

MATRIX

39 Dec-Jan 81-82



NOVOCON =





Contents

MATRIX No 39

DECEMBER 81/JANUARY 82

THE BSFA NEWSLETTER

EDITORS: GRAHAM JAMES
& LINDA STRICKLER

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The views expressed in MATRIX very rarely reflect those of the BSFA, but they might do.....who knows.....does anybody care?

The Editors would like to wish everybody an Unbroken Christmas and a really super New Year (this IS an Official view of the BSFA)

The Editorial address is c/o ~~BANKLEY~~/Hospital... no sorry, CALIFORNIA... woops, we'll get this right in a minute. Thank you, I'll eat it here....

12 FEARNVILLE TERRACE OAKWOOD LEEDS LS8 3DU is the editorial address. Any complaints, write to the Chairman: Alan Dorey, 64 Hartford Avenue Kenton Harrow Middx.

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COPY DEADLINE FOR MATRIX 40: 14 JANUARY 1982

WHO TO BLAME FOR WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO READ

		Page
Editorial	- Graham & Linda James	3
Convention News	- Graham James	4
SF News	- Joseph Nicholas, Rog Peyton, Roy Macinski, Simon Bostock	5
Jim Barker Confesses		8
Deep Cuts	- Simon Ounsley	11
Life on Mars	- Steve Green	17
The Tavern at the End of Time	- Kevin Clarke & Steve Green	19
Competition Page	- Dave Langford, Nik Morton	20
Letters	- Your Bit	22
Members Noticeboard		30
Reviews	-Martyn Taylor, Hussain R. Mohamed, Michael Ashley	31

Artwork - D. West , Ashley Walker
 Cover Details - Novacon 11 - Photographed by John Harvey
 Top right- Martyn Taylor ; Top row left to right- Bob Shaw receives his Guest of Honour tankard from chairman Paul Oldroyd ; Malcolm Edwards receiving his Nova Award for the best fanzine of 1981(Tappen) from Bob Shaw ; Fan artist award being presented to Pete Lyon by Bob Shaw ;
 Kev Smith, Jim Barker and Paul Kincaid user test this mailing's free gift;
 Middle row left to right; George Martin, Joseph Nicholas, Roz Kaveny & Malcolm Edwards on the 'Any Questions?' panel; Chris Atkinson receives the fanwriter award from Bob Shaw(no she's not really laughing at the panel);
 Helen Eling and Rog Peyton take the floor at the Saturday night disco;
 Bottom row left to right; In the bar are John Brunner, Arnold Aitken, Celia Parsons & Stan Eling; The final of the University Challenge quiz Malcolm Edwards, Jim Barker and Paul Kincaid (Channelcon Intellectuals) Ian Maule, Joseph Nicholas and Brian Smith (Surrey Limpwrists - who suffered their first defeat after winning for two consecutive years)

THE EDITORS RETURN (well, almost)

"Q is the question of how far away
A person can travel in one single day
And whether its' worth it, or might be
better
To just stay at home and write someone
a letter?"

(extract from Abecedary - T M Disch)

Laying down on my back is perhaps not the most suitable way to pen a MATRIX editorial - although my brain tends to do a reasonable service whether its upright, upside down, or sideways, the biro doesn't perform very well reverse side up. Hence these should be moderately coherent words from me - even though the odd word may be obliterated - well, I have to make excuses for John's printing somehow. After all, he has a lot to do, not only printing the thing, but helping to edit it as well. I've explained the reasons for our absence from the last issue, in the letter column; John and Eve did a smashing job, literally stepping in at the last moment to put the issue together - it was not their fault that the letters and news columns were missing - courtesy of the American legal system.

Now, why am I laying on me back? Little do some of you know that, not only did this issue nearly fail to appear, but so did the James'! The M1 at Barnsley was very inconsiderate in carefully disguising some debris for unsuspecting motorists to drive over and puncture their tyres. One such driver was yours truly along with Linda, one of our daughters, Kate Jeary and Helen Starkey. We thought we were going to NOVAACON but after overturning three times and skidding for 300 yards we decided to rest up in Barnsley Hospital for a few weeks. No2 daughter bounced merrily around in the arms of Linda and came to no harm; Kate's bonny frame cushioned her from serious injury but the rest of us got broken, fractured, and smashed a bit. We'll make a permanent recovery towards the end of the year, but this issue has once again been prepared with Harvey assistance in typing, lay-out and arranging for a con-rep and news column. The letters column is resurrected, though, with plenty of meat (or soya) to get yer teeth into - we haven't given up yet

In many ways, our absences and accident have caused us to miss many fannish events - Silicon, Novacon and the so-called fannish renaissance in fanzines. Nevertheless, since there aint much else to do laying on one's back in Barnsley Hospital, reading fanzines and watching TV became number 1 pastimes. I don't normally get the time to read all the fanzines sent to me in great detail (Unlike ace fanzine-reviewer Ounsley) so the recent weeks have been particularly refreshing with so many damn fine fanzines appearing. Out of the woodwork comes Edwards, Bridges, Greg, C. Priest and others long since forgotten, to prove that there is a wealth of writing talent virtually dormant amongst fannish fans. Greg writes two damn fine articles, bringing into question TAFF, The Doc Weir Award, and everyone runs for cover, wondering what hit them; have things really been that tame in the last few years? Chris Atkinson (probably the best fannish writer at the moment) does 3 or 4 articles and you suddenly feel that what you've been reading in most fanzines of late is pure drivel; with this support, Chris' cricket-loving-man-of-leisure, Malcolm Edwards, pushes out 3 quick issues of TAPPEN and, deservedly, wins the NOVA Award for best fanzine... of the year....

Could it really have been SEACON 79 which caused such a change in British fandom? I hate to admit it ('cos he appears to have struck me off his circulation list) but just maybe, Hansen was right. Off everybody went from the World con; 'established' fans either gave up in horror at what they'd been through or else went off chasing the myths of American fandom; the newer fannish recruits went away and formed their SF clubs and organised endless streams of mini-conventions. No wonder that no-one had any time or energy to devote to fannish writing, nor any need, since they all met regularly. It's no coincidence that the largest fan group in the country, Birmingham, produces next to nothing when it comes to fanzines.

Now I hope that this resurgence of interest in producing and writing for fanzines is going to induce some of you out there to writing for MATRIX; not that I'm particularly short of articles, but competition and the setting of standards will help to improve quality, won't it?

This issue sees the return of Jim Barker (or I hope it does...) - he's been absent from these pages for too long - and he will, shortly, be re-enacting the CAPTIVE cartoon series. Any other wonderful ideas, please let me know; as I've said before, articles on virtually any subject are welcome, as are cartoons and art-work

AN INTERESTING
PIECE OF WORK

EITHER
THE UNIVERSE
IS DUE TO
SELF-DSTRUCT
NEXT TUESDAY
OR YOUR
CALCULATOR
NEEDS A NEW
BATTERY



since in these areas, the files are getting a bit low.

If I've failed to reply to any specific letters of late, may I apologise and plead mitigating circumstances. Ta.

One idea I've been toying with, is whether MATRIX should organise a Fannish Poll (best fan-writer etc etc) - the BSFA runs awards for the Pro side and the fannish side has been left, largely to the Checkpoint/Ansible poll plus the Nova Award. The former is never very well supported and I wonder whether a poll organised through the BSFA might be more representative? Your thoughts would be welcome.

Graham & Linda

CONVENTION NEWS

CHANNELCON: The British Easter Science Fiction Convention, April 9-12, 1982. Venue is the Metropole Hotel, Brighton. Joint Guests of Honour are John Sladek and Angela Carter; Committee Chairperson, the lovable carnivore, Eve Harvey. PR2 now out revealing that dogs can be kept in the hotel at a charge of £2.50 per day while cots are available at £1.50 per night (plus V.A.T.)....the mind boggles since cats are not allowed (*join Fans Against Feline Discrimination Now*). The con has all the makings of a good event so join up now at £6.00 attending membership (human beings) - to Pat Charnock, 4 Fletcher Road, Chiswick, London W4 5AY. Cheques for dogs, cots or anything else should be made payable to "Channelcon".

LEXICON: Not a card game, but a convention to be held from 28-31 May 1982 at the Wigston Stage Hotel, Leicester. Guest of Honour Bob Shaw (how original). Details from Tony Cullen, 43 Station Road, Kirby Muxloe, Leicester LE9 9EL.

COLNECON 82: A one-day event (although overnight stay is probably needed) on 26 June 1982. Guest of Honour Gary Kilworth and Hitch Hikers' sounds fiend Tim Souster. Venue is Colchester's Arts Centre. Cheap hotels available. Attending membership - £2.50 - write (SAE) to Alex Stewart, 11A Beverley Road, Colchester, Essex.

RACON: "Edinburgh's first Science Fiction Convention". Guest of Honour Harry Harrison and Fan Guest of Honour, likeable semi-pro artist, Pete Lyon. Looks to have reasonable prospects of being a worthwhile con to attend, especially as it's planned for 4-6 February 1983. Attending membership at £7.00 is a bit high for a small con. Details (SAE) from Phil Dawson, 4/7 New John's Place, Edinburgh.

MEDIACON 3: March 20, 1982. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Registration Attending £3.00, Supporting £1.50 (to Dec. 31), thereafter £5.00 or £2.50 respectively. Plus 3 9x4 SAEs for Progress Reports. Details Kathy Halsall, Star One, 45 Welby House, Haselville Rd., London N19. No details of Guests as yet, but events include Fancy Dress, Marvel Art feature. Proceeds from this con go to Charity; previous cons raised £150 for Hospital Equipment and £250 for MIND - a very worthwhile charity for organisation for Mental Health.

EASTERCON 1983: Now the rumours come out into the open - no news of any Leeds bid but full details available for METROCON with a proposed London venue - organised by a slick outfit of predominantly limpwristed fans with Dave Langford as El Supremo. Slightly over-egging their publicity with an impressive list of qualifications (?) of members to run the con, but an otherwise comprehensive bid sheet. Details (or pre-supporting memberships at £1.00) from Ian Maule, 5 Beaconsfield Rd, New Malden, Surrey. No details of rates for parrots, likewise no details of the Glasgow bid - Albacon 2 - have been sent to the editor. I'd be happy to print details of this bid together with those of any other con if sent to me.

SF NEWS

FORTHCOMING BOOKS

by Joseph Nicholas
Gollancz:

	12 November 1981	Arthur C Clarke (ed) - <u>Science Fiction Hall of Fame, Volume 4</u> (£8.95) all the Nebula-winning short fiction from 1965 to 1969 inclusive
	28 January 1982	Bob Shaw - <u>A Better Mantrap</u> (price unknown) a collection of short stories
	22 April 1982	Thomas M Disch - <u>The Man Who Had No Idea</u> (price unknown) his greatest novel yet! Buy it! Vote it a BoSFA, a Ditmar, a Campbell, a Huge and Nobly!
	27 May 1982	Phillip Mann - <u>The Eye of the Queen</u> (price unknown) described as "one of the finest first SF novels, written in the classical mould, that we have ever published"
	June 1982	Michael Bishop - <u>No Enemy But Time</u> (price unknown) another competitor for the BoSFA, the Huge, the Ditmar...
	July 1982	Frederik Pohl - <u>Starburst</u> (price unknown) novel expanded from his story "The Gold At The Starbow's Ends"
Pan:	15 January 1982	Russell Hoban - <u>Riddley Walker</u> (price unknown) post-holocaust novel written in a peculiarly idiomatic form of English, praised by mainstream critics everywhere (coming out in their Picador imprint) Julian May - <u>The Many-Coloured Land</u> (price unknown) first book in "The Saga Of The Exiles" series, involving a host of trad SF cliches but using them in manner than transcends them (if that makes any sense...)
Sphere:	15 November 1981	Jack Williamson - <u>The Reign of Wizardry</u> (£1.50)
	17 December 1981	Brian Daley - <u>Han Solo And The Lost Legacy</u> (£1) Robert Anton Wilson - <u>Schrodinger's Cat II: The Trick Top Hat</u> (£1.95)
	14 January 1982	Neil Oram - <u>The Warp 3: The Balustrade Paradox</u> (£1.95)
	25 February 1982	Roger Zelazny - <u>The Guns of Avalon</u> (£1.50)
	25 Marvh 1982	Dare we incur Rob Holdstock's extreme displeasure by mentioning the next two novels in <u>The Professionals</u> series coming out under the "Ken Blake" pseudonym on this date? Probably not.... Paul Davies - <u>Other Worlds</u> (£1.95) a science title under their Abacus imprint.
Robert Hale:	10 December 1981	A Bertram Chandler - <u>Star Loot</u> (£6.25) a "Grimes" story
Arrow:	1 December 1981	Charles Sheffield - <u>The Web Between The Worlds</u> (£1.60) the "other space elevator novel"
Dragon's Dream/ Windward:	already out	J G Ballard - <u>The Drowned World</u> (£9.95) large format hardback, with watercolour illustrations by Dick French which rather suit the mood of the novel (will be reviewed in <u>Vector</u> in due course)
Faber & Faber	already out	Chris Evans - <u>The Insider</u> (£6.95)

BESTSELLERS

by Rog Peyton (Andromeda Books)

July

	Last	Months on Chart
1. DEATH'S ANGEL - Kathleen Sky (Corgi £1.25)	-	1
2. CLASH OF THE TITANS - Alan Dean Foster (Futura £1.25)	-	1
3. DARK CRUSADE - Karl Edward Wagner (Coronet £1.25)	-	1
4. THE PRIESTS OF PSI - Frank Herbert (Futura £1.35)	-	2
5. MASTER OF THE FIVE MAGICIS - Lyndon Hardy (Futura £1.50)	6	4
6. ROADMARKS - Roger Zelazny (Futura £1.50)	-	1
7. THE NINJA - Eric van Lustbader (Granada £1.95)	-	1
8.= THE RINGWORLD ENGINEERS - Larry Niven (Futura £1.75)	1	3
8.= THE GALACTIC WHIRLPOOL - David Gerrold (Corgi £1.25)	-	2
10.=THE SHOW QUEEN - Joan D Vinge (Futura £1.95)	2	3
10.=DUNE - Frank Herbert (NEL)	-	1

August

1. DEATH'S ANGEL - Kathleen Sky (Corgi £1.25)	1	2
2. DRAGON'S EGG - Robert Forward (NEL £1.50)	-	1
3. FIRESTARTER - Stephen King (Futura £1.95)	-	1
4. THE GALACTIC WHIRLPOOL - David Gerrold (Corgi £1.25)	8	3
5. CLASH OF THE TITANS - Alan Dean Foster (Futura £1.25)	2	2
5. THE RINGWORLD ENGINEERS - Larry Niven (Futura £1.75)	8	4
7. ONE STEP FROM EARTH - Harry Harrison (Arrow £1.50)	-	2
7. ROADMARKS - Roger Zelazny (Futura £1.50)	6	2
9. TIME BANDITS - Charles Alverson (Sparrow 95p)	-	1
10. OUTLAND - Alan Dean Foster (Sphere £1.50)	-	1

July

Despite being published only a few days before the end of the month, DEATH'S ANGEL, the new STAR TREK novel, smashed into number one position selling three times the quantity of its nearest rival, CLASH OF THE TITANS, tie-in edition with the latest Ray Harryhausen film. The new Wagner novel about Kane The Mystic Swordsman, the 5th in the series, entered at No.3 selling far better than the previous four in the series. Increased sales were recorded for the first four titles. Due to the Frank Herbert signing session, PRIESTS OF PSI re-entered to make No.4 while Dune - the classic steady seller - made No.10. Exceptional sales continued for MASTER OF THE FIVE MAGICS for the fourth month in succession, but the new Zelazny only made number 6, sales being rather slow. What's this at number 7, you might ask? No, it isn't SF or fantasy but was stocked because of the SUNSET WARRIOR series. ENGINEERS dropped to 8 sharing the position with another STAR TREK novel, THE GALACTIC WHIRLPOOL, which had been unavailable for 3/4 months. THE SNOW QUEEN dropped to 10. A fairly boring month.

August

No change at position 1 but very close behind is Robert Forward's DRAGON'S EGG, a hard-SF novel recommended by no less than Arthur C Clarke himself and as one reviewer put it, "...it's been written with an almost total lack of characterisation and with a deaf ear for literary style." Yes, but it's got ideas and some people think this is the only thing that matters! (Unfortunately!)

FIRESTARTER, the new Stephen King, smashes in at 3 even though it was published at the end of the month (no prizes for guessing what will almost certainly be No.1 in September). Another SF novel that has to be labelled something else in order to get the mass market to swallow it.

The republished GALACTIC WHIRLPOOL moves up to 4 while CLASH OF THE TITANS drops from 2 to 5. ENGINEERS continues to sell steadily at 5 while the Harrison re-issue re-enters at 7. ROADMARKS shares the honours at 7 dropping only one place. After just missing the Top Ten for a couple of months, TIME BANDITS makes No.9 - I'm sure this book would have sold better published as an adult Arrow book rather than by their children's imprint. Last position is taken up by yet another (yawn) Alan Dean Foster novel-of-the-film.

Notable omission this month is MASTER OF THE 5 MAGICS - it stopped selling simply because we sold out... so did Futura. Hopefully they'll be shipping more copies over from the States.

MEDIA NEWS

by Roy Macinski

Hollywood has just declared that its 2.1/2 year slump is over, and to prove this they have released the turnovers & profits for the summer just gone. Top of the list was Raiders of the Lost Ark grossing over \$125,000,000. Second was Superman II grossing over \$101,000,000. Further down the list we find For Your Eyes Only clocking in at \$45,000,000 and Clash of the Titans earning \$31,000,000. Biggest re-release of the summer was The Empire Strikes Back. Biggest disappointment of the summer was Outland only earning a mere \$14,000,000 (it cost \$7.5 million) for the Ladd company.

Peter Bodganovich, best known for his movie The Last Picture Show has said that one of his next two movies will definitely be sf. Terry Nation has signed an exclusive deal with 20th Century-Fox to write and produce telefilms and series for them.

Things are very busy at Industrial Light and Magic these days; having finished their work on Empire they are now involved in providing the SFX for no less than 5 major productions, these being: Conan, the Steven Spielberg/Tobe Hopper (director of The

Texas Chainsaw Massacre) co-production; The Poltergeist; Spielberg's The E.T. & Me, Revenge of the Jedi (3rd in the Star Wars series) and Star Trek II.

Talking of Trek II... Nicholas Meyer, writer and director of Time after Time, has been signed up as director for Star Trek II. The budget for the movie is said to be between \$10-15 million. Work has just started on the principal photography and the film is set for a June '82 release.

Richard O'Brien's (the mastermind behind The Rocky Horror Picture) new film for 20th Century Fox entitled Shock Treatment explores the influence of tv on us all. Set in a town which is basically a giant tv studio, the movie reintroduces us to Brad and Janet, the two heroes(?) from TRHPS.

Quest for Fire is a \$12,000,000 Franco-Canadian co-production described by its producer, John Kemeny, as "sf in reverse". Set 80,000 years ago it is based on the novel by J H Rosney which tells of the search by a tribe for fire after their's has been dowsed by a rival tribe. Location shooting took the crew to Canada, Scotland (where the Ice Age was recreated) and to Kenya. To ensure as much authenticity as possible some big names have been involved with the project. Desmond Morris was used to coach the actors in 'body language and movement', Anthony Burgess created a special primitive language and ace make-up artist Chris Tucker (who was responsible for the make-up in The Elephant Man) was called in to create the film's special make-up. The movie premieres in Paris this month (December) and is set for a London release in March.

FILM & TV NEWS

by Simon Bostock

Small Pieces: The Man from Uncle, the virtually Godawful spy thriller (comedy?) may make a comeback, in the guise of a feature film from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. However, UNCLE is now to be controlled by a woman (Cloris Leachman); special effects will probably be used to a great extent...Salem's Lot has finally been shown on British television, and I can now understand why Stephen King has been dubbed the new fantasy master (rather like Barlow, his substitute for Dracula, in an odd sort of way); just...Because of American tv's strict censorship rules, there are no plans to show the 13 episodic Hammer House of Horror, unless either it is only screened on Cable tv (an alternative to the commercial kind) or it is heavily edited to suit the prudish US censors...Kinvig, the new series by Nigel Kneale, is supposedly about sf fans, I kid you not, but how many sf fanatics really even touch copies of UFO Newsletter?...Chris Priest had his photo, a big one at that, printed in an issue of mediamag Starburst, which is good for him...Motel Hell is a terrible motion picture concerned with two loonies, Farmer Vincent and Ida, whose one hobby is slicing folks like you would a cucumber. Writer Robert Jaffe apologised for him and his brother: "It sprung forth full-blown from our demented minds"...The Omen, you all should know, was shown on ITV Bank Holiday Monday, and was absolutely fantastic; not filled with blood and gore and naked female sacrifices, but with a constant awe to make you shiver. Totally absorbing, though I doubt whether they'll make it their answer to the opposition's The Sound of Music; no-one would dare show it on Christmas Day... New projects include Earthright (UFO crap), Nightfall (guess who wrote this?), Uforia (more flying saucer bumf), Space Vampires (based on a book by Colin Wilson), Trom (Disney thingy), World War Three (a story in which this breaks free when the Ruskiies attack the Alaskan oil fields), I Robot (more Asimov trash) and Night Skies (would you believe yet more UFO shit?). The Bladerunner has a screenplay by Hampton Forcher (who?).

Sources for both pieces:

Starlog, Fangoria, Starburst, Screen International

LATE NEWS

Gary Kilworth tells us that Dennis Potter (of "The Blue Remembered Hills" and "Pennies from Heaven" fame) is just concluding negotiations on a contract for an option on the film rights for "The Night of Kadar". Gary adds, "it's taken six months, but the terms are good".

Before her tragic death, Natalie Wood was working on a new SF film - Brain Storm - which was supposed to be directed by Doug Trumbull, but it would appear that some unknown director has taken over. With only 10 days' pre-photography left on the project, MGM are now in a quandary about what to do with this unfinished film. They could claim the insurance, or they could decide to patch it up somehow. An executive at MGM is quoted as saying "we would like to get the film out because Natalie's performance in it is outstanding and it would be a fitting tribute to her talents"; or to put that another way, we have sunk \$10m into this movie and we are not going to see that go down the tube! Thus Hollywood's business machine grinds inexorably onwards.

"IT ALL STARTED WHEN I CREATED THIS COMIC STRIP ABOUT A FAN-ARTIST."



**RESIGN
RESIGN
RESIGN**

"WHO, ONE DAY DECIDES THAT HE WANTS TO LEAVE THE BSFA, AND POSTS OFF HIS RESIGNATION"



"BUT UNKNOWN TO HIM, HIS EVERY MOVE IS BEING WATCHED AND REPORTED!"



"HE GOES HOME AND STARTS TO PACK FOR A WELL-DESERVED HOLIDAY."



"INSTEAD HE ENDS UP BEING GASSED."



**AND WAKES UP...
SOMEWHERE ELSE!**



"WHERE AM I?"
"IN THE CONVENTION..."
"WHAT DO YOU WANT?"
"INFORMATION"
"WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?"
"THAT WOULD BE TELLING, WE WANT INFORMATION..."
"YOU WON'T GET IT!"
"BY HOOK OR BY CROOK, WE WILL."
"WHO ARE YOU?"
"THE NEW NUMBER TWO."
"WHO IS NUMBER ONE?"
"YOU ARE BSFA NUMBER 1465"
**I AM NOT A NUMBER,
I AM A FREE FAN!**



HAHAHAHAHA...

MOST INTERESTING! A CLASSIC
CREATOR/CHARACTER CONFLICT,
LIKE DOYLE AND HOLMES! YOU'RE
OVER IT NOW, I TAKE IT?



NEVER FELT BETTER! I'VE WORKED ALL
MY ANGST OUT OF MY SYSTEM!



I CAN'T EVEN FEEL BITTER TOWARDS
"THE CAPTIVE" THESE DAYS! I'M EVEN FOND
OF HIM... HELL, IF I COULD THINK OF
A HALFWAY PLAUSIBLE WAY TO BRING
HIM BACK, I MIGHT EVEN
BE TEMPTED TO BRING
HIM BACK FOR A
REUNION!



DON'T SUPPOSE YOU
CAN RAISE THE
DEAD, EH DOC?



HA, HA... I HEAL THE
MIND, NOT THE BODY!
AND I'D SAY YOU'RE
COMPLETELY CURED.
IF YOU LIKE
TO COME
THIS WAY...

OH, ONE LAST QUESTION
BEFORE YOU GO...

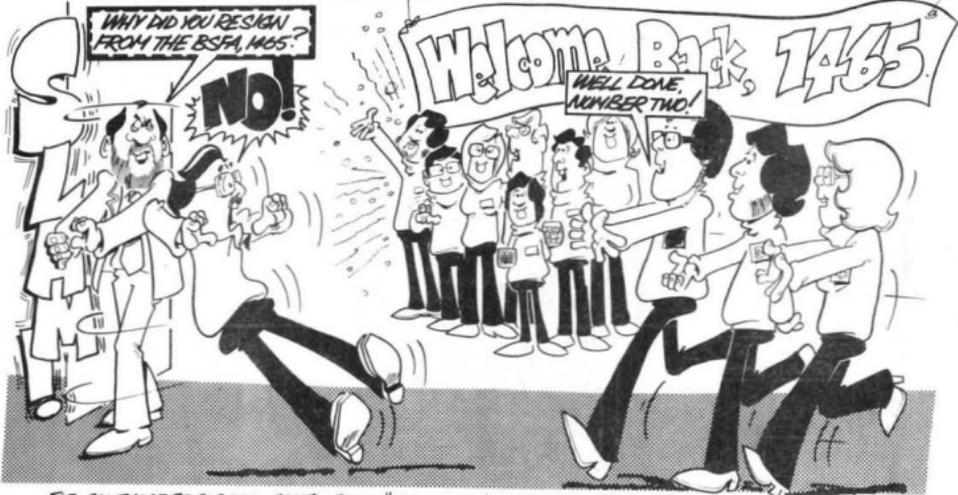


WHY DID YOU RESIGN
FROM THE BSFA, MGS?

NO!

Welcome Back, 7465.

WELL DONE,
NUMBER TWO!



FOR ALL THOSE PEOPLE WHO ASKED ABOUT "THE RETURN OF THE CAPTIVE"
ESPECIALLY ARNOLD AIKEN...

Jim Barker
24/10/81.

DEEP CUTS

Simon Ounsley

This issue: Fanzines received up to the end of October

My address: 13A Cardigan Rd, Headingley, LEEDS LS6 3AE

Apologies and explanations: A quick perusal of Steve Green's fannish dictionary reveals that I've been a victim of *fafia* this last month or so. Swatting for exams has interfered with my fanzine reading somewhat, so that not all of this issue's reviews are the kind of incisive in-depth analysis I'd like them to be. "None of them are" you will probably reply, but you know what I mean, I think. So, to be blunt, some of this column consists of blatant downright listings. Sorry about that. Normal service will be resumed next issue.

Anyway, enough of this downbeat stuff. My exams are over now. Hooray! The DEEP CUTS column has been out celebrating and is scarcely sober enough to explain what it all means, but it will try.

The usual means that a zine is available for trade with other zines, letter of comment, or contribution. If a zine is available for money, the price is listed, otherwise try writing in and asking for a sample copy.
R means reduced typeface. Page sizes: FC (foolscap) 12" by 8"; A4 11 3/4" by 8 1/4"; Q (quarto) 10" by 8"; A5 8 1/4" by 5 7/8".

This column is dedicated to Graham, Linda, Helen, Kate and Naomi, with thanks for surviving. Meanwhile, the spate of ill fortune which has hit Leeds fandom continues unabated. Just now, I almost cut my finger-end off with a used razor-blade. I've put a plaster on it and wrapped it round with toilet paper, which I've tied with a piece of twine, but there's still blood dripping over the typewriter. Nevertheless, I press on. What really annoys me is that the damn things are never sharp enough to cut my beard properly. To the fanzines.....

A FOURTH FOREIGN FANZINE (Roelof Goudriaan, Postbus 589, 8200 AN Lelystad, The Netherlands. For the usual or £2-20 in Europe, 5 US\$ elsewhere; payment by IMO, postgiro (NL-4113560), or cash; A5; R; 40pp).

The main theme this issue is the state of SF and fandom in Europe. There are separate articles on France, Italy, Sweden, Belgium and The Netherlands; other stuff includes an interview with Ray Harryhausen; a short story by Dorothy Davies (who has a very dark imagination - I preferred this to her piece in FOCUS 4. What's effective are the things it doesn't describe, rather than the things it does.); a piece by Anemarie Kindt on Frederik Pohl; and David Thiry attempting a bit of amateur psychology on SF fans. Roelof is hoping to start a European fannish newzine and is looking for articles on events all over the continent. Hope it gets off the ground.

ANSIBLE 20 (Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave, Reading, Berks, RG2 7PW; 6 for £1 UK; 5 for £1 Europe, 4 for £1 elsewhere; Q; 8pp incl two of reduced typeface). Jolly good fannish newzine.

ARENA SF 12 (Geoff Rippington, 6 Rutland Gardens, Birchington, Kent, CT7 9SN; UK and Europe 60p each or 3 for £1-80, America and Canada 3 for 4½ dollars surface, 3 for 6 dollars air. Add 1 dollar for bank charges if paying by cheque; A5; R; 40pp).

Britain's premier independant serconzine. This issue: James Corley on SF's relationship to science and religion; Ian Watson on the problems of being a writer in the present economic climate; an interview with Richard Cowper; and lots of reviews, including Dave Langford on the "terrible, terrible" NUMBER OF THE BEAST.

DEATH RAYS 1 (John Bark, 5 Byerley Close, Westbourne, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 8TS. Free to SHSFG members (see below) or for the usual; A5; R; 12pp)
This is a clubzine produced by the South Hants SF Group (Membership enquiries to Jeff Suter, Tel: Cosham 373956 6pm to 7pm) and not a bad attempt for the first issue from a new group. I could do without the childish illustrations and the choice of contents isn't exactly breath-taking (though there's no fiction, which is a plus) but there's a pretty good piece by Jeff Suter on collecting comics, with some comments on the extortionate prices they sell for. Also: a ten favourite books feature; some books reviews; and a less predictable item by Mike Cheater about wheeling a Fokker biplane through Portsmouth.

DEATH VALLEY AND ALL POINTS WEST (or IDOMO 5 2/3) (Chuck Connor, Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wissett, Nr Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0NF; For "trade, stamps, comments, and above all, good old-fashioned D. I. R. T."; A4; 36pp)

Main contents are a whole bunch of fanzine reviews (SF and otherwise), a long interview with some members of the Norwich Group and a "gossip" column. The interview is largely unedited, allowing the protagonists to ramble on at great length about the production of their clubzine, helpfully explaining the process of democracy: "Now there's five of us, and in the case of a story that some people want in and some want out, then three against two wins", and in case you didn't follow that, they continue: "'You see we read everything, and we all give decisions on what we think of it'. 'And you're sometimes called upon to defend your decision and explain it. This is where the point of view thing comes in'."

Is this sort of thing supposed to be interesting, Chuck? What is even more annoying than the fact that much (if not all) of the interview could have been cut out, is the way in which a couple of pieces have been removed. These are comments on individuals which have been edited in such a way as to remove the comments themselves, while leaving the reader in little doubt as to who they were about, thereby casting a slur on the person without having the guts to actually reveal what was being said! I don't think this is a very good way of handling things.

As to the "gossip" column.... I suppose there's no denying that fans appreciate scandal as much as anyone else, but Chuck presents his stuff with so much vitriol and so little wit that you come away with a bad taste in your mouth. I'll be replying to Chuck's comments on ventures with which I'm personally involved in a loc, since this seems to be the proper thing, but as to his piece about NOVACON's recent registration problems: I find Chuck's obvious relish at the committee's predicament annoying, considering that such people are willingly giving up their time and effort to organise a convention so that people like Chuck can go there and enjoy themselves. It's inevitable that committees will be attacked in cases of incompetence, but this fiasco was beyond their control. So why the bloody fuss? It doesn't even make very entertaining reading: more NEWS OF THE WORLD than PRIVATE EYE.

Which brings me onto the fanzine reviews: generally OK, I thought. I don't agree with all of Chuck's views, but at least he's bothered to read and think about the zines, which is more than many "reviewers" make the effort to do, even ones without excuses.

DNQ 32 (Tara Wayne, 1812-415 Willowdale Ave, Willowdale, Ont. M2N 5B4, Canada, and Victoria Vayne, PO Box 156, Stn D, Toronto, Ont. M6P 3J8; DNQ is, as far as I can gather, about to become RSN, which will be larger and count as either 2 or 3 subscription units, depending on its length. Are you following? This is all because of an alteration to postal rates in Canada, which make slim issues uneconomical. Rates are 5 units for 3 dollars US, 4 units for 3 dollars Canada, 5 units for £2 UK, all others pay in US currency: overseas rate 5 units for 5 dollars. Also for the usual, including trades to both editors; USQ; 14pp). The penultimate issue (and first for a year) of the long-running Canadian newszine. This issue contains news (surprise, surprise), a short column by John Berry about playing draughts with an old uncle, and some brief fanzine reviews. Tara's comments on TAPPEN: "If the Brits are so smart, why ain't they rich?"

The final issue, 33, is planned as a block-buster, with articles by Langford, Berry, Coad, a reprint from Susan Wood and 30-40 pages from Tara, "just to pad the issue out to award-winning proportions". Do I detect a note of cynicism in that remark?

DRYGULCH 4 (From Cretin fandom and the Red Army Choirboys. Write to Sandy Brown - who is co-editor with Bill Carlin and Jimmy Robertson - at 18 Grodon Terrace, Blantyre G72 9NA, Lanarkshire, Scotland; for trade or whim; FC; 8pp). Well, if not padding out, DRYGULCH could do with a bit of expansion about now. This issue, there's a con report which takes the "what I had for breakfast" school of fan-writing to its logical limit; a brief hospital report on Barney Carlin; and a rather clever poem about a guy called McDracula who lives in Easterhouse. It's all entertaining and rather less incomprehensible than previously but it remains a collection of disparate pieces collected together. In a way, I suppose, this is a clubzine and suffers a clubzine's problems, but the editorial board of three shouldn't be too unwieldy. I'd like to see them attempt to mould it into a proper fanzine. Even a bit of extra length might help to make it less like a collection of unconnected pieces which are held together with sellotape and safety pins.

EYEBALLS IN THE SKY 2 (Tony Berry, 567 Holyhead Rd, Coventry, W Midlands, CV5 5HW; for the usual; A4; 12pp) Pessimistic Mr Berry arrived at Yorcon 2 wearing a badge which said something like "OK, so you didn't like my fanzine" but he needn't have worried too much. Tony writes in a quietly engaging style which manages to bring out his personality very well, and includes the occasional bit of humour which is hilariously effective,

like noticing a sign at a Chinese take-away saying "This shop is a member of TAFF". "I looked through into the kitchen" says Tony, "expecting to see Dave Langford slaving over a pan of bean-sprouts". (Turns out TAFF stood for Take Away Food Federation, as opposed to our own Take-away Fan Federation). Contents include a long piece on Tony being ship-wrecked and a couple of short con reports (on Silicon and Unicorn). The con reps are no masterpieces but they manage to be short enough to convey the atmosphere without stopping around long enough to drag in all the tedious details, like breakfasts and break-downs.

The main problem with the zine is that it's too short, though I've one other grouse: I could have done without the brief dismissal of unilateral disarmament. The problem is a lot more complicated than Tony tries to make out. For instance, it's equally easy to make out a short dismissive case against the present NATO policy in the same way that Tony has against unilateral disarmament. The problem seems to be one of selecting the policy which is least bad. And it would take more than a paragraph to attempt that.

Oh yes, and the kiss-your-ass-goodbye joke was used in the last edition of FORTH, but I guess Tony didn't see that.

FANTASY ADVERTISER 70 (Martin Lock, 3 Marlow Court, Britannia Square, Worcester WR1 3DP; Subs 40p for 1, £2 for 5. Cheques payable to M Lock; A4; 32pp). The return, after a two-year gap, of this attractively produced zine which specialises in comics ads but also includes a comics news column, a piece about the recent difficulties of BEM, a couple of strips, some fanzine reviews, and a short piece about the sexist treatment of women in comics ("how can any female character be considered seriously when her biggest assets are those which prevent her from seeing her stomach when she looks down?").

The new editor, Martin, (Who also edits BEM) is hoping for a bi-monthly schedule.

FOURTH (Being the ingenious title of the fourth manifestation of the Edinburgh clubzine. Communications to Jim Darroch, 21 Corslet Rd, Currie, Midlothian, EH14 5LZ, or Phil Dawson, 4/7 New John Place, Edinburgh; A5; R; 32pp). A less impressive issue this time, mainly because of Forth's relative unfamiliarity with fannish writing, I think. I mentioned last issue that for a group of people who didn't understand what fannish writing was, they were doing some pretty good fannish writing. The trouble is, this time both Owen and Jim attempt con reports, both of them blissfully unaware of how very difficult it is to produce an entertaining example of such a thing. This peculiar sub-genre has been so done to death (though admittedly not in recent times) that some fresh approach is really needed to make it work nowadays. I've already mentioned that Tony Berry's reports (see EYEBALLS IN THE SKY 2) were OK because they were sufficiently brief. Not so with Jim and Owen. At two pages, Jim's ain't too bad, but by the end of six pages, Owen's is getting positively tedious. The trouble is, having a car breakdown on the way to a con seems to be very much of a fannish norm. If I see it done again, I'll scream..... (OK, wait for it).

Other contents: an overlong loc by Arnold Akien which should really have been edited and used as such rather than included as an article; an attempt by Keith Mackie to try to explain in a single page "Why SF is subversive" (a broad, complex subject, which could no more be tackled in so short a space than the theory of general relativity of the meaning of life), and (best thing this issue) Chris Anderson reviewing the contents of issue three. According to Chris, Reagan's plans for space include "a huge cannister of paint, which will spray the words "7-up" on the surface of the moon", "a space telescope to look for God" and "a powerful transmitter to beam platitudes at him once he's found". Good stuff.

Oh yes, and the Pete Lyon illos were very good.

GROSS ENCOUNTERS 10 (Alan Dorey, 64 Hartford Avenue, Kenton, Harrow, Midds, HA3 8SY; for the usual; A4; 20pp).

Once upon a time GROSS ENCOUNTERS was a really terrific influential Nova-Award-winning fanzine, but in a moment of tragic mis-judgement Alan took over the BSFA and found himself unable to attack it any more. This left him at rather a loss as to what to write about, a situation which persists to this day. In fairness to Alan, I should add that it's not for any want of trying. He's continually attempted to break new ground, and recent issues of GE have been written in a very careful, rather elaborate style which is worlds apart from his KTF roots. The trouble is, it very rarely came off, and eventually culminated in the dreadfully boring issue 9. It's no good writing in the style of Jane Austen if you're only going to talk about what you had for dinner.

With the current issue (apart from a short piece about the summoning of Joseph Nicholas), Alan has more or less reverted to his original straight-onto-stencil approach. The contents include a long piece on "fannish sporting activities",

another on favourite fannish phrases (the best piece in the issue, that), and some fanzine reviews, but most of it is just too hastily written. The sporting piece could have done with a better structure and a couple of extra drafts. Bits of it are funny because of the intrinsic humour of the situation rather than any skill in the writing. Everything Alan does seems to be either under-written or over-written. When are we going to get the happy medium?

Eventually, if Alan keeps searching around, GROSS ENCOUNTERS may re-emerge as an exciting fanzine, but for the moment, the situation looks bleak. It's a toss-up as to whether Alan or the infinite number of monkeys will be first to deliver the goods.

INFINITY CUBED 4 (The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers' League, Box 8845, U.T. Station, Knoxville, Tennessee 37916, USA; \$7½ for 4 issues. I assume this is US - there's no mention of overseas rates; USQ; 64pp)
The showcase of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers' League of Knoxville, Tennessee, no less, with a few articles, lots of fiction (including a piece by Barry B Longyear) and an "in-depth" interview with Jack Chalker. In depth? Deep into his bank account certainly. Chalker seems entirely obsessed with money. There's not a word about what he's writing or why he's writing it, just stuff about sales and royalties and contracts. Maybe there ought to be a dollar sign in front of the zine's title.

LOVE MAKES THE WORLD GO AWRY 5 (Frank Skene, 10202 - 149 Street, No. 344, Surrey B.C. Canada V3R 3Z8; for the usual or \$2 for 4 (I assume that is US rate); USQ; 16pp).

This is the kind of American personalzine that I've been warned about but never actually seen before. Fran rambles on about the cons she's been to and the people she's met and the problems she's been having, but there's no attempt to convey anything very much about the cons or the people to anyone who didn't go or doesn't know them. On top of that, having missed the previous issues, I'm kept a bit in the dark about exactly why Fran's been having such a rough time. The zine may be interesting if you know Fran or some of the other people involved but to me it was like listening in to a private telephone conversation. By her own admission, Fran is using the zine at least partly as a form of therapy to get over her problems, which seems fair enough but I should have thought a circulation among people she knows would have been appropriate for that? Why make her therapy so public; why tell me? There's no wit and not a great deal of insight here, just blatant soul-bearing. Some of her readers seem to like it though: there are fifteen locs printed and round seventy people in the WAHF column! But then, Marjorie Proops is popular over here, isn't she?

MOLLY TURBINE 3 (Stephen Mackey, 186 Peel Hall Rd, Wythenshawe, Manchester, M22 5HD; for the usual; A4; 14pp).
The new incarnation of METAL DOG sees Stephen very eager to listen to comments and criticism - just a little too eager, I think. He has responded to suggestions that he chuck his capsule reviews in favour of something longer by doing just that, so we get a review of CLASH OF THE TITANS which goes on for almost two pages, but for all that it actually has to say, it could have been compressed into two or three lines. "I won't give you a full run-down on his adventures in detail..." says Stephen, "or I'll be accused by Simon Ounsley of having 'too much plot summary'". Well sorry about this Stephen, but you have got too much plot summary - in fact if you look back at the review, you will probably realise it contains very little else. The idea of doing longer reviews is to treat the subjects in greater depth. It's no good just inflating a capsule review into a two-pager by padding it out with a synopsis of the story. I'm not exactly a fan of short reviews myself, but as they go, yours were OK. The thing to do is not to worry about writing to this length or that length, but to match the size of the article to what you want to say! The other contents of this issue are a piece about school life (a subject suggested in a loc by Abi Frost), a list of Stephen's favourite records (doubtless in response to other lists in other fanzines) and a letter column and very little else. In fact, the damned thing's too short. I get the feeling Stephen's becoming too self-conscious, too nervous to include anything which he hasn't either seen elsewhere or had suggested to him. I may be exaggerating the situation, but I don't want to see Stephen losing all freshness and originality by only doing what other people tell him. Listen to the critics by all means, Stephen, but don't let them take over! (I should add that you can ignore that plea if you want to.)

MUNICH ROUND-UP 152 (Waldemar Kunning, Herzogspitalstr. 5, D-8000, Muenchen 2, West Germany; DM2.50 for 1 issue (incl. postage); A4; 72pp)
A zine produced by the Munich SF Group, mainly in German with a summary sheet in English. It's interesting to see Jim Barker cartoons with speech balloons in German and also a con report on Yorcon 2: "es war leider night der bestorganisierteste Con, den ich besucht habe" it says. And it goes on: "Daruber gibt es jetzt eingigen Streit in England, nachdem Kev Smith den con in ANSIBLE

kritisiert hatte und deshalb von Graham James in MATRIX angegriffen worden war". Bloody hell, fan feuds sound even better in German, don't they? Scrutinising the rep for details of why it wasn't so bestorganisierteste, I can only find "Die Hotel-bar Plötzlich zumachte". Wonder what that means? As I dial for my lawyer, I look for the by-line: what's this? Graham England? What a fine teutonic name! Wonder if he saw the con report in LOCUS though?

Other contents: mainly sercon, with lots of book and film reviews (Stalker, Superman 2, Number of the Beastie, etc.)

NEW CANADIAN FANDOM 2/3 (Box 4655, P.S.S.E. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T6E 5G5; edited by Robert Runte; sample issue on request, subs five issues for C\$4 or US\$, cheques to Robert Runte; USQ; 32pp)
Canadian SF newszine, with con reps, book news, a column on fan history by Taral, and an article on Canadian SF libraries.

NEXUS (Sept/Oct 1981) (Michael Gay, Bridge Chambers, Bridge Street, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 8BN; 5 for £2-50 UK; 5 for £4 Europe; 5 for £9-25 world by airmail; A4; 16pp)

Glossily produced collectors' mag, with lots of classified ads and articles covering comics, pen friends, trains, puzzles... Basically, they seem to print anything, including fiction. Ads cover SF, music, militaria, stamps, old newspapers and programmes, "adult" magazines... etc, etc.

OVERMATTER 3 (Steve Green, 11 Fox Green Crescent, Birmingham, B27 7SD; for SSFG members and maybe the usual; A4; 4pp)
Newsletter of the Solihull SF Group, with a brief run-down on Unicon, a few reviews and the second part of Garry Kilworth on aliens. Hmm, reads a bit funny that sentence, doesn't it?

SECOND-HAND WAVE 42 (Alien Ferguson and Triffid Briggs, 26 Hoecroft Court, Hoe Lane, Enfield, Middx, EN3 5SJ; for the usual; A4; 20pp)

At first glance it's much the same old SECOND HAND WAVE, we've all come to know and love, with a spectrum of material from the excellent to the indifferent, the extremes probably represented this issue by a great piece on TV advertising and a pretty average one about the car breaking down on the way to YORCON 2 (yes, if you're following carefully, this is where you get to hear me scream). But, underneath it all, there are overtones of what can only be called peevishness creeping in. The familiar friendly and easy-going editorial presence is replaced by rather churlish jibes at SHW's critics and at one point, God help us all, the spectre of "fannish barrier" rears its ugly head: "... we now find a herd of BNFs generally avoiding the masses at conventions and wallowing in each other's BNFiscence", they say. Good grief, I thought the spectre of fannish barrier had been laid to rest a couple of years ago. Don't let's go through all that again. I mean, it couldn't just be that BNFs, like other mere human beings, quite enjoy the company of their friends could it? If you'd like an excellent illustration of how illusions like the fannish barrier get started, I suggest you turn to page six of Jimmy Robertson's TWENTYTHIRD 5, where the cause of it all is succinctly demonstrated.

I really don't understand why Alan and Trevor are suddenly getting so stropky. Maybe they were just in a bad mood the day they typed this issue out, but it's a shame to see their fanzine spoilt by half-baked jibes like the one I've quoted above. SECOND HAND WAVE is one of the best fanzines to appear since Seacon, and has been recognised as such in this year's ANSIBLE POLL. Isn't that enough egotism to be going on with? Will they not be satisfied until every loc and review is filled with unmitigated praise for SHW? Is that it?

For myself, I'm an awkward sod. When something is good, I expect it to get better, so I keep on pointing out the faults which remain. All I can hope is that my comments will be received as constructively as they are offered, and not be stupidly mistaken for personal abuse.

So what of the rest of this issue? There's Colin Greenland's quite funny interpretation of the laws of robotics; David Swinden's interpretation of Joseph Nicholas's interpretation of SF criticism (though the piss was taken more amusingly by the infamous Kev Smith in DOT); and a loc by Brian Aldiss which has rather incongruously been given the status of article. The editors' stuff, as I have said, is the usual mixture of the successful and the less successful, but the worst pieces this time fail because they're ambitious, not because they're plagiarised or just plain dull, like they sometimes have been in the past. The already successful SHW is trying harder, I think, which makes the peevish editorial tone all the more annoying.

One other point I should put the record straight on: Graham James takes the MATRIX locs to West Riding meetings to show to D West so that he can get ideas for illustrations. I've never seen the sort of incident which Alan and Trevor describe on the back page of this issue.

But, by the way, the Pete Lyon illos were excellent.

SELF-ABUSED BUT STILL STANDING 3 (Chuck Connor - address as DEATH VALLEY...; for the usual or a larger-than-A4 SAE with a 50p stamp; A4; 64pp)
A massive, competently produced collection of fiction and poetry, with locs and good cover illos. Contributors include Steve Sneyd, Steve Green, Nic Howard, Ken Mann, and Roelof Goudriaan. I'll review the next issue properly, honest.

SF COMMENTARY 62/63/64/65/66 (Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5095AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia; 10 for A\$10, 10 for US & C\$12, no UK rates given!; Q-ish; 72pp)
Bumper quintuple edition of this most engaging of serconzines. Enticing contents this issue: articles on Disch's ON WINGS OF SONG and Aldiss' REPORT ON PROBABILITY A; two pieces on Dick; "Best of" lists for 1980, including one by Tom Disch; dozens of reviews and the usual lively letter column.

STARSHIP 42 (Andrew Porter, PO Box 4175, New York, NY 10163, USA; US\$10.60 for 4 issues; UK £4.85 for 4 issues to Ethel Lindsay, 69 Barry Rd, Carnoustie, Angus, DD7 7QQ - cheques payable to ALGOL PRESS; USQ; 52pp)
Glossily produced serconzine, with a Brian Stableford interview, Robert Anton Wilson on "how to make it as a writer!", a column by Fred Pohl, reviews, and, as they say, lots more.

STILL IT MOVES 1 (Simon Ounsley, 13A Cardigan Rd, Headingley, LEEDS LS6 3AE; A4; 36pp)
Ostensibly, this is available for the usual, but despite my admissions of a guilt complex last issue, I didn't get enough of this printed (due to snags described therein) so I've run out already. Next time, I promise, I'll get enough printed so I can impose the damn thing on anyone who's sent me a zine or a letter. Meanwhile, back at issue one: there's me on the collecting phenomenon; Graham Ashley on music 1977 onwards; Pete Lyon and Anne Falloon on saints; Helen Starkey on dictionaries; Michael Ashley on not getting to Oxford. Plus Van Gogh, civil servants, films, and gherkins... Oh, and some Pete Lyon illos. The trouble with having someone around who's that good, you see, is that you keep forgetting to mention him.

SUPERNOVA 3 (Simon Bostock, 18 Gallowes Inn Close, Ilkeston, Derbyshire, DE7 4BW; for the usual or 40p for TAFF; A5; 24pp)
"The fanzine for all SF and Fantasy Fans" proclaims the cover. The underlining is mine, but it does reinforce the impression I get that Simon thinks he's producing something like OMNI. There are other zines, you know, Simon. Still, the contents continue to prove fairly entertaining despite it all. This issue, there's an interview with Dave Langford, Harry Andrushak on violence at US cons, Steve Green on TV SF, and Simon plugging his damned apa. Wish he would tidy up the presentation though.

TAPPEN 2 (Malcolm Edwards, 28 Duckett Rd, LONDON N4 1BN; "for a few of the usual reasons"; Q; 30pp)

Malcolm seemed a bit peeved that I called him an elitist last issue. Actually, it was a fairly flippant accusation; even so it's nice to have an explanation. Evidently Malcolm is quite likely to send a copy to any eager young fan who writes and asks him. People he's not likely to send it to are those he already knows, who are set in their ways and unlikely to offer anything interesting in the way of a response. Fair enough. Certainly, with the state of my own print run (as described above) I'm in no position to criticise anyone.

To the zine then: Colin Greenland does the "desert island discs" selection this issue, and I prefer his effort to Greg Pickersgill's column last time, mainly because Colin talks about the memories connected with the records, rather than just sticking to the music itself. There's a piece by Chris Priest about working for a mail order books firm (quite amusing this, though I've seen a lot better from Chris) and another edition of Roy Kettle's increasingly fantastic gossip column: it grows on you after a while, like some particularly exotic species of mould. Anyway, what really counts this time is the article by Chris Atkinson, LIFE WITH THE LOONIES PART ONE, which must be close to the best thing I've ever seen in a fanzine. Certainly, I can't think of anything better offhand. Chris's emergence as an ace fan-writer is perhaps the most important thing so far to come out of the present fanzine renaissance. TAPPEN and STOP BREAKING DOWN, good as they are, might still be accused of turning the clock back, but Chris is doing things which have never before been attempted in fanzines (as far as I know!), things which many, including myself, had thought unsuitable for the form. She manages to talk about sexual fantasies (in SBD 7) and insanity (in TAPPEN 2) with wit and intelligence, forcing everyone who thought that absolute honesty wasn't possible in fanzine writing to eat their words. "There are things you shouldn't mention in fanzines..." that attitude is revealed as bullshit. It's just taken someone with the skill to carry it off. Chris won the award at Novacon for best fan-writer, I hear. It was richly deserved.

And before I move on, I should mention that TAPPEN got the best zine award, again deservedly I think. No doubt Malcolm will silence those scurrilous tongues who have accused him of bringing out three issues so quickly merely to win the award by maintaining the same frequent schedule in the future.

(Oh yes, and Pete Lyon won the best artist award, almost forgot.)

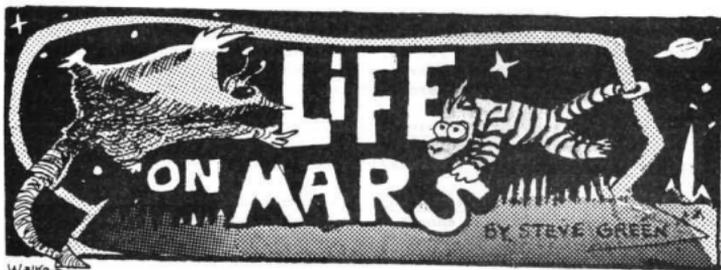
TWENTYTHIRD 4 (Jimmy Robertson, 64 Hamilton Rd, Bellshill, Lanarkshire, M14 1AG; for the usual; FC; 8pp).

For my money, TWENTYTHIRD is the best zine to emerge out of the lean post-Season period. Jimmy is no great literary stylist, but he writes with imagination and, above all, commitment. I can do no better than quote Phil Palmer from CHOCOLATES OF LUST: "When I read it I felt every clipped laconic sentence being nailed through my eyes and into my brain". Exactly.

WALLBANGER 4 (Eve Harvey, 43 Harrow Rd, Carshalton, Surrey; for the usual or 14p in stamps; A4; 18pp)

This is the best WALLBANGER I've seen. There's a great new article by Bob Shaw (OK, it's the same thing he was doing thirty years ago, but it's still good), Eve on the fanzine scene of six months ago (now happily transformed) and John writing about his recent dismissal from his job. The latter is one of the things that fanzines are good for: not getting the sack, I mean, but writing about things that anger you, things you feel the need to communicate. John's article isn't going to help him in any way but he did get my sympathetic anger at the injustice of it all. The piece was well written; I just hope it doesn't give other firms ideas about cutting down on staff without paying redundancy money!

That's it then. Not the best column I've written I don't think, nor - I hope - the best I'm going to write. So keep sending the fanzines. Now I'm going away to rest my brain for six weeks after all this work of one kind and another. But you'll be pleased to know that my finger's stopped bleeding. Deep Cuts? Perhaps I should change the title.



Pete Roberts once expounded the view that "in a sense there's only one Novacon... (it) simply adds a few more days and a few more anecdotes to itself each year", and despite the behind-the-scenes drama preceeding Novacon 11 (of which I'll say no more, for reasons that should be apparent from this issue's lettercol), the party spirit (along with the rest of the alcohol) was much in evidence.

Among the weekend revellers scattered around the Royal Angus was jovial Jeff Suter, whose South Hants Science Fiction Group has rocketted from a membership of two (Jeff and Ric Cooper) into a 30-strong gathering within 12 months. As well as the regular get-togethers every second Thursday in the lounge of the George & Dragon, Cosham High Street ("events include quizzes, boozing, sf charades, boozing, social evenings, cinema outings, boozing..."), the group occasionally plays host to guest speakers, one recent victim being our own beloved leader, Emperor Alan. Other events in the pipeline include the southerners' first agn, video evenings and "lots of luvverly skiffy movies".

The SHSFG's publishing empire has recently expanded to produce the fanzine Death Rays, available from editor John Bark (5, Byerley Close, Westbourne, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 8TS) for the Usual; issue 3, which hit the streets at Novacon, features Hazel Faulkner's guest speech on fandom, Mike Cheater's ten favourite novels and a review of the TV SALEM'S LOT which increases my regret at missing it. Death Rays still has plenty of room for improvement, but for a society barely into its second year, it's not bad at all.

Edinburgh fandom's Fourth, on the other hand, continues to weaken the case against groupzines. The latest edition, sporting an excellent cover by John McFarlane, features Owen Whiteoak's Becon report and Jim Darroch's amazement at how many fans still balk at paying more than a tenner for original artwork (a reaction I heartily second after the pathetic number of bids at this year's Unicorn and Novacon auctions) - well worth dropping a line to Jim at 21, Corslet Road, Currie, Midlothian.

Both Jim and Owen were highly visible at the Royal Angus, distributing flyers for the city's first of convention, Ra Con (Grosvenor Centre Hotel, February 4-6 '83). As well as the regular panels and films (GoH Harry Harrison; Fan GoH Pete Lyon), the group will be organising a separate video programme if there's enough support; full details from Phil Dawson at 4/7 New John's Place, Edinburgh - see you there?

Meanwhile, the revitalised Leicester Science Fiction Group, which had the distinct misfortune once to invite yours truly over to talk on fandom (one of the worst experiences of my life so far) and miraculously survived to invite fellow Brummie Dave Hardy across on November 6 (some people never learn...) enters the convention scene itself with Lexicon in May. I'm far from happy with the membership rate (£8 attending - compared with, say £6.00 to attend the '82 Novacon), but the weekend's certain to prove popular with fans of the ubiquitous Bob Shaw, making yet another appearance as guest of honour. Full details from Tony Cullen, 43 Station Road, Kirby Muxloe, Leicester; could prove a suitably informal pit stop for victims of post-Eastercon hangovers.

Films scheduled for the Exeter Group's forthcoming MicroCon (unlike the preceding events, designed specifically for local fans) include the classic Z-movie ATTACK OF THE KILLER TOMATOES; remaining programme items are of a similarly informal nature. Margin note for Greg and Linda Pickersgill: despite my involvement on the programming, there are currently no plans to set the campus toilet block on fire.

Heading back up north, the Glasgow University group Io joined forces in October with its Strathclyde University counterpart S4 to present a varied timetable of speeches and films; Ed Buckley opens the new year with a glance at anecdotal America on January 12, followed a week later by the inimitable Jim Barker; other guests on the schedule include Bob Shaw (yes, again...) in March, Chris Boyce and Don Malcolm.

Glasgow fandom still centres on the Friends of Kilgore Trout, of course, formed in the summer of '74, the Friends still meet Thursdays at Wintergill's Bar (midway between the Kelvinbridge and St Georges X tube stations on the Great Western Road.)

Breakaway fandom rules ok: the Bolton Group, launched as a spin-off of the Manchester scene, has established itself well enough to consider organising an "sf week" in February, although the cost of its recent Lionel Fanthorpe evening ("very poorly attended," explains downcast BaD chairman Bernard Earp) has thrown the scheme into doubt. Meanwhile, the group has dropped its fortnightly schedule ("too confusing - and the original reason behind it was that it enabled us to also attend the MaD (Manchester) group meetings, very necessary the first year when we were so small and meetings so sparsely attended") to meet every Thursday at the Old Three Crowns, Deansgate.

Appeals for information on local fandom: Valerie Housden, 55 Chapel Wood, New Ash Green, Kent ("What do local groups do, apart from drinking?" - anyone care to tell me so I can tell her?); Jeremy Crampton, 34 Percy Road, Handbridge, Chester (Liverpool during term-time).

STOP PRESS: Solihull Group to change venue in January, from the increasingly crowded Masons Arms to the Red House, Lode Lane (10 minutes walk from the railway station, just past Solihull Hospital) . . . SSFGer Steve Gooch to launch group in Rugby, more details to follow . . .

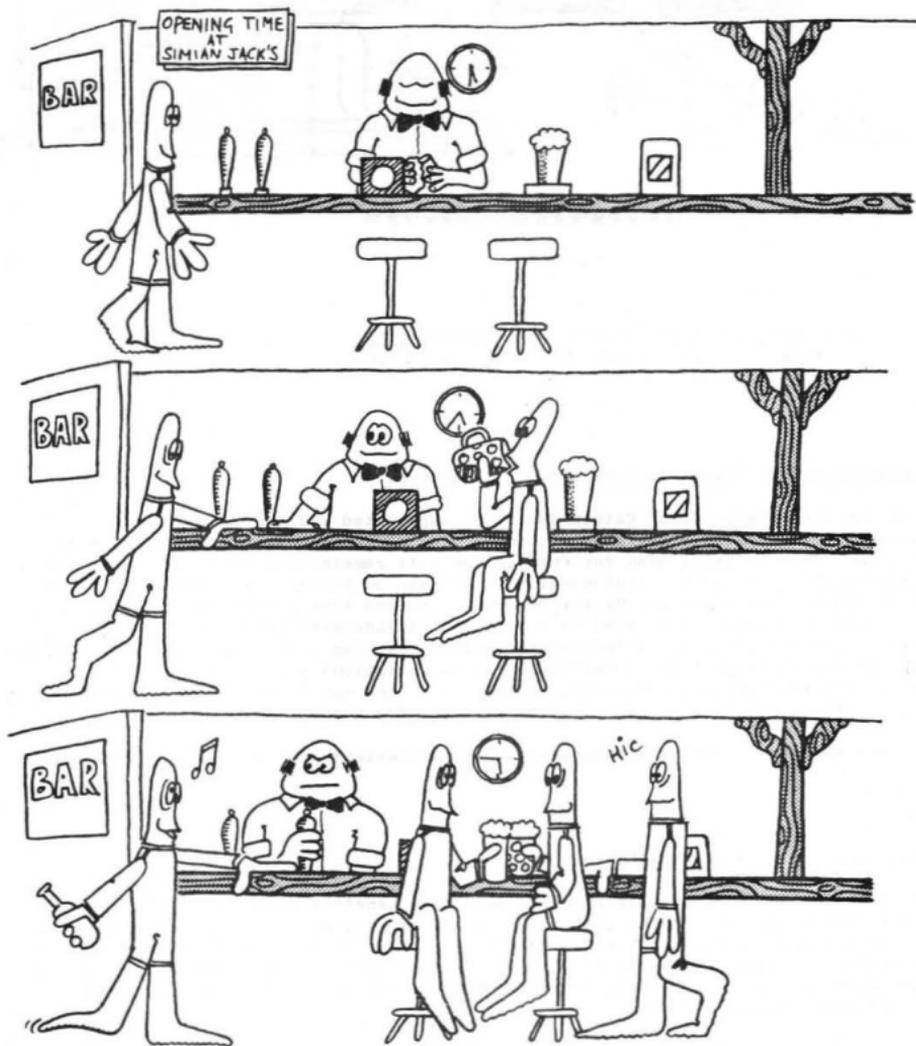
Steve Green

Mail: 11 Fox Green Crescent, Birmingham B27 7SD
Telephone: 021 705 8215 (office hours)
Deadline: January 1 1982

THE TAVERN at

THE END OF TIME

By Kevin Clarke
and Steve Green





COMPETITION PAGE

The Ongoing Matrix Competition Situation: A Reminder

One of the items left out of Matrix 38 - for complicated and horrendous reasons you should know about - was a reminder of Competition M37, the Cosmic Quiz of SF general knowledge. This is still open for entries and will remain open until the copy date for Matrix 40 - see inside front cover for the date in living black-and-white. New members whose first issue was Matrix 38 or 39, and who thus missed the original quiz, are welcome to a copy - just send me a stamped self-addressed envelope (difficult job getting these envelopes to address themselves, but who am I to quibble with the standard formula?) and the full list of childishly simple questions will be yours. Some laudable entries have been received, but all are a long way from the top score - I won't say what figure you have to beat, but be assured it's not all that big!

Rush your entries to the usual address: 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks RG2 7PW.

Dave Langford

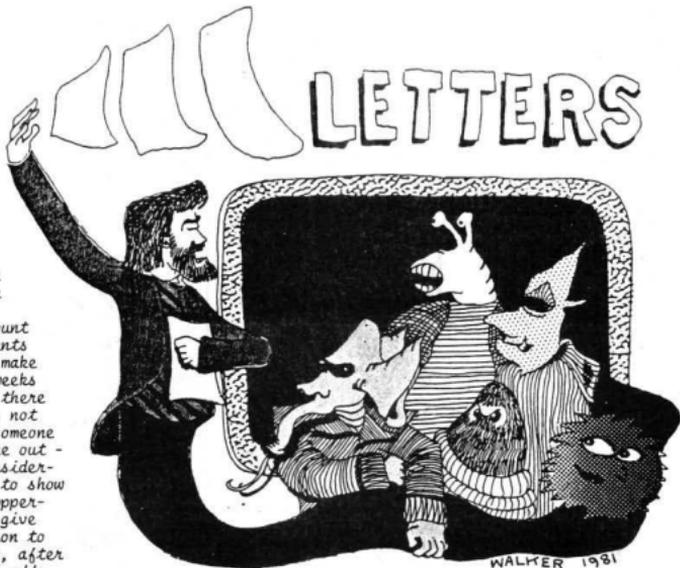
Competition M39 : Set by Nik Morton

None of those "really difficult intellectual" Dave Langford problems.... this one is so easy that even yours truly, the editor, could get the answers correct - mind you, Nik Morton did provide me with said answers..... All you have to do is identify the book titles and authors associated with the (following) cartoons. Answers to the Editor by the deadline on page 2; usual prize for correct entry. In the event of a tie, the prize will be decided by a draw.



LETTERS

Judging by the limited response to M38 (which contained no letter-col) I'm quite sure that Matrix would quickly fold without this column. So, you have been warned..... Sorry for said absence of letter-col, but the American Legal System doesn't take into account your editors' commitments for Matrix. I had to make 3 visits there in 10 weeks and Linda had to stay there all that time. It was not exactly a holiday as someone below would try to make out - and it has left us considerably in debt. Still, to show that revenge is not uppermost in my mind, I'll give pride of "pole" position to said correspondent who, after a few inane ramblings, adds his thoughts on the Presidency.



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

If Mary Gentle took note of the facts on the riots then maybe she would get some idea of the Big Wide World we all live in and have come to hate. "Waking up in the dole queue?" Well, first I've got to have a nice long holliday (sic) in India (on my redundancy money), and then I'll sign on.

And yes, we all know how Colin Greenland got his really wonderful position (at the expence of Ian Watson and John Sladek). Odd how the advert was worded for an "established writer", and according to rumour they're still bouncing Colin's first novel (complete with a covering letter - or so I'm told - by Brian Aldiss). Mind you, the boy is fairly Right Wing, isn't he.

Sad to say, I have to agree with Arnold Akien. The easiest way around the representation thing would be to make it a vote-form system pushed out in one of the mailings. This could be done on a yearly basis if need be, and

if the 'voter' votes 'NO' for re-election then he or she should also present their 'candidate' as well, stating reasons (if they feel like doing so). Clarke is still running (I suspect) on the sales of 2001 (I haven't seen a copy of RAMA on the shelves for some time, thank God) and, as such, cannot really be classed as an active writer anymore. True, his name may just be a neat hook to snare the potential new member, but if his books are no longer 'on show to the public' then that hook will get blunt very quickly. Dynamic British Writers? Well, you've got Watson, for a start - even if I don't like his books - Priest (if you can stand him) and Rob Holdstock (not quite a household name, but at least he's working on it).

The 'position' shouldn't really mean anything to a "struggling author", otherwise you're making him struggle even more. Yet, on the other hand, a show of interest now and again, wouldn't go amiss, would it?

All the very best and good fate - too bad we all can't afford to dash off to the States for 6 weeks, some of us have to work for a living.

More on C. Connor later; meanwhile some further mixed thoughts on the Presidential issue:

ROGER WADDINGTON
4 COMMERCIAL STREET
NORTON, MALTON
NORTH YORKS YO17 9ES

I'm wondering whether a President of a science fiction association can be anything more than a figurehead; for with so many different ideas about the function, scope and future direction, there's no way that one person could try to direct the course of sf; or indeed that he would be



OH, HE JUST
LIKES TO
PRETEND
HE'S THE
SPACE
SHUTTLE



ADVISE
MISSION
CONTROL
TO
ABORT

allowed to, once in that position! It's different with (say) a Better Business Bureau, or the Worshipful Company of Silver-Smiths where there's only one purpose and one direction; but with such a subjective topic as sf in discussion?

And if we must have a figurehead, there's still no writer with quite the popular stature of Arthur C. Clarke (and I stress 'popular'). He's still remembered for 2001 - and always will be, however devoutly he wishes for other fame - and now that he's again in the news with a sequel as well, not to mention the plans for a film of The Fountains of Paradise Too, even Bob Shaw acknowledges his Mysterious World TV series, which put him in the public eye as no sf writer has done since Nigel Kneale and Quatermass.

It all depends on how you want to recruit, whether with what I would call the 'gosh-wow' approach, or the literary ditto, whether you want quantity or quality, in which case it would seem to be typified between Arthur or (say) Brian Aldiss, whose name on the masthead might bring the members of Mensa; though personally, I believe in capturing the enthusiasm first and letting the learning come afterwards; which is why my vote would still go to Arthur. There are other father figures which I'm sure will be mooted, John Brunner, Michael Moorcock (the first I doubt quite so well known outside the field, and would the second want such a position?), but whether in Sri Lanka or Britain, is there any other writer with such a public stature?

Though before descending to personalities, we must decide what sort of Presidency we want; or rather, need!

What sort of President? Hmm, maybe the next writer's Bark is worse than his Bite, but....

JOHN BARK
5 BYERLEY CLOSE
WESTBOURNE
EMSWORTH HANTS PO10 8TS

On the ACC as President issue, it's obviously good to have someone super-famous and widely acceptable inside and outside fandom nailed to the masthead.

Equally, it would also be nice to have someone perhaps less well known, but active, who'll turn up at conventions and meetings and can be billed as the of the BSFA.

What about creating a new position of 'Patron' for the 'Big Name', who would only come up for re-election if he/she goes around working against the aims of the BSFA. The President would then be redefined as 'an active writer living in the U.K. who attends conventions' or similar. Since there's a danger of a President-type turning into a Patron-type, the President would come up regularly for election as at present. Of course, there's no reason why both shouldn't be active writers, but that would be an added bonus.

IAIN R BYERS
9 SHAFTESBURY PARK
DUNDEE DD2 1LB
SCOTLAND

I fully agree with Arnold Akien regarding the retaining of Arthur C as President. His residing in Sri Lanka is totally inconsistent with being prez of a British organisation. As for his name attracting members it never attracted me, and why we should want as members anyone who would be attracted by a name, I can't imagine. A whole bunch of Arthur C

Clarke fans (if there is such a thing!) The BSFA as the ACC Fan Club! Sounds as if it's straight out of a science fiction novel. I don't even know why we need a President at all, especially when he doesn't do anything, unless of course we want to change his position to Titular Head. How come on His 'Mysterious World' he wasn't introduced as Arthur C Clarke, author of '2001', inventor of the communications satellite, and President of the BSFA? Who could let such a chance for publicity to go by?

More from Iain later; I'll finish the subject for this issue with Jon Wallace's thoughts on the matter. He also thinks I'm getting a little paranoid about Vector? Not anymore....

JON WALLACE
21 CHARLESTON ST.
DUNDEE DD2 4RG
SCOTLAND

Retaining Arthur C Clarke as President was a bad move as far as I'm concerned. Apart from the excellent reasons for ousting him given by Arnold Akien, look at the "Mysterious World" fiasco. No-one who watched it could fail to be impressed by AC's genuine devotion to his Native country - What? He wasn't born in Sri Lanka! - Seriously, though. By linking

his name with this blatantly crankist series he has made himself a laughing stock in the eyes, especially, of those who noticed that both the series and the book "Arthur Clarke's Mysterious World" were not actually written by Clarke, but by two other people.

If we, as an association, link our name with this over-the-hill, seemingly senile, egomaniac, then we are also laughing stock material.

Don't you think that you're getting a little paranoid about the Matrix/Vector demarcation line? OK, you feel that certain things are the province of Matrix and that other things are made for Vector, and I agree. Wholeheartedly. But I think that you are definitely worrying too hard about it. The letter column of any magazine contains stuff as similar as that in any other, but the overall "slant" is different. This is generally true of Vector and Matrix, with the possible exception of the LOGs on LOGs that you refer to in your editorial.

The Vector letter column, on the whole, carries stuff about SF. Matrix carries stuff about fans, that's how it should be, it's up to you and Kev as editors to keep it that way.

As it turned out, Kev didn't disagree with me, anyway, in Vector 103, neither did his features editor Paul Kincaid.

PAUL KINCAID
114 GUILDHALL ST.
FOLKESTONE
KENT CT20 1ES

I do not advocate reviews of films or television programmes in Vector. I agree with you wholeheartedly that their place belongs in Matrix. Nevertheless sf in the media is not of such importance that I feel it would be a dereliction of Vector's duty as 'The Critical Journal

of the BSFA' if it were not to subject it to the same critical standards that we apply to all other forms of sf. Thus I would hope to publish occasional articles on the subject in the pages of Vector - always assuming, of course, that we receive contributions of the critical standard we are looking for.

Mind you, my editorial seems to have brought my old pal, the Genetic Engineer William Bains, back into action:

WILLIAM BAINS
182 SEDGEMOOR ROAD
COVENTRY CV3 4DZ

The BSFA was formed to promote interest in SF and its associated social grouping, fandom. These two partially distinct roles have called two quite distinct magazines into being - Vector to introduce SF as something more than a particularly esoteric form of pulp fiction, and Matrix to ... What?

Your concept of Matrix' role clearly differs from some other members, mine included, although not so drastically as to make Matrix unenjoyable. Matrix should introduce potential fans to the social side of SF, not the narrow fandom of cliques and feuds, but the whole scope of what fen do, preferably in as good a light as is compatible with those benighted creatures' activities. Thus it should paradoxically be about fandom while not itself being fannish. Too often a letter from a new member is published to say that their first Matrix, or second or fifth, was quite incomprehensible because the dense net of aggressive cross-reference between articles, letters, issues, even between Matrix and other fanzines or convention proceedings defies unravelling. The levels of aggression and vitriol displayed in some letters and articles also gives a false view of what club meetings and conventions are like, and, rather than encouraging newcomers to participate, builds an entirely illusory wall around 'fannish' activity to keep the neofan at bay. Joseph Nicholas commented on his personality division between typewriter-mediated and personal speech in Matrix 37, and this may be a general reason for the perennial overstatement and overreaction in Matrix' lettercol. These features of complex self-reference and overlaid debate can be very entertaining for the initiate, but do not serve any purpose for which the BSFA was formed.

Nor do admirably fascinating articles on life on the dole, which are not relevant to anything but the first letter of the BSFA's name, just as articles on female biology or Paris fashion (because, after all, some of the membership are women, even if they loath Paris) would be out of place in Matrix. Fen publish their own fanzines just to bring these topics to 'public' attention, and more power to those who can break out of the Sci Fi mould. But Matrix has a unique role, differing significantly from fanzines by fen for fen. It largely fulfills this with its regular review columns for films, meetings, zines. Please, try to curb those who just want an outlet for their more destructive output for their amusement and the BSFA's loss.

You touch on this in your editorial, of course, but strangely suggest that only Vector should keep a tight reign on its letter column. Not so! The Matrix Loccol should be true to the aims of Matrix, the BSFA organ, not to Matrix the pub brawl.

As I said, I don't want to criticise the majority of work you publish, which is solid, interesting, informative material that all club-zines should put out and few manage. Full marks, he says patronisingly, never having edited a zine in his life.

Well, thank you for those few kind words; I don't disagree with some of your comments, but if Matrix is to be solely for the purpose of "introducing" fans to fandom, then it is going to remain rather boring to 95% of the fans once they have been "introduced". Does the vitriol really give a false impression of fannish activity? Sometimes, I think it is merely a fairly harmless way of getting rid of frustration/aggression - other times, those Knives In The Back begin to pain a little. Still, after receiving a card with about 250 signatures on it, and countless messages and letters of goodwill after our recent road accident, I'm convinced that virtually ALL fans are next to Godliness. That is, other than when it comes to fanzine reviews....

SIMON BOSTOCK
18 GALLOWES INN CLOSE
ILKESTON
DERBYSHIRE DE7 4EW

"Deep Cuts" was very self-indulgent, and for that reason it wasn't all that super. If Ounsley likes to comment on the zines himself, and not type just a synopsis of the contents, then he should LoC the appropriate fannags. And his shit about Apas. He's got it all wrong. There is no restriction on the amount of apazines to be drummed out of the du-

plicator, as long as the material is specifically for the Apa concerned. The surplus copies can go to friends, etc, and since most fanzines are out for the Usual anyway, no loss could be made. So let him stick that up his pipe and smoke it. Keith Walker told me he'd wrote also in defiance of Simon's crap, so maybe, just maybe, it'll attract potential apamembers. That's a longshot. Impossible.

Keith Walker did, indeed, write, but I had great difficulty in deciphering his handwriting:



KEITH WALKER
SOMEBHERE BETWEEN
MANCHESTER & BOLTON
ON A TRAIN, AUG 81

The Nickelse Memorial Award goes to Simon Ounsley for his inane inept ramblings on APAs in the only issue of Matrix I've received this year! At least Joseph's verbigations are based on a partial knowledge of the SF and fnz field but Ounsley's comments on APAs arise from a self-confessed ignorance of what he is talking about.

It's difficult to know where to begin to correct his catalogue of falsehoods based, as they are, on the biased views of a handful of discontents. But, to begin with, APA-zines are by no means exclusive to the APARs. Although I've contributed to many APAs, I've only on one occasion produced a zine exclusive to the APA. Terry Jeeves used to produce three versions of ERG for FAPA, OMPA and general distribution. Others merely off-load an over-print into an APA. Of course there are those who produce APA-only zines but even here they often go into more than one APA. So, bearing these points in mind, the comments quoted are plain stupid. I certainly wouldn't take the word of Taral "Svengali" Macdonald either, who has a rather mercenary attitude towards fnz and, of course, APAzines don't bring in money! For the same reason he also operates a very restrictive trading list.

Now that OMPA is dead, I wish Simon Bostock well with his attempt to create a British APA.

Keith also has initiated an Audio UK APA - for details write to him on that train - if it's Slow enough, it might be somewhere near his home by now; he also tells me that the BSFA Tape exchange has a new List out for a SAE.

ANDY SAWYER
59 MALLORY ROAD
BIRKENHEAD
MERSEYSIDE L42

So Iain Byers rates me BSFA Letterhack No. 2, eh? Looks like I've got to lose M38 even if only to attempt to overtake Chuck Connor - watch out boy, I'm on your tail! A quick flurry of letters to Matrix and Vector and I could even pull out in front; perhaps we could make something of this - two points for a published letter, one for a WAHF, and

the league leader at the end of the year gets the Complete Works of Elmer T. Hack (Revised and annotated edition) and the last-placed loccer gets a copy of The Number of the Beast (together with a test paper to make sure they read it).

I don't want to get into an argument with Simon Ounsley - especially as he's sent me a copy of Still It Moves - but I suppose I must be one of the few people in fandom who enjoyed the BIG DUMMY productions. I won't say that assumes vast critical insight in me or great artistic qualities in the zines; Simon may be right, and I wouldn't go so far as to say that he is wrong - but I found the chaos of the things curiously inspiring. Partly, I suppose, it's a nihilistic nostalgia for a previous era of self-consciously 'underground' magazines ... I'm not sure that John Shire and co. were ever really into producing Fanzines As We Know Them anyway.

INTERZONE looks interesting and worth hanging around for. I hope it works, and I hope every BSFA member gives it support. Alan is quite right in saying that this is something the BSFA should be involved in; we should all be publicising the thing and, if it succeeds, we can only benefit. Are there any plans to distribute flyers to colleges, bookshops, etc? Every BSFA member could help here.

Never mind, Simon, Somebody does love you:

EVE HARVEY
43 HARROW ROAD
CARSHALTON
SURREY

I approve of the change in personnel with Simon Ounsley taking over the fanzine review section. Not that I want to decry Rob's hard work, or Simon's "Life on Mars", but I have always admired Simon's writing style and felt it was somewhat wasted on the "Life on Mars" column. This section is an important component of the BSFA's service and Simon brought energy to what had merely been a factual listing; but since the factual content is its most important constituent and most of the contributions were written by members of the clubs and societies being highlighted, insufficient scope was provided for Simon's very adequate literary skills. Steve Green has not quite reached the heights previously scaled by Simon, but it is only his first attempt and I don't think the column suffers.

As for the fanzine reviews, Rob's efforts succeeded in what he intended for them, but personally I have never found directories very useful - I prefer a little more in-depth discussion to provide sufficient information on which to base my decision to request a particular zine. Simon manages perfectly (for me at least) to produce the mix of subjective reviewing with factual listing of contents etc to provide this basis. OK so I might not agree with him, but at least there's enough meat to keep a carnivore like me going.

R NICHOLSON-MORTON
235 WEST STREET
FARHAM
HANTS PO16 0HZ

Simon Ounsley's "Deep Cuts" have helpful advice to aspiring writers (in particular, his comments on Hindmost 2). I will take issue with the comment attributed to Bob (FOKT) Shaw, regarding the assumption that either fiction material is good enough to sell, or it is junk. It may be good enough to sell, but it is a buyers' market and the buyer has a limited outlet, besides funds constraining the page-count per magazine. Of course, any material can be improved; but if work is good enough and not simply good topical stuff soon forgotten, it will stand the test of time and be accepted EVENTUALLY.... No way is only good material paid for and bad stuff rejected: life isn't that "fair" or simple. No two editors have the same taste - though each must appeal to a wide amorphous audience to survive, this does not mean that what they publish is good and the rejections must be rubbish. I might add that usually the stories are good enough and deserving of publication; it just depends on the yardstick that a given editor uses. Good material is rejected: Gone With The Wind was, and The Ipress File; there are many other instances, too.

Like many a reader I'm sure, one of the first sections I turn to is the News which never disappoints. It is good to read that it is not all gloom and doom in the sf publishing world! Take heart, Dorothy!

Martyn Taylor's review of DEATHWATCH was excellent and, along with Margaret Hinxman's comments, has convinced me that it will be worthwhile catching this film if it does get shown on BBC. (D G Compton's novel was called THE CONTINUOUS KATHERINE MORTENHOE when issued by Arrow in the mid-70s.) Some of your contributors' phrases are gems: "Close Encounters with an Airfix Kit" is priceless!

Nik continues on the question of the letter-column being open to the views of all - and so it is - back to the bomb -

Hussain R Mohammed's views are my own, and he has put them better than I could have managed. As stated, "Letters" is the BSFA forum where all coherent views may be aired; it is surprising that anyone should want conformity when interested in sf, a literature whose main premise could well be "question conformity in all its guises."

As for John Brunner advocating that sf should support causes, I'm all in favour. The Poles have guts. Cancer seems worth fighting too, not to mention helping the disabled - the disabled really have it rough, but are they hurling bricks at the police? No, they get on with living and getting the most out of those limited lives they have.

They, too, have guts. Unilateral disarmament is all very well, but who disarms first? Tom A Jones's letter reflects this realistic attitude. Are our priorities wrong? Maybe we should be combatting mutual distrust: once that is overcome, global disarmament could become a reality. I once mentioned in an unprinted Matrix article that Japan didn't have the Bomb, but it didn't prevent the idealistic West dropping a Bomb on them: has human nature changed all that much since? If it seems politically expedient to Bomb the UK, then we will be Bombed; a potential for retaliation, however, will make the Bomber think twice whereas, if we were Bombless he would not... For "Bomb" read a malodorous American euphemism, "Nuke" - a word which hides untold misery and inhumanity.

Hopefully, the pen, the word, will be stronger than the sword - if spread by enough brave dissidents behind the Iron Curtain, to the point where they will eventually rot the benighted fabric that holds together the most repressive regime the world has known; and then, as the fabric begins to rip, yes, then dissidents should begin to call for disarmament in the West as well. Disarmament is an ideal worth striving for: rationally, with brain as well as heart. Voices are being raised in the West, rightly so: Richard Leakey made a moving plea in his splendid Making of Mankind series, and recently we heard Carl Sagan reiterate the same despairing plea. But where are the Sagans and Leakeys behind the Iron Curtain: who will hear?



Our Tony Benn of the BSFA (and that is by no means an insult), James Parker, vigorously defends Mr Brunner:

JAMES PARKER
18 KING WILLIAMS ST.
OLD TOWN, SWINDON
WILTS SN1 3LB

Thank God for John Brunner! Here at least is one SF writer who is not afraid to grapple with the fundamental social issues of our age. He is, to put it simply, not scared of political speculation. If only there were more writers of the same quality, waking us up to the dangers (and hopes) of our ever more complex age, instead of just feeding us glamourous visions of a technological Disneyland of the future... And for those still around who still subscribe to the latter view, who even at this late hour can still dream of going into space and spreading benevolence among the stars etc, well, think on, 'cos your pop-corn fantasies are looking sicker by the day. Sure, Carl Sagan with his ludicrously conceived 'Cosmos' offers us some nice psychedelic imagery and some pretty (not to mention purple) poetics, but the brutal fact remains: Man's destiny will be realised upon the earth - or nowhere at all. It is on this crazy, blood-soaked speck of cosmic debris we all call home that we will either achieve a sane, just society (with technology controlled by the needs of the people) or we will surely perish at the hands of madmen drunk with power fantasies, getting their jollies from heaps of phallic ironmongery. Face it, the whole 'space thing', whether in fact or fiction, is a total irrelevance. I happen to believe that space IS infinite; that the human mind is unable to cope with such concepts. Think about space as the ultimate metaphor. Death? Think about Gagarin, Armstrong, etc as not so much astronauts as necronauts.

Fact: all money spent on putting man into space is a criminal waste of funds. 'Star Trek', '2001', and 'Cosmos' etc etc are all American frontier fantasies projected into the abyss. Far more fascinating, I think, is the madness within man that can sustain such a hopeless yearning.

Never forget: SF, in its wild state, is the destroyer of mental apathy. It must provoke. Otherwise, it's just candyfloss for the mindless inhabitants of Sagan's cosmetic 'Cosmos' - as dreamed up by God and Hollywood.

Iain Byers (address as before) also observes that: Tom Jones describes himself as strange, and I'm not surprised. It is all very well being in favour of nuclear disarmament as long as the other side starts first, but it is reasoning like that that prevents anybody from starting at all.

Finally, John Brunner (who had a letter in the Guardian last month) has penned the following:

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

AN OPEN LETTER TO MY COLLEAGUES IN SCIENCE FICTION

In August, the British newspaper The Guardian reported an appeal, signed by West and East German authors, calling for an end to the arms race and for immediate disarmament talks. They appealed for "joint action to prevent Europe from becoming the nuclear theatre of a new and final world war" and rejected "the criminal idea" that a limited nuclear war could be waged and won. Among the signatories were Heinrich Böll and Günter Grass from West Germany, Stefan Heym and Hermann Kant from East Germany. The appeal was said to be supported by writers' unions in France, Italy, Holland, Finland and Yugoslavia, and at least one signatory was Russian.

We in science fiction, living so much of our lives in the future, have better reason than most to look forward to a day when it will be as inconceivable to settle international disputes by re-sorting to war as we would now think it to burn someone at the stake for wanting to hold a different kind of religious service.

But that day will never come so long as we tolerate the arms race, so long as we live in this hair-trigger world of ICBM's, cruise missiles, neutron bombs and the rest.

I am certain that many people involved in science fiction writing, editing and publishing would wish to associate themselves with this appeal. If those who do would care to write to me at the above address, preferably before 1st January 1982, expressing their agreement and mentioning their connection with the science fiction field, I will arrange for their support to be publicised and send their letters where they will do the most good. Thank you.



Interesting how those who are vociferously opposed to any debate on the Nuke question in fandom are the same ones who criticise Russia for its (admitted) suppression of free speech. Doom-merchants such as Rob Hansen (remember "Seacon will be the end of British Fandom as we know it" are saying that the "politicisation" of conventions will destroy fandom as we know it ... and so on, contd page 94. John's letter to the Guardian was married with a cartoon ridiculing SF and SF "Loonies" - do we want our literature to be taken seriously? If so, then we should, at least, debate serious topics. After all, the traditions of SF in this country go a little beyond bulbous warriors zapping monsters with laser guns and plundering leggy virgins. At least I hope so!

such as fan feuds, bitching etc - stand back while the shit hits the fan ...

MARK WATERMAN
412 SOUTHCROFT RD
STREATHAM SW16

Pete Lyon's inverted snobbery is the kind of attitude that gets the unemployed a bad name. He tells us how hard up he is, but how he hasn't sold his sole to the devil by working for a capitalist Big Brother. We can all feel proud that he has kept to his ideals, even though he could

not afford to buy one of his own paintings. And yet, he does sell his paintings, and where does the money come from....?

Joe Nicholas is talking through the wrong orifice once again. He states that there are too many books published for anyone to read all of them, therefore he only reviews the good ones. These two facts taken together seem to indicate that he has some sort of second sight. He also says that it would not be possible to give small encapsulated reviews, or even plot summaries, of all the books received. If memory serves me correctly, this is exactly what Phil Stephensen-Payne did with PP, and that was a lot more popular than PI is. He even does it himself in his pocket reviews in the news section of Matrix. So come on Joe, why not just admit that you do PI the way you do just because you like doing it that way.

DAVID C HOLMES
TREASURER: BIRMINGHAM
SCIENCE FICTION FILM
SOCIETY & FILMCON 81
28 GROSVENOR AVENUE
STREETLY
WEST MIDLANDS

Would someone please tell Steve Green to get his facts right. Many of the facts he used in his Life on Mars column (Matrix 38) he copied from my own notes and yet he still manages to give a totally wrong picture.

First of all, the subscribing members to FILMCON will be receiving ALL of their money back. This will be done automatically and members will not need to formally request their refund. Any queries should be addressed to myself at the above address.

Secondly, we have the character assassination of Chris Smith. Whereas there may well be room for criticism because neither he nor Jean Frost handed in resignations during their period of long and serious illness, the extreme lengths to which it has gone are totally unjustified. The real culprit in this situation has been none other than Rog Peyton.

The problems that were encountered both by the Birmingham Science Fiction Film Society and by FILMCON, can be dated to the time when Mr Peyton once more took control of Brum Group. Like some avenging angel he descended on us as if his reputation and standing allowed him to do anything he liked. And the ironic thing is that - it does. People like Steve Green let him get away with it. I will not go into the sordid details, because there is no point. Rog has already won, and his safe state of apathy can return.

However, there is one thing I do object to. That is Steve Green's implication that FILMCON was somehow fraudulent. As you can see this is not the case. I would therefore like to see a half-page in Matrix 39 retracting this comment. You see, I too have a reputation, the difference is that mine is based on my honesty.

Benign as the MATRIX team is, Steve readily offers a retraction:

STEVEN J GREEN
11 FOX GREEN CRESCENT
BIRMINGHAM 27

Following the publication of my "Life on Mars" column in Matrix 38, I was threatened with a libel action by Chris Smith, former chairman of the Birmingham SF Film Society and Filmcon, and his fiancée Jean Frost, former Novacon 11 treasurer; the action was to concern itself with my comments on the demise of the BSFFS and Filmcon in that column.

Rather than spend time and money fighting such an action, Chris Smith has agreed to settle the matter out of court; his demands are:

1. That I retract any implication that the organisers of Filmcon in any way defrauded fans who paid for convention membership.
2. That I likewise retract any implication of low moral standards by describing Jean Frost as his "live-in girlfriend"; although he admits that they do live together, Chris Smith argues that she is his fiancée and not his girlfriend, a distinction which I failed to perceive when writing the column in dispute.
3. That I publish these retractions in letters both to Matrix and to the BSFFS newsletter, and that he receive copies of these letters.

I have met all three demands and as far as I am concerned the matter is now closed.

.... but - well affable TAFF candidate and erstwhile Matrix contributor Rog Peyton rise to Mr Holmes' accusation .. watch this space as the rivalry and infighting in the Brum Group reaches Labour Party proportions. Meanwhile, on the subject of the financial efficacy of conventions, Simon Bostock has decided to keep strange bedfellows:

SIMON BOSTOCK
18 GALLOWES INN CLOSE
ILKESTON
DERBYSHIRE DE7 4BW

Great to see that a magazine such as INTERZONE has been formed, but, as Chuck Connor has already said, how come the magazine is to be financed through profits from Yorcon II? A convention such as the Eastercons should not have profits (at least not substantial), unless used to see the next through, and if that is true, what is blowing into Channelcon's baloon? Sums of a couple of hundred pounds should be made public.

Apart from that query, I hope the prozine succeeds, a better alternative from the spasmodic Ad Astra, which for me has become (and probably was to start with) too pseudo-science for my liking. A zine with half its contents deliberately (mmm...) devoted to UFOs and things that go Bump in the night would, I once would have wagered, not appeal to the sf fans; I have been proved wrong, yet again. It still breathes, its only good point being that it pays well for fiction, having lined the wallets of such BNFs as Kevin Smith and Dave Langford.

To save embarrassment I won't print Simon's ill-thought-out sexist attack on Rochelle Dorey being elected to organise BSFA London Meetings.....the position going to..."Alan Dorey's wife".....but I will print honourable Dave Pringle's response to Chuck Connor's deceptive pronouncements on Yorcon II's affairs:

DAVID PRINGLE
21 THE VILLAGE STREET
LEEDS LS4 2PR

I'm writing in my capacity as Chairman of Yorcon II because of certain accusations made about the financial side of Yorcon II. We had hoped to publish details of Yorcon II's accounts with our proposals for dealing with what became an embarrassing surplus. However, we have been upstaged by someone who has illicitly obtained only a portion of the story and whose accusations would have dealt a serious blow to a new SF Magazine venture, had not fans chosen to ignore, largely, his views.

As you've no doubt heard by now, Yorcon II made a substantial "profit" - something in the region of £1,300 after all bills were settled. This came as a surprise to us. We had budgeted for a contingency fund, of course, but had not expected to emerge with more than a couple of hundred pounds surplus. The major reason for the large surplus was the very high number of registrations, many of which came late in the day. Yorcon I, in 1979, had about 500 registrations. We knew that Yorcon II was going to be bigger, and we estimated (conservatively, as it turned out) that we might have 600 registrations. In the event we had over 750. Another reason was that for Yorcon I a number of advertising and other bills remained unsettled; we did budget for some "bad debts", but this year virtually all accounts were settled.

We also saved considerable sums of money by borrowing and hiring at no cost a number of items which other conventions have previously paid for - there were Art Screens (from Leeds Poly); Video and Audio Equipment (from Leeds fans); a Colour Television (in exchange for an advert); and Computer Games (in exchange for publicity).

As I say, we emerged with an almost embarrassing surplus of slightly over £1,300. We settled certain extra expenses to our Guests of Honour (since they had been thoughtful enough not to incur

extra expenses at the hotel). We have also made donations of £25 each to the TAFF and GUFF funds. Our actions hardly speak of "profiteering" since we retained a registration rate of £6 (lower than the previous year's rates), and negotiated a reduction on beer prices and had room rates of £8.50 per person - lower than many, many conventions.

We decided as a committee that we would like to use the remainder of the money for a purpose which would benefit British science fiction. (We did consider passing some money on to Channelson, but decided against this on two grounds - (a) the precedent has lapsed; to the best of our knowledge no Eastercon since Mancon in 1976 has passed money on to its successor; and (b) we felt that they would have no need.)

Accordingly, we have voted the sum of £1,200 to INTERZONE, a new quarterly science fiction magazine to be run by a collective of eight people as a non-profit-making venture (four of the eight are on the Yorcon II Committee - myself, Graham James, Simon Ounsley and Alan Dorey - so naturally we are confident that the project is a very worthwhile one and we'll be in a position to see that the money is not misused). This donation will be of benefit to many fans since we have offered reduced subscription rates to BSFA members.

I trust that fans will consider our actions reasonable in the circumstances.

If you've seen Chuck Connor's thoughts (sic) in his fanzine, he fails to say where and how he obtained his views - why don't you make them public Chuck?

Now back to matters connected with SF....dare I? There was a good response to some of the Reviews printed recently on film; TV & Radio SF; Martyn Taylor's reviews seem to be well liked, but Phillip Nicholas didn't find favour with Nick Flynn (who wanted Phillip to "Dust off his brain") or John Hobson:

JOHN A HOBSON
328 UPLAND ROAD
EAST DULWICH
LONDON SE22 0DP

The Phillip Nicholas column on SF on BBC Radio suggests that Phillip has an alternative career as an eulogy writer if he honestly believes that the recent output of SF on BBC 4 was of "consistently high quality". I'm afraid I've come to bury, not to praise.

I only heard one of the Saturday Night plays, The Technicolour Dream Machine, a mediocre tale that was dramatised to resemble a cross between a yawning chasm and a space void. Director Glyn Dearman was obviously bored to death with the entire project and never ever bothered to ensure continuity of accents with the result that the lead actor's voice varied from transatlantic cockney to mid-west Virginian, the most unforgiveable sin on radio where the voice is paramount. The actors showed no commitment to a script that would be embarrassing to relate; suffice to say that an average episode of The Archers would show more originality, wit and engender more interest.

And as for Earthsearch! God help us, the Beeb are planning a sequel to one of the most inept and amateurish programmes it has inflicted on the public for years. No wonder SF has no audience if this is the sort of drivel that the BBC considers to be SF. Even the Star Wars series on Radio One, an endurance test if ever there was one, had more going for it than the Dearman productions.

I listen to Radio drama a lot, and the production values, scripting and acting in the BBC SF programmes are shoddy and below average. Radio is surely an ideal medium for SF (which never fully translates into the visual); let the listener imagine, think, rather than spoon feed him. Unfortunately if the BBC continue with the current approach, the Radio Times will be full of complaining letters and who could blame them. As for the excuse that the BBC could not obtain radio rights to many SF books, they didn't try very hard if the Technicolour etc is all they could obtain.

Second rate drama is second rate SF: Stop making excuses for it just because it is SF.

The problem, as I see it, is that much of the material on Film, Radio, and TV is daubed with an "SF" label because it includes hardware which we associate with "space", it is set on another planet, or it includes an obligatory spaceship. Witness the incoherent, mundane "Adventure" game on BBC2 which could equally have been set in a greenhouse as on the planet "Arg". Space hardware does not imply that the material is SF - more often than not it is, as John says, second-rate drama. There have been good examples of SF on the box; the first few 'Survivors' episodes [before it became a soap opera] and the brilliant 'Englishman's Castle'. I'm sure that in a few years' time when the whole Crossroads Team is burnt at the stake, it will be replaced by some equally putrid serial set in a motel on, say, the planet 'Tharg'.

Still, there's space enough for a few witty "shorts" and WAHFs:

JOHN BRUNNER (again): "I quote strictly sic from Gwynfor Jones in Matrix #37 (p. 28): 'Surely there can be no less mundane and boring an occupation than being chained to a typewriter all day!' With all possible respect to Mr Jones, he has to be wrong. I'm told there are ways of creating universes without the need to stick paper in a machine and sit wiggling your fingers at it. But for further information on this totally non-mundane and non-boring profession you'll have to inquire of an altogether higher authority than yours pompously (natch!) -"

JOHN FAIRWEATHER: "The 'Excalibur' review (Matrix 38 Oct/Nov '81) reminded me of a quote from NME where it describes knights in armour on horseback as a 'mediaeval equivalent of a Panzer division'."

NICK FLYNN (again): "Thank you for not printing my last letter - I got a bit carried away."

ROELOF GOUDRIAAN: "An offer for a FREE SCI/FI cat, an ad telling me LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE is 'spectacularly readable', a pamphlet stating same, penetrating me with the fact that this time at least Pan has managed to glue most of the pages between the covers in the right order, a pamphlet extolling INTERZONE, that fascinating magazine I was planning to subscribe to, in a marginally

mature tone - an admitted improvement on the earlier mentioned ads. And a standpoint by Colin Greenland, and an objective Day in the Life by Alan Dorey, extolling INTERZONE in yet more mature matter. Goshwow, jolly gleeful.

If I'd been told more than once how absolutely divine it would be to renew my membership, I might have been tempted to react the same. Such, whatever the worthy cause is, is the awe-inspiring might of over-exposure." ROELOF Goudriaan (again).

DAVE LANGFORD: "Have you heard of FART? No, no, not what you think. FART is the Fund for Aesthetic, Readable Typefaces, and you have been chosen as the next beneficiary. When the fund target is reached, a knock will come at your door, and in will burst a howling lynch mob which will respectfully smash your 'script' golfball into extremely tiny fragments. But even as the cries of anguish tremble on your lips, a FART spokesman will step forward, utter a brief but firm sentence of apology, and (amid tumultuous cheering) present you with some other golfball whose printing, while no less distinct from the main typeface of Matrix, will be infinitely less repulsive to the eye. (Light Italic for choice, if your machine is IBM compatible.)

The populace will then disperse in an orderly manner to their homes. Be warned."

DAVID LEWIS ("idiot fandom lives"); HUSSAIN R MOHAMMED; DAVID NORTH (another Ounsley knocker); ALEX STEWART;

MARTYN TAYLOR: "If I didn't know you were such a sweet, loveable soul at heart, I might have detected something akin to malice in the juxtaposition of my grubby little letter next to Joseph's handsome - and unnecessary - apology in the last Matrix. Storm in a bloody tea cup. There must be something in the air of Yorkshire that breeds them.

Anyway, there you go. It all helps the world go round, I suppose."

and PETER WALKER. Thanks to all of you.



FOR SALE: Complete run of Matrix (nos. 1-34 incl.) plus complete run of Paperback Parlour and three Tangents. £5 the lot, plus P & P which I estimate will be £2. Write with SAE to: Steve Bishop, 'The Wood', Pen-y-Mynydd, Nr. Chester, Clwyd.

WANTED: I missed Episode 26 (after 6 months, sigh...) I will even pay to dupe off some compassionate soul's high-bias stereo copy of the LOTR finale. Hussain Mohamed, Office tel: 01-583 0967. Hopefully...

WANTED: I will pay for anything by M. John Harrison - in particular: The Committed Men; By Gas Mask & Fire Hydrant; The Machine in Shaft Ten. Also: The Savoy Book New Wave

Sword and Sorcery (Savoy Anthology). Contact: Mel Anderson, 14 Melmount Gdns, Strabane, Co. Tyrone Northern Ireland.

WANTED: Anything to do with the TV series of a few years' back "Indian Scout" - Books, posters, stills, etc. To buy or loan for photocopying. Write first, before sending, to John Welsh, 1 Temple Gardens, Annieland, Glasgow.

WANTED: Submissions for sf fanzine, Supernova, the fourth issue of which is to be issued in April. Deadline, December 20th at the latest. All sent will be looked into intensely, and subjects can be anything from a convention report to an analysis of one author's works. MUST BE SF. Art also desired. - Simon Bostock, 18 Gallows Inn Close, Ilkeston, Derbyshire, DE7 4BW. Include SAE if poss.

BACK ISSUES: Of OMNI available; send S.A.E. to Box no. 1, c/o Matrix editorial address.

THE ART AND HARD GRAFT OF WRITING SCIENCE FICTION: John Brunner will be tutoring this course at Dillington College and Arts Centre. Dillington is a residential Adult College, set in Somerset Parkland. The course runs from 12-14 Feb 82 and fees are: Resident £34.60; non-resident £21.00 (slight reduction for students from Somerset/Wiltshire). The course is, obviously, for people seriously wishing to write and sell SF. Attendance is limited to 14. For details send SAE to Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 9DT or ring Ilminster 2427/3875 for information only.

Out Now...
Supernova #3
18 GALLOWES INN CLOSE, ILKESTON, DERBYS.

Letters & Articles by Steve Green, Harry Anderschak, Chuck Corner, Simon Bostock, Martyn Taylor, etc. Art by Alan Hunter.
Interview with D. Langford...

24 AS PAGES; THE USUAL 14p

REVIEWS

LES LOUPES DE LONDRES

by Martyn Taylor

It is a time of werewolves in sin city. Everywhere you turn there is talk of lycanthropy. Hardly a crossroads in the whole city is not under excavation (although the authorities issue other, incredible explanations). The gospel according to John Landis is preached even in Leicester Square. Fever has even reached the staid old BSFA, whose November meeting was told a tale of werewolves, albeit a tale with a difference. The magical animals of Angela Carter's tales are hardly at all horrific. They are sad, trapped creatures who will eat you with tenderness and despair, as well as relish.

The monthly meeting was held in 'The Distillers Arms' on Fulham Palace Road because the regular venue, 'The Rutland Hotel', resembled (to quote Boss Dorey) '... a rerun of Hiroshima. . . ' consequent to some over enthusiastic attempts at redecoration. It was something of a sneak preview for Channelcon with both Guests of Honour present; John Sladek behaving as all the best John Sladeks do - smiling a lot, speaking wise words, giving just the occasional flicker of that playfully malicious wit while generally leaving centre stage to Angela Carter. Until that night she had been something of an unknown quantity. Her books, of course, had revealed her to be a writer of exciting and individual quality but the knowledge concerning the lady herself was mostly restricted to the photo on the back of her books. This revealed her to be (to quote Mr Jagger) a ' . . . girl with the faraway eyes . . . '. Her reality turned out to be a little older, a little greyer of hair and a little more 'lived in', but even heavy spectacles could not disguise the fact that her eyes remained fixed upon some different perspective.

At first it was plain that she was suffering the after-effects of a long and tiring journey, but as she became involved with the story she had chosen to read all that evaporated. The story was 'The Company of Wolves', from the collection 'The Bloody Chamber' (which is published by King Penguin at £1.95 - ISBN 0 14 00.5404 9 - buy it!). This story demonstrates her almost unique talent for bringing the exotic into an intimate, fruitful relationship with the mundane. It pictures a world in which the werewolf is, if not exactly commonplace, an expected and accepted facet of life. It is in this interface between the everyday and the imaginary that can be found one of the major sources of excitement in her writing. A description of something as ordinary and well known (and potentially boring) as a kitchen can be interrupted by a sudden, sharp, brittle image of pure exoticism; the juxtaposition serving not only to reinforce the impact of the image but also to pour an other worldly light on the 'normality' surrounding it, bringing the acceptance of the perceived world into question. While the elegance, clarity and precision of her prose is obvious to even the most casual of readers Miss Carter's style of reading her work reveals additional depths of construction that might well be obscured by the more conventional virtues. She remarked that she enjoys reading her work aloud, and hearing her do so is an enjoyable experience. That style is as individual as the writing itself, and the staccato, almost stumbling, delivery was strange at first. Quickly, though, the subtle rhythms and melodic cadences of her words and images built up a structure that revealed more of the story than 'mere' reading had. The world she pictured was known to most of her audience because of its roots in the commonalities of European folklore. By the time she had finished putting flesh onto the bones of that rudimentary background the 'Mittel-Europ' ambience of her story was every bit as real as the cold and blustery world outside an upstairs room in a West London pub.

Questions followed the story, and it was plain that she had been asked most of them many times before - which did not prevent her giving interesting and informative answers. When asked whether she was happy to be drawn into the science fiction circle she replied that she is not a science fiction author (a fact self evident even under the most catholic of definitions) but that she found science fiction readers to be much less easily shocked by her stories than those who do not read science fiction. Whether this meant that fans had been right all along, and that we do know 'better' than the mundanes, we will never know, because no-one had the audacity to ask that question.

There can be no doubt that the meeting was a success with members coming from as far afield as Folkestone and Falkirk to attend. No doubt Angela Carter whetted appetites for Channelcon and the (hopefully) increased opportunity of getting to know this fascinating writer. Of late there have been questions as to the worth of these monthly meetings, as attendances declined and they degenerated towards becoming just another get together over a pint. The answer to those questions must be very clear. More of this, please, and there will be no questions.

An American Werewolf in London and Wolves

Reviewed by Hussain K Mohamed

An American Werewolf in London (AAWL - because my fingers tire easily) from John Landis (he of Animal House infamy) is a genre spoof, deliberately structured to be knowingly funny. Wolves, from a book by one Whitley Strieber, is a far more complex horror fantasy full of good intentions and interesting effects. The problem with both films is that neither have fully thought through the implications of the premise. It is one thing to aim for a black comedy as in AAWL but quite another to achieve it when every opportunity for a gag is pushed to extreme lengths. The plot of AAWL is simple - two young Americans hiking in Wales are attacked by a werewolf. One is killed but the other survives to be haunted by the spectre of his friend, to fall in love with his nurse, to turn into a werewolf when the moon is full, and ultimately to kill and be killed by a curiously ant-like society. The film is very funny, very tedious, pretty, a little chilling, and not particularly well made. The hero rushing naked through the zoo clutching some balloons is hilarious but the preceding shot of him hopping from bush to bush hands concealing his groin is coy and inept, a waste of good stock. Then again the near final tracking shot of the wolf-creature stalking past wrecked cars on Piccadilly is as good as I've seen in a long time. But! The earlier scene of the two hikers at night on a floodlit Welsh plain (?) is so badly done as to be laughable. It is not difficult to see that Landis was making what he thought would be a very entertaining though scary film. The idea of parodying the classic images of the horror-film (villagers in a pub suddenly falling into silence as the strangers enter; the terrible secret that must never be revealed to the outside world; the authorities who do not react until it is almost too late; etc) is fine but not when it degenerates into constant knowing leers as if to say - aren't we clever to take these time honoured clichés and transmute them so? we're making a horror film but we're far above taking it seriously; we are sophisticated people who know what it's all about... Even Soap understands that humour is just the other side of the coin from tragedy. The slyness of AAWL robs it of all subtlety and depth which is a great pity as the technical crew (Rick Baker for one) obviously worked very hard to deliver the goods. The transformation scene is remarkable, as is the mayhem in Piccadilly Circus. There was however only one scene that salvaged the film for me and that occurred when the hero and the nurse were on their way to see the 'sympathetic doctor' the day after the first killings in London. Having slaughtered and fed merrily under the full moon as a wolf the hero is in an ecstatic mood, unable to stand still for a moment, voluble, full of sexual energy and without any interest in why he is so. For a short while it was magical, suggestive of motives and beliefs well beyond the actual set boundaries of the film. The way was open but Landis for whatever reason chose not to go through. Pity.

Wolves on the other hand has ambition beyond its abilities. Ostensibly it concerns the efforts of the police to track down the perpetrators of a series of bizarre and grisly murders, who turn out to be a pack of 'superwolves' manhunting in the grim confines of New York's abandoned slums. But underneath is an allegory of cultural war, using as a metaphor the inability of white America to understand the Indian. Perhaps in an attempt not to appear too simplistic the director Michael Wadleigh has included two incidents to cover himself. When Dewey Wilson (the police investigator) is having the nature of the wolves explained to him by some Indian construction workers they suddenly tell him not to accept anything they say. 'It's all in the mind' apparently, which ties in neatly with the suggestion at the climax that the wolves may be supernatural in origin. Perhaps even a figment of the imagination? It is an unsatisfactory way of attributing psychological significance. Equally unsatisfactory is the explanation for the wolves presence in urban New York, that evolutionary pressure (man hunting, man breeding, man building) forced them 'underground' into the cities whilst their intelligences expanded out of all bounds. Where would you go if people with guns insisted on hunting you? Into the very places where you were most at risk or would you take to the hills sharpish? That real wolves stay quietly in the wilderness perhaps answers the question. The argument seems to be that the wolves have an alien motivation that cannot be explained in human terms, and that they also scavenge on the unhealthy parts of an organism, hence their victims in the film. It's not a terribly convincing argument but given that the wolves are not 'ordinary' it just about holds for the duration. The bitterness of the Indians in New York (working high up in the wind on bridges) was most convincing however and should be the subject of a separate film. Anyone who has read Dee Brown will see the parallels. The mechanical effects in the film are very good, mainly because they are so fast and so technical. Violence is shocking and terrible (remember the girl who was hit in the face with a broken bottle in The Long Goodbye?) and Wolves does not try to disguise the fact. Nor, in my opinion, does it glorify it. The visual effects on the other hand are difficult to assess. The idea I believe was to create a look that represented wolfen vision - something a little inside and a little outside the human optical frequency response, coupled

with an ability to 'see' emotions. Video enhanced tonal separations for the most part they need all your attention to sort out why they look like this and then like that and what it all means in terms of the highly developed wolfen senses. Nevertheless they are beautiful to look at not least because of the extended SteadiCam wolfen-point-of-view tracks at high speed across the slum wastelands. Albert Finney as Dewey Wilson is portly and taciturn but wonderfully human. Supposedly he is recovering from some great traumatic experience as the film opens so - it may after all be only his nightmares. The options are there. Wolfen is a sombre, suprisingly low-key film that seems much longer than it actually is. Philosophically it is all somewhat confused, trying to be too many things all at the same time, but it has a grave poetry which I found most compelling. And the wolves are outstandingly beautiful.

It's interesting that when I saw Wolfen - only a day after it opened here - there were only about fifteen people in the cinema. There have (as far as I know) been no press showings and precious little pre-publicity. Maybe if it had some sly humour the producers would have been more confident.

And for the future, I keep wondering whether Mr Scott is making a complete hash of Blade Runner or if we might just get something quite outstanding.

OUTLAND

Reviewed by Martyn Taylor

Director - Peter Hyams

In the titanium mines on Io everyone is happy. Production levels are way up. That makes the company, Con-Amalgamate, happy. Their satisfaction brings deep joy to Sheppard, the general manager of the mine. Even the miners are happy, because Sheppard pays them good bonuses. In fact even the company whores look happy. There is just one fly in the ointment. Every so often one of the miners gets too happy and tries to do something really terrific, like going to take the air on the 1/6th g zero atmosphere surface of Io without first putting on his space suit. Still the titanium is shipped out and no-one really bothers too much.

Then a new marshal arrives. Io is just another dead end hole for O'Neill, but it is one hole too many for his wife and child. She definitely knows a better hole; it is called Earth and she sets off to show little Paulie the sights. This puts O'Neill in a bleak frame of mind to begin with and, in order to take his mind off his domestic trouble, he decides to get to the bottom of the dead miner mystery. During his investigation O'Neill is informed by genial, golf playing Sheppard that he is a dead man. Sure enough the next shuttle brings a couple of shotgun toting goons who might have made Attila the Hun look for a side exit. Not O'Neill. A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do!

The parallels with 'High Noon' are obvious, but at least Hyams is 'borrowing' from a good film!

The film tastes of a Western. The mining camp is little more than a high-tech gold rush town inhabited by very much the same types who walked the streets of Dodge City. There is the shifty-eyed thief, the stolid working man, the venal lawman who wishes he could afford to go straight again, the alcoholically acerbic doctor, and the all-powerful town boss. Times do change, though. The thief is a drug pusher, the men work in standard issue pressure suits, the doctor is a woman and the town boss has a beer gut, a straggly beard and plays golf with the aid of a computer! This indicates the real strength of 'Outland'. The setting convinces. The miners exist in stacked high warrens where privacy is an imaginary state of mind. Nothing on the station is wasted, everything looks well used. Perhaps not every widget would perform the task it would be supposed to perform but Io looks like a deep space mining camp will look like, and if they don't then they damn well should!

If the setting is SF and the theme Western the action of the film is that of a fairly pedestrian thriller. O'Neill solves the problem fairly quickly and finds out the bad guys before the film is half over leaving the question of whether he will be able to zap the bad guys before they zap him. Seeing as O'Neill is played by Sean Connery there is never much doubt that the bad guys will be zapped, but in these days there is never any guarantee that the virtuous will be rewarded by living ever after all, let alone happily. Director Hyams parades all the plot and visual cliches he can muster and they do work. He manages to create an atmosphere of real tension and there is doubt as to the outcome right up until the credits roll.

'Outland' is not an ambitious film. It holds no great message, never suggests that there might even be a meaning to life let alone what it might be. It does not matter a bit because it succeeds in what it is trying to do. This is old-fashioned Randolph Scott hokum without the expletives deleted. The cast all play their parts adequately, which is about all that can be expected with a script that never aspires to the standards of the 'other' O'Neill (Eugene, dummy!). Connery is his customary easy, competent self while James B Sicking and Peter Boyle give satisfying performances as Montone, the bought cop, and Sheppard. Bethnal's own Steven Berkoff takes time off from rewriting the canon of English classic plays to give a suitably oily performance as the drug peddler.

Berkoff is involved in that area of the film which takes it out of the realms of those worth seeing if you find yourself outside the flopait on Friday night but otherwise wait until it comes on the box into that elite of films worth searching out now. 'Outland' is the first film in which a development of the camera body harness has been used. This removes cine cameras from the restrictions of the tracking shot. Hyams uses it wonderfully in a chase sequence through the miners' quarters that is easily the best chase since Steve McQueen did so much for the profits of the Ford Motor Co. in 'Bullit'. The claustrophobia of the setting, the fear of Berkoff, the anger of Connery and the general exhilaration of the sequence positively drips off the screen. This one sequence is filmed with such verve and style and it redeems an otherwise ordinary film and turns it into a 'must see'.

NOT REALLY THE SCI-FI IMAGE PART TWO

Michael Ashley

Way Back in Matrix 28 I wrote an article called The Sci-Fi Image, all about a TV series on books called 'A Better Read' in one programme of which series Bill Grundy sneered at science fiction and said Sci-Fi a lot. With a distinct 'ho hum' feeling I recently noted the arrival of a new series of 'A Better Read'. And again on Sunday 13th September at five past nine in the morning the newspaper said that this particular week the programme was looking at science fiction. Perhaps some of us never learn but on Sunday the 13th I was up by nine. Here we go again, I thought.

Well not quite. For one thing Bill Grundy had been replaced by someone called Tom Coyne and while Grundy was someone who always spoke his mind Coyne seems to be one of those bland TV interviewers who tend towards the sycophantic. For another, the programme was about what was termed "Science Fantasy", although as in the previous series there was a guest expert to define the genre and give a brief history of it. This guest expert was Michael Ashley (author of 'The History of the SF Magazine', amongst others, and no relation) who reckoned that whilst SF was based on rationality, Science Fantasy was founded on impossibilities; he then attempted some sort of potted history going from George Macdonald, William Morris, E R Eddison, and James Branch Cabell via Tolkien and Howard to the present fantasy scene where he stressed the dominance of women writers like Marion Zimmer Bradley, Katherine Kurtz and Anne McCaffrey (the fact that some of these names are linked with pure fantasy and what the difference between science fantasy and fantasy is anyway remained unexplained). Then Ashley, who has been an important figure in the British Fantasy Society, managed to squeeze in a plug for the BFS which included getting their address up on the screen (pity the BSFA couldn't have done something similar on Grundy's programme).

Next Coyne interviewed two of the female fantasy writers mentioned by Mike Ashley: Anne McCaffrey and Tanith Lee. It was here that the loss of Grundy (for all his bigotry) was really felt. Apart from pussyfooting around with trivia about dragons and etymology, Uncle Tom seemed reluctant to actually push his guests to talk in any depth about such fundamental matters as escapism and responsibility towards the reader, although both authoresses reeled off examples of people who believed in their fantasy worlds and wrote saying they needed further doses in the manner of a drug addict. Again over the question of literary style Coyne let Tanith Lee dodge the issue. Asked if she thought writing genre fiction imposed any boundaries on creativity, she was allowed to cop out with the glib reply that all writing is fantasy. Full stop.

The fault probably lies with the type of programme as much as the presenter. These magazine shows aren't meant to be critical analyses but are more in the manner of capsule reviews. As a guide to the interested newcomer they just about serve, but as a guide to, say, literary ability I feel that Coyne's closing words somehow obliquely summed things up: "Next week, we'll be looking at cookery books".