

# matrix

The newsletter of the  
British Science Fiction Association

## Issue 114



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April – May 1995

# matrix

the news magazine of the

# BSFA

British Science Fiction Association

## Editorial

Another crowded issue, and again your editor has had to blue-pencil himself . . . I will soon have enough spare editorials to fill the magazine all by myself. Apologies to those whose articles were cut or held over. I know how it feels!

This *Matrix* sees a concentration on conventions, with two reports on Confabulation (this year's Eastercon in London's Docklands), a report on Picocon (a small one-day con at Imperial College), and an article on the literary side of Intersection. This won't happen often; the summer months are fallow times for conventions, especially this year with the Worldcon being held in Glasgow. Cons are an important part of sf life, but many of you are unable — or unwilling — to attend them, and *Matrix* must cater for all.

This is my third issue, and while I feel I'm settling in to the production side of things, the content is still — and will continue to be — under review. For this to be successful, of course, some feedback is pretty essential! If you have any complaints about the magazine, or suggestions — what am I *not* covering that you'd like to see? — please don't hesitate to tell me, by phone, letter or email. More generally, letters on (nearly) any subject are most welcome. Don't worry too much about the deadline; I know the mailings are sometimes later than we'd all like, but if a letter is too late for one issue it will still be considered for the next one. So don't hesitate to write!

An erratum to my erratum of last time is due. In *Matrix* 112 on page 16 there was an article incorrectly credited to **Paul Allwood**; it should have been credited to **Paul Billinger**. And in *Matrix* 113 I apologised for this, but got it wrong again, miscrediting it that time to **John Dallman**. Fulsome and profuse apologies to all three, and you can make toast with my face. Let's hope I've got it right *this* time . . .

— Chris Terran

### BSFA Membership

This costs £18 per year for UK residents, £9 for unwaged. Please enquire for overseas rates.

**Renewals and new members:** Alison Cook, 52 Woodhill Drive, Grove, Wantage, Oxon., OX12 0DS

**USA Enquiries:** Cy Chauvin, 14248 Wilfred Street, Detroit, MI 48213, U.S.A.

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**BSFA Awards**

The annual BSFA Awards ceremony was held at Confabulation on Easter Sunday. The awards, presented by David Hartwell and Bob Shaw, were:

Novel: **Iain M. Banks** *Feersum Endjinn*

Short Story: **Paul de Filippo** "Double Helix" (*Interzone* 87)

Artwork: **Jim Burns** Cover for *Interzone* 79

• Other awards given at Confabulation were:

Doc Weir award: **Bernie Evans**

(Presented for outstanding contributions to fandom over the years, voted for by the attendees of Eastercon.)

Ken McIntyre Award: **Dave Harwood**

(cover of *Attitude* 2)

(For best fanish artwork.)

Congratulations to all!

**Clarke Award**

The 1995 Arthur C. Clarke Award was won by **Pat Cadigan** for her novel *Fools*, published by HarperCollins.

Selected from forty-five submitted books, the other titles on the shortlist for the ninth Clarke Award were as follows (in alphabetical order of author):

**John Barnes** *Mother of Storms* (Millennium)

**Gwyneth Jones** *North Wind* (Gollancz)

**Paul J. McAuley** *Pasquale's Angel* (Gollancz)

**James Morrow** *Towing Jehovah* (Arrow)

**Kristine Kathryn Rusch** *Alien Influences* (Millennium)

Judges this year for the 'very close decision' were Chris Amies and David Langford (representing the BSFA), Mark Plummer and Dr David Seed (Science Fiction Foundation), and Dr John Gribbin and Maggie McDonald (International Science Policy Foundation). The award — an engraved bookend and a cheque for £1,000 donated by Arthur C. Clarke —

was presented by astronomer and TV presenter Heather Couper at the Conservatory in St Giles Street, London, on 20th April. Past winner Colin Greenland was the Master of Ceremonies, and the event was attended by Clarke's brother Fred and his niece Angie Edwards as well as many of sf's Great and Good.

In her presentation speech Couper admitted to not reading sf, but did acknowledge the influence of an Asimov science-fact book in her selection of astronomy as a career. To remedy her ignorance of sf she was presented with the entire shortlist for the award as 'the best introduction possible'.

• David V. Barrett retires as the Clarke Award administrator this year, and is replaced by **Paul Kincaid**.

• Cadigan becomes the first person to win the Clarke Award twice: she previously won in 1992 for *Summer*.

• Two years ago the Clarke Award was won by Marge Piercy's *Body of Glass*, a choice which caused some controversy. The author is not British (though a UK author is not required), the book was not marketed by Penguin as sf, and they did not use the award in their promotion; this prompted accusations of a 'wasted award'. Last year Jeff Noon's *Vurt* was the winner and appeared to mollify the critics, being indubitably sf and British.

• **Ringpull Recycled** Ringpull Press, the Manchester-based publisher of **Jeff Noon**, went into voluntary liquidation just as Noon's new novel *Pollen* was due to be released,

# NEWS

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S**Many thanks to**

David V. Barrett, Elizabeth Billinger, Brum SF Group, Michael A. Burstein, Benedict Cullum, Jenny Glover, Colin Greenland, Ken Lake, Dave Langford, John Ollis, Peterborough SF Group, Charles Platt, Mark Plummer, Terry Pratchett, David Pringle, Julie Rigby, Andy Sawyer, Simo Simpson, Brian Stableford, Jim Trash, Jessica Yates

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reportedly due to legal problems they encountered with an Eric Cantona 'instant book'. Ringpull was subsequently purchased by the publishers Fourth Estate. Some review copies of *Pollen* appeared and a few copies have been spotted on sale in specialist shops, but the new owner's plans for the book are uncertain at press-time.

**Tiptree Award Winners**

The fourth James Tiptree Jr. Memorial Award was presented at a special banquet during Potlatch 4, a convention held in Oakland, California on 12th February. The two winners for 1994 are **Ursula Le Guin** for the short story "The Matter of Segni" (published in *Crank*, Spring 1994) and **Nancy Springer** for her novel *Larque* (on the Wing (Avon Books).

**Digital SF**

Major authors are starting to move into CD-ROM and related technologies. **Michael Moorcock** has signed a deal with Origen (part of Electronic Arts) for the creation of a fantasy world to be used as the basis for CD-ROM games. **Dan Simmons** is working with Microsoft on the design for an interactive sf project. And Grollier are to issue the CD-ROM edition of the *SF Encyclopedia* (with photographs and illustrations added) later this year.

**Discworld: The Series**

Granada Television has optioned the TV rights to several of **Terry Pratchett's** *Discworld* novels, including *Guards! Guards!*, *Men At Arms*, and the projected third 'Guards' book. Andy Harries, Granada's Head of Comedy and Drama, has prepared scripts for a series of hour-long episodes and is seeking US backing for what is likely to be a very expensive series. Terry is not too worried about American involvement:

"Co-production almost certainly means that someone in it will be American. Given that the *Guards! Guards!* radio adaptation [on BBC Radio 5 in 1993] was enhanced by Welsh and Irish accents, I don't automatically think this is a bad thing. I've always wanted to see Alan Rickman as the Patrician in any case!"

• Concerning the LWT production of *Johnny and the Dead* screened in April, Terry professes himself pleased: "It's 95% of what I'd like it to be. Anyone who has ever had anything of theirs done on screen will know how unlikely even this much satisfaction is!

"And most of the things which weren't exactly right were really down to budgetary constraints. But people like Brian Blessed and Jane Lapotaire really carry it along."

• In late May or early June Terry will be featured in the Channel Four series *Short Stories*. And in June BBC Radio 4 will broadcast an adaptation by Claire Grove of *Wyd Sisters*.

• In-store promotional material for the paperback edition of *Soul Music*, due in May, shows Pratchett on a Harley Davidson motorbike and wielding a mean guitar (sorry, axe). Both bike and guitar are competition prizes.

**Endangered Aboriginal**

The American magazine *Aboriginal SF* has suspended publication, chiefly due to the family commitments of its editor, **Charles Ryan**. Launched in 1986, *Aboriginal* featured many up-and-coming US writers, and in 1991 co-operated in a controversial 'exchange' issue with *Interzone*. The future is uncertain; Ryan hopes to sell the title or perhaps refinance it, and has promised to pay for all accepted submissions. Arrangements for subscribers, though, are not known.

**Birth Of Beyond**

Better news in the UK, as two new sf magazines are announced. A warm welcome to *Beyond*, which saw its first issue in March with extensive distribution in Menzies and Smiths; it featured stories from **Stephen Laws**, **Ramsey Campbell** and the late **Karl Edward Wagner**, and articles by **Kim Newman** and **Keith Brooke**. *Beyond*, edited by **David Riley**, will "cover the entire genres of fantasy and science fiction. I have no wish to be restrictive... the only criteria that should matter is quality." (And grammar, one hopes.) To this end Riley has regular columns on comics and films as well as book reviews, an article on the small-print scene, a column for budding writers by **Stephen Gallagher**, and an interview with the boss of Troma studios.

• Future Publishing will be launching an sf magazine later in the year to be called *SFX*. Future, well known for their stylish and glossy computer magazines (including *net*, probably the best of the recent spate of internet publications) have appointed **Matt Bielby** as editor, and intend to cover "mainly films and TV, but also books, comics, models..." though presumably not of the Naomi Campbell variety.

... NEWS continued ...

### Become A Millionaire

The Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya in Barcelona runs an annual contest for an original, unpublished novella in the sf genre. Submissions must be of 25,000 to 40,000 words, and can be in English, Spanish, French or Catalan. Interestingly, the contest is judged "blind" — the work must be signed with a pseudonym (though submissions must include a sealed envelope containing your real name and address). Closing date is 12 September 1995, and the first prize is 1,000,000 pesetas and publication in Spain by Ediciones B; the winner waives the rights to (and income from) the Spanish and Catalan editions, but not any English edition. Send an SAE to Chris Terran at the editorial address for further details.

### Nebula Awards

This year's Nebula Awards were announced on 22 April at the Nebula Banquet in New York. The winners were:  
 Novel: **Greg Bear** *Moving Mars*  
 Novella: **Mike Resnick** "Seven Views of Ouldvaui Gorge"  
 Novelette: **David Gerrold** "The Martian Child"  
 Short Story: **Martha Soukoup** "A Defense of the Social Contracts"  
 SFYA President Barbara Hambly also presented a Grandmaster Award to Damon Knight.  
 Gardner Dozois was Toast Master, and all the recipients were present to collect their awards. Tom Doherty, head of Tor Books, gave an optimistic speech on the state of sf publishing.  
 • The other shortlisted novels were:  
 Octavia E. Butler *Parable of the Sower*  
 Jonathan Lethem *Gun, With Occasional Music*  
 James Morrow *Totting Jehovah*  
 Rachel Pollack *Temporary Agency*  
 Kim Stanley Robinson *Green Mars*  
 Roger Zelazny *A Night in the Lonesome October*  
 A triple tie for fourth place meant that there were seven nominations rather than the usual five.

### Alternative Beliefs

What exactly are 'Alternative Beliefs'? Which beliefs are classified as alternative? Why are you pagan, or gothic, or new age etc? If you could pen a poem about *New Age — Old Religion* then Poetry Now of Peterborough would like to hear from you for a new anthology of verse. You are invited to submit up to two poems each no longer than 30 lines. Closing date is 30th June 1995. Royalties will be paid on accepted contributions. Contact: SAE to Poetry Now, Alternative Beliefs, 1-2 Wainman Road, Woodston, Peterborough PE2 7BU.

### Philip K. Dick Award

The P. K. Dick Award is given to the best original paperback of the year, and this year's winner, announced at Norwescon on 18 April, is Robert Charles Wilson for *Mysterium*.  
 • The judges included Megan Lindholm and Richard Russo, and the other shortlisted novels were:

- Alexander Beshner *Rim: A Novel of Virtual Reality*
- Jack Cady *Inagehi*
- Jan McDonald *Scissors Cut Paper Wrap Stone*
- Lisa Mason *Summer of Love*
- Lance Olsen *Tonguing the Zeitgeist*

### Paul Williams Injured

In late April Paul Williams, Philip K. Dick's literary executor, was in a serious motorcycle accident. Some brain damage may have occurred (he was not wearing a helmet), but a full diagnosis will take time. He is, however, able to recognise people and remember previous visits.  
 • Williams is also the founder of *Crawdaddy* (the first magazine devoted to rock music),

## Stamp out sf!



Now that email and fax are making snailmail obsolete, the Royal Mail brings sf to the post. Four stamps appear on 6th June 1995, to honour the centenary of the first publication of H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* and the fiftieth anniversary of Wells's death.

Computer-generated designs by Siobhan Keaney feature the four major aspects of science fiction and bear the titles of four of Wells's books. The 25p value, subject "Time Travel", refers to *The Time Machine*; the 30p, "Space Travel", *The First Men in the Moon*; the 35p, "Alien Invasions", *The War of the Worlds*; and the 41p value, "Futuristic Society", *Things To Come*.  
 Most of Wells's novels were written when he was in his thirties, struggling to make a living from writing; in later years he turned mostly to political and journalistic activities, and in one of his last prophetic exercises he drafted the *Sansky Declaration of the Rights of Man* which paved the way for the Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the newly established United Nations General Assembly in 1948. In announcing this stamp issue, Royal Mail special stamps programme manager Rosena Robson said "Science fiction is a popular subject, and H. G. Wells was a writer of genius whose prophetic works changed the way people thought about the world. Using modern computer technology, our stamps capture in miniature some of the ideas Wells had a hundred years ago and the drama of his

remarkable books. They are among the most striking we have ever issued. While science fiction has a fascination for us all, these futuristic stamps will particularly appeal to youngsters, our own future generation." Siobhan Keaney's work "frequently explores the multiple-layered association of words and images." She says she has relished the challenge of reproducing her work on a small scale: "I had to be careful and precise about what I was doing, but at the same time I was trying to create something that was exciting and wild and fun — like science fiction itself." The four stamps measure 35mm x 37mm, and are offset-lithography printed by The House of Questa, London. Special first day envelopes designed by Siobhan Keaney are available at main post offices, many sub-offices, and from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh, EH3 5TT. There will be two "first day of issue" postmarks: the Bureau handstamp depicts Saturn and four flying saucers, while one from Wells in Norfolk has a more abstract design.  
 There will be a special presentation pack containing the four stamps, also designed by Siobhan Keaney with text by Brian Aldiss; this is available from 6 June, price £1.65. Four "stamp cards" illustrating the stamps will also be available from 23 June; they are numbered 171A-B-C-D, cost 25p each, and depict the stamps in full colour.

— Ken Luke

author of *Only Apparently Real* (a book about Dick), and has just finished editing volume 2 of the complete stories of Theodore Sturgeon.

### Star Wars Again

To commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the release of *Star Wars* in February 1997, Lucasfilm will be releasing a new cinema version; it will have improved sound and revamped special effects, and will contain previously unseen footage wherein Han Solo meets Jabba the Hutt. Meanwhile, the next three *Star Wars* films — parts 1 to 3 — are in preparation and the first is expected to be released in 1998.

### Cherchez le Klingon

The Las Vegas Hilton hotel is to construct a 50,000 sq. ft. extension in which every facility will be based on *Star Trek*. Due to open in 1996, the mini theme park will have *Trek*-based

gambling (Spock? Kirk? Gammon?) and dining areas, as well as virtual reality games, interactive videos, and many concession stands selling *Trek* merchandise. You can guarantee this Enterprise won't be free ...

### Load of GUFF

Congratulations to Ian Gunn and Karen Pender-Gunn who were the winners of GUFF (Get Up-and-over Fan Fund, which funds a trip from Australia to Europe or the US), and this will be making merry at Glasgow in August.

### ... and finally ...

Congratulations to the BSFA's very own Maureen Kincaid Speller and Paul Kincaid, who have been named as Fan Guests of Honour at Evolution, next year's Eastercon. They join Vernon Vinge, Jack Cohen, Colin Greenland and Bryan Talbot.

## The Age of Wonders

Confabulation, this year's Eastercon, proved very successful for the BSFA in terms of fund-raising. As usual, I ran a tombola, as well as selling second-hand books and back issues of magazines. We raised a grand total of £578.15, which includes subscriptions from five new members. It's a great pleasure to welcome Ellen Herzfeld, Francis Lustman, Karl, and Carol Philpott to the BSFA, and to welcome back Simon Deane, whose membership inevitably lapses. £25 is to be donated to the Mexican Hat, a fanish group devoted to providing seed money in the form of interest-free loans to all kinds of fan enterprises. However, the bulk of the money, after expenses have been deducted, is to be spent purchasing a computer printer which will then be loaned to Chris Terran, editor of *Matrix*, who currently has hire a printer when producing the magazine. I'd like to thank all the people who helped make the BSFA tombola such a success over Easter, including Paul Hood, Cattie Cary and Tanya Brown, who donated a number of prizes, including books and Easter eggs. Also, Paul Hood (again), Matthew Freestone, Tony Cullen, Sue Jones, Vikki Lee France, Nick Mahoney, Jilly Reed and Lorna Bootland for helping over the weekend, and not forgetting Mark Plummer for organising our tables in the dealers' room.

With Eastercon out of the way, our sights must be set firmly on the Worldcon, in Glasgow at the end of August. Once again, I would like to emphasise that we are very keen to have as many volunteers as possible to help during the convention, giving an hour here and there to run our desk in the dealers' room. That way we all get to enjoy the convention as well. If you are interested in helping and want to know more about what is involved, do contact me at the usual Folkestone address.

We are also looking for donations of suitable prizes for the tombola, and second-hand books to sell. If every BSFA member were to contribute one new or second-hand paperback to the tombola/bookstall, this would keep us going very nicely during the convention. Scouting around in charity shops and

# BSFA news

remainder shops can yield useful results. If you want to send material for the tombola, again please post it to the Folkestone address.

Arrangements can generally be made to collect large amounts of material. And if you have any other fund-raising ideas, do let us know. We're hoping to be selling T-shirts by Worldcon, and we're working on a special item, of which more nearer the time. But there must be plenty of other things we could do, so let me know. Lastly, thanks to everyone for being so patient when magazines don't appear. I'm sure I don't need to remind you that we do this for love, in our spare time, and spare time can't always be easily found in the daily routine. Thanks for bearing with us.

— Maureen Speller

## Standing Orders

In order to take advantage of special free banking facilities for clubs and societies the BSFA's bank account has been changed. The new account details are as follows:

**Address** Barclays Bank Plc  
150 Parade  
Leamington Spa  
Warwickshire  
CV32 4AZ

**Sort Code** 20-48-08  
**Account No** 00377244

We apologise for any inconvenience caused, but would be grateful if each member paying by standing order would notify their bank of these changes. A standing order form with the new details is enclosed in this mailing to make things easier for you. If anyone else wishes to change their method of subscription please feel free to complete the standing order form.

— Elizabeth Billinger

## Renewals

Please note that all renewals and subscription enquiries should now be sent to Alison Cook, and that her address has changed to:

52 Woodhill Drive  
Grove  
Wantage  
Oxon. OX12 0DS

## Are you on the net?

If so, we'd like to hear from you! And if not, we want your opinions too... do you think the BSFA should have a presence on the Internet? What kind of service would you like to see? Access to fully-fledged World Wide Web sites? Access to information files, archives of selected articles? Our own discussion group (a mailing list)? Please send any ideas and opinions to Chris at terran@cityscape.co.uk or the editorial address.

## Fanarchy in the UK

If you'd like to contribute to a forthcoming BSFA project, you can help us by racking your brains and suggesting interesting locations within the UK which have a science fictional or fantasy connection. We're after both real places — Minehead is the birthplace of Arthur C. Clarke, for instance — and imaginary — perhaps the 'actual' location of Mythago Wood. Particularly interesting would be locations used in children's sf / fantasy, and sites in odd corners of the islands. Contact Chris Terran at the editorial address with your ideas.

Here are a few to get you thinking: Corle Castle (Keith Roberts's *Pâturie*); Aller, Somerset ('Alder' in Kim Newman's *Jago*); Manchester (Jeff Noon, *Virtul*); Sark (Mervyn Peake, *Mr Pige*); Dorset (Chris Priest, *A Dream of Wessex* and Richard Cowper's *White Bird of Kinship* novels).

## Neal Stephenson

... is the Seattle-based 35 year old American author of the much-admired (and very funny) post-cyberpunk novel *Snow Crash*. His fifth novel, *The Diamond Age*, was published in the US in February, and could be described as futuristic steampunk: "There's no better setting for a novel than Victorian England, kind of like there's no better setting for a movie than the Old West. This poses something of a dilemma for sf writers. I started trying to think of a way to devise a neo-Victorian society set in the future, and discovered that not only was it plausible, it might be inevitable."

Stephenson boasts the usual baroque mix of jobs prior to being a writer: food chopper in a Chinese restaurant, X-ray file clerk, antiperspirant test subject, detassembler (whatever that is). He uses the net service known as "the WELL" and makes no secret of his fascination with computers: "Favourite languages: Lisp, Jolie, Smalltalk. Least favourite languages: C, C++" He shares these preferences with the protagonist of Rudy Rucker's *The Hacker and the Ants*, and — according to *The Hacker's Dictionary* — with every Real Programmer. Fortunately his writing doesn't suffer.

## Gregory Benford

... saves the world! He is now a member of NASA's Near Earth Objects working party, which looks into ways of detecting close approaches from asteroids and preventing collisions with the Earth.

## Terry Pratchett

... famously shy author and traveller, has recently been the subject of some probing

profiles for *Time*'s finest. In a two-page spread in *The Sunday Times* of 19 March, Mark Edwards starts off well but soon trips up by mis-spelling 'Ook' (as 'Beik', which means something entirely different). First he attempts to establish some street-cred: "Clearly, serious reviewers have a problem with Pratchett. They like his work a lot, but they are as embarrassed by this as a hip, young rock critic would be caught listening to Mariah Carey (*who has two mentions in this Matrix, which is quite enough*)."

... Add to this Pratchett's past as a journalist and — worse still — a PR, and he becomes some kind of critical leper. So, for critics actually to stand up and be counted as Pratchett fans you'd have to assume his writing is very good indeed — and you'd be right." However, fawning soon gives way to snobbery: "For a man who is Waterstone's bestselling living author, he has an extraordinary imagination," said Edwards from on high. Overall, though, the profile was competent enough — no gross errors or misconceptions.

Rupert Goodwin's piece in *The Independent* of 17 March was shorter but better, and concentrated on the release of the Discworld computer game. Goodwin thought it a qualified success: the graphics and gag-count got full marks, and "The voice-overs are splendid, with Eric Idle, Jon Pertwee and Tony Robinson setting just the right tone. Yet the game is strained in a way the books never are; it is at heart the same adventure game that's been haunting computers for 20 years. Move around, hit a problem, find a solution and then move around again." Fine as far as it goes, but it sounds a little like complaining that a book is using all the same words that have been



## People in science fiction

around for hundreds of years.

Goodwin also asked about Terry's use of the net: "How does he cope with the awe-struck net-heads? 'I get some e-mail just saying, 'Are you really Terry Pratchett?'; I used to reply sensibly but now I tend to wind them up. 'God no, I'm fed up with being mixed up with him. The man can't even write.'"

"And the net is growing up. It has to — at the moment it's as if everyone's got a nuke in their back yard. You can spam [flood with unwanted messages] the whole net from your bedroom. All that side of things has to be sorted out — it's like a relationship. We've had the falling in love bit, now we need to make the marriage work."

\* The Discworld game is available for PCs on CD-ROM for £49.99, and on disc — of course — for £44.99 (though this version has very little speech).

## R. A. Lafferty

... suffered a stroke late last year. The 80-year old writer is now at home, and is alert, but needs a full-time carer. ○

• All unquoted remarks by Chris Terran. Abbreviations: pb, paperback; hb, hardback; tp, trade paperback; pg, page count.

#### ☞ HIGHLIGHTS

Jeff Noon *Pollen* (Ringpull). Greg Egan *Permutation City*; John Barnes *Mother of Storms* (Millennium). John Whitbourn *To Build Jerusalem* (Gollancz). Brian Stableford *Serpent's Blood*; Greg Bear *New Legends* (Legend). Stephen Baxter *The Time Ships*; Simon Ings *Hotwire*; Colin Greenland *Seasons of Plenty* (HarperCollins). Terry Pratchett *Soul Music* (Corgi).

☆ **Isaac Asimov's** 'Foundation' series is being sharecropped. The American branch of HarperCollins have bought the rights to publish three books set in the 'Foundation' universe, with publication expected in 1997. Two are currently in preparation: *Foundation's Fear* by **Gregory Benford** and *Foundation and Chaos* by **Greg Bear**, with a third to be announced.

☆ **Orson Scott Card** intends to start work on the fourth book in the **Ender Wiggins** series later this year; the projected title is *Children of the Mind*. Meanwhile, *Alvin Journeyman* has been finished and will be published in the US by Tor in the autumn.

☆ *The Gas*, **Charles Platt's** long unavailable and legendarily disgusting sf novel, is to be reissued by Loompanics in the US. First published in 1970 by Olympia, it was available briefly in England in the early 80s in a Savoy Books edition, boasting a foreword by Philip José Farmer. Despite much competition, Platt remains confident that the book "stands secure at its low-water mark of unredeemable filth."

☆ **Nicola Griffith** (author of the much-praised *Ammonite*) has turned in *Slow River*, her second novel, to Del Rey in America for August publication.

☆ **Brian Stableford** has contracted with Borg Press for three non-fiction books: *The Devil's Party: A History of Satanic Abuse*; *Glorious Perversity: The Decline and Fall of Literary Decadence*; and *Yesterday's Bestsellers*, a collection of articles which originally appeared in *Interzone's* now-defunct sister magazine *Million*.

☆ **Terry Pratchett's** next Discworld novel is to be called *Maskerade*, and will be published in November. It's another witchbook, and will feature the Ankh-Morpork Opera House. Also out there will be a full map of the Discworld, despite Terry's protestations that it was impossible.

☆ **Gregory Benford** has written an sf/horror novel called *Chiller*... but you won't find it under his name. Look for a Bantam paperback in the horror section credited to 'Sterling Blake'.

☆ **Bob Shaw** has written a third 'Warren Peace' book. Called *Warren Peace: Toga Wars* it will be issued in Spring 1996 by Gollancz.

☆ **Peter F. Hamilton's** next novel — his first in hardback — will be a departure from his previous near-future detective 'Mandel' books. Called *The Reality Dysfunction*, it is an epic (in both size and scope) galaxy-spanning space opera set in the 26th century. It will be published in January 1996 by Macmillan.

☆ **Eric Brown**, whose *Engineman* was shortlisted for the BSFA Award this year, has finished his next novel. Called *Blue Shifting*, it's due in paperback from Pan in September.

#### Bantam

**Roger MacBride Allen Star Wars: Ambush at Corellia** (9 Mar; £4.99 pb, 308pp) • **Dennis O'Neil Batman: Knightfall** (Apr; £4.99 pb) • **Anne McCaffrey & Elizabeth Ann Scarborough Power Play** (Apr; £14.99 hb) — Sequel to *Powers That Be and Power Lines*. • **Anne McCaffrey The Dolphins of Pern** (Apr; £8.99 tp) • **Dave Wolverton Star Wars 5: The Courtship of Princess Leia** (May; £4.99 pb) • **Barbara Hambly Star Wars: Children of the Jedi** (May; £10.99 hb) • **Timothy Zahn Star Wars: The Conqueror's Heritage** (Jun; £4.99 pb) • **Roger MacBride Allen Star Wars: Assault at Salonia** (Jun; £4.99 pb)

#### Century

**Joe Donnelly Havock Junction** (16 Mar; £15.99 hb, 464pp) — New horror novel. "Patsy Havenin's children were abducted

do that. Still possessing all the memories of your lifetimes as yourself. You would never make the same mistake twice. You could always go to the right place at the right time. In fact, you would be the Most Amazing Man Who Ever Lived. Or you'd be the Devil himself...."

#### Gollancz

**Terry Pratchett The Witches Trilogy** (Mar; £9.99 hb) — Omnibus volume containing *Wyrd Sisters*, *Witches Abroad* and *Lords and Ladies*. A real bargain, available in Smiths and Menzies. • **John Whitbourn To Build Jerusalem** (Apr; £15.99 hb) — Alternate-world fantasy set in the same milieu as his excellent award-winning debut novel *A Dangerous Energy*. One day in 1995 magic ceases to work as normal.... • **Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle & Steven Barnes The Dragons of Heorot** (May; £15.99 hb) — Sequel to *The Legacy of Heorot*. • **Jenny Jones The Blue Manor** (May; £15.99 hb) — "A haunting fantasy of incest and earth magic." • **Peter James Alchemist** (May; £15.99 hb) — New horror novel. • **Tricia Sullivan Lethe** (Jun; £15.99 hb)

# BOOKS

## Recent and Forthcoming

by her husband and the weird bunch of nomads he now travels with. But Patsy has now snatched Peter and Judith back and is taking them home to safety — or so she thinks. For the real nightmare is only just beginning." A book continuing the fine old English tradition of demonising gypsies and their modern counterparts, New Age travellers. Ho hum.... • **Joe Donnelly Shrike** (16 Mar; £5.99 pb) — Paperback of his previous novel.

#### Corgi

**Terry Pratchett Johnny and the Dead** (6 Apr; £3.99 pb) — Repackaged re-issue to coincide with the LWT television adaptation screened in early April.

• **Robert Rankin The Greatest Show Off Earth** (6 Apr; £4.99 pb, 318pp) — Comedy fantasy. No sprouts this time, but a circus drifting between planets in a Victorian steamship. • **Terry Pratchett Soul Music** (11 May; £4.99 pb, 378pp) — The 16th Discworld book. Pratchett deconstructs various rock music icons; wizards put BORN TO RUNE on the back of their better robes, an incompetent group play "Anarchy in Ankh-Morpork", and CMOT Dibble is the manager. • **Terry Pratchett Johnny and the Dead** (May; £7.99 audio-book) • **Terry Pratchett Only You Can Save Mankind** (May; £7.99 audiobook) — Both read by Tony Robinson.

#### Doubleday

**Robert Rankin The Most Amazing Man Who Ever Lived** (6 Apr; £14.99 hb) — Comedy fantasy with a premise reminiscent of Ken Grimwood's under-rated *Replay*. "Something is going very wrong. Someone is tampering with the system and is pre-incarnating — being born again and again on their original birthdate. And just imagine if you could

#### HarperCollins

**Stephen Baxter The Time Ships** (Apr; £15.99 hb) — Baxter's sequel to *Wells' The Time Machine*, issued to coincide with the original's 100th anniversary. "A radical — and amazing — reinterpretation of Wells' ideas in the light of cosmological insights gained from outer space and quantum mechanics." • **Robert Silverberg Hot Sky At Midnight** (9 May; pb) • **Janny Wurts Ships of Merior** (22 May; pb) • **Andre Norton & Mercedes Lackey The Elvenblood** (5 Jun; pb) • **Simon Ings Hotwire** (5 Jun; pb) — First publication. • **Yvonne Fern Inside the Mind of Gene Roddenberry** (19 Jun; pb) • **Colin Greenland Seasons of Plenty** (22 Jun; £15.99 hb) — Sequel to the multiple award winning *Take Back Planet*. The last (and as yet unwritten) volume of *Tabitha Jute's* adventures will be called *Mother of Plenty*. • **Guy Gavriel Kay The Lions of Al-Rassam** (22 Jun; £15.99 hb) — "Inspired by the rich medieval history of post-Moorish Spain; a beautifully crafted tale of intrigue, romance and war." • **David Zindell The Wild** (Jun; £15.99 hb) — Third in the 'Neverness' series.

#### Headline

**F. Paul Wilson** (as **Colin Andrews**) *Implant* (Feb; £16.99 hb) — Medical thriller. • **Dean Koontz Strange Highways** (Apr; £16.99 hb) — Large collection, including two novels (one previously unpublished), nine novelettes and half a dozen short stories. • **William Davis The Lucky Generation** (Apr; £16.99 hb) — Non-fiction. The former editor of *Punch* reckons that "our children and grandchildren are the 'lucky generation'; they will enjoy a life of increasing wealth, health and peace — thanks to technological, medical and financial advances that will banish forever the nightmares of the twentieth century."

• **James Randi** *The Encyclopedia of the Occult and the Supernatural* (Jun; £18.99 hb) — Randi, a stage magician and renowned sceptic (and an interesting choice of editor), deals with over 700 topics related to the paranormal.

**Hodder & Stoughton**  
**Simon Clark** *Nailed By the Heart* (2 Mar; £16.99 hb, 294pp) — Debut horror novel from a Yorkshire writer with four tales in *The Year's Best Horror Stories* to his credit. "The Stainforth family start a new life in a pleasant and unremarkable coastal village. Except it was once the sacred place for the old religion. And the old God is not dead... it ought to herald the dawn of an age of miracles. But thirty years ago a ship sank offshore, carrying mercenaries with a ferocious bloodlust for mutilation and slaughter; when they are touched by the power, the magic is tainted. The Stainforths must now enter into a terrifying battle for their lives." • **Mark Burnell** *Glittering Savages* (16 Mar; £16.99 hb, 266pp) — Second horror novel from a Northumberland resident. "A famous

**Belle** *The Wolf Within* (May; £8.99 tp, 470pp) — Second fantasy from the popular historical novelist. • **Famela Belle** *The Silver City* (May; £4.99 pb) • **Simon Harding** *Changing Hearts* (May; £4.99 pb, 312pp) • **Lois McMaster Bujold** *Mirror Dance* (Jun; £4.99 pb, 394pp)

**Millennium**  
**Alison Sinclair** *Legacies* (9 Feb; £15.99 hb, 330pp; £8.99 tp) — First novel from a researcher in structural molecular biology at Leeds University. "With its strong narrative, its intelligence and scope... this is the kind of book that first attracted me and many other readers to science fiction, the sort that one sees too rarely these days. To describe Alison Sinclair as promising would be to do her an injustice. *Legacies*, her fine first novel, stands as a promise fully kept." (Lucius Shepard) • **John Barnes** *Mother of Storms* (16 Mar; £5.99 pb, 455pp) — Paperback of the Clarke Award nominated novel in which monster hurricanes devastate a mid-21st century Earth. His previous novel, *A Million Open Doors*, was also a

despite treating the protagonists' personalities as palimpsests. Highly recommended, and your editor's choice this issue. • **Greg Egan** *Axiomatic* (17 Apr; £15.99 hb, 289pp; £8.99 tp) — Collection of 18 short stories from a line issue man, half of them originally seen in *Interzone* and two previously unpublished. • **Sarah Ash** *Moths To a Flame* (17 Apr; £15.99 hb, 296pp; £8.99 tp) — First novel from a writer who originally trained at Cambridge to become a composer. "Opulent high fantasy and tightly paced adventure." • **Phil James I.** *Arnold* (17 Apr; £15.99 hb, 280pp; £8.99 tp) — SF comedy novel; Round Three of the Galaxy Game series. "Arnold the Android gives full rein to his megalomania — the World Presidency or bust." Features a spectacularly endowed rogue robot called 'Rudy' (no relation, presumably).

**New English Library**  
**Pierre Ouellette** *The Deus Machine* (16 Mar; £4.99 pb, 446pp) — Near-future techno-thriller. "Join the world's first sentient computer in a race to save the world from terrifying biological catastrophe", which is a very

Alien-influenced (and scientifically implausible, to say the least) form of artificial life. "The mega thriller of tomorrow for the readers of today!", we're told with remarkable restraint.

**Pan**  
**Melanie Rawn** *Dragon Token* (13 Jan; £5.99 pb, 574pp) — Book Two of the **Dragon Star** series. • **Tony Richards** *Night Feast* (13 Jan; £5.99 pb, 537pp) — Horror/fantasy. The ancient gods of Egypt return....

**Penguin**  
**Paul Davies** *Are We Alone?* (2 Feb; £5.99 pb, 109pp) — Overview of the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence. • **Steven Levy** *Insanely Great* (23 Feb; £7.99 pb, 312pp) — Subtitled *The Life and Times of Macintosh, the Computer That Changed Everything*, this is a gushing and sycophantic history of Apple's most successful product. At least Levy appears to have read Asimov.

**Pocket**  
 ('ST'=Star Trek, 'TNG'=The Next Generation, 'DS9'=Deep Space 9, 'SA'=Starfleet Academy.)

• **K. W. Jeter** *ST DS9: Warped* (6 Mar; £9.99 hb, 345pp; £7.99 audiobook) — Jeter's first novel, the near-pornographic *Dr Adder*, was championed by Philip Dick; one wonders what the master would have thought of his protégé doing *Trek* books. Been vastly amused, probably... Jeter is currently working on *Blade Runner 2: Edge of Human*, a sequel to *Dick's Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* • **J. M. Dillard** *ST Vol 73: Recovery* (6 Mar; £4.50 pb, 277pp) — The final book in the bestselling 'Lost Years' saga. • **Simon Hawke** *ST TNG Vol 34: Blaze of Glory* (6 Mar; £4.50 pb, 277pp) — "A renegade ship's captain threatens the Enterprise and the Federation." • **Michael Jan Friedman** *ST TNG: SA#6: Mystery of the Missing Crew* (Feb; £2.99 pb, 119pp) and *ST TNG: SA#7: Secret of the Lizard People* (3 Apr; £2.99 pb, 113pp) — Two young adult titles, illustrated with amazing ineptness. • **Nathan Archer** *ST DS9 #10: Valhalla* (3 Apr; £4.50 pb, 277pp) • **Michael Jan Friedman** *ST TNG: All*

# Recent and Forthcoming

violinist is found dead in a London hotel room, and the police begin their search for the elusive killer. A killer of unique ferocity, who moves unseen and unheard, who uses unimaginable force but no weapon, who leaves no clues. A killer who is just beginning...."

**Legend**  
**David Gemmell** *Bloodstone* (16 Feb; £4.99 pb, 298pp) — The new Jon Shannon novel. • **David Gemmell** *Ironhand's Daughter* (16 Feb; £15.99 hb, 283pp) — First novel in a new heroic fantasy series called *The Hawk Queen*. The second part, *The Hawk Eternal*, will be out in October. • **Harry Harrison** *One King's Way* (16 Feb; £15.99 hb, 426pp) — Sequel to *The Hammer and the Cross*. The co-author, 'John Holm' (in reality academic Tom Shippey), is only credited on the title page. • **John Brosnan** *Damned and Fancy* (20 Apr; £4.99 pb) — First publication. • **Terry Brooks** *Witches' Brew* (20 Apr; £15.99 hb) • **Terry Brooks** *The Tangle Box* (20 Apr; £5.99 pb) • **Greg Bear** *New Legends* (4 May; £15.99 hb) — Anthology of original cutting-edge hard sf. • **Brian Stableford** *Serpent's Blood* (18 May; £15.99 pb) • **Chris Bunch & Allan Cole** *The Warrior's Tale* (18 May; £5.99 pb) • **Chris Bunch & Allan Cole** *The Kingdoms of the Night* (18 May; £15.99 hb) • **Greg Bear** *Legacy* (15 Jun; £15.99 hb)

**Macmillan**  
**Melanie Rawn** *Skybox* (13 Jan; £15.99 hb, 672pp) — The third and final book in the **Dragon Star** series. • **Robert Silverberg** *The Mountains of Majipoor* (10 Mar; £12.99 hb, 165pp) • **Charles de Lint** *Memory and Dream* (Apr; £14.99 hb, 400pp) • **Pamela**

Clarke nominee so he's doing something right. Millennium's publicity says that "Barnes writes sf that reads like an airport saga", hardly a blurb to grab me; despite this calumny, the book is a fine hard sf read reminiscent of Greg Bear's *Queen of Angels* in its attention to style, characterisation and extrapolation. Barnes's occasional lapse — his rather harsh treatment of a young environmentalist, for example — is mitigated by a sense of irony. The science is first-rate, too, convincing yet mind-boggling. Recommended (shame about the cover, though). • **Steve Perry** *Aliens Omnibus Volume One: Earth Hive & Nightmare Asylum* (16 Mar; £5.99 pb, 278-277pp) — Bound-together (and not repaginated) reprint of two **Alien™** spin-offs. The cover of this book fairly crawls with™ symbols. • **Mary Corran Fate** (16 Mar; £16.99 hb, 363pp; £9.99 tp) — "Epic quest fiction with a feminist slant" from a former stockbroker at Chase Manhattan Bank. • **Mary Corran** *Imperial Light* (16 Mar; £4.99 pb) — Fantasy. Paperback of her first novel. • **Mickey Zucker Reichert** *Western Wizard* (3 Apr; £5.99 pb, 502pp) — Book 2 of 'The Last of the Renshai'. Huge sword-and-sorcery novel with the traditional map and appendices. • **Greg Egan** *Permutation City* (3 Apr; £4.99 pb, 310pp) — Paperback edition of Egan's brain-boggling epic of solipsism and metaphysical abstraction. Shortlisted for the BSFA Award, the novel takes the idea of Virtual Reality about as far as it can go, and contains every programmer's dream — an infinite computer constructed of pure mathematics. Brings off the difficult trick of maintaining human interest

## Books continued . . .

*Good Things . . .* (3 Apr; £4.50 pb, 248pp) — Novelisation of the final episode, with 8 pages of B&W photos. • **Alan Dean Foster** *ST Logs 1-3* (3 Apr; £4.50 pb, 564pp) — Bargain collection of 9 early ST stories. • **Larry Nemecek** *The ST TNG Companion* (30 May; £12.99 large format pb, 339pp) — Illustrated guide to all 7 seasons, revised and updated to include the *ST Generations* film.

## Fic

**Jim Murdoch** *Rise of the Robots: The Book* (Feb; £4.99 pb, 310pp) — Novelisation of the computer game of the same name. • **Richard Gilliam, Martin H. Greenberg, Edward E. Kramer** *Grails: Quests of the Dawn* (Apr; £6.99 pb, 387pp) — Anthology of original stories (including a few poems and a play) about the Grail legend; authors include Gene Wolfe, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Orson Scott Card, Janny Wurts, Neil Gaiman and Mercedes Lackey. The book contains half of *Grails: Quests, Visitations, and other Occurrences*, originally issued in a limited edition by Unnameable Press; the other half will be issued by Roc later in the year. • **Michael A. Stackpole** *Mutant Chronicles: Dementia* (Apr; £3.99 pb, 270pp) — Volume 3 of the 'Apostle of Insanity' trilogy. Violent sub-cyberpunk sf. • **Tom De Haven** *The Last Hyman* (Apr; £4.99 pb, 276pp) — Last book in the 'Chronicles of the King's Tramp' fantasy trilogy.

## Others

**Nancy Holder & Melanie Tem** *Making Love* (Raven; Jan; £4.99 pb) — Erotic

horror. • **Jeff Noon** *Pollen* (Ringpull Press; 31 Mar; £14.99 hb, 327pp) — The much-anticipated sequel to his Clarke Award-winning *Virt*, delayed from November. "In a strange remixed future Manchester a cloud of pollen descends — in a new strain, each tiny grain a murderer. Within days the city is overgrown with vicious blooms as the fiercest hay fever epidemic of all time takes hold. A small percentage of the population are immune; two of them — shadow-cyop Sybil Jones and her wayward daughter Boda — are on separate paths into the dark place from where the pollen originates. What they find there will change their lives forever." Music, drugs, taxi-drivers, football, talking cabs, reality under threat . . . and much more. Highly recommended.

UPDATE: As Ringpull has now folded availability is uncertain; see news pages. • **Peter Häning** (ed.) *The Frankenstein Omnibus* (Orion; Mar; £5.99 pb, 735pp) — Huge anthology of Frankenstein-related stories spanning 200 years, many hard to find elsewhere. Includes short novelisations of various film scripts, and stories by — amongst many others — Herman Melville, Fritz Leiber, Arthur C. Clarke, H. P. Lovecraft, Brian Aldiss, Robert Bloch, and two from Mary Shelley herself (though not the original novel). Häning's companion volume, *The Vampire Omnibus*, will appear in July. • **Tanith Lee** *Vivia* (Little, Brown; Apr; £16.99 hb) — Her new medieval fantasy. • **Ian Watson** *Warhammer 40,000: Chaos Child* (Bantam Press; £15.99 pb) — A 'Collectors' Hardcover Edition' of Watson's latest game tie-in.

## Imports

**Neal Stephenson** *The Diamond Age* (Bantam Spectra; Feb; \$22.95 hb, 464pp) — Fifth novel from the author of *Snow Crash*. • **Hal Schuster & Wendy Rathbone** *Trek: The Unauthorized A-Z* (HarperPrism; Feb; \$5.50 pb) — "Your complete unabridged guide to every corner of the *Star Trek* universe . . . The first six movies are covered in depth — and believe it or not, it's alphabetized." Astonishing. Who would have thought it of an A-Z guide? • **Isaac Asimov** *Asimov: A Memoir* (Bantam Spectra; Feb; \$6.99 pb, 688pp) • **Michael Bishop** *Brittle Innings* (Bantam Spectra; Feb; \$5.99 pb, 528pp) — Much-praised novel about Frankenstein's monster turning up to play baseball during World War II. SF. *Chronicle's* choice for best novel of 1994. • **Connie Willis** *Remake* (Bantam Spectra; Feb; \$11.95 hb, 192pp) — Short novel set in 21st century Hollywood. • **Orson Scott Card** *Earthborn* (Tor; Mar; \$23.95 hb) • 'Homecoming' volume 5. • **Isaac Asimov** *Gold* (HarperPrism; Mar; \$20.00 hb) — The uncollected stories. • **John Barnes** *Kaleidoscope Century* (Tor; Mar; \$21.95 hb) • **Cynthia Starnau & Martin H. Greenberg** (eds.) *The Secret Prophecies of Nostradamus* (DAW; Apr; \$4.99 pb) — Anthology of stories based on 'new' quatrains by the seer. • **Walter Jon Williams** *Metropolitan* (HarperPrism; Apr; \$20.00 hb) • **Roger Zelazny & Robert Shekley** *A Farce To Be Reckoned With* (Bantam Spectra; Apr; \$12.95 pb) • **Linda Nagata** *The Bohr Maker* (Bantam Spectra; Apr; \$4.99 pb) ○

## MAILBOX

Letters (and emails) on any subject are very welcome; thank you to everyone who took the time to write.

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From M. J. Simpson

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I cannot let Joseph Nicholas's review of *Timecap* in *Matrix* 113 pass without comment. Joseph — or anyone else — is perfectly entitled to like this turkey, but to say that "it has a fully worked out plot" is simply not true.

Time travel stories are tricky things, but so long as internal consistency and sequential logic are followed, they can be both entertaining and thought-provoking. *Back To the Future* is an example of a time travel yarn which works because someone sat down and worked out the story from each character's point of view. When the film-makers don't bother to do this, you end up with nonsensical rubbish like *Back To the Future 2*. But *Timecap* makes BTTF 2

look like *Citizen Kane*!

There are so many gaping holes in this film's 'plot' that to list them all would take forever: the non-matching of the rocket-sled / walking time-travel methods which Joseph mentioned; the inability of the 2004 timecaps to spot that they are on a different timeline because of a change in the past, which is fine except it makes their entire operation futile; and let's not forget that great line about carbon-dating gold bars!

I'm sure that on video, with a six-pack and a pizza, it will be great fun but I find the whole thing rather sad. That so much time, energy and money can go into producing something which looks like it was filmed over a weekend with no script is amazing.

I've nothing against dumb sf movies — heck, I love 'em — but *Timecap's* plot has no logic or consistency whatsoever. People should be told. ☒

From Mike Brain

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Amongst the media and video reviews in recent times, I have yet to see anything on *Alien Nation* (shown on the Granada TV area after midnight on Wednesdays). Some of the early episodes were actually

shown out of sequence, and when I complained Granada confirmed this and apologised — it was the American's fault!

Naturally for an American series, there is the usual LA cops and robbers scenario, but at least one of the 'buddies' is an alien. I particularly like the way each episode teases out a few more fascinating facts about the Newcomers' physiology (two hearts), sexual and social mores (three partners for fertility), religion, weaknesses (salt water is a corrosive poison), crime, past history (slaves), diet. These topics have barely been touched upon in *ST:TNG*, and only tentatively in *Babylon 5*.

Has there been a review, and are there any other *Alien Nation* fans out there? ☒

From Ken Lake

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Like many philatelic and other hobbyist magazines, sf is now being overrun by cyberia, though many fans have no access to the new medium. Though Robert Bloch is no longer with us, we should all remember his First Adage Of SF Writing: "If a typewriter was good enough for Shakespeare, it's good enough for me." ☒

Letters were also received from: K. V. Bailey;

Darrol J. Bevan; Michael A. Burstein (whose first story, "TeleAbsence", will appear in 98's Analog); Syd Foster (a long and thoughtful letter which will be printed and responded to next issue); Ken Lake (again); Roy Gray; Colin Greenland; Ray Harrison; Caroline Needham; Barry Traish; and Howard Watts. Thanks to all!

# THE BLUE BALL

Reviewed by Paul Kincaid

# THEATRE REVIEW

Written and directed by Paul Godfrey. Royal National Theatre.

"The flight of Collins, Armstrong and Aldrin is too sure, too programmed, not 'wild' enough for a poet to find nourishment in it." — *Primo Levi*

EVERY FEW CENTURIES there is a paradigm shift, a change which alters our view of the world and our place in it. One such occurred when navigators revealed that the Earth was round not flat; another came with Copernicus's revelation that we are not the centre of the universe but merely handmaiden to the Sun. Another came in the 1960s when an astronaut in a flimsy tin can floating in the deep cold of space emerged from the shadow of the moon and took a photograph of the Earth rising beyond the lunar arc. An Earth that was not green or brown as we might have imagined, but blue.

That moment is the pivotal point of Paul Godfrey's new play at the National Theatre. Paul, the writer/researcher who hovers like a Greek chorus on the edge of all the action, interviews Oliver, a fictionalised version of the astronaut who took that famous shot. Oliver (a wonderful cameo by Trevor Peacock) is old now, living in retirement in Florida with a younger wife, and near-blind without the glasses he rarely bothers to wear. He looks myopically upwards and announces: "There are two places in my mind: one is the close-up moon where I was and this out-of-focus one up in the sky is another."

Every few moments Oliver is likely to drift off into a reverie. He understands the poetry of what he has experienced (one of the few who does) but he is unable to express it. This is the dichotomy Godfrey's play addresses. It's a familiar story, revealed in countless television documentaries about the Moon landing; astronauts are emotionless, unimaginative, they have to be to survive the experience, to do their job, but it makes them the worst people to describe what it's like. ("Did you call Neil?" Oliver asks. "No. I was told it would be a waste of time," Paul replies. "He's not eloquent" says Oliver.)

Godfrey deals with this dichotomy in a two-fold way. In one strand, Paul Godfrey, a playwright (played by Peter Darling with all the curiosity but none of the sharpness the rôle seems to demand) has received a small grant and is in America researching astronauts. Running alongside this is Paul's play about the first (fictional) man in space. Alex, a curious conflation of Yuri Gagarin and Alan Shepard, is played by Dexter Fletcher as the eager, upright, unthinking archetype of the astronaut. But on his return from his historic mission he discovers that his life is now emptied of purpose. He is a figurehead, the man who went into space, but there is nothing more for him to do. Even his 'autobiography' is fictional. Gradually he learns that he is a puppet in the control of the rigid and unfeeling Stone (a marvellously brusque performance by Nigel Terry). He was even chosen for the symbolic flight not because he was a hero but because he was biddable, ready to submit himself to Stone's iron will.

As Stone and Alex play out the story of astronaut-as-pawn, Paul meets a selection of astronauts who provide him with the material for his play. There is Sylvie (Annabella Apson), the epitome of the unimaginative astronaut, and Bob (William Armstrong), preparing for the next shuttle mission, who recants in gruesome detail what happened to the Challenger astronauts, oblivious to the effect it has on his wife. In this exchange the fictional Paul Godfrey is so eager for the romance of space flight that he misses totally the heroism involved, something that the real Paul Godfrey also seems to have done.

*The Blue Ball* contrasts the romance that space flight holds for those of us who are Earthbound, with the routine, technological experience of those who actually undertake such flights. Poetry vies with mundanity, and somewhere in the struggle something is lost, some resolution that the play never quite reaches. Alex and other early astronauts were not expected to have feelings; they were not even expected to do anything. They simply sat inside the tin can like any other experimental dog or monkey and let others do all the work for them. Yet they were changed by the experience, and Godfrey constantly worries away at this change without ever quite finding it. Nevertheless, somewhere amid these eager naive encounters he touches on the way that space flight has changed us all. It is an unsatisfactory play in many ways, yet fragments of it could live for a long time to come.

— Paul Kincaid

# OBITUARIES

## Norman Hunter (1900-1995)

*The Incredible Adventures of Professor Branestawm* (1933) originated as stories for BBC Radio's *Children's Hour*. The absent-minded inventor was a farcical figure with five pairs of spectacles; he brooded on and invented one labour-saving contraption after another under the stern and disapproving eyes of his Cockney secretary, Miss Flittersnoop. Amongst the devices invented by the Professor were invisible glasses, a shopping basket with four legs, a solar-operated washing-line, flowers that picked themselves, an inflatable rubber house, and a penny-farthing bicycle with wings for negotiating traffic jams. The stories proved extremely popular and were published as a collection by Bodley Head. In all there were 15 Branestawm books, the last of which was published in 1981. W. Heath Robinson collaborated on many of the books.

Norman Hunter, who died on 2nd March 1995 at the age of 95, was the inventor of Branestawm, writing in his spare time. He worked in advertising, writing copy for Guinness and Bovril; he was also a member of the Magic Circle, dressing as a Chinaman and using the stage name 'Ho Wat Fun', and gave hundreds of performances in the 1930s in Maskelyne and Devant's Magic Theatre. From 1949 to 1970 Hunter lived in South Africa, during which time he did not write at all, but began again after returning to Britain.

For years Hunter worked on building a scale model of Drury Lane Theatre, fully electrified and complete with stage sets. Using puppets he staged performances of many operas, including *Du Ringold* and *The Mikado*; there were properly-planned lighting cues, realistic theatre sounds, music and costume changes. All the puppets were to scale and in costume.

Hunter wrote other books for children including the *Incredibilia* series, also about inventions, and the *Puffin Book of Magic*, and for adults books on magic and advertising.

— John Ollis

## Philip E. Cleator (1908-1994)

The British Interplanetary Society formed a meeting place for many of its fans in the 30s, an organisation formed in Liverpool in 1933 by Philip E. Cleator; he was its first president and edited the *Journal of the BIS*. He also wrote for the first sf magazine to be published in England, *Scops*, and was the author of *Rockets Through Space: The Dawn of Interplanetary Travel*, one of the earliest books on space travel, published in 1936. Cleator wrote a small number of stories for *Fantasy* and *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, and several other books on rocketry in the 50s and 60s including *Into Space* and *Introduction to Space Travel*. He died in December 1994.

— Chris Terran

## Ian Ballantine (1916-1995)

Ian Ballantine has been one of the main figures in American publishing for over 50 years, and had particular impact on the sf field, particularly for British authors. In 1939 he and his wife Betty (his lifelong partner in both business and social life) started importing Penguin books from England, in 1945 he founded Bantam Books and in 1952 set up Ballantine Books; both houses are still strong presences today and have vigorous sf lines. Ian Ballantine was partial to British writers and was responsible for the first American publication of Tolkien and Arthur C. Clarke. He was committed to good writing and making it available at affordable prices, and was possibly influenced in this by his early work with Penguin. He also encouraged original paperback, and many outstanding sf and fantasy authors first made their appearance in his imprints.

On 14 February, shortly before his death, Ballantine and his wife were recipients of the prestigious *Literary Market Place Lifetime Achievement Award* at a ceremony in New York Public Library. Ian Ballantine died in New York on 9 March 1995.

— Chris Terran

# Haunting Melodies

## Brian Stableford

Illustration: Dave Mooring

**S**PRING IS IN THE AIR and the time has come for all of us who are that way inclined to return our nominating ballots for the 1995 Hugo awards. We open up our pink forms and find, to our astonishment, that there is an extra category this year, modestly billed as "an additional award created by the Intersection committee": **Best Music**, for which "any original musical composition relating to science, science fiction, fantasy or fandom first published in 1994" is eligible.

I, for one, immediately find myself wondering what might have happened if someone had only thought of such a jolly wheeze thirty years ago. If we were now in a position to buy a double CD compilation of the Hugo Winners, what would it contain? Would it feature the Rolling Stones ("Sympathy for the Devil"), Pink Floyd ("Interstellar Overdrive"), Blue Oyster Cult ("Black Blade" and/or "Don't Fear the Reaper"), Led Zeppelin ("The Battle of Evermore") and Warren Zevon ("Werewolves of London")? Or — is that the gurgling sound of a thousand hearts sinking? — would it be the thirty greatest filksongs of all time?

This is not such a silly question as it may seem, of course, for the pink form is staring me in the face right now, and I have to fill it in with no prior guidance as to what might be considered *appropriate* by other would-be nominators. There is no possibility of seeking guidance, because the deadline is too close; by the time anyone (including me) can get an article like this one into print March 30th will be long gone. The long lists of yearly highlights which *Locus* obligingly prints a month or two in advance of the nominating ballots going out provide helpful suggestions for almost all the other categories, but the editor had no forewarning of this one, and has taken no forearming steps.

There is no alternative but to consult the CD collection with a wide-open mind and see what might qualify.

Mercifully, there has over the last few years been a veritable explosion of fantasy-related music, much of it occasioned by the rapid evolution of Gothic rock towards lyrics deeply steeped in mysticism, paganism and vampirism. Three years ago I might have had great difficulty in locating five items to nominate, but this year I am spoiled for choice. I do not need to worry about such questions as whether *Aurora Sutra's The Dimension Gate* was released in 1994 (the packaging is entirely innocent of any dates) or whether, if so, "The Quest" should be disqualified on the grounds that its

lyric is plagiarised (from Isaac Asimov's "The Last Question") or whether it would be better to select "Farewell My Little Earth" from Nosferatu's *The Prophecy* rather than "The Keeper's Call" because it's more science-fictional. Interesting though these examples are, there are others dearer to my heart.

After an appropriate interval of judicious prevarication I make my choice:

① "Devils" by **Incubus Succubus** (from *Wytches*; Pagan Media). Marvellously lurid musical melodrama from the UK's leading pagan band (brilliant live performers). I like "Song to Pan" a little better, but it doesn't qualify, having originally appeared on the *Bdaine* tape album a couple of years ago.

② "Oblivion" by **The Whores of Babylon** (from *Metropolis*; Candlelight).

A rich, multi-layered, angst-ridden anthem from the best debut album of the year. "Lamia" is, of course, more obviously fantastic but not nearly as imposing.

③ "Sylphs" by **Corpus Delicti** (from *Sylphes*; Glasnost).

Avantgardist French Gothic music, magnificently Decadent. If only Beaudelaire could have lived to hear it!

④ "Reverbstorm" by **Jessie Matthews** (not) (CD single; Savoy).

Speaking of Decadence . . . the Obscene Publications Squad seized most of the comic books, but the song lives on. The short version is also available on the excellent album *Savoy Ways*, which collects the earlier Lord Horror twelve-inch singles.

⑤ "Watchers Out of Time" by **The Garden of Delight** (from *Necromantion IV*; Dion Fortune).

Avantgardist German Gothic music; more earnest and less ornamental than the French equivalent. The best track from the first ever Cthulhu Mythos concept album (yes, *those watchers out of time . . .*)



It is, I think, an excellent list. Were the final shortlist to resemble it I feel that the award would be well worth giving, and I'd feel optimistic that in thirty years time the Hugo Winners double CD would be a real treasure. But why, I wonder, do I have this uneasy feeling that when the second set of ballot papers come around I'll be faced with a choice between five fanciful filksongs?

We must, of course, be thankful for small mercies; the Guns 'n' Roses version of "Sympathy for the Devil" isn't eligible.

— Brian Stableford



# STAR TREK: GENERATIONS

Reviewed by Joseph Nicholas



Directed by David Carson: US, 1994, 118 minutes.

**T**RUE CONFESSIONS TIME: we do not own either a satellite dish or a video recorder — which means that, because they were originally transmitted on Sky and later networked by the BBC at the “kidult” hour of 6:00 pm, I have not seen a single episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. In theory, this should have made parts of *Star Trek: Generations* incomprehensible, since a number of scenes and quite a lot of the dialogue continue character interactions from the television series and have scarcely anything to do with the plot. In practice, however, these scenes were easy to follow, since almost everyone bar Picard and Data was reduced to a bit-part, and the sub-plot involving Data is built around that old standby of the artificial life-form struggling to understand human emotions.

Even so, the fact that the film so obviously projects itself as a continuation of the television series points up its problem: that because it trades on existing audience familiarity, and takes their sympathy for the characters as a given, it is incapable of being anything more. The direction, the acting, the plot: “perfunctory” is perhaps the best description. Admittedly, no-one goes to see a *Star Trek* film because they’re expecting another *Schindler’s List*, but one nevertheless expects rather more than a made-for-TV movie with a different screen aspect ratio.

The plot involves much the same sort of unexplained daftness characteristic of the original *Star Trek*: in this case, a tube of unknown energy which writhes through the galaxy every thirty-odd years and transports those who fall into it into something called the Nexus, described as a place of great joy which they won’t want to leave. In the opening sequence which does for Captain Kirk, an earlier Enterprise rescues a number of people whose spaceship is being pulled apart by the energy tube, including Whoopi Goldberg and Malcolm McDowell, who seems to be carving out a renewed career playing pinched and hunted-looking bad guys, and who proceeds to steal the film out from under everyone else. His life’s quest is to return to the Nexus, which he can only do by snuffing out a sun or two to redirect the energy tube where he wants it; the Enterprise necessarily tries to stop him, complicated by some renegade Klingons to whom he’s promised a super-weapon with which they can re-establish the Klingon Empire. Cue lots of special effects, including — and despite everything I’ve said so far — the truly impressive planetary crash-landing of the Enterprise saucer, terminating any thought of a series of *Next Generation* films.

The joy to be experienced inside the Nexus, however, is not all that impressive, and is in fact another manifestation of the *Star Trek* universe’s fundamental flaw: its

thoroughgoing and quite implausible decency. Bad guys, although necessary to drive the plots, are conspicuous by their rarity, because everyone’s real mission in life is to be as nice as possible to each other so that conflict can be avoided and happiness broadcast as widely as possible. Of course, one could argue that a twenty-fourth century space-faring society could have genetically engineered out any anti-social traits, but I suspect it’s much more likely that the characters’ obvious desire to like and be liked is a sign of the series’ late twentieth century US origins. Hence the constant injunctions to celebrate one’s differences, to share one’s troubles with a counsellor (the Enterprise seems stuffed with them), to learn to control one’s emotions; indeed, the open discussion of people’s feelings at all.

Such a criticism is perhaps Very British (we tend to be much more reserved about such matters). But the fact is that the one-line homilies about their feelings the characters spout at every opportunity are inane beyond redemption. In the cinema foyer — I saw the film on the first weekend it opened, surrounded by obvious fans of the series — I spotted a poster proclaiming “All I know about life I learned from *Star Trek*,” and I’m sure it wasn’t a joke. That such trite blather can be taken as a genuine philosophy is truly astonishing.

— Joseph Nicholas

## Forthcoming Attractions

The following list is of *sf* and *fantasy* movies currently being planned, in production, or for imminent release, though dates should be treated with caution.

*A.I.* (Dir. Stanley Kubrick, Warner Bros.) — A computer becomes self-aware.

*Alien IV* (20th Century Fox) — Being planned.

*Apollo 13* (Dir. Ron Howard, Universal; Summer 95) — Tom Hanks in the true story of the near-disastrous moon mission.

*Batman Forever* (Dir. Joel Schumacher, Warner Bros.; Summer 95)

*Casper* (Dir. Brad Silberling, Universal; May 95) — Eric Idle in a Spielberg production.

*Congo* (Dir. Frank Marshall, Paramount; Summer 95) — Tim Curry in a Michael Crichton story about intelligent gorillas.

*Day of the Triffids* (Dir. Tom Holland, MGM) — Another attempt at the John Wyndham novel.

*Deep Impact* (Paramount) — Disaster movie about a meteor strike on Earth. Spielberg produced.

*Die Hard 3* (Dir. John McTiernan, 20th Century Fox; May 95) — Stars Jeremy Irons and Bruce Willis.

*Doom* (Ethos Films) — Movie version of the PC game.

*Dragonheart* (Dir. Rob Cohen, Universal; Summer 96) — Sean Connery and Julie Christie and a large dragon.

*Fahrenheit 451* (Warner Bros.) — Mel Gibson in the Ray Bradbury novel, previously a classic film by Truffaut.

*The Fantastic Four* (Dir. Chris Columbus, 20th Century Fox) — Live action version of the comic.

*First Knight* (Dir. Jerry Zucker, Columbia) — Sean Connery in an Arthurian fantasy.

*Fist of Northstar* (Dir. Tony Randel) — Malcolm McDowell in a live version of an anime movie.

*Godzilla* (Dir. Jan De Bont, TriStar) — The big ape gets a big budget.

*Hackers* (Dir. Iain Softley, United Artists) — Apparently a cyberpunk thriller.

*Indiana Jones 4* (Dir. Steven Spielberg, Universal; Summer 96)

*Johnny Mnemonic* (Dir. Robert Longo, TriStar; delayed until 96)

*Judge Dredd* (Dir. Danny Cannon, Warner Bros.; Summer 95)

*Lasermaozer Man II* (Dir. Farhad Mann, New Line)

*Mary Reilly* (Dir. Stephen Frears, TriStar; June 95) — Updated *Jekyll and Hyde* story.

*Mission: Impossible* (Dir. Brian De Palma, Paramount; Summer 95) — Tom Cruise in another old TV series.

*Mortal Kombat* (Dir. Paul Anderson, New Line; Summer 95) — Another game translation.

*Outbreak* (Dir. Wolfgang Petersen, Warner Bros.) — Dustin Hoffman in a bio-thriller.

*Plan 10 From Outer Space* (Dir. Trent Harris) — Good grief. *Plan 9* was the worst film ever made; can they surpass it?

*Planet of the Apes* (Dir. Oliver Stone, 20th Century Fox) — Arnold Schwarzenegger stars.

*Predator 3* (20th Century Fox) — Being planned.

*The Seven Faces of Dr Lao* — Michael Jackson is reportedly making a musical version of this, with songs from Giorgio Moroder.

*Species* (Dir. Ronald Donaldson, MGM/United Artists; Summer 95) — Ben Kingsley in a story similar to *A For Andromeda* (message from space contains DNA pattern). Design by *Alien*’s H. R. Giger.

*Starship Troopers* (TriStar) — Yes, the Heinlein book... finally seems to be going ahead.

*Star Trek VIII* (Paramount) — Will probably feature the *Next Generation* cast.

*Tank Girl* (Dir. Rachel Talalay, 20th Century Fox; Spring 95) — Malcolm McDowell and Ice-T in the comic-strip translation. Has just been previewing in the US.

*Village of the Damned* (Dir. John Carpenter, Universal) — Christopher Reeve in a remake of the Wyndham novel.

*The X-Men* (Dir. Richard Donner; Summer 95)

# diabolical doings in docklands

## Jim Trash

**I**T'S EASTER, IT'S 1995, it's the event which one attendee referred to as the AGM of British fandom, where all the various streams of fandom come together to celebrate the joys of being fans, being alive and being together.

The venue is Docklands in London, an area more usually thought of as the epicentre of the evil empire created by those who hailed Mrs Thatcher as their high priestess and money as God than a place of wild hedonism and playful exuberance. For this weekend though the Porsches and mobile phones have moved out and the revelers have moved in.

The opening ceremony featured our chairman for the weekend, the inimitable Alison Scott, who had a spot of bother with her microphone: "Whenever I take my hand off it it goes limp." Hmmm. A leech was called in to deal with the errant microphone and it stood proud and sure throughout the rest of the ceremony. Alison introduced the guests of honour: Bob Shaw, Lois McMaster Bujold, and Roger Robinson, who all grabbed their own rather better behaved microphones to give a short speech. Formalities over, Alison did her official announcements—from the committee bit and declared the convention well and truly open. Hurrah said the crowd and rushed for the bar, as did I. Upon reaching the bar I was faced with a choice of Websters, Budweiser or, God forbid, lager. Later I discovered a rather nicer beer in the bar downstairs and so was saved the ordeal of drinking Websters weak and watery all weekend.



Illustration: Sue Mason

I visited a number of programme items that first day, some of which were quite delightful such as the folk set from Elaine Samuels, and some which didn't quite hit the mark such as the live chat show known as Moose TV. The primary reason for my attending the Eastercon though was to meet some of the people I'd been conversing with over the Net, through APAs and via fanzines. I hunted hither and thither peering at name badges and looking downright suspicious. Fortunately hordes of other people were indulging in precisely the same activity so I managed to get away without being arrested or committed for my peculiarities. My search was rewarded and I did meet up with all manner of people who claimed to be the names I was looking for. Almost all of them looked nothing like the image I had created of them through our correspondence. Apparently I also gave them a few shocks by simply refusing to fit into the pre-defined image, thus provoking meetings which went something like this: "Hiya, I'm Jim Trash, we've conversed online/via letter/through an APA." They would answer, "Oh hi, I'm <name> . . . so you're Jim Trash." I'd answer, "So you're <name>." Then there'd be a long and embarrassing silence as we both stared at each other smashing down preconceptions and building entirely new ones. Often a traumatic experience, possibly more so the more involved the correspondence has been beforehand but ultimately enriching and intriguing. I feel.

The first day was exhilarating and exhausting culminating in a bit of a wrangle over bar closing times. The hotel seemed to think a closing time of 1am was quite reasonable. We who were drinking and relaxing in the lounge begged to differ. Determined to outmanoeuvre the machinations of the hotel managers the hotel room ordering ploy was brought into play whereby one of the residents uses the all night room service to order drinks for everyone in the lounge. Objections came back, there were only certain beers available, they were all in cans, there would be an additional charge etc etc. Finally our con chairman went on the warpath (a scary sight) and got the bar opened for another hour so we poor thirsty souls were able to guzzle just a little more. The bar closed again and those who had rooms retired and I went out into the night to track down some of the night buses. I was staying with friends in Ilford. We eventually managed to find a bus and were intrigued to find out it was entirely filled with zombies. They all stared straight ahead unblinking and unmoving until some internal mechanism instructed their bodies to arise from the seat, ring the bell and leave the bus. We sat tight and managed to escape from these denizens of hell

without being mauled, eaten, smothered or whatever else they do to people in those zombie films. I never watch them myself, maybe I'd have been much more frightened if I had seen some of them.

The next day dawned bright and fair, the con beckoned us in once more. I sat and chatted to a *Star Trek* fan for a while. I must admit I was a little surprised to find one. There was little to attract your 'sci-fi' TV and film fan there. There were two video programmes, both late at night. These were a holocaust theme and an anime programme. There were no *Trek*, *Babylon 5*, *X-Files* or *Fanderson* panels. In fact it was a dead loss for media fans, or was it? I had to ask, "What on Earth are you doing here?" "The people are the most important element of a con; I come to these events because I can guarantee meeting a wide variety of absolutely fascinating people." There seemed to be a central tenet here and it was reinforced throughout the weekend as I met even more people who had no interest in the programmed items, the guests of honour or even, in some cases, in science fiction. Year after year they returned to the Eastercon purely for the purpose of meeting up with old friends and making new ones. It's a fascinating community which consists of a very wide variety of people.

I, however, wanted to see some programme items too. I had missed the sensuality workshop (damn!) but was determined to go to the fanzine panel. I'm glad I did as it was very lively and wonderfully opinionated. There was a stimulating exchange of views. There was discussion of fanzines. *Attitude* featured heavily, partly due to the fact that all the editors plus some of the contributors were there. It's also possibly the finest fanzine being currently produced. *Attitude* has a firm editorial line and an abundance of ideas from the three very extrovert editors, Michael Abbott, Pam Wells and John Dallman. This they demonstrated again later that day when they gave a live performance of the fanzine. I would have thought this impossible but surprisingly enough it worked. There was an editorial, an opinionated fan bit, a three-way comic routine, a fanzine review section by the most erudite and incisive Joseph Nicholas and finally it was thrown open to the audience for the live letters section. All the way through the artist, Sue Mason, scribbled away furiously lampooning the performers mercilessly with her cartoon depictions. The easel faced the audience so those on the stage will have seen nothing of her work until later. Probably just as well.

There was also the BSFA AGM on Saturday but I'm sure you don't want to hear about that. Oh you do, oh well -Jim shrugs- here we go. It was all a little bit tedious for we watchers. The committee read out their reports, people shuffled, people coughed. Some committed members apologised for their recent lack of commitment and promised better in future. A vote of thanks was made to Steve and Jenny Glover for their sterling work on *Matrix* the previous year. Dave Hodson was mentioned for his lack of work on *Matrix* and the new editor was introduced to those assembled. A collection of canoes were gathered outside on the Thames. I entertained hopes that they might be coming to storm the building with gas bombs, grappling hooks and rubber hoses but they let me down. The meeting droned on and the canoes got themselves tangled up with a sailing boat. Someone else got up to speak, various votes were made and eventually the sailing boat became untangled. The meet broke up and we left in the sure and certain knowledge that the minutes had been well and truly proposed, accepted, and voted upon. We could all sleep soundly in our beds once more.

Goodness, I do need a drink.

Stumbled into the Guest of Honour interview next, to see Peter Morwood quizzing Lois McMaster Bujold (author of *Barrabur* and many others). Peter Morwood opened the interview in typically tongue-in-cheek style: "Where do you get all your ideas from?" A ripple ran through the audience but fortunately no-one was washed overboard. The obligatory answer of a PO box number in Schenectady was brushed aside quickly and Lois began to seriously ponder the question. She said that her ideas came from the everyday living experience of meeting people, talking to them and living life. Lois also mentioned one particular idea which she could trace to a specific event. This was a telephone conversation with an astronaut in which he happened to mention the fact that your hands get very tired in space. You're using them to get around, grabbing ahold of things and swinging from place to place. Legs are almost useless in such situations and will tend to atrophy. This led directly to her invention of the Quaddies, characters with four arms and no legs. Peter asked about her background; how it affected her work, what she read, what she watched, etc. This set Lois off on a long monologue about her home town, the people she knows, the books she reads and the films she's

seen. Lois was clearly enjoying herself and revelled in the experience of chatting about her life and her work. Later she revealed why she liked the experience so much when asked whether she enjoyed going to conventions and whether she viewed them as business or pleasure. Lois answered that she didn't see the difference and particularly enjoyed conventions as they gave her an excuse to talk about her books. In the small town in which she lives there is almost no opportunity to talk 'business' so she welcomes the opportunity to do so at these events. Lois gave us lots of *Hello* magazine type information about herself. It wasn't quite 'What's your favourite colour?' but it was did discover that her favourite film is *Lawrence of Arabia* and she used to read romance stories in her 20s. She now reads mysteries, light fantasy and Terry Pratchett. There was a brief interlude in the light sparkling small talk when she turned her attention to the shared experience of reading and writing as an art form. She sees the fusion of reader and writer as the complete work, both bringing something to the process to make it whole: "The book does not exist until someone reads it. That mesh of what the reader brings and what the writer brings is the ultimate product." She also produced a very neat working definition of what she considers to be a classic book: "A book you can read more than once." I would consider this more a starting point than a complete definition but then maybe so would Lois in a situation where she had more time to think and consider. It must be all too tempting to offer up short snappy sound bites to an audience hanging adoringly upon your every word.

The interview which had been bowling along quite nicely up until this point began to tail off. Peter and Lois, both writers, began to talk about some of the more technical problems of writing, made in-jokes about agents and publishers and it became more of a dialogue between the two writers. Heads began drooping and the rest of the interview ran its course finishing with a whimper and not a hint of a bang.

Despite the lacklustre ending it was a fine interview and we learned much about the author and her views. She was a little nervous, I suspect, but very enthusiastic. Possibly she hasn't made many of these very public appearances. Someone who is much more at ease with the public forum is Jeff Noon, author of *Vurt*. He began by reading from his new book, *Pollen* which is the second in the *Vurt* saga. It was a powerfully evocative passage which portrayed a sleazy city of dog-men and strictly defined hierarchies. The city is, apparently, a fictional version of Manchester. He said that as far as he knew no-one else had written about Manchester and he felt that someone should, so he did. Noon was a very polished speaker indeed. The presentation was slick and professional and he was able to deliver his talk with nary an er or umm to be heard. This could have something to do with one of his many past careers. He was a stand-up comedian for some time which would have undoubtedly armed him against any public situation. We conventionists would have been mere pussycats compared to the fierce hostility of the Manchester club circuit. The tale of his entry into the world of sf writing is wonderfully low-key and bizarre. He was working with Stephen Powell in a Waterstones bookshop and Stephen suddenly announced one day that he was starting a publishing company and would he, Jeff, write him a novel. Well, despite a certain degree of scepticism, Stephen was well known for his crackpot schemes. Jeff sat down to write. He very quickly became absorbed in the process and produced *Vurt* which launched the publishing company, Ringpull. This publishing company has now been taken over by Fourth Estate who have given an undertaking to distribute and publish Jeff's books. His next book will not be part of the *Vurt* saga and he was refreshingly cool to just what it was about. "No I can't tell you anything at all about it," he said, "just a little bit would give it away." The next one in the *Vurt* universe will be called *Information*, not to be confused with the Martin Amis novel of the same name. I'm sure Jeff won't confuse his fee with that of the eminently credible Amis. A good talk and I enjoyed it. I was hoping to meet with Jeff Noon later in the convention but as far as I could tell he vanished completely after that. Either our paths didn't cross or he left the convention. Maybe he was only there for the talk rather than being a convention guest.

Oh well, more beer . . .

It was while sampling some more beer that I discovered the disco downstairs. I could go for this I thought and leaped onto the dance floor throwing myself in many different directions all at the same time. Impossible you might think but I had drunk several pints of Directors beer and was definitely in *The Twilight Zone*. Someone tapped me on the shoulder, "Hiya, what are you doing?" "Me, I'm dancing," I replied. "Ah, so that's what it is." The anthropological enquirer wandered off again leaving me to my antics which may not have been elegant but were wonderfully invigorating. Several records and buckets of sweat later I left the dance floor to check out what was happening upstairs. Ceilidh it said in my booklet so, intrigued I went to check it out. There were three bored looking musicians sitting on a little raised platform in the middle of the room. To the right had appeared a dance floor and crowds of people were huddled there

holding hands whilst a steely-eyed caller stomped up and down these massed ranks barking instructions at them. One person broke ranks and ran for cover. The caller shouted after her instructing the deserter to get back in line but it was too late. She had snuffed freedom and was heading for Switzerland or at least the nearest neutral zone where she would be safe from the mad power-crazed caller who wanted everyone to cock their legs or revolve in circles holding hands with seven other people. The caller was eventually appeased when another victim was enrolled from the gathered multitude bemusedly watching this bizarre spectacle. I retreated back downstairs where I could make a fool of myself without the added irritant of someone shouting at me about going clockwise or anticlockwise at the right moment. The only real drawback with the downstairs disco was getting past the bouncers at the door. They had obviously been given instructions to let convention attendees through without hindrance but I still felt terribly nervous every time I passed and had to suppress an impulse to apologise for being here or to justify myself to them every time I scurried through.

Next time I went upstairs I didn't bother to check on the Ceilidh but hung around chatting to people in the upstairs bar. Andy Sawyer, Science Fiction Foundation librarian, was found in possession of a most remarkable book. The stars of this book were two spaceships called Ronnie Rocket and Suzy Saucer. Tell us a story Andy, we pleaded, and so he did. Suzy Saucer came from Saturn and was out with a patrol when she decided to mooch off and have a look at Earth. This was against the rules as there was supposed to be no contact with Earth. There she was captured by an Earth scientist who tore her petticoats and looked rudely at her instruments. Ronnie Rocket tried to save her but could not so he leaped into the sky to bring help from other saucers but they would not talk to him and flew away. He spotted five saucers from Mars and chased after them. They seemed to be getting away from Ronnie had an idea . . . he switched his engine on and off in short bursts to give the signal for SOS. Now as everyone knows all ships anywhere in the universe are duty bound to answer an SOS, so reluctantly they turned around and came to see what the problem was. Ronnie told them about Suzy and they swooped down to save her from the Earth scientist who was just about to poke around inside her with his instruments! They took Suzy back to her father on Saturn and he was furious with her: "You broke the rules," he yelled, "you should never have got yourself into that situation. Whatever happened to you was all your own fault."

See the analogy and shudder.

Sunday featured a most peculiar phenomenon. Groups of people actually compete with each other for the opportunity to put in months of hard work, organisation, sweat, and toil on staging another Eastercon. There was a bidding session to see who would be given the 'pleasure' of organising the 1997 Eastercon (they're always allocated 2 years in advance). Two groups of people took to the stage and told us why they were the best people to do it and then we all stuck up our hands at the end to vote for the people best suited to the job. The Intervention committee carried all before them as they demonstrated to the audience that they had already planned for and considered almost every problem which may arise. They also had some impressive names already confirmed for guests of honour at the convention. These were, or rather are seeing as they won the bid, Dave Langford, Brian Aldiss and Robert Silverberg. The convention will be at the Adelphi hotel in Liverpool over the Easter weekend in 1997. Prices 10 pound supporting and 20 attending to Intervention, 12 Crowsbury Close, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 7TS. Cheques payable to 'Wincon'.

The highlight of Sunday for me was the talk given by Bob Shaw. This was billed as 'Bob Shaw's Serious Scientific GoH Speech'. Thankfully it was anything but serious. Bob has apparently made these talks something of a tradition and the membership pack contained a book with ten of the talks he'd made at previous conventions, every one of them enormous fun to read. Bob demonstrated though that they were even more fun to hear. He has a smooth deadpan style and a very dry delivery which seems to carry a deflag effect. He finishes a sentence and is moving onto the next subject when you suddenly realise that the last bit was uproariously funny or contained an atrociously bad pun. He told us of Von Donegan and his machinations to get funding for the Irish space programme. He told us of a ride on a coach that took so long the driver got scurvy, and he took a side swipe at the BSFA who liked this up-and-coming new author Jules Verne, and considered him a cinch for the next year's Arthur C. Clarke Award.

Highly chuckleworthy.

It was about 4pm when I suffered a power failure. I seemed to run into what marathon runners might call 'the wall'. I felt I couldn't drag myself into another programme item, the conversation around me was receding into the distance and I couldn't even face another pint of beer. I needed to get out of the building. Something all seemed too intense and I needed to escape this closed-in feeling. I've heard people refer to post-con blues so maybe I'd got this and my timing was out. I reckon I need more con practise. Fortunately I had relatives in Croydon and so was able to hop on a bus then tube then train and rest and recuperate until Monday morning when I breezed back into the convention all

ready for buckets of socialising and carousing.

There seemed to be fewer people around on Monday but the atmosphere was still festive and frolicsome. I wasn't sure whether the panel discussions would have run out of steam by this time but found quite a bit of life left in the 'Sucking Growth Fandom' debate in the main hall. In an interview at Wincon Norman Spinrad is reported as saying that fringe groups such as *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* fans, gamers, etc are a sucking growth which will devour fandom unless we learn to be less tolerant and cast them from our midst. This is a wonderfully forthright quote guaranteed to cause much debate on purity and tolerance, and to produce yet more definitions of fandom. Of course that's exactly what it did in this debate. I did notice a certain air of complacency amongst many of the participants: That's America that is, it couldn't happen here. There was some wonderful bitching about past conventions going on here. Most of it meant absolutely nothing to me but it was intriguing to see all these people reviving old gripes and moans. The knives were out for Follycon with Greg Pickersgill expounding that he was fan gusted of honour there and still had a miserable time. I couldn't follow much of this bakkitting but they did seem to be having a good time. Maybe it was also useful in that it was a perfect example of how not to run a con and so may have provided valuable information for other conners. Then again, maybe there's another group of people somewhere who thought this Follycon of which they spoke was the epitome of all that is good in a convention. I think the gist of the argument was that Follycon was too heavily programmed and therefore it became too diverse and disparate.

More beer methinks but shock, what is this? We've drunk the hotel dry. This cannot be! I scot downstairs and find, thank goodness, they have some Directors left. Back up again for the closing ceremony. I held my hands at the ready prepared to get involved in endless clapping. Sure enough various people were brought onto the stage and were thanked by the committee as we all clapped heartily. Thank guests, thank committee, thank Moose TV, give them Easter eggs, thank hotel, thank attendees, thank tech people, give RNIB a cheque for £4000 plus a large jar of uncounted metal money. Dish out a number of 'Get Out of Worldcon Free' badges. Steve Glover got up and suggested that the committee offer to run a Worldcon. He was promptly taken outside and SHOT. Then there was the handover to next year's committee who will run Evolution and the convention was officially closed. There was still much going on with a debate on the Internet and the Dead Moose Party galloping on through the night. I retired to the downstairs bar where I sat and drank the last of the real ale with a group of people who write in the same APA as myself, until it was time for me to head back home to Leeds.

There's so much I've missed out such as the slave auction where all manner of people dressed in leather and chains were sold to the highest bidder, the Morris dancing bikers, the games of Killer going on around the hotel, the room parties, the long and fascinating conversations going on into the night, the peculiar case of the dog barking in the night and all the wonderful people I met. In fact I never realised there was so much in it.

—Jim Trash

## SF AND FANTASY ON VIDEO

Geoff Cowie

**T**HERE WERE A NUMBER of quality anime releases in February and March: from Anime Projects the charming fan favourite *Oh! My Goddess* and more of the classic *Urusei Yatsura* TV series, from Kiseki the subtitled sf romance *Macross Do You Remember Love?*, from Manga Video the high budget *Macross Plus*, and from Western Connection the stylishly naughty romp *Devil Hunter Yohko* and the first episodes of boy-and-monster comedy *Ushio and Tora*. It does seem that we are now seeing the best of Japanese animation rather than titles the Japanese companies were happy to sell cheaply. More good stuff comes in April and May with *Slowlstep* from Western Connection and *Kishin Heidan* from Pioneer. Manga Communications Ltd have recently bought into the US anime market and one result of this is that all their releases are now dubbed in the USA.

**OH! MY GODDESS!** Anime Projects, subtitled, 28 mins, cert. U, £12.99. One of the most delightful anime series to reach our shores, and, unusually, a U certificate. Student Keichi is left in the dorm to answer calls while his fellow students, all hulking bike fanatics, are out. Hungry, he telephones for food but finds the takeaways are not open. Instead, he gets the Goddess Helpline and no sooner realises he has a wrong number than a Goddess materialises in answer to his call. Offered one chance to wish for anything, he imagines various possibilities; however he has no girlfriend, the Goddess is cute so... he wishes that she stay with him forever.

The first result of this wish is that they are both thrown out of the men-only dorm... together. Homeless and wet, they take up residence in a disused shrine. The series, adapted from a manga, has proved a great fan favourite in Japan and in the USA, and Anime Projects will have no trouble selling tapes; even though they are rather short for £12.99.

**URUSEI YATSURA** TV Series, vols #3, #4, subtitled £12.99 ea, cert. PG. More of the essential series featuring cute alien girl Lum; great comedy and good value at 100 minutes per tape. Introducing the gorgeous Princess Kurama and other annoying aliens, and Mendou Shutaro, the richest youth in Japan. See the hilarious parody of the Tale of Genji, and the Mothers' Squabble at the school open day! Vol. 4 was trimmed by 8 seconds to deny our youth the sight of a nunchaku, an illegal chain/cosh weapon.

**PLASTIC LITTLE** Kiseki, subtitled, 48 mins, £10.99, cert. 15. Tita is the captain of a ship of Pet Shop Hunters, that is, hunters of exotic animal animals for the pet shop trade. Little is made of the interesting hard-sf background; instead we get a lot of fast action, bare bosoms and confused plotting in short the sort of thing anime fans are reckoned to like. It's an attractively produced video, but compared to the Pioneer output reviewed below it decidedly lacks substance.

**ORGUSS 02** Volume One: Manga Video, £11.99

The first two episodes of an ongoing series, set in an alternate world, where centuries after the 'space-time' catastrophe two armies race to unearth and reconstruct the robot-like war-engines that their more technologically equipped ancestors once used. The action centres on Lean, a young mechanic, who falls under the influence of Manning, a cynical and self-serving army officer. The action sometimes seems simplistic, but the character designs are good and there is plenty of absorbing storyline to keep the viewers hooked. Nothing deep here, but plenty of entertainment for both young and older viewers.

**MACROSS PLUS: Part One** (Manga Video, £9.99)

Lavishly produced latest in the *Macross* saga, this time about rival teams of vartech fighter developers. This is very recent; so new that episodes are still being made in Japan. It has excellent animation, with superb aerial combat sequences, and the dubbing is so good that few viewers would stop to think that there had been a Japanese language original.

Unfortunately the attention given to production values has designed the life out of the characters, leaving collections of unconvincing motivations and attributes who don't come to life on screen. This was certainly not a trait of earlier incarnations of *Macross*, as even when the characters were as irritating as Sylvie and Hibiki in *Macross II*, one could not help but think of them as real persons. By all means see this for the production values, I, however, was not tempted to see more.

**KISHIN HAIDIN** vols 1,2 (Pioneer, 60 mins ea, cert 12, £12.99.)

An astonishing of anime series from Pioneer, set in an alternative 1940s period world where hostile power blocs face each other AND an alien invasion is in progress! The alien invaders are mostly androids, and with some difficulty several rival groups from Japan, Nazi Germany, etc (one of these being the Kishin Corps) capture a few of the control components or 'modules' with which they can animate their own fighting robots; crude, gigantic, but still, in a 1940s world, highly effective war machines. At the outset the hero, young Taishi Takamura, has one of the modules, but it is soon seized from him and the Kishin Corps fights to get it back. There is a fascinating cast of characters ranging through children, Nazi spies, soldiers, inventors, heroes and villains, and the 'mecha', the robots and the special trains also have to be seen to be believed. There are elements of real history, and real issues such as the responsibility of scientists. The fast-paced action never lets up and, coupled with some transparent and well-scripted dubbing, makes for riveting viewing. Do watch this, and if you do, may not want to return to mental chewing gum like *Star Trek*.

**GREEN LEGEND RAN** vol 3 (Pioneer, 52 mins, cert 12, £12.99.)

Concluding volume of the thrilling sf eco-adventure (see *Matrix* 113). Aira is imprisoned in the holy shrine at Green 5 being interrogated by the Rodosist Bishops. Ran is looking for Aira, and for the man with the scar. Meanwhile the Hazard are plotting "Operation Fireball" to destroy the alien Holy Mother. Brilliant and beautifully produced; if you don't view this series you're missing some of the best screen sf around.

Unless stated otherwise, all tapes are PAL, dubbed into English & with hi-fi stereo sound.

—Geoff Cowie

# an alternative view of eastercon

John Ollis

**W**HAT HAS MORE BEER-BELLIES than the World Darts Championships? More ponytails than the Horse of the Year Show? More bizarre costumes than the House of Lords? More leather jackets than a potato patch? More gas than the North Sea? Yes, folks, it's Eastercon 95, to be precise. Confabulation, to be wholly accurate.

This year I went to Eastercon 95, together with 698 other human beings and a moose. I hadn't been to a convention before. I had thought of going to the World Convention, Intersection, in Glasgow in August; before forking out a small fortune on that, I wanted to know what a con was all about. Eastercon 95, sorry Confabulation, seemed the ideal con to try, being inexpensive and comparatively close to home.

There's probably a good reason for calling the con 'Confabulation', but I don't know what it is. Why could it not just be called 'Eastercon 95'? If a con has to have a mascot, then a moose seems as good a choice as any other, a mascot, in this case.

There was a toy moose greeting members on the registration desk, and some poor sod clobbered up in a (probably synthetic) moose-skin complete with antlers. This pseudo-moose spent most of its time in the bar, not an activity normally associated with moose, I believe.

The opening ceremony was at 2pm on Good Friday with the closing ceremony at 4pm on Easter Monday. Because of work commitments I could only go on Saturday and Monday, so commuted from Luton. Most members stayed at the con hotel, the Britannia International in Marsh Wall, Docklands. The hotel seemed well-appointed although the first floor, where the con was, appeared rather cramped. On Saturday I rose at 4am, left home at 6.20 and arrived at the registration desk at 8.25. Seated there was a large gentleman wearing no name badge who said, when asked, "They're having breakfast, they'll be down in half an hour with the stuff." At 10.10 'they' arrived. By then about a dozen members were waiting to register, all of whom had missed, or were late for, the first programme item. By this time I was surprised to find there was an envelope amongst 'the stuff' with my name on it. Inside were several booklets and papers, and a tasteful name-badge with a charming drawing of a moose, my name, spelt correctly, and the words 'Confabulation 1995'. The artwork in the booklets is excellent.

A con has 'Guests Of Honour' (GOHs), whose principal tasks are to autograph copies of their books, to circulate, and to give a speech or be interviewed. The GOHs were the American sci writer Lois McMaster Bujold (why do all Americans have three names?), of whom I had never heard, the Northern Irish sci writer Bob Shaw, and the British fan and publisher Roger Robinson, one of the regular contributors to *Matrix*. I saw the interview with Ms Bujold, which was interesting and well-attended, but the other two guests' 'performances' were on the day I did not go. Also on Saturday there was a reading by Dave Langford, which was rather amusing.

There were many programme items and workshops running contemporaneously to which there was not time to go, together with the AGM of this organisation, presided over by Paul Kincaid, and attended by about 40 members. I don't know if any of these came only for the AGM or if all were at the con. The last AGM I attended was, I think, in 1987, where the numbers were far smaller, so probably it's a good idea to hold this at a con. All the people that one would expect to see were there. (Our leader, or at least the power behind the throne,

Maureen Kincaid Speller (née Speller née Porter) is not an American, so why does she have three names?)

On both days I scoured the dealers' room, buying about 40 books. Approximately 10 book dealers were present, including one from abroad, together with about 5 dealers in other goods, the BSFA Tombola (though not on Monday when there were no prizes left), and the Science Fiction Foundation. The range of books was what you would expect, from new hardbacks to secondhand paperbacks, with a few magazines and other genre books as well. I've no idea if this spread of dealers is typical, but did think there might have been more bookstalls and fewer sundries. Perhaps limiting attendance to 700 members had an effect on this.

On Monday I saw the presentation programme for Intersection, listened to an excellent speech by Peter Morwood (I'd never heard of him, either), and saw the closing ceremony, before going home. Programme items did not start until 11am, I suppose because most hotel-dwellers would have been up all Sunday night. One of the items at 11am was a gripe session; perhaps if I'd gone to that, much of this article would have been superfluous.

It clearly helps to know other attendees. I knew nobody by sight; after reading the membership list I found seven names I knew via an APA [*Amateur Press Association* — CT], about a dozen officials of the BSFA, plus 8 authors. Short of going around constantly scrutinising name-badges there did not seem to be any way of meeting them. I found Chris Terran on both days, the first thanks to his accurate description of himself [*"you can recognise me from the ponytail and sloppy look"* — CT], and three others on the Monday. One reason I went was the constant nagging by Jenny Glover; unfortunately she could not be there. I spent most of the time on my own. Everyone else was in groups. Thanks here to D. M. Sherwood; other than dealers, Chris and the other three, and those at the registration desk, he was the only person to speak to me. Mostly it was like being on the fringe of a bunch of grown-up children who, like children, were suspicious of strangers. I thought con-goers were supposed to be a friendly lot. The statue at the doors of the lounge was as friendly.

So to the other gripes. A fact-sheet for new con-goers (if they are known to be new) would be a great help. When sending my sub I said that it was my first con and that I would not be going until Saturday. None of the booklets received by return, nor the letter from Sue Mason (one of the organisers) contained the fact that registration would not be available until 10am. This information is contained in one of the booklets received after registration. What use is it then? I sat waiting like a lemon for nearly two hours, feeling most unwelcome. The fact-sheet could also advise that most book-dealers lower their prices on the last day. The difference between attending and supporting membership wasn't at all clear. I wouldn't have thought I had much in common with a moose, apart from looks; the moose won't be going to another con and it would take a lot for me to go again. What is a con for? The Chairperson, Alison Scott, writes that, *inter alia*, "it should be fun." Hmm. Should it, indeed? I'd rather be at home with a book. Other people have said that meeting those you don't otherwise see, except at cons, is their main reason. Hmm again. Do I want to meet anyone again? Hmm once more. Of course I do! Will I be going again? I'm afraid so. £12 is already laid out for Evolution next year. What have I done? After this article I shall probably be banned!

— John Ollis

## a billion zines that don't

**T**HE FIRST SURPRISE most new readers have when they encounter fanzines through a publication such as *Matrix* is that fanzines aren't about science fiction. One or two may carry convention reports, but when they do they rarely mention the sf aspects of the con, concentrating instead on the social side. The reason for this is pretty obvious; there isn't that much left to say about science fiction these days — other than that most of it isn't much good, and you soon run out of clever ways of reiterating this. So fanzines are about whatever the person producing it wants to write about. It's their time and money, after all.

Traditionally, what makes fanzines an integral part of science fiction fandom (and, therefore, a valid subject for *Matrix*), is that they are produced by science fiction fans. You'll even get some bright-eyed enthusiasts like Simon Ounsley ("Minor Incisions", *Matrix 112*) suggesting that even the most banal episode in life can be made into something very special in fanzines simply because:

We are looking at it in a quirky, often surrealistic sort of way, expecting at any moment to see the fantastic emerging out of the commonplace, and looking at it also — and this is important — with an open mind, prepared to give a chance to concepts and ways of being which may have the man who comes to read the gas meter throwing up his hands in horror and bolting off without his torch.

Uh, well, maybe.

But there are fanzines, or "zines" as they tend to be called, coming from the world beyond science fiction fandom. Indeed, for every fanzine coming out of "our" fandom, there are probably 1,000 coming from elsewhere. Some are good, some bad, some awful beyond description. But they exist, there are a lot of them, and despite the protestations of sf fanzine purists, they won't go away. So you can denigrate them,

ignore them, or — if you really *have* got an open mind, you can read on . . .

When you think about it, it isn't really surprising that other groups of weirdos, obsessives and funsters should have stumbled upon the not exactly esoteric notion of putting out their own little magazines. Fans don't hold the monopoly on using photocopyers and believing that they've got something worth saying in print. The name "fanzine" may have originated with our little clique, but the concept keeps being re-invented all the time, usually by hyperactive enthusiasts who have no idea that this sort of thing has been going on for decades.

The problem with most zines is that they want to be proper magazines. Even if they're three sides of blotchy, xeroxed illiterate rubbish their creators still believe that they can sell subscriptions and that before long Absolut will be begging them to put full colour ads for vodka on the back. Usually these zines die before the second issue can crawl off the high school photocopying machine, and aren't mourned by anyone except the perpetrators, who were hoping they'd be on their way to fame, wealth, and Christina Applegate lookalikes.

The advantage that the fanzines coming out of "our" fandom have over most others is that they've accumulated an enormous wealth of tradition, in-jokes and communality. (And usually most fanzines don't even bother trying to be anything more than small circulation, incestuous freebies — all the other

variants were tried and found wanting before you were born, dear

reader.) At their best, fanzines build on the fanzine tradition rather than existing purely on their own as discrete entities, plugging in to a complex, but user-friendly mish-mash of discourse, self-mythologising soap opera, knockabout fun, deranged feuds and whatever else has wormed its way in. At their best, fanzines make you feel part of something very special and life-enhancing . . .

Unfortunately, there aren't many fanzines around that do this at the moment. And those that do tend towards glitzy exercises in nostalgia, commemorating the gold days of 50's fandom, and wondering why things had to change. Or when they're not gazing at the 50s, they're gazing at their navels, lifelessly debating the intricacies of what makes a fanzine a fanzine and other such self-regarding nonsense, rather than actually publishing material which will interest and encourage an audience that hasn't already been committed to such stuff for a couple of decades.

The only fanzine around right now that really shows what a traditional fanzine can do is **Blat!** from Ted White and Dan Steffan. It combines a reverence for fanfash traditions with a willingness to take aboard whatever else is going on in the world. At 94 pages, with an extra 28 page *Blat!* archive reprint of a neat 70s fanzine called *Syndrome*, and with excellent layout and artwork, it puts 99% of all zines, regardless of their origin, to shame. I can pick faults with individual articles, but as a whole, as a model for how good a fanzine can be, *Blat!* can't really be faulted. It's one of those rare fanzines that makes me feel enthusiastic about fanzine fandom, that makes me want to join in the celebration rather than poke mean-spirited fun at it from outside.

n i g e l e .





# interzone 94 was interzone interzone interzone interzone interzone

edited and designed by

**Charles Platt**

who here explains how  
it was put together

**C**HARIS TERRAN has asked me to "say a few words" about *Interzone* number 94, which David Pringle kindly allowed me to design and edit.

A year ago, I visited David in Brighton and mentioned that in some ways I miss magazine production. From the age of 21 until I was 25, I worked very intensively on *New Worlds* magazine, and the experience imprinted me. "So why not guest-edit an issue of *Interzone*?" David suggested. After I recovered from my shock at this spontaneous offer, I decided to do it to mark my fiftieth birthday, in April of this year, which also happens to be exactly 25 years since I stopped working full-time on *New Worlds*.

The *Interzone* production process was simultaneously less painful and more painful than my labors in the 1960s. It was less painful because, with the exception of Barrington Bayley (who steadfastly insists on using a manual typewriter), all the contributors sent me their text in electronic form, so I didn't have to type anything. It was also much easier to do the design on a screen instead of wrestling with pen, ink, paper, and Cow gum. This is not simply a matter of creative freedom; desktop publishing eliminates absurd drudgery such as nudging each column of text merely to get it straight on the page.

But of course one pays a price for computerized design: there are endless temptations to take advantage of the technology. For instance, I created five different display typefaces for my guest issue, and I learned an entire program (Photoshop) merely to adjust the contrast of halftones and do tricks such as the distorted "Niven clones" illustrating Dave Langford's column. All in all, temptations of this kind caused me to spend much more time than I ever spent on *New Worlds*, but of course the result looks more interesting.

Editorially, it was easy to assemble the stories. I have been told that I published no new writers, but three of them were new to me, which satisfied my personal desire not to recapitulate the past.

I commissioned maybe half of the stories. The rest turned up in the mail as a result of announcements which appeared in *Anisble*, *Locus*, and *Science Fiction Chronicle*. Because I was determined to include as many stories as possible, I imposed a strict wordage limit and insisted on cutting the longer pieces. I made specific deletions, then asked the writers to approve, disapprove, or make their own changes to bring the stories in at the required length. There were some moans of distress, but no one ultimately rebelled against this cruel treatment.

Perhaps readers won't like the stories as much as I do; but from my point of view, it has always seemed relatively easy to nag writers into producing good, interesting, imaginative work.

Finding people to read it is the ongoing problem, but in the case of *Interzone*, this burden rests on David's shoulders, not mine. It's much harder to be the publisher of a struggling magazine than it is to be the editor. On the other hand, David reaps the profit (if any) while my services were provided free.

David's only instructions to me were to avoid anything that might forfeit the Arts Council grant or get him sued. Thus I was given a truly amazing degree of freedom, which I appreciate very much. Our only disagreement concerned the typeface for the word "Interzone" on the front cover: I wanted something new, but David feared that readers might not recognize it. I could see his point of view, so I capitulated.

The rest of the design was done exactly the way I wanted it. My main concern was to have an interesting visual element on every page. I also wanted the stories to be easy to read, so I used conventional faces for body type. Regarding the artwork, I deliberately strayed from the usual literal style of illustration. Two friends of mine are exhibited artists, so I used some of their work and found other artists at a design college affiliated with the place where I teach computers. To illustrate Rudy Rucker's story, I commissioned a piece from his daughter Georgia, who is a talented designer.

Overall, I used much more art than you see in a typical issue of *Interzone*, and much more fiction, too. I was happy to pay for this excess out of my own pocket because I find it very satisfying to publish work which might not find a market elsewhere.

British readers should realize that *Interzone* is extremely obscure in the United States, and American writers were quite generous consigning their work (for a relatively low fee) to a magazine which their American friends and editors may never see. I can't say why *Interzone* is relatively unknown here, but obviously if it was my magazine I would be a little more bold, because that's my nature. I would step on a few toes, do something outrageous — and probably end up losing the Arts Council Grant and alienating the subscribers as a result. It's important to remember that under David's guidance, *Interzone* has lasted more than twice as long as *New Worlds* under the Moorcock regime. Being radical may be fun, but it is usually not commercially viable.

Would I guest-edit and guest-design another issue if I was given the chance? Definitely, but not in the near future. Maybe by the time of my seventy-fifth birthday I'll be ready. Assuming I am still alive, my mental powers will have deteriorated even further than they have today — but with any luck, production techniques will have evolved more than enough to compensate.

— Charles Platt

# Picocon 12

Pat McMurray

Picocon 12, a one-day student con at Imperial College organised by ICSF, Sunday 12 March 1995. Guest of Honour Iain (M) Banks.

## Pre-con

For me Picocon started Thursday night when I dropped off a few bits and pieces for the con at the flat of one of the organisers. Unfortunately the first thing I found out was that Simon Ings had been sent to Finland by his agent to attend a film awards ceremony. Obviously work commitments came first, but it was still a disappointment.

Picocon had been given a couple of pages in the IC student mag to promote themselves, which they'd chosen to use for a "funny" piece with definitions of dorks, dweebs and anoraks, as typical fans. It was amusing but it was also a missed opportunity. The article could have been used to attract people not already involved with fandom, and it was positively offputting to female students.

## At-Con

I arrived on Sunday morning and helped set up a bunch of tables in the biggest room for the "dealers" — Z29, FoF, Intersection, Evolution, Galactic Guide, ICU bookstore — a typical small student con dealers' room. But it was friendly and busy with some interesting stuff. At various times everybody seemed to end up there, especially when there was little going on elsewhere.

The Con started with Pictionary in the bar, a collection of unbelievably bad drawings to illustrate sfnal people, places and books such as H. G. Wells, "The Doors of His Eyes, The Lamps of His Mouth", *Cormeghust*, Arthur Dent, K. W. Jeler. This was well run and had a small but very amused audience.

People gradually trickled in through the morning, both students and non-students. The location was nice, in the Students Union in Imperial, and the sun shone like July instead of March. Things moved slowly but the numbers gradually built up to 80 or so, of whom perhaps 20 were from Imperial, the rest being the usual suspects for London gatherings.

## The First Panel

"The Use and Misuse of Drugs in the Future" panel sat around smoking, eating chocolate and waiting for the bar to open. They then said they knew nothing about drugs anyway so they discussed Judge Dredd, the comic and the film. They then went on to a roving conversation about how Americans messed up TV series. Two examples were that the pilot of the US version of *Finality Towers* had no Basil in it and that the US version of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* had trouble with the meaning of life, the universe and everything, 42 was felt to be a bit silly after the big build up — the usual problem with irony.

The con then stopped for two hours when the bar opened, while people sat around and discussed the state of fandom and the net, slugged off Adam and Eve's stories, and watched videos, including lots of *Babylon 5* series 1, which seemed to be popular.

At one end of the bar half the con watched *Babylon 5* on a six foot screen, while the other half shot the breeze at the other end, and all ate disgusting sausage rolls and meat pies.

## The Guest of Honour speech — 50 people

The programme proper started at 2PM with the GoH speech by Banks. The video and dealers room were both shut down for this, something of which I approve.

We got 30 minutes of gonzo stand-up comedy about how Iain became an author. It was funny and interesting, starting with Maclean / Brunner pastiches at 15, in which Mongolia was the 51st US State. The first of he remembered reading was the *Kemlo* series. The next Iain Banks novel is due out in September, and the next 'Culture' novel in June next year.

When asked if he'd deliberately avoided the Culture in *Against A Dark Background*, his memorable reply was "Well, it wasn't accidental, I didn't type THE END." He smote his head: "Ah, fuck! I forgot!" He also described himself as a bar fan, like some people are film fans, fanzine fans ...

## Panel: "Babylon 5: Good SF, Good TV?"

Eddie Cochrane, Chris Cooper, Simon Bisson, Hugh Davies, moderated by your humble reporter. Attended by about 30.

This panel attempted to explore the attraction of *Babylon 5* as sf and as TV. There was a lot of discussion about the attractions and workings of the programme. There was also some discussion about what might have been done to make it better, and what we'd hope to see it become. This wasn't a bad start, but it was obvious that there was a great deal of scope in this discussion; we had to keep dropping things that looked like they were going to dominate the entire programme, things about politics,

religion, racism, sex. Hopefully we'll talk about these again in future panels. Usual problem, you can't report something you're on very easily.

## Panel: "Unbelievable Science in SF"

Iain Banks, Arley Anderson, Dave Clements, moderated by Simon Bradshaw, about 50 attendees.

This was an interesting, educational and very funny panel. Some of the points brought out were that explanation should be kept to a minimum, that sf affected people's ideas of real science and scientists, and can have people believing some appalling mistakes. However sf should not be sugar-coated science exposition, but about the human aspects of science.

Iain said that he was well aware of when he was bullshitting, but that certain tropes existed which were too handy to be ignored, hyperspace as an example. He also said "FTL — it seems so bloody unfair not to have it!"

Arley made the point that when talking about writing you had to separately consider good writing, bad writing and serialised television. He also pointed out that not only does science inspire sf, sf frequently inspires science.

Dave was unimpressed by the need felt by some authors to add appendices with references to their books, 50 pages explaining that yes, their physics/math/whatever was perfectly correct and to the point. During the questions at the end, the point was made that infodumping is not always bad, but that if you're interesting or a very good writer you can do it, eg Umberto Eco, Tom Clancy. The last point that stuck in my mind was the panel agreeing that Terry Pratchett's use of science in the Discworld was very good. He's made his premises about magic, the nature of the world and the like, and then sticks consistently to them throughout.

## Panel "Short Stories"

Chris Copper, John Dallman, Tim Illingworth, Berni Peek moderated by Bridget Hardcastle with about 20 people.

The bar was shut, so Bridget nobly supplied the panel from her own personal bottle of rum, thus explaining the make up of this panel, almost.

The conclusions reached by the panel went roughly as follows:

- Short stories are the backbone of sf, as they tend to be about ideas, whereas novels are about characters. The shortage of new short stories is mainly about economics and marketing. Word rates are too low to make a living from short stories, and reprints are too rare. Even editing anthologies is very poorly paid. Specific examples were discussed.
- Modern authors only write short stories for a few reasons: for practice, to become known, on commission or for the hell of it, but not for money.
- The UK market seems to be effectively dead, with very rare exceptions, certainly nothing like the 1930s/1940s. Anthologies, single author collections, magazines just don't sell, perhaps they demand too much of the reader.

Most of the panel do read short stories, more or less at random, a magazine here, an anthology there, but couldn't name any short stories that might be eligible for this years Hugo.

These days an author with a good idea who wants to eat and pay the mortgage, writes a trilogy, not a short story. Some don't really like writing short stories, and will only do so on commission. It was all a matter of economics really.

This was a good panel, but ultimately a bit depressing in its foreshadowing of the death of short sf. It was very witty and erudite, especially considering it had been put together that afternoon, when the intended person hadn't been able to attend, for reasons beyond their control.

In conclusion, not a lot happened, what did happen was very good. Because of the small size of the con, the panels were generally very open and encouraging to audience participation. The bar shutting in the afternoon was a pain, a big disadvantage of trying to run a con on a Sunday. Programming was a bit light; there was only one item apart from the ones I've discussed above, a talk by Arley Anderson on wormholes. I think there should have been some more programming in the evening, encouraging people to hang around a bit longer. As it was, after 7 there was nothing except a film.

It was an expensive Sunday, for what it was. On the other hand, it had a good spirit and feel about it: relaxed, engaging, and friendly. I'd go again if they put on a little more programming and opened the damned bar.

One other piece of news I did hear was the first public mention of *SFX* a new magazine of review and criticism — both media and literary — to be launched by Future Publishing late Spring/Early Summer. A very nice Polish meal, with honey vodka, wrapped up the day nicely.

— Pat McMurray



Evolution the 1996 Eastercon - UK National SF Convention  
 Vernor Vinje, Bryan Talbot, Colin Greenland, Jack Cohen  
<http://www.tardis.ed.ac.uk/~simon/evolve/>  
 Join us for fun, games and evolution



# The Fan Club At The End Of The Universe

## Simo Simpson

**S**OCIETIES — of whatever sort — seem to naturally find their own level. Since I joined the BSFA several years ago, its membership has (apparently) remained fairly constant at about 1,000. The first sf club I ever joined was ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha, the Official *Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy* Appreciation Society back in 1982, when the club was eighteen months old and had about 300 members. This seemed to be the club's natural level, and for 11 years the membership fluctuated between 250 and 400. But in 1993 things changed big time for ZZ9.

What happened was that we had our address listed in the paperback of *Mostly Harmless*, the fifth *Hitch-Hiker* book. Since this sold several hundred thousand copies, it meant that several hundred thousand *Guide*-fans discovered that ZZ9 existed, and hot diggity if most of them didn't decide to join!

Our membership rapidly shot up to the thousand mark, where it has remained for the last eighteen months. What is crucial here is that these hundreds of new members are not just new to ZZ9, they are new to fandom. Like myself 13 years ago, they joined the *Hitch-Hiker* society and through it discovered the BSFA and all the other clubs, zines and conventions which make up fandom. The BSFA elders would do well to bear this in mind when considering plans for increasing recruitment. The number of new members you can get through conventions etc. is limited, but there are many sf readers outside of fandom who would love to join if only they knew of the BSFA's existence.

Getting back to the ZZ9 renaissance, two other significant factors roughly coincided with the membership boom. One was that I took over editorship of the club's quarterly magazine (also called *Mostly Harmless*) starting with issue 51 and aided by my trusty vice-editor Anthony 'Doppelganger' Shepherd. The other factor was that the membership's involvement in the mag and the club rocketed.

Since time immemorial (okay: 1980) the job of *MH* editor has involved scurrying around for contributions and desperately trying to pad the zine out to 28 A5 pages. Suddenly I find

myself receiving between 50 and 100 submissions for every issue. This figure includes snippets of info for the news page or 'Towel Corner' letters, small ads and competition entries. Virtually every day's post brings something for *MH*, and much of the material is very good indeed. By issue 54 the mag had doubled in size to 56 pages, and with 55 we went to a professional-looking A4.

One problem we have found, though, is that many of our new members are young. Very young. Many are younger than *Hitch-Hiker*, some are younger than the *Hitch-Hiker* TV series.

There is nothing wrong with this — the future belongs to youth, etc. — but it can be very wearying for the committee, because many of our members have apparently never written any letters except to thank Aunt Daisy for the postal order. I receive all manner of hand-scrawled submissions on scraps of paper of varying sizes, colours and shapes. Because this is the members' society, I have to try to include at least part of everything I'm sent, but even with our super-expanded zine we're building up a backlog of material.

Yes indeed, things are very healthy for ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha right now. We have kept our membership fee at £5 for several years, yet we now have an annual turnover well into five figures. Our renewal rate has increased noticeably, and roughly ten per cent of our members contribute to each issue of the zine. We have shown that it is possible for an sf club to make an — if you will — quantum leap to a new 'natural level' of membership.

And we give the BSFA regular plugs, so here's the other half of the arrangement: ZZ9 membership costs £5 (UK), £6 (Europe), £9 (rest of universe) which brings you four issues of *Mostly Harmless*, exclusive merchandise and irregular meetings. For details send an SAE to: 26 Northampton Road, Croyden, Surrey CR0 7HA.

— Simo Simpson

## The Word

Colin Harris and Nadja Tegen

on *Intersection's* literary programme

**T**HE INTERSECTION LITERARY PROGRAMME consists of some 130 programme items, excluding such ephemera as signings and readings. Within this budget (which represents about 30% of the total programme), we hope to provide a fresh and entertaining look at the whole field of speculative fiction, whilst also providing enough traditional programming to appeal to the many first time con-goers that we expect to attend.

We have divided the programme (for planning purposes at least) into a number of threads which deal with aspects such as sf themes, criticism, editing and publishing, and mythology and folklore. Within each theme we have worked to create a degree of coherence, so that items should relate to each other to a greater degree than is often the case.

With Samuel Delany as our literary Guest of Honour, no-one will be surprised to hear that we are planning a number of items on criticism within sf. We will debate the value of criticism and ask whether the field benefits or suffers from having to provide its own critics. We will also explore the intersection between sf and mainstream fiction, in what we hope will be a key-note panel for the literary programme. And there will be a chance to ask whether good ideas really do excuse bad writing. Finally, we will put critics and authors together to deconstruct some of the more interesting books of the last few years.

A number of items will re-examine traditional themes in sf and fantasy and ask where they are going: the treatment of the family, religion, the city, and utopias will be featured here. Remembering our location, another item asks why the iconography of Scotland and the Highlander continues to be so popular.

There's no risk of the programme getting too serious, though. Some panels will look specifically at humour in sf and fantasy, but we have also included several items specifically designed to leave people laughing. In 'If Only I Had One of Those', the panelists have an opportunity to design those useful gadgets that have somehow slipped through the public consciousness until now, while 'If We Ruled the World' puts the writers in government (tax relief on beards an early benefit?)

Finally, a series of items is being organised in collaboration with the science programme, under the general banner of 'Horizons'. These items will extrapolate 10, 100, 1000 and more years ahead to look at what really may await us in the unconquered country. Bringing sf writers and fans together with economists, scientists, and other experts, these items should certainly give food for thought.

Of course, content is complemented by presentation, and we are working hard in this area too. In the Mexican tradition, the stage will have coffee tables and easy chairs to break down the barriers between audience and participants. The items themselves will include not only panels but talks and presentations, and all participants will be expected to pull their weight. In this respect, we are lucky in that we already have over 240 potential participants in the literary programme alone, including many more overseas participants (especially American) than for the last two European Worldcons. Fitting this much programme in would normally be a problem, but *Intersection* is committed to a full five day programme so there should just be room. Don't arrive late though — you never know what you might be missing . . .

— Colin Harris and Nadja Tegen

# EVENTS

## 4 May: London SF meeting

Wellington pub opposite the Old Vic exit from Waterloo Station. Usually starts about 5pm. No special events but very popular.

5 May 1967: Alan Shepard becomes the first American in space.

## 5-14 May: Fantastic Cinema

Derby based film festival: "A host of movie premieres, previews, special guests and events from the realms of fantasy will take place at this city wide festival." Included are a Dr Who evening with Jon Pertwee, a screening of the rare silent film *Dr Mabius* with live accompaniment, and a celebration of Hammer Horror with Ingrid Pitt. Contact: Metro Cinema, Green Lane, Derby DE1 1SA, tel 01332 340170.

6 May: Births: Sigmund Freud (1856) and Karl Marx (1818).

7 May 1945: Victory in Europe, World War II.

14 May 1944: George Lucas born.

## 14 May: Fantasy Fair

10.30am-4pm, Cresset Exhibition Centre, Bretton, Peterborough. Guests Bryan Talbot and Stephen Gallagher. Admission £1. Contact: 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough PE2 0RB

18 May 1980: Mount St Helens blows its top.

21 May: Saturn's rings edge-on from Earth's perspective.

24 May: Shuttle launch — a docking with Mir is planned.

## 24 May: BSFA London Meeting

Jubilee Tavern, York Road (near Waterloo Station). Starts at 7pm in the upstairs room. Guest is Stephen Baxter on a panel discussing "How hard is sf?"

25 May 1978: *Star Wars* released.

26 May 1946: In America, a patent is filed for the hydrogen bomb. Infringe at your own risk.

27 May: Venus passes behind moon (visible from Europe).

## 1 June: London SF meeting

See above for details.

2 Jun 1740: Marquis de Sade born.

5 Jun 1833: Software meets hardware: Ada Lovelace is introduced to Charles Babbage.

9 Jun 1934: Donald Duck born.

9 Jun: Near-Earth (about 3 million miles) approach of Asteroid 1991JX.

13 Jun 1983: Pioneer 10 becomes the first man-made object to leave the solar system.

16 Jun 1963: Valentina Tereshkova becomes the first woman in space.

## 17-18 June: Finncon 95

Jyväskylä University main building, Helsinki. Guests are Storm Constantine, Vonda McIntyre and Bruce Sterling. Admission free! "Beer and mead, sex and time machines, techno and computers, blasphemy and panels, hongkong and horror, rôle playing and videotape, baroxx'n'roll and masquerades..." Contact: Otto Mäkelä or Paula Heinonen +358 41 613 847 or email otto@jyu.fi or paula@jybox.jyu.fi or WWW <http://www.jyu.fi/~otto/42.html>

23 Jun 1912: Alan Turing, computer pioneer, born.

## 28 June: BSFA London Meeting

See above for venue information. Guest is Gwyneth Jones.

## 30 June-2 July: Avengers Treasure Hunt

This year the 9th annual Time Screen Avengers Treasure Hunt takes place in St. Albans. The weekend nominally consists of a tour around various locations used during the filming of 1960s television series, such as *The Avengers*, *Department S*, *Randall and Hopkirk (deceased)*, *UFO* and *The Prisoner*. The Saturday programme includes guided tours of major locations and a series of games testing manual dexterity and mental agility, taking an episode of the Avengers as a theme; prizes will be awarded to the winners. The weekend concludes with a treasure hunt on the Sunday morning starting in St. Albans. As you can imagine, access to a car is essential. We can usually find room for a small number in the cars of others if they are willing to share. Price is £17.50 per person with bed and breakfast accommodation at £13.50 pppn sharing.

Contact: Send an SAE or IRC to: 88 Edlington Lane, Warmsworth, Doncaster, DN4 9LS or E-mail a.r.mckay@shu.ac.uk

2 Jul 1985: Giotto launched to rendezvous with Halley's Comet.

## 6 July: London SF meeting

See above for details.

13 Jul: Separation of Galileo's Jupiter atmosphere probe from the orbiter. After more than 5 years in space, Galileo is now undergoing the last few course corrections; on 7 Dec it will perform a gravity-assist manoeuvre around Io and enter Jovian orbit the following day.

## 14-16 July: Dimension Jump 95

The official *Red Dwarf* Fan Club convention, held somewhere in Stratford-Upon-Avon (a more suitable place for a *Blake's 7* con, one might have thought).

Contact: SAE to Garden Cottage, Hall Farm, Scotton, Norwich NR10 5DF

## 26 July: BSFA London Meeting

Jubilee Tavern, York Road (near Waterloo Station). Starts at 7pm in the upstairs room. Guest TBA. Note there will be no meeting in August.

## 29-30 July: BroomCon

The Pagan convention, sited at the University of Essex in Colchester; special guests are Terry Pratchett and leading pagan band Incubus Succubus. "Our aim is to bring together as many different pagan traditions as possible to find the common ground. You don't even have to be pagan yourself to join in. We have a varied programme of both the silly and the serious as well as loads of events for you to take part in. We can promise interesting talks, discussions, a lughnasadh ritual, belly dancing workshops, rune/tarot workshops, astrology, pathworkings, astral sex workshops, debates, quizzes, wart growing, herbal and spiritual healing, loud music and lots lots more." Registration is £15 for adults, £5 children attending; £5 supporting. Contact: BroomCon, 39 Henniker Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 5HF or email phil.willis@aimac.co.uk

## 19-20 August: Precursor

Rob Hansen, John Harvey and Martin Smith are running a pre-Worldcon con on the weekend before Intersection. Guests and venue TBA (but may be in Leicester).

Contact: Precursor, 144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London E6 1AB

## 24-28 August: Intersection

This year's Worldcon, held in Glasgow. Membership is now £90. Contact: Intersection, Admail 336, Glasgow, G2 1BR or email [intersection@snoof.demon.co.uk](mailto:intersection@snoof.demon.co.uk)

## 22-24 September: Festival of Fantastic Films

Sacha's Hotel, Manchester. GoH is Roger Corman, with Don Sharp and July Sharp. Registration is £40 before August, £45 thereafter. Contact: 95 Meadowgate Road, Salford, Manchester M6 8EN

## 14-15 October: Octocon 95

Ireland's national sf convention, at the Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire. A superb guest list: GoH is Mary Gentle, others are Diane Duane, Robert Holdstock, Katherine Kurtz, Anne McCaffrey, Scott McMillan, Peter Morwood, Kim Newman, Tom Richards, Michael Scott and James White. Registration until 1 September is £10 supporting, £16 adult (over 16) and £12 junior attending. Contact: Octocon, 30 South Circular Road, Dublin 8 or email [mnmhugh@tdc.ie](mailto:mnmhugh@tdc.ie) or WWW <http://arrogant.itc.icl.ie/OctoCon.html>

## 27-30 October: Cult TV Appreciation Weekend

Haveen All-Action Centre, Caister, Great Yarmouth. Covers UK and US TV series of all types, but mostly sf. Registration is £39. Contact: Send a 9x6" SAE to Cult TV 1995, P. O. Box 1701, Peterborough, PE1 1EX.

## 3-5 November: ReContanimé Ted 1995

This anime convention will be held at the Grand Hotel, Colmore Row, Birmingham. Registration is £21 until 30 Sept, £26 thereafter. Contact: SAE to Martin Pay, 29 Langton Avenue, Chelmsford, CM1 2BW [This is the payment address; the enquiry address, phone number and email address are illegible on the flyer. *Publicists take note!*]

## 5-8 April 1996: Evolution

The 1996 Eastercon will be held at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow. Guests will be Verne Vinger, Jack Cohen, Colin Greenland, Bryan Talbot, Maureen Speller and Paul Kincaid. Membership is £24 attending, £14 supporting and child rate. Contact: Evolution, 13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London NW3 6PX or email [bmh@ee.ic.ac.uk](mailto:bmh@ee.ic.ac.uk)

## 28-31 March 1997: Intervention

The 1997 Eastercon, themed around 'Communication', Venue is the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool. Guests are Brian Aldiss, Robert Silverberg and David Langford. Membership is £20 attending, £10 supporting. Contact: Intervention, 12 Crowsbury Close, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 7TS.

**STAR'S  
END**



**Andy  
Sawyer**

Recently Arthur C. Clarke was awarded an honorary doctorate by Liverpool University, home of the Science Fiction Foundation. Administrator Andy Sawyer makes his report....

The ceremony occurred on Thursday January 26th through a satellite link-up between the University of Liverpool and Sri Lanka, where Clarke makes his home. The degree was awarded by Professor Philip Low, Vice-Chancellor of the University, who also signed the official agreement to welcome the Science Fiction Foundation Collection, which is a central resource for the University's new Studies and one of the world's major research collections in the field.

An audience of invited guests included Arthur C. Clarke's brother Fred, sister-in-law Babs, and niece Angie, local writers Ramsey Campbell, Bob Shaw and Stephen Baxter, academic and library staff of the University, and friends (and Friends) of the Science Fiction Foundation. Professor John Tarn, the Public Orator, spoke about Clarke's inspiration by the Liverpool philosopher / novelist Olaf Stapledon, (whose archive is deposited in the Sydney Jones Library), his work as a communicator in fact and fiction, his prize-winning novels, and his "uncanny knack of demonstrating that the unreal can become real, that the world of science fiction for one generation can be the world of space exploration for the next."

He concluded, "Here then is a man who in every sense is the successor of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells and who, in his turn, has looked at the wonders of our world and universe, speculated on our origins and their future, and sought to encapsulate and commend the noblest skills and aspirations of the human race."

Dr Clarke then responded with a wide-ranging reply in which he referred to more Liverpool connections: his membership of the British Interplanetary Society and his friendship and collaboration with the late Eric Frank Russell, whose papers he also held by the University. He said, "I am indeed happy that the Science Fiction Library has found a home with you and that degrees in the subject are now being presented... we should recognise its importance as a link between the famous 'Two Cultures'". To emphasise this, he spoke about two controversies, literary and scientific, which found common ground in the world of sci. A recent book claimed that the posthumous works of C. S. Lewis, whose papers he also held by the University, being suggested that so-called "cold fusion" might be "a rather unimportant tip of an enormous iceberg" which would cause a major upheaval in the world of physics — "but don't sell your oil shares yet!"

After declaring that he was "honoured and flattered" to receive the degree, he shared with the audience two mementoes: a certificate of possession: a photograph of H. G. Wells bearing both Wells's signature and his own ("alas, sixty years apart, but I can assure you they are both genuine") and something which would have amazed Wells and which all the wealth of mankind could not have purchased 30 years ago: a pinch of powdered moon rock. Perhaps recalling his early novel *A Fall of Moondust*, he poured the grains of rock on to a sheet of paper.

The satellite link was concluded by the official transfer of the Science Fiction Foundation Collection to the care of the University of Liverpool Library, with the agreement signed by Professor Love on behalf of the University and John Clute, co-editor of the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* on behalf of the Trustees of the Friends of Foundation.

Following the degree ceremony, Professor Patrick Parrinder of the University of Reading officially launched the Liverpool University Press's new "Science Fiction Texts and Studies" series, of which the first volume is Robert Crossley's authoritative biography of Clarke's mentor, Olaf Stapledon. This was followed by four around the stacks of the Science Fiction Foundation Collection directed by Andy Sawyer, its Librarian, while guests watched the Mandelbrot Sets and fractal imagery of the new film *Arthur C. Clarke's Colours of Infinity*, directed by Nigel Lesmoir-Gordon; notably described by Andy as "looking like the music of Pink Floyd set to music".

The satellite linkage was directed by Brian Thomas of the Liverpool-based Euro News Service in consultation with Mercury Communications and Global Image Ltd. It involved images transmitted to the INTELSAT VI satellite and retransmitted to the Mercury Communications international earth station at White Hill, Oxford. The signal was then carried by optical link to the Mercury satellite station in London and retransmitted via the EUTELSAT II satellite to the University of Liverpool. The ceremony was recorded on video, and it is hoped that this, together with information about the Foundation Collection, will be made available in the near future (see *ad opposite* — CT). Meanwhile, the scroll bearing the official record of his honorary Doctorate was sent to Dr Clarke by more conventional means — not, as was originally suggested not altogether unseriously, by fax.

— Andy Sawyer

## Members' Noticeboard

Advertisements and announcements are free to BSFA members. Send your ad to the editorial address.

**SF BOOKS / MAGAZINES FOR SALE** The Science Fiction Foundation Collection has a large number of science fiction / fantasy books and magazines for sale at bargain prices. Proceeds to the SF.

Contact Andy Sawyer on 0151 794 2696 / 2733 or email [asawyer@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:asawyer@liverpool.ac.uk) for further details.

**A LOAD OF OLD BOSH**, ten of Bob Shaw's serious scientific talks! Produced by Becon Publications for Confabulation, the 1995 British National SF Convention. All profits will be donated to the RNIB Talking Book Fund. £4.95 from Becon Publications, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG

**INTERSECTION** attending membership for sale, £70 or nearest offer. Includes all progress reports to date. Phone Eugene Doherty (01232-645134 Tuesday-Sunday after 7pm) or e-mail 100410.2200@compuserve.com

**WANTED:** A copy in any condition of Brian Stableford's novel *The Paradox of the Sets*, published by Acc Books in the 70s. Chris Terran, 9 Beechwood Court, Back Beechwood Grove, Leeds LS4 2HS or email [terran@cityscape.co.uk](mailto:terran@cityscape.co.uk)

**HARM'S WAY** by Colin Greenland — "What if Charles Dickens had written a space opera?" (*Locust*) — large paperback, the one with the pretty cover, £3.50. Also the two linked fantasy paperbacks, *The Hour of the Thin Ox* and *Other Voices* (great covers by Roger Dean and Ian Miller), £1.50 each. Prices include postage. Colin Greenland, 2a Ortygia House, 6 Lower Road, Harrow, Middx. HA2 0DA.

**MICHAEL MOORCOCK** — *Lunching With The Antichrist*, an exclusive new American collection from Mark Zeising Books containing previously uncollected and/or revised stories. No UK equivalent. In trade hardcover or signed, limited, slip-cased editions: £15.00 and £36.00, respectively. Contact: D. J. Rowe, 18 Laurel Bank, Truss Hill Road, South Ascot, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 9AL.

**ARTHUR C. CLARKE VIDEO** now available, of the conferment by satellite link of his degree of Doctor of Letters at the University of Liverpool on 26 January 1995. Includes an introduction to the Science Fiction Foundation Collection and a free sample copy of *Foundation: The Review of Science Fiction*. Send a cheque for £16.50 + £1.50 p&p (£2.50 outside Europe) payable to "The University of Liverpool" to Andy Sawyer, The Science Fiction Foundation Collection, Sydney Jones Library, The University of Liverpool, PO Box 123, Liverpool L69 3DA.

**FOR SALE:** 1090 SF and Fantasy books, comprising: 70 new stock hardcover, 337 new p/b, 86 used hardcover, 597 used p/b, £950.00 the lot. Buyer to collect from Bournemouth. Phone 01202 432489.

**A COMICS SCRIPTING / ART WORKSHOP**, organised by Peterborough SF Writers' Group and featuring writer Noel K. Hannan and artist Rick Rawlings, is being held on Saturday 20th May at Peterborough Arts Centre, from 10am until 4pm. Cost £5. Onsite cafe facilities. Book early, places are limited. For further information contact Helen Gould at 28 Bathurst, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, Cambs. PE2 5QH.

**COMPLETE UK ANIME BUYERS GUIDE!** Over 120 titles! Comprehensive A-Z listing and reviews of UK-PAL releases of dubbed and subtitled anime and "Manga Videos™". Only £2.99 inc. postage. Write to: G. Cowie, 9 Oxford Street, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK2 2UA.

**THE WAY TO WRITE SCIENCE FICTION** by Brian Stableford. Signed pb copies available at £5. Also available: *The Empire of Fear*, £10 hardcover, £5 C-format pb; *Sexual Chemistry: Sardonian Tales of the Genetic Revolution* £8 hc; *The Asgard Trilogy*, £10 boxed set (limited to 500 copies) of 3 pbs. All prices post-free. Order from Brian Stableford, 113 St Peter's Road, Reading RG6 1PG.

# COMPETITION CORNER

Roger Robinson

## COMPETITION 114 — "MIXED GROUPS"

The following list of anagrams of *sf* / fantasy book titles is given here in order of length. The task this time is to decode the titles and then divide the books into three groups of five. The groupings I am looking for relate to the authors rather than the titles themselves. As there may be several possible 'valid' groups please explain your groupings and list the five titles in each group along with their authors. The usual £5 token for the winner.

- |                       |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. SURE IDEA          | 9. DOE SEEING TO THYME     |
| 2. OTHER POSSE        | 10. ELBOW STOOD IN WANT    |
| 3. HE GAVE MORT       | 11. A FATWA HOARD SEIZER   |
| 4. HE MEANT FLAME     | 12. WHICH BULL TORE TINE   |
| 5. SAVE SHOT CLUTE    | 13. THATCHER NAMES CEPES   |
| 6. SHOW NIGHT SHAPE   | 14. DEAL IRON, CLEAN WIND  |
| 7. CHOOSE TAN TRIFLE  | 15. FREE FENCED IN THINGEE |
| 8. THE BLEEDING CROWD |                            |

## RESULTS OF COMPETITION 113 — "LIMERICKS"

As I thought, this was quite a popular competition with entries of varying literary merit, and to my surprise not much scurrility! A selection of entries is given below with the book token going to **John Ollis** who used the *Matrix* competition page as the subject of his trilogy, by a very short head from **Steven Cain** who got all three Confabulation guests into his set of three. Honourable mentions go to **Theo Ross**, **Nigel Parsons** and **A. Nony Mouse**. Thanks to these and to all the other entrants.

### SAMPLE LIMERICKS

*John Ollis (Winning Entry)*

There was a young editor called Chris,  
Whose lateness caused readers to miss  
The chance, I surmise,  
At this wonderful prize,  
Methinks he is taking the p\*ss.

Chris gave his readers four days,  
Thanks to his disgraceful delays,  
To dash off three verses.  
If he'd heard my curses  
He'd not have mistook them for praise.

Old Rog's decision is easy,  
There's only one winner, that's me, see,  
I stayed up all night  
To be sure I could write  
The piece de resistance that's ici.

*Steven Cain —*

But shaggydogmeister Bob Shaw,  
Has done novels and fanzines and more:  
Straightforward appliance  
Of *Serious Science*  
Should result in a hearty guffaw.

*Theo Ross —*

Taprobane (Art Clarke's Sri Lanka)  
Gave his space-tower in *Fountains* an anka.  
Now, the plan to fulfill,  
He must wait so long till  
Serendipity finds him a banka.

*Nigel Parsons —*

Bill Shatner wrote all of *Tek War*  
So he says, although I'm not too sure.  
The reviews I've seen posted  
Hint that it was ghosted —  
But watch out for that damn libel law.

*A. Nony Mouse —*

At a con Mary Gentle said "Oh!"  
"I will join in a weaponry show."  
She had cuffs trimmed with lace,  
She had style, she had grace;  
But was Mary gentle? — Oh no!

*Gary Dalkin —*

An American psychotic charlatan called  
Hubbard  
The secret of sanity, Astounding(ly),  
discovered.  
From evidence of Scientology.  
One might blame pharmacology,  
But 'twas from Pulp Fiction L. Ron never  
recovered.

*Sue Jones —*

Our Arthur, who lives in Sri Lanka,  
Has frequent occasion to thank a  
Bizarre Kubrick flick  
With some apes and a brick  
As he chatters — by sat — with his banker.

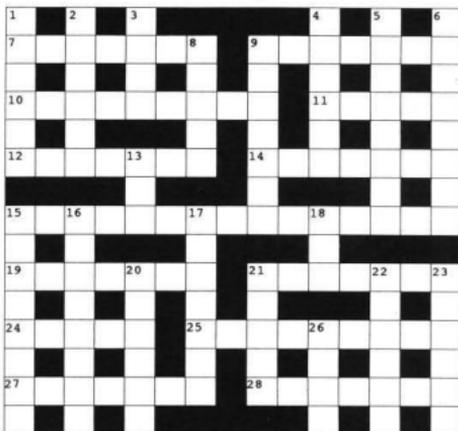
Please send all quiz and crossword entries, together with any competition correspondence, to the usual address:

Roger Robinson  
75 Rosslyn Avenue  
Harold Wood, Essex  
RM3 0RG

by Friday 9th June 1995.

## Crossword 14

John English



### ACROSS

- Forming partnerships with nearly everyone, not being truthful (7)
- Main girlfriend of 16 makes way for ships (7)
- Our sphere turns due to such as 8 21D, 8 14 or 12 21A (9)
- See 6D.
- Officer has fit when murderer is about (7)
- Left one bird in the light (7)
- 21A Band of 10s is fair distance from the continent when guarding diamonds (7,6,2,7)
- One against work problem (7)
- See 15A.
- Say yes to one with most of 8 (5)
- Blind 10 is challenged by sin (9)
- Manuscript I raise about belief in good and evil (7)
- Find sword in ruined castle (7)

### Down

- Interpret a hundred as an astronomical distance (6)
- Good meal for pals, perhaps? (4-2)
- Singular Anthony goes out on the seafloor (4)
- 10 attends to 12, possibly (6)
- Mad 8 imprisons woman, the swine! (8)
- 11A. Crazy man's seen proof, one with money (6,2,5)
- New information about religious education (5)
- Seat that is made of grass (7)
- Woman without son discovers Muhammed, perhaps? (3)
- Clumsy Dopey, jar's in danger! (8)
- 10 is a great guy (8)
- Title role, mad antics needed (7)
- Exclamation of surprise at 8 with navy cut (3)
- Enter and set about Peg (4,2)
- Proverbially straight publisher's imprint (5)
- 22 How to use money, or where to keep it if you lose your shirt? (6)
- Seduce with some unusual Lurex (6)
26. Last of Shai-Hulud you can see on Arrakis (4)

### Crossword 13 Solution

All but one of the eight entries were correct, and the first of the Magnificent Seven out of my hat was regular entrant **Terry Jeeves**. A £5 book token will be making its way up to Scarborough in the next couple of days.

