that kind of thing, surely it can't be beyond the wit of the British;

Third, we should take advantage of the occasion to incorporate some extra events, particularly a parallel programme (some of which could take place in other languages) aimed as much at the British fans who would like to hear what is going on abroad as at the actual foreign delegates; and SF films never shown in Britain which the overseas delegations could be asked to bring with them. These could also have an English language summary for the benefit of people who would like to follow the plot.

Apart from that, I'd hope to see a perfectly typical British convention - (perhaps not in the sense that the Glasgow con was typical!) - at which the chief unusual feature would be that the UK delegates would bear in mind the fact that they were acting as hosts to a gang of newcomers from other countries and would make sure the latter got the chance to join in the fun.

I don't know for sure where the idea took its rise that all SF cons, apart from those in Britain and the US are te-bly te-bly sercon; I think it must stem from people too young to remember what it was like, 25 or more years ago, to have one count it one chance per year to get together with others who shared your interest in SF. I do remember that period very clearly. For instance, at the first convention I attended, I couldn't afford to stay in the hotel, so I took the last bus home each evening actually reading the SF I'd bought during the day. I have the habit of saying that any kind of travel is travel through time; well in this case it's incontestably true, and at least a few of the SF cons I've attended abroad have reminded me acutely of our cons in the 1950's.

But not all, by any means! Indeed, one of the more gratifying things I find about travelling to foreign cons is how much the Anglophone tradition is catching on - this does, after all, indicate that we came up with a good and contagious idea.

Steve Ince's attack on Rob Jackson (and Simon Ounsley) provoked some response - not least, from Rob. Both Dave Kirkbride (the purveyor of the excellent cover for this issue) and Chuck Connor (him again) wrote on the subject, but I shall leave the two protagonists to 'fight' it out together:-

ROB JACKSON
8 LAVENDER ROAD
WEST EWELL
EPSOM SURREY
KT19 9EB

Steve Ince's letter in MATRIX 32 made it obvious to me that there are one or two misapprehensions still to be cleared up about my attitude to fiction in fanzines. I thought that in MATRIX 31 I was making it clear that "those who show talent in fiction writing in fanzines deserve our special attention." Yet here is Steve managing to twist that round and telling me "Fan fiction isn't all bad." Which is exactly what I was saying, yet Steve puts it in his letter as if I need to be told, and is therefore, by implication, accusing me of taking an attitude directly

opposed to my real one.

I agree entirely with what he says in his letter about writers of fan fiction needing encouragement, and I was trying to say so in Matrix 31. But obviously I didn't make it clear enough. I was trying to say, "Please, those of you who can't tolerate fan-fiction, at least try to tolerate it - fiction is more difficult to write than a con-report or a book review, as fiction involves creating a whole new imaginary situation; so if a piece of fiction shows promise, don't ignore it." However, I over-emphasised the part about the difficulty of writing fiction, and underemphasised the plea for tolerance, so the piece was less encouraging and more condescending to fiction writers than ficzine editors than I had intended. Hence the opportunity for Steve to misunderstand what I was getting at.

I also agree with Steve's comment that to expect a writer to "come up with the goods" before one is willing to like his/her story or the ficzine it appeared in is unfair. (I assume that by "coming up with the goods" he means producing a technically perfect, polished story, or at least a strikingly entertaining one.) No: of course writers don't suddenly appear full-grown from nowhere. Nor do the zines (or writers' workshops) in which they and their works can receive exposure and constructive criticism. I am well aware, having written for and helped produce and sell SFINX in Oxford 9 years ago, that aspiring writers thrive on encouragement and a positive but not uncritical approach.

The cries of anguish from Chuck Connor and Steve have reminded me forcefully of this need, even though I had known of it intellectually all along; so the important thing now is not what I say my attitude to ficzines is, but the concrete results of that when I read and comment on individual ficzines. It needs to be obvious that I take each zine seriously, on its own terms. A case in point is IN DEFIANCE OF MEDICAL OPINION. When it first appeared it was so badly produced and presented that I found it difficult to take the written contents seriously: hence the brevity and rather dismissive nature of my comments on issues 1 and 2, at least. However, the presentation was vastly improved by issue 4, and I took it seriously enough to spend two hours working on that eleven-line review in Matrix 32, more than twice as long as for any other zine that issue. I hope that it showed in the review.

Steve says "Equating ease with standard is a very poor cop-out indeed!" about my comparison of non-fiction with fiction writing in fanzines. It wasn't meant to be a cop-out at all, Steve. It was meant to be a justification of your position.

I have been pleading above for tolerance of fiction zines by those whose personal preference isn't for amateur fiction. I would like also to reverse that plea for tolerance, and fic-zine editors and developing writers to remember that people's tastes vary, and that not everyone can be guaranteed to be enthusiastic about amateur fiction. Leave them room to exercise their own preferences. "I don't like it, I haven't tried it" is prejudice, but "I've tried it, and generally it isn't for me" is judgement.

One final point. My fanzine reviews and Simon Ounsley's clubs column don't "... crowd out everything else": I don't think the Harveys, of Graham so far, have ever omitted anything to make way for our columns. Simon and I both have to be comprehensive, because Matrix is a clearing-house of information about both clubs and fanzines. It would be just as unfair to exclude one club as to exclude one fanzine. Steve doesn't have to read the fanzine reviews if he doesn't want to. Reduced as they are in MATRIX 32, an enormous amount of information is compressed into not that many pages.

STEVE INCE
5 OTTERBURN STRRET
HESSLE ROAD
HULL HU8 5HE

Dear Rob, thanks for letting me have a copy of your letter you sent to Granam.

Considering the strength of my attack on what you had to say in M31, I'm pleasantly surprised that you took it so well. Better, obviously than I took your initial comment on the state of fan fiction. I would like to say

that your piece was a little open to misunderstandings, and being rather wary of those who say they are fannish fans (and so, on the whole, dislike fan fiction) I opened up with a rather slighting letter to Matrix. Having read your letter, I now see that I have been far too harsh on you and would like to say I'm sorry for doing so, although what I said applies to those not so lenient as you are when it comes down to fan fiction.

Much of the problem with ficzine editors and authors of fan fiction lies in your being biased in the past away from such zines when you have reviewed them. As you said, IDOMO had poor beginnings, but I have read in your column something along the lines of: The quality of reproduction is none too good, but it is the words that count. This is a very good thing to say about any zine, but in the past you haven't applied this to ficzines and so we editors and authors feel a little cheated. When we feel that our efforts are being dismissed simply because of bias, we tend to come on a little strong (at least I do). It might be the only way of defending what we feel are our little brainchildren. This is partly the reason behind the Poetry and Fiction Magazine Association: getting people together that publish fiction and Poetry magazines so that they will be encouraged to do so and continue to do so.

Obviously, we are hoping that any problems that develop within fandom (or have done so in the past) can be overcome. The fact that you are ready to bring out a new section in your column on ficzines is a good sign indeed.

If I've offended you, I'm sorry. But you don't get things changed without standing on someone's toes. Hope yours aren't too heavily squashed.

My comments on the two columns crowding everything out was badly expressed, but the fact that they take up a lot of room is a cause for concern. If nothing has been left out, then surely there is something lacking from Matrix and the new editor should try his best to push the need for articles or whatever, for those readers who are not into fanzines or who don't want to read about clubs that are miles away from

where they live at the best of times. Admittedly, you try and avoid the feeling of crowding by reducing the size of the print, but Simon's seems to take up more room than perhaps is necessary. (Oh dear, don't I go on. MS2 seemed even worse, though as so much was left over from the last issue.)

I'm not sure what Steve means by that last comment; the last issue was a little shorter than some previous issues, but not that much shorter. Most of the letters I received actually were pleased with the contents and commented that the changeover went well. I couldn't print all those comments though, could I? The fact that I have received so many letters this time may bear testimony to the old saying that quantity doesn't equate with quality - but maybe members were just being kind to me. Anyway, this issue, as you may have noticed, is much larger.

In Steve's other letter, he turned his attention to the competitions, and remarked that they were too long. He felt also, that quizzes were better than the type of competition set by Dave Longford, and added that the fact that there were few responses to the last one, bore testimony to his view. Comment if you wish, but I feel that a competition which promotes creativity is by far superior to one which merely requires reference to an encyclopaedia. Constructive criticisms and submissions are most welcome. Steve did write me a friendly and helpful letter when I took over Matrix, perhaps he would like to contribute an article - perhaps on the PFMA - but I shouldn't say that, should I? Now for that correspondence I mentioned earlier.

KEN MAIN

(address as before)

It was with some surprise that I, Chuck Connor and Steve Ince, read in the Members Noticeboard that you were running a feature on the Poetry and Fiction Magazine Association in your next issue. Since you had not the courtesy

to contact us beforehand, we can only consider such statements as you have made as rash and precipitate. We have since had a thorough discussion of the matter and have reached agreement on the following points:

1. We believe that the present degree of publicity/advertising in MATRIX is adequate to our present needs. We, hopefully with your agreement, will continue to run the occasional small 'ad' in the noticeboard.

2. We believe that any feature article which you propose will not be in the best interests of the PFMA or its members at the present time. Quite frankly, the membership is expanding quickly, but at a controlled rate. The PFMA is also going through a transitional stage. For these two reasons - and our commitments to existing members - any large-scale publicity (Matrix) would be to the detriment of our relatively smoothly running network.

3. The PFMA is a broad-based network. It would be erroneous to suggest that it is devoted purely to amateur SF fiction/poetry. In fact, quite the opposite is true.

4. We expressly forbid you to publish part or all of any of the PFMA's Information Sheets. If you do so, then you will be in breach of copyright.

5. We are advising members of the PFMA not to cooperate with you over this matter.

In conclusion, this letter may seem somewhat whip-bearing. However, the PFMA has the interests of its members to consider, hence we choose our advertising outlets with care. Perhaps in the future we can consider such an article for MATRIX. If you go ahead with the article, it will be without our blessing and without our confidence. We also take this opportunity to dissociate ourselves from any such article and do not consider any statements made therein to be representative or binding upon us. Any correspondence resulting from any such article will be returned to you: we would ask our addresses and names to be withheld, since they may suggest tacit acceptance on our part.

Chuck Connor then wrote to me some time afterwards (his third letter) making much the same points as Ken; he ended up by saying:-

CHUCK CONNOR
c/o SILDAN HOUSE
CHEDISTON ROAD
WISSETT
Nr HALESWORTH
SUFFOLK IP19 0HF

If there is to be a 'slur' attack made on the P/FMA network in forthcoming issues of MATRIX, then I will personally publish as many disclaimers as possible. I am not dependent on the 'Enchanted Duplicator' - in case you have forgotten - and will therefore not be a 'target' for the ever-popular "Sorry, lost in post." that seems to be coming some BSFA committee members' catch phrase.

Having been advised by common sense not to make threats, you can take the above to be a bona fide binding promise.

It seems to me that both Ken and Chuck are Labouring under a number of misapprehensions, which I shall try to explain and answer below:-

1. I did not say that I would be doing a feature on the PFMA itself. I said that I intended doing an article on the fact that there were a number of new Poetry/Fiction magazines starting up - INCUBUS is an example.

2. If I choose to do such an article, then that is my prerogative. Any such magazines that I had in mind to feature in the article are not, in any case, the property of the PFMA.

3. However, I did say that I would welcome details from editors/writers - that hardly implies that I am going to write something without reference to anyone.

4. Why is it assumed that there is going to be a 'slur' attack on the PFMA? - This unjustifiable fear is, no doubt, the reason for Ken's response. There is absolutely no reason for him to suppose that I would do such a thing.

I have, in fact, chosen not to publish the full text of Chuck's letter, because

Its tone of belligerence seems (from the other letters he wrote) to be untypical and it is so full of mistaken assumptions that it would do him a severe injustice.

He went on to say that the "railroading" of Ian Garbutt in the past was evidence that I would take a negative view of the PFMA: had Chuck, or Ken Mann been aware of a wider cross-section of fanzines then they would have known of my own attitude on the question of 'fan' fiction. My views, if they had taken the trouble to find out about, were spelled out in a fanzine which I co-edited with Simon Dunsley; these are not dissimilar to Rob Jackson's and we wrote about the matter in 1978.

Bah! - as they say. What annoyed me the most was that Chuck published his letter to me in a PFMA Information Sheet: quite apart from slanderously misrepresenting the position of the BSFA, and presenting a wholly one-sided account of the matter, he falls foul of one of his own points - namely, not consulting me first. Maybe I should make some 'bona fide' promises as well.

Now, on to a subject, slightly more relevant to the BSFA:

CY CHAUVIN
14248 WILFRED
DETROIT, MI 48213
U.S.A.

I read John and Eve's comments in Matrix about the BSFA's US Agent "trying energetically" to encourage overseas members, and I thought maybe I should respond. While I have received inquiries and even membership money from as far away as Australia and Israel, the total number of memberships received has been rather pitiful, in my opinion.

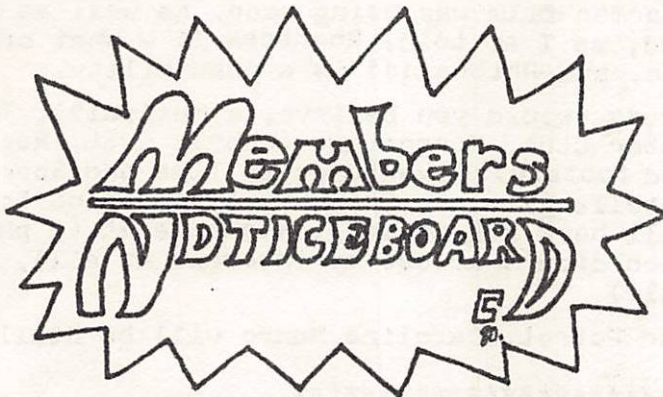
What has been done to promote the BSFA in the U.S.A.? I mailed out approximately 400 flyers with a fanzine; distributed some flyers at a con: - two responses were received. A full-page ad was taken out in the Auto-Clave Programme Book - this cost the BSFA nothing - no response at all. VECTOR was mentioned in AMAZING's fanzine column, and a couple of people sent subscriptions. A small ad appeared in F&SF, but a British address appeared only - this apparently netted quite a few inquiries. Approx. \$200 has been collected in subscriptions since I began as the BSFA Agent several years ago, most are renewals. I do think some new campaign is needed if the BSFA would like to have more readers in North America. I'd suggest pushing VECTOR subscriptions, however, rather than BSFA memberships, because V is more accessible to US and Canadian readers and, more importantly, the cost is less. Few fans are willing to send \$14 on an unknown product, but \$6 or \$7 is acceptable. Once they get VECTOR, they may want the whole product.

I'd recommend ads in STARSHIP and LOCUS because the cost is less than in the prozines. Sending out sample copies might help, too.

Whoops, I knew it would happen - forgot to change the type-face for Cy's letter - honest, it wasn't me who wrote the above! So, what doest thou think about expansionist policies in the US? Probably, this is a matter which should be discussed by the Committee (or maybe it has, but I haven't been to a meeting yet - early days, though).

That's more or less it then; hardly any WAHF's, because I seem to have included at least something from everyone's letters, even if it has only been "...hated the front cover..." But, I did also hear from Geoff Boswell (twice), another letter from Simon Bostock, Reg Palmer, whose letter arrived this morning (too late, Boss), and I've heard so many times from Chuck Connor that I could have devoted the whole letter column to him - now that would have been exciting, eh?

Keep on writing, all your letters are appreciated, even if I don't quote them all. Maybe I will sometime - provided I can read them amid the blotches, crossings-out, and wondrous incantations.



WANTED: The BURROWERS BENEATH, by Brian Lumley (Daw Books).

Write stating condition and price to: Nic Howard, 5 Gray's Lane, Downley, High Wycombe, Bucks.

NEW APA BEING FORMED: APA-SFAF (SF & Fantasy). More details from Simon Bostock (See letters for address, or 'phone Ilkeston 326918, 6-10pm.)

Some main rules: At least 2 A4 pages must be made; 27 zines to be made; Bi-monthly schedule; 30p to be included with mailing to cover postage, any remaining will be returned; SF/fantasy material only. There is the outline, now join and help this APA to go from strength to strength, as by rights it should.

(There SEEMS to be a folder of APAs elsewhere...!)

RICHARD ALLEN is going to edit a News Page for EVENSTAR, and he would welcome any news of forthcoming Cons, Book lists etc for possible inclusion. Details to him at: 4 Arlington Close Kingswinford, West Midlands, DY6 9PP.

Stop Press: Congratulations to Rob and Coral Jackson on the birth of their Daughter.

MEMBERS NOTICEBOARD: Contd.

FUSION 3 is now in preparation - due out Xmas 1980.

FICTION: for the best fiction: £100. For the rest: £20. For the best poetry: pro rata. For the rest: pro rata. ART WORK: Full page: £60 minimum. Rest: pro rata.

Conditions: For art/prose, full copyright to Editor.

Subject matter: non-SF, non-fantasy. Further info from Ken Mann, Editor. For address, see elsewhere.



FILM & TV NEWS: SIMON BOSTOCK

FORTHCOMING BOOKS: JOSEPH NICHOLAS

GENERAL NEWS: JOSEPH NICHOLAS

OTHER ITEMS: The Editor

FILM & TV NEWS: After this small introduction, I will attempt to tell you of new projects in the TV and Film world, which I collected from the various magazines - namely Famous Monsters of Filmland. Hope they are of use.

1, Robot, the famous anthology by Isaac Asimov, is to be made into a film. Irvin Kershner, of Empire Strikes Back fame, will direct.

Following news reported by Jim Barker that Sheena, Queen of the Jungle had been postponed, it is now known that filming will start early next year. Apparently it was stopped because of a search for a leading lady.

The Robert E. Howard barbarian Conan is to be a film, with Dino (King Kong) De Laurentiis as director. Arnold Schwarzenegger will be Conan and the female star is Sandahl Bergman. Filming starts in January.

New films include Zombie 2, Gnomes (most likely to be made because of the art book of the same name), Loser Lady, Rebels of the Stars, The Dead Zone (from the novel by Stephen King), Lord of Light, The Howling (a werewolf film, no doubt), Demon Pond, The Rocky Horror Shows Again (another sequel, this time to RHPS), Dune, The Final Conflict (the second sequel to The Omen, no less), and Sirens of Titan, by Kurt Vonnegut. Quite a lot, I've only given a taster of what's in store.

As shown above, there seems to be quite a number of sequels in production. Superman 11 has already been completed, due mainly to the fact that production began when the first Superman film was being made. As well as that, Phantasm may have a sequel called, so I am told, Phantasm 11 - what originality! Star Trek 11 is to be made, and Phibes 111 is a possibility.

Hell! More films. War of the Worlds (would you believe, a musical?), The House that Stood Still, The Monster Club, Kongorilla (huh?), Evil, Rocket-Ship X-M (the old film with added footage), Adventures In Time and Space (an anthology of stories, the title tells all...), Space Hunt, Alien on Earth (an Italian film, no doubt it will have sub-titles), Night Beast (a photo of which was shown in FM and which didn't arouse my interest at all), Star Riders.....(a long boring title)

Starcrash 11 is to be called Star Patrol. Caroline Munro will be Stella Star again.

GOLLANCZ: Ian Watson & Michael Bishop: Under Heaven's Bridge (Nov. £6.50)
James Gunn: The Dreamers (originally slated for September, but has yet to appear, £5.95)

DOBSON: R A Lafferty: Not to Mention Camels (Oct. £5.25 - review copy just received)

ROBERT MALE: Charles G Waugh, Martin Greenberg & Joseph D Olander (eds): Mysterious Visions (Oct. £6.95 review copy just received - reprint of stories by crime writers).

VIRGIN: Josephine Saxton: The Travails of Jane Saint (Nov. £1.95).

MAGNUM: Clifford D Simak: Cemetery World (Nov. £1.25; reprint of 1977 edition with new cover). Ben Bova: The Starcrossed (Nov. £1.25; first UK edition of send-up of US TV, based on the shenanigans surrounding the screwing up of Ellison's The Starlost).

NEW ENGLISH LIBRARY: Poul Anderson: The Earth Book of Stormgate 2 (Nov. £1)

CORGI/BANTAM: Joy Chant: The Grey Morn of Morning (Nov. £4.95; large format illus. trade pb. edition of 1977 fantasy novel. The title is not a typo!).

GRANADA: Philip Jose Farmer: The Magic Labyrinth (Jan. price unknown) Richard H Francis: Blackpool Vanishes (Dec. price unknown). E E Doc Smith & Stephen Goldin: Family D' Alembert 7: Planet of Treachery (Jan. price unknown) Tim Powers: The Drowning of the Dark (Jan. price unknown; first novel by Fantasy artist). Jack Vance: The Dying Earth (Feb. price unknown; reprint of a classic that should never have been out of print). Philip Jose Farmer: Riverworld and other Stories (Feb. price unknown). Charles Harness: The Rose (Feb. price unknown; reprint of a classic - ditto comments on Vance). Harry Harrison: Wheelworld (March, price unknown; 2nd in 'To the Stars' trilogy).

SHERE: Dave Langford's War in 2020 has been put back to February 1981, having been supplanted by some bump-and-grind tripe from call-girl Mandy Rice-Davies; but it will receive a new, less SFnal, more best-sellerish cover and receive better promotion. M John Harrison: A Storm of Wings (Dec. £1.35; originally slated for Nov. as announced in Matrix 32). Robert Sheckley (ed.): After the Fall (Dec. £1.30; anthology of post-holocaust stories). Jack Williamson: Brother To Demons, Brother To Gods (Jan. £1.25; quasi-novel cobbled up from stories in Analog). David Lindsay: A Voyage to Arcturus (Jan. £1.25; reprint of classic fantasy novel that should never....)

CORGI: James White: Ambulance Ship (Dec. £1.25; quasi-novel built from three novellas about Dr Conway of Sector General, purportedly with more material than US edition). David Gerrold: The Galactic Whirlpool (Dec. £1.25; another bloody Star Trek novel.....).

GENERAL NEWS ITEMS (culled from Sept. LOCUS)

A E Van Vogt has settled out of court with 20th Century Fox for a settlement of \$50,000 in regard to similarities between ALIEN and his 'Space Beagle' stories Discord In Scarlet and Black Destroyer. Apparently no plagiarism was involved; Van Vogt and his agent, Forrest J Ackerman, felt that the similarities were sufficient to force money out of Fox.... well, if that's the case, why don't LOCUS try suing me for the similarities between this and their own report? (Ed. maybe they will?) Is the American SF community so obsessed with money that it really has to go to this sort of length to bolster its tawdry little ego? Further, they settled out of court because it was felt that a court battle might damage Van Vogt's health and result in a settlement after his death - or: I really wanted more money, but had enough sense to realise that I'd already made a big enough tit of myself as it was.

Alan Dean Foster has sold a fantasy novel, Spellsinger, to WARNER Books - which means, presumably, that he's only sold an outline, not actually written the thing yet. With a bit of luck he won't write it at all.

Brian Aldiss and John Earth will head the list of featured speakers at the Second International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts, sponsored by the Thomas Burnett Swann Fund, to be held in March 1981 at Florida Atlantic University.

Final figure in the Ellison/Bova settlement with ABC/TV-Paramount for their

ripping off of 'Brillo' for Holmes and Yogo is now put at \$292,000.

Frank Herbert has delivered the fourth (and hopefully, please god, the last) Dune novel, God-Emperor of Dune, to Berkley, scheduled for June 1981 publication. With a title like that, how can anyone say that pulps are dead? Sandworms of Dune may have been pretty awful, but it was marginally better....

Spider Robinson has sold a novel, Mindkiller to Holt, Rinehart & Winston: a collection, Time Travellers Strictly Cosh, will appear from Ace in mid-1981.

Susan Allison is apparently the replacement editor for James Baen at Ace; she will continue to publish Destinies until the material in the inventory runs out (soon, one hopes), although the editing of it will be done by Baen on a free-lance basis. Baen has gone to Thomas Doherty Associates to edit two titles a month, which will be published by Pinnacle and distributed by Warner - and have Baen's name on the front cover (asshole that he is). Forthcoming books from Ace include Herbert's Direct Descent (Oct), Lots of Tedious Little Homilies about the Wonderfulness of War and Killing Everyone who disagrees with Me ((Expanded Universe)) by Robot A Henliner (Feb '81), H Beam Piper's Federation (Feb '81), Dickson's The Final Encyclopedia (March '81) & Niven's and Barnes' The Dream Park Builders (April '81). Despite advertising, Ellison's Blood's A Rover, a novel built around "A Boy and His Dog" didn't appear in October; the manuscript hasn't yet been turned in (snigger).

L Sprague De Camp has been awarded the Groff Conklin Memorial Award at Nor-eascon for "promoting a sense of wonder in the reader". The thing is apparently given by something called 'Second Fandom', who are, presumably, not much different from 'First Fandom': another tedious bunch of old wankers inflicting their self-congratulatory farting around on fandom at every Worldcon. Balls to the lot of them.

An apt end to Joseph's news column - so good that even Ansible quotes MATRIX as a news source. But, 'Groff Conklin' - a piss-take I bet.

But something far from a piss-take was the Fuzz's bust of SAVOY BOOKS in mid October. The Vice-squad seized several thousand copies of THE GAS by Charles Platt and THE TIDES OF LUST by Samuel Delany. Apparently SAVOY are still waiting to hear what proceedings the Police will take against them.

John Sladek's new novel features a piece of 'prophecy-come-true' - it has a Ripper killing a student in University grounds. No joke for those of us living in Yorkshire at the moment - several of the Leeds SF group have already been 'stopped' by the Police, after returning home after their Friday night meetings. Colin Greenland, who may have missed the BSFA's last meeting in London, showed far better taste in turning up to the Leeds Group's Northern Tur in November. (Friday nights at the West Riding Pub.)

Just about anybody who was anybody seemed to be handing round flyers for Conventions in 1981, at Novacon: fuller details will appear next issue, but in the meantime, the following info should help you to decide how to spend your money next year, assuming Maggie hasn't taken it away by then:

FAIRCON: 24-27 July, Glasgow. GoH John Brunner. Details from 200 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LN. (S.A.E. required). (Membership seems expensive.)

BECCON. 31 July-2 August, Basildon. GoH Barrington Bayley. Details from 191, The Heights, Northolt, Middx. (Small con envisaged - PR 1 available.)

BABEL-CON. 8-9 August. Details from Joy Hibbert, West Bank, Winster, Matlock, Derbyshire. (Hitch-Hikers' con.) If what I hear of Douglas Adams' antics at conventions is true (ripping off the con-committee), I wonder if he will be invited again.

UNICON 2. 11-14 September, University of Keele. GoH John Sladek (hurrah) and Fan GoH Alan Dorey (who?). Should be good if the last one is anything to go by. Details - Chris Davenport, 'Bridge End', Shawbury, Shrewsbury, Salop.

CHANNELCON is making a bid for the 1982 Eastercon. First flyer is now out, and looks impressive. Pre-supporting membership £1 from Pat Charnock, 4 Fletcher Road, Chiswick, London.

YORCON 2. 17-20 April - The British Eastercon, next year. GoH Ian Watson and Thomas M. Disch. Fan GoH Dave Longford. Details (S.A.E.) from me! (GJ)

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** CHRISTMAS MESSAGE ***** ALAN DOREY **
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WINDOW ON THE FUTURE

You will no doubt have noticed that the BSFA Christmas Mailing is actually out before Christmas. This feat has involved massive industry on the part of the committee who have literally moved heaven and earth to make this miracle become possible. Of course, by writing these very words, I'm laying myself open to all kinds of awful retribution should some unsuspected obstacle rear its head and thwart our plans once again. This obstacle is generally referred to by the quaint euphemism, POST OFFICE, but it has also manifested itself as LATE ARTICLES, PRINTING MACHINE BREAKDOWN and RECOVERING FROM THE EXCESSES OF READING, AN SF NOVEL THE NIGHT BEFORE. So be warned! Actually, speaking of mailing sessions, I would like to express a massive Thank You to the 14 people that turned out last time at Reading the old regulars, plus one or two new faces which was very gratifying. So that you may take advantage of these exciting weekends - a chance to demonstrate vast reserves of strength and sheer labouring ability - we've put together a list of the dates for the rest of 1981:

February	7/8th	August	8/9th
April	11/12th	October	3/4th
June	6/7th	December	5/6th

If you would like to come over to Reading to lend a hand on any one of these dates, we'd love to see you. Before you go, why not call Keith Freeman (Reading 666142) or John and Eve Harvey (01-640-1349) to see exactly what's planned? Thanks!

The BSFA Meetings in Hammersmith are going well; on November 21st Eve Harvey presented a very interesting interview with Chris Evans, who performed very well. The next meeting, on December 19th at the Rutland pub, Hammersmith (on the upstream side of Hammersmith Bridge - plenty of parking and easy access to buses and tubes) has Brian Stableford presenting a talk but since this mailing may not reach all interested members in time (Christmas Post delays), I'm arranging to send a pre-printed letter to members, who live within reasonable distance of London. Apologies to the rent of you, but the January meeting is on Friday January 16th, the February one on the 20th and thence every third Friday of each month. Commencing with the December gathering we shall be making a nominal charge for entry, simply to pay for the room hire and any speaker's fees. I'm sure you'll appreciate why this has to be done, and you will know that it's going to a good cause - I hope!

Anybody who has asked for BSFA posters and hasn't received them yet, please have patience. I've taken delivery of them, and they are being sent to the four corners of the globe - so yours should be through soon. They're definitely worth waiting for - a fine design by Jim Barker - and if members would like a copy or two to display in suitable places, please drop me a line and I'll get them out to you. My address for the present is 20 Hermitage Woods Cres., St. John's, Woking, Surrey, GU21 1UE, although this is likely to change very shortly (or will have changed by the time you read this). However, all mail going to Woking should only suffer a maximum delay of a couple of days, so please do keep writing.

Now, why is my address changing again? The reason will be revealed towards the end of this column - don't hold your breath waiting though - I want everyone to be completely wide awake and alert!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, APRIL 18, 1981

As I write this article of huge literary merit, there are just over four and a half months to the AGM, which in 1981 will be held at YORCON II, the 32nd British Easter Science Fiction Convention. The con take place at the Ladbroke Dragonara Hotel in Neville Street, Leeds, and the AGM will be on the Friday evening at around 7 p.m. This will ensure a larger attendance than at Albacon in Glasgow - let's face it, 10.00 on a Sunday morning is not exactly calculated to encourage many members to crawl from assorted beds, floors and skirting panels and into a con Hall where they're expected in mere seconds to be wide awake and attentive. Right. - the next mailing in February, will contain a full agenda, together with minutes of the 1980 AGM, as provided by super-efficient Company Secretary Kevin Smith. However, whilst the committee and council have several items we wish to include on the Agenda, important points can - and should be raised by the membership. So, if any member has some burning item of great interest, please let me know in writing before the end of January 1981. Similarly several of the present BSFA council come up for renewal at Easter. A full list will appear in the next mailing, but if anybody does have any objection, suggestions or motions of support for current council members, please let me know. I know most of us would love to continue, but it is of the highest importance that you, the membership are in accordance with what is going on. (That way you can't blame us totally if events take a turn for the worse at some later date!)

THINGS TO COME

And before I close, just a few indicators as to what we intend doing next year. Focus 4 is due out in February, and will then go into temporary suspension for a couple of issues, re-appearing in August 1982. There are two reasons for this i) Rob Holdstock and Chris Evans, the editors, put a lot of spare time into Focus, and currently, both are - and will continue to be - heavily involved in writing various novels and pieces. We had the option therefore of either suspending Focus for a year, or changing editors. The latter course hasn't been chosen because Rob and Chris have done an excellent job and have gone on record as saying that they would like to continue with it when the pressure eases off. ii) I've been toying with the idea of producing some author bibliographies with Geoff Rippington of SF Arena. The plan at present will probably be to replace the two issues of Focus with two author bibliography booklets. These will contain a full bibliography, an article on the author, pieces on him/herself. Geoff, myself and Paul Kincaid, who will be playing an important part, have ideas on the first two booklets, which are currently under preparation.

I must emphasise that these are only plans, and are subject to late change, but rest assured, we will aim to improve our present services whilst retaining our current value for money. There are a few other new ideas we intend to implement during the current years, several of which were first mooted by discussions with members at the Hammersmith meetings. So, there's a lot to look forward to in the coming months. Stay with us!

FOR MY LADY

And finally - you'll have to forgive my occasional flippancy every now and again, but I got engaged to American fan Rochelle Reynolds in November - and there's a lot of planning to do on that front too. I know Graham won't mind me mentioning this, since I need to say it - and yet don't want to be accused of blowing my own bugle. Anyway - it's done me a power of good, and might even regenerate my fannish activity. Who can say? Merry Christmas!

See you next issue.

THE CAPTIVE - COMPETITION RESULT

JIM BARKER

WHO SHOT JB?

Well, after an initially disappointing response, extending the deadline on the competition seems to have done the trick. I was swamped with masses of correspondence, piles of ...oh, all right, I had four entries. That's the last time I bust a gut devising competitions for you lot.

Four entries, four different answers. REG PALMER thought it was Dave Langford by the Caption. RICHARD ALLEN thought that he'd been shot with a tranquilliser dart by an alien hit squad. SIMON BOSTOCK deserves special mention because he was the first entry. His solution was that JB was shot by a gang who planned to blackmail him over certain photos they'd taken of him in the loo. As he paid over the blackmail money there was a smelly noise and a strong wind blew the cash and pics out of the window and JB was shot trying to escape.

However, the answer I liked best came from ARNOLD AIKEN who said that JB, the Captive was actually shot by Jim Barker because the Captives personality had become so overpowering that Jim was being pushed into the background. An elegant solution ... and so very near the truth. So Arnold wins the book token and original artwork. However, he still got it wrong! Watch out for the upcoming Captive which will reveal who really did shoot JB.

And so another issue of Matrix draws to its conclusion with the news you all thought you'd never here - YES the CAPTIVE will be back NEXT ISSUE. John Collick will still be contributing for me, and for any of you who have seen his one-shot fanzine, FOR A FEW FANZINES MORE, I think you will be justly pleased.

COMING NEXT ISSUE: Marjorie Brunner reports on the SF convention held in Krakow, Poland.

The CAPTIVE

Brian Stobleford - an extract of a talk given to Leeds University SF Group. (REAL SF!)

PLUS all the regular features.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL MEMBERS



Donovan.