

MATRIX

34



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 D. WEST: Pages 29, 30(second cartoon), 33, 34, 35
 PHIL GREENWAY: Page 30(first cartoon)

At the time of writing this page, I'm still not sure what the contents will be: the GPO industrial action in London has delayed receipt of Alan Dorey's article (still time to include if Alan has a copy and Eve can type it up) and, at the last minute, Jim Barker apologises for not having been able to complete THE CAPTIVE - so much for my opening remarks in my editorial!

Anyway, now to the boring bits: The views expressed in MATRIX are not necessarily the Official views of THE BSFA, etc etc.

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Coming Real Soon Now: Andy Sawyer reviews the radio dramatisation of THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON: Geoff Boswell writes about life as a cowboy in Rochdale(honest).

As usual this has been printed by John Harvey on the BSFA press c/o 55 Blanchland Rd. Morden Surrey

Rather a lengthy issue this; but since there is no VECTOR or full issue of FOCUS, I hope you'll feel partly satisfied. In this issue there is an extract of Brian Stableford's talk on 'what use is SF': maybe you might consider this to be VECTOR material, but as MATRIX is the only complete publication in this mailing, I feel justified in its inclusion. Not only that, but it is a particularly thought-provoking article which I hope will merit a well-reasoned response from members.

As I have remarked in the letter-col, my editorial last time did seem to elicit a better response from some members on their inner-most thoughts about MATRIX; however, we are still far too concerned with trifling arguments about 'X' versus 'Y' and this or that article was superlative or crap. When one considers the scope of the genre which we are all deeply attached to, and the limitations and restrictions of The Media for the purposes of expression of people's views, I find it difficult to comprehend why there is little debate in these columns on the issues facing society at present and, more appropriately, in the future.

As I see it, with Governments increasingly unable to alleviate World recession, and more and more people & Third world countries chasing fewer and fewer resources, there is every prospect of escalation of the arms race, both to stimulate waning economies and to achieve dominance/control over other peoples. The West will not sit idle while Russia strives to increase its span of influence, neither will it allow its imperial possessions to throw off the shackles of those controlling countries.

Carter was elected, essentially, on a ticket of peace and open government, in the wake of Watergate and America's realisation of its atrocities in Vietnam; Reagan has been elected, a mere four years later on a ticket of returning America to its supposed No 1 position, principally in the wake of Iran. That can mean only one thing, a return to intervention in other countries' affairs with the prospect of War. Now, warnings of War are always meant to be an easy way of attracting response. I haven't discussed the question merely



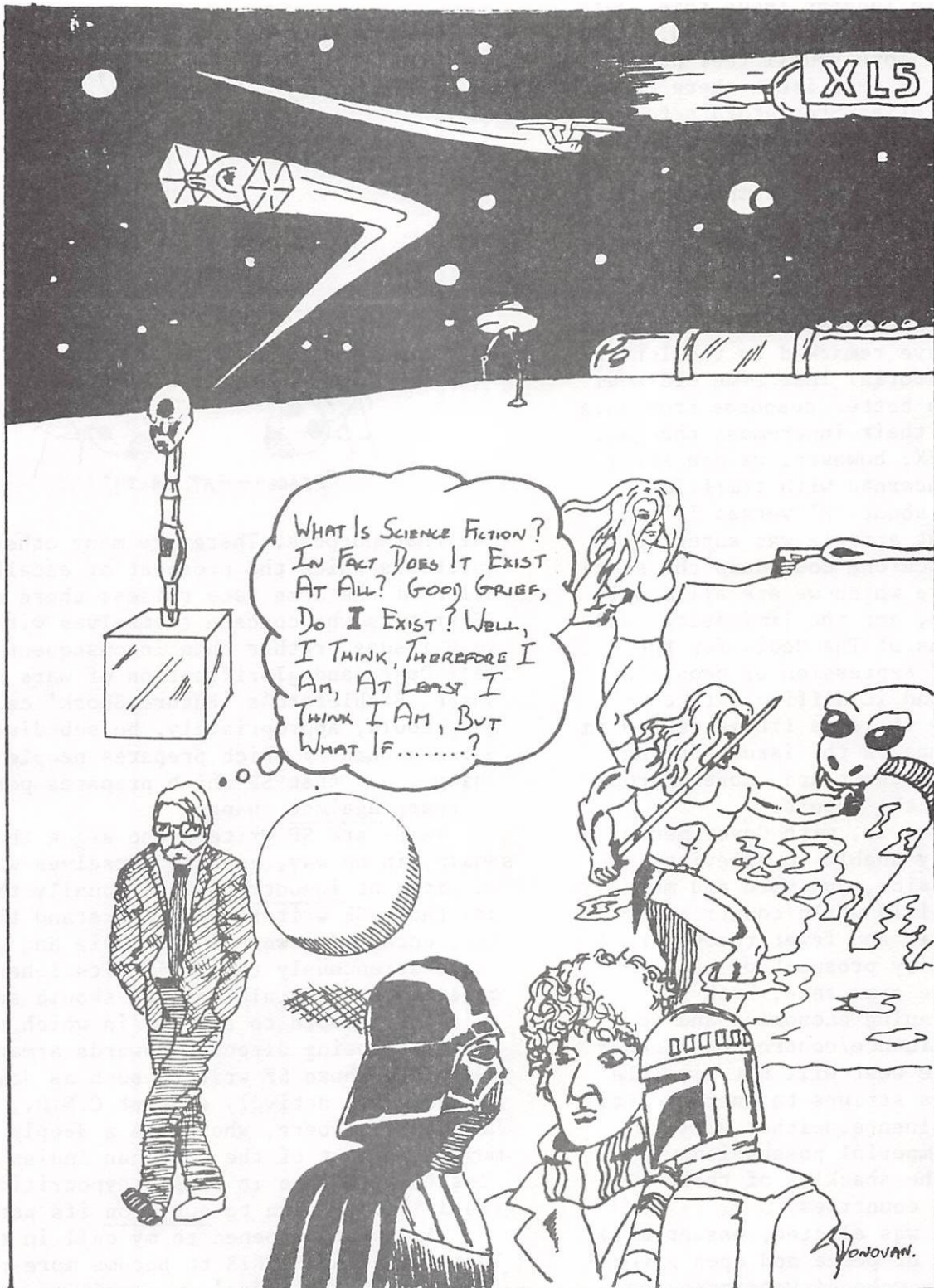
MIKE GOULD

for that purpose. There are many other questions which the prospect of escalation of the arms race raises: there are SF writers who concern themselves with such issues, rather than inconsequential Space Opera and glorification of wars in Space. Stableford's 'Future Shock' category could, appropriately, be sub-divided between that SF which prepares people for change, and that SF which prepares people to react against change.

There are SF writers who argue that we should, in no way, concern ourselves with attempts at indoctrination; equally there are those SF writers who understand the influence and power of the Media and who argue strenuously that, with its inherent capacity for speculation, SF should seek to alert people to the way in which their lives are being directed towards armageddon. I applaud those SF writers such as John Brunner, who actively support C.N.D., and Robert Silverberg, who wrote a deeply moving account of the American Indian peoples, long before it became hypocritically trendy for America to question its past.

And what happened to my call in the last issue for MATRIX to become more of a 'fannish' zine? There's no conflict, as I see it: a fannish zine doesn't mean that it is concerned with who-puked-up-over-whom-at-which-con; it means that the zine is open for discussion on any matter whatsoever.

But, maybe I have changed my views somewhat, and become far more concerned with the future. I've just returned from California, where, on 7 January, a daughter was born to Linda Strickler and myself. And nothing prompts one to think about the future, more than one's child.



The following is a summary of a talk given by Brian to the Leeds University Science Fiction Group in December. The talk made reference to a thesis which Brian is working on at present, and many of the arguments are developed in greater detail in that work.

I want to begin by quoting from various people who have offered what might be called 'manifestos' for Science Fiction. These are statements from the famous, the not-so-famous and the down-right obscure as to what Science Fiction is, or might be, good for. I shall then try to bring together some of the threads that emerge from these cases and obtain an elementary classification of the kind of arguments used; I shall then offer some brief comments.

Out of respect, and for no other reason than that it is a convenient place to start, I shall begin with Hugo Gernsback, who offered, in his first editorial for *Amazing Stories*, the

following explanation of what he was then calling Scientifiction was all about. Gernsback said,

"It must be remembered that we live in an entirely new world. Two hundred years ago, stories of this kind were not possible, Science, through its various branches of mechanics, electricity, astronomy etc., enters so intimately into all our lives today, and we are so much immersed in this science, that we have become rather prone to take new inventions and discoveries for granted. Our entire mode of living has changed with the present progress, and it is little wonder, therefore, that many fantastic situations - impossible 100 years ago - are brought about today. It is in these situations that the new romancers find their great inspiration.

Not only do these amazing tales make tremendously interesting reading - they are always instructive. They supply knowledge that we might not otherwise obtain - and they supply it in a very palatable form. For the best of these modern writers of scientifiction have the knack of imparting knowledge, and even inspiration, without once making us aware that we are being taught.

And not only that! Poe, Verne, Wells, Bellamy, and many others have proved themselves real prophets New inventions pictured for us in the scientifiction of today are not all impossible of realization tomorrow. Many great science stories destined to be of historical interest are still to be written, and Amazing Stories magazine will be the medium through which such stories will come to you. Posterity will point to them as having blazed a trail, not only in literature and fiction, but progress as well."

This ambitious statement of intent was, perhaps, not quite fulfilled by the early Amazing Stories which suffered somewhat from Gernsback's insistence that the merit of stories was primarily dependent on their containing nuggets of scientific information, sugar-coated with what he called "charming romance". To emphasise this point he would lovingly extract from his stories all the nuggets of Scientific information and gather them together into a "Science Quiz" whose answers were given in the form of page references to various stories. ... However, it was not long before other pulp publishers (who were one of the most imitative speices ever to walk the earth) decided that, since Science Fiction magazines seemed to be viable, they might as well have their own. The most enduring of the competitive magazines that were set up was Astounding Stories of Super-Science, originally edited by Harry Bates. He had no delusions of grandeur about the educational value of science fiction - what he wanted to offer was mainly costume drama with ray guns. Thus, when the time came for editors of Astounding to offer an apologia for what they were doing they had to couch it in slightly different terms. The following statement was issued by F. Orlin Tremaine, who was the man who took over Astounding after it first went bankrupt. He said, in the introduction to a book called 'Requiem for Astounding':-

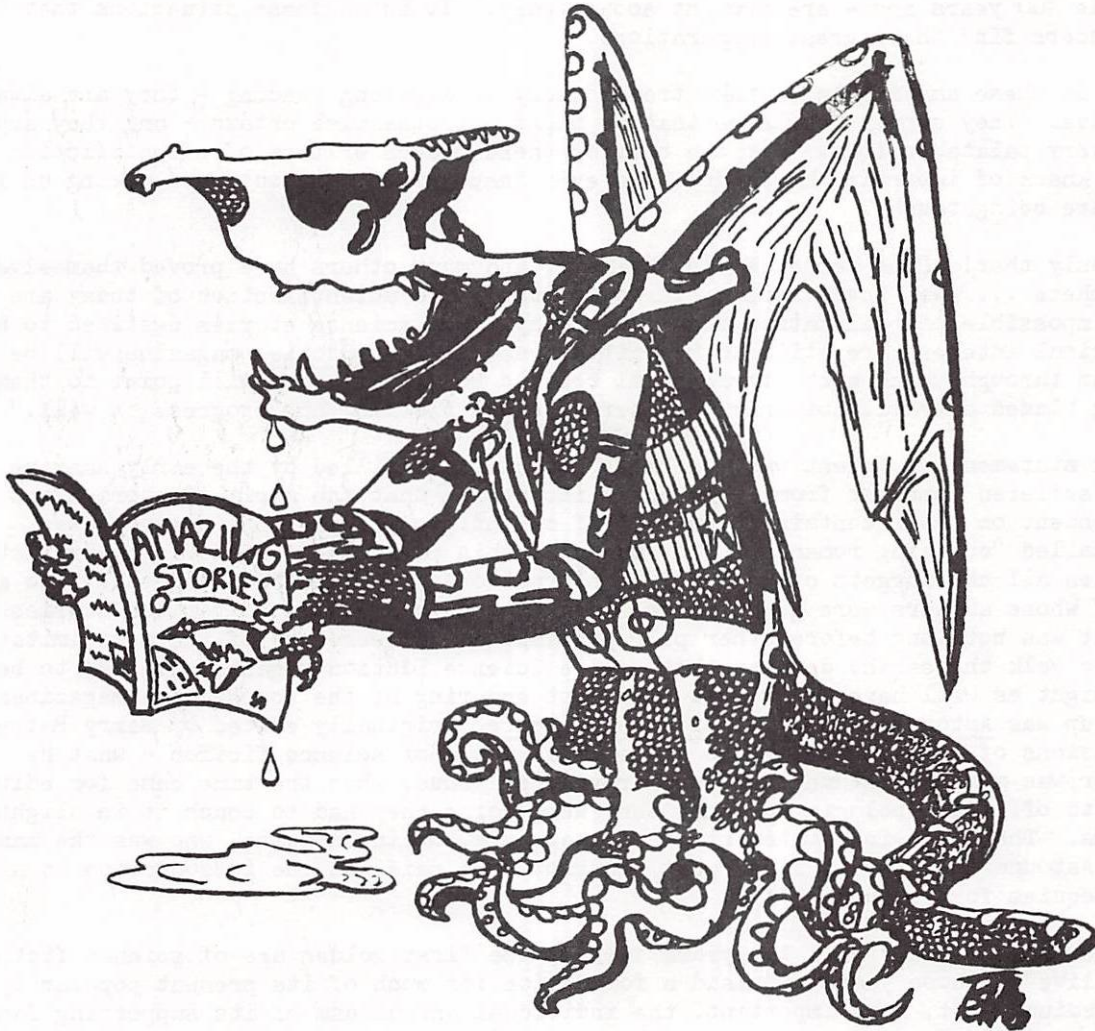
"I believe we can safely call the years 1933-37 the first golden age of science fiction. It came alive in those years and laid a foundation for much of its present popularity as a story medium. But, more important, the individual enthusiasm of its supporting fans has not lessened. I have had reason to be proud of the large number of young men whose interest has been maintained while they became substantial citizens, moving into the current of modern life without confusion because they knew what was coming in the scientific field.

Science fiction has enabled many of us, who have followed it through the years, to maintain an untroubled poise in what is too often referred to as a 'troubled world'. And as newer generations grow up within the circle of our fictional forecasts of things to come they learn to feel the serenity which comes from knowledge.

The mysterious doors of nature's secrets are being opened to use one after another in real life, and the population at large finds these revelations a little terrifying. But to those of us who rode jet spaceships to the planets in our stories many years ago, there is no surprise in the actuality of jet planes. To those of us who have lived through interplanetary wars, there is no particular reason for surprise at the H-bomb."

Here you will see a slightly different case being made out for the merits of science fiction.

While Gernsback thought that science fiction was primarily a didactic medium for teaching people science, Tremaine was making a case out on the basis that reading science fiction is in some way adaptive to the rapid pace of change that we all have to live with in today's world. (Versions of this argument have been put forward more recently by Marshall McLuhan and by Alvin Toffler. The later is particularly keen on science fiction as a kind of cushion against what he calls "Future Shock"; and suggests that all Universities ought to have courses in "The Future", where students would read science fiction stories and thus become immunized against Future Shock and its horrid effects.)



Tremaine eventually got tired of editing Astounding and hired an Assistant to do all the work. This Assistant, who eventually became editor, was John W Campbell Junr, who had strong ideas of his own about the merits of science fiction. He thought that science fiction could be used as a medium for thought-experiments in Science. He believed that there should be a close relationship between science fiction as a medium of speculative thought and Science itself. This view is, perhaps, best exemplified in the title he chose for Astounding when, after many many years, he finally got the opportunity to retitile it, and called it Analog, on the basis that science fiction is "analogous" to science fiction. Campbell observed that:

"Scientific methodology involves the proposition that a well-constructed theory will not only explain every known phenomenon but will also predict new and undiscovered phenomena. Science fiction tries to do much the same - and write up, in story form, what the results look like when applied not only to machines, but to human society as well."

He was very keen, of course, on the notion of science fiction writers extrapolating from known

data, and also on exposing the effects of innovation on society. ... :-

"Any extrapolation whatsoever is, necessarily, based on the implied but unstated proposition, 'If things go on as they have been' The proposition is, right now, open to serious question...whenever science becomes engineering, it meets legislation made by man.

The science fiction writer is, therefore, faced with a simply stated problem. Taking off from the solid ground of known laboratory science, sighting along the background of past experience, he launches into the future.

But he may come down in a never-will-be future, because somebody harnessed telepathy, and threw civilization off on an entirely unexpected track. Or because the Supreme Court...has eliminated the institution of patents. Or because a new social theory has decided that no scientific advance should be permitted for 250 years.

Nevertheless, science fiction can not only be fun, but an extremely valuable experience."

Campbell was clearly hedging his bets - in dissenting from Gernsback's view that science fiction would, and must be, prophetic he pointed out that extrapolation has to work from premises that might easily be falsified. The fact that most of the premises would turn out to be false, however, did not mean - for Campbell - that it was in any way devalued as an intellectual exercise.

The book from which this quote comes (Groff Conklin's The Best of SF) is an odd book in some ways because it carries two different introductions which flatly contradict one another; Conklin himself put forward a very different case on behalf of science fiction, he said:-

"It is in its embroideries that the largest merit of science fiction resides...any branch of writing, no matter how incredible, which explores regions of man's imagination heretofore virgin to his interest is worth reading. If only because the stories included in this book are incredible, they may be said to have value...the fact that here are ideas and dreams which man has never before thought or imagined in the written history of the world gives these tales a certain premanence."

Thus, while Campbell was arguing that science fiction was good stuff because it was possible, Conklin was arguing that it was good stuff because it was impossible. It seems that the first man who used the term science fiction was a minor Scottish Poet named William Wilson. He is particularly interesting because he invented the idea of science fiction before anyone had actually written any science fiction. Wilson wrote the following in 1851, in a book called "A Little Earnest Book on a Great Old Subject".

"Those Sciences which appear to us to be most attractive to the imagination, and to present the widest and best revealed fields of investigation, and to contain - even to a surface-inspection of their wonders, their beauties and their combinations - the most Poetry, are the studies of the Philosophical Naturalist, the Botanist, the Geologist, the Astronomer, and the Chemist. The Study and extraction of Poetry from these sciences is like reading mighty books of Life, Beauty and Divinity. But we can only obtain in the end, even if we spend a life in abstract Scientific studies 'a cloud-reflection of the vast Unseen'.

With what an advance of interest over that of ordinary men must the Man of Science wander in the Fields and the Woods, and traverse over mountains, seas and deserts. The Trees and the Flowers have tongues for him, and the Rivers and the Streams have a History. - He knows that the smallest insect, as well as the mightiest animal, has a direct parentage. He knows where the Zoophytes merge into one another; he knows not only the form and colour of a Flower but the combinations that produce its symmetry and lovely hue; and he knows the laws by which the white sunbeam is thrown back from its surface in coloured rays. He knows, O wondrous fact! 'that the dew-drop which glistens on the Flower, that the tear which trembles on the eyelid, holds locked in its transparent cells an amount of electric fire equal to that which is discharged during a storm from a thunder-cloud'. Here is Poetry! He knows that minute insects have

built whole islands of coral reefs up into light from the low deep bed of the vast ocean. Here is Poetry! He knows that neither Matter nor Mind ever die; and that if the fixed laws of Attraction and Repulsion were for one instant disturbed, the whole physical Creation would fall back that moment into Chaos, and that the ponderous Globe itself would then and there vanish."

Wilson's argument in favour of science fiction was, basically, that science fiction could promote a new way of looking at the world, could offer people a new perspective in which the common everyday things that men see would be revealed in an entirely new light.

Another early manifesto was put forward by a writer named Edgar Fawcett, who wrote a number of science fiction novels, now very difficult to find. He was very keen on the idea that there was a need for a new species of literature, which he called "Realistic Romance". His manifesto went as follows:-

"Perhaps I am only a poor pioneer...in the direction of trying to write the modern wonder-tale. It seems to me that this will never die till what we once called the Supernatural and now (so many of us!) call the Unknowable, dies as well. Mankind loves the marvellous; but his intelligence now rejects, in great measure, the marvellous unallied with sanity of presentment. We may grant that final causes are still dark as of old, but we will not accept mere myth and fable clad in the guise of truth. Romance, pushed back from the grooves of exploitation in which it once so easily moved, seeks new paths, and persists in finding them. It must find them, if at all, among those dim regions which the torch of science has not yet bathed in full beams of discovery. Its visions and spectres and mysteries must there or nowhere abide...

To make our romances acceptable with the world of modern readers, we must clothe them in rationalistic raiment...I should name them 'realistic romances' - stories where the astonishing and the peculiar are blent with the possible and accountable. They may be as wonderful as you will, but they must not touch on the mere flimsiness of miracle. They can be excessively improbable, but their improbability must be based upon scientific fact, and not upon fantastic, emotional, and purely imaginative groundwork."

Fawcett regarded his realistic romances as a way of saving imaginative fiction in general. He thought that because of the advance of rationalism, stories based on myth, ghost stories, etc were no longer acceptable to modern readers. He thought that what was necessary was the development of a new kind of romance, where improbabilities would be based on imaginary scientific inventions of one kind or another. His own realistic romances use a rather peculiar strategy of "double" justification: not only do the improbabilities that they contain arise from new inventions in Science, but every story is also equipped with a "frame narrative" which suggests that it is possible that the entire story might be a hallucination of the central character.

I would now like to talk about one or two of the 'apologists' from outside the genre who tried to redeem science fiction from its poor reputation in the literary community. These were people possessed of some prestige, and their views were of some importance in helping science fiction to gain a measure of respectability. One was C S Lewis, who worked out an elaborate categorisation of different kinds of science fiction and the different justifications which might be applied to them. There were such kinds which he did not like and did not try to justify but there were two sub-species of science fiction that he did approve of heartily. One of these was what he called "eschatological science fiction", and he said of this kind:

"Work of this kind gives expressions to thoughts and emotions which I think it good that we should sometimes entertain. It is sobering and cathartic to remember, now and then, our collective smallness, our apparent isolation, the apparent indifference of nature, the slow, biological, geological, and astronomical processes which may, in the long run, make many of our hopes (possibly some of our fears) ridiculous."

His favourite kind of science fiction though, was of the kind he, himself, wrote; and he says of this:

"The last sub-species of science fiction represents simply an imaginative impulse as

old as the human race working under the special conditions of our own time. It is not difficult to see why those who wish to visit strange regions in search of such beauty, awe, or terror as the actual world does not supply have increasingly been driven to other planets or other stars. It is the result of increasing geographical knowledge....

The defence and analysis of this kind are... no different from those of fantastic or mythopoeic literature in general.....

If good novels are comments on life, good stories of this sort (which are very much rarer) are actual additions to life; they give, like certain rare dreams, sensations we never had before, and enlarge our conception of the range of possible experience."

Here, we find echoes both of Fawcett's arguments in favour of Realistic Romance, and of Conklin's argument that science fiction is good because it is fantastic and responds to some kind of innate hunger for the marvellous. The last person I would like to refer to is one of the American Academics who discovered science fiction in the mid-sixties. Robert Scholes, who produced the most sensible of these commentaries, despite feeling compelled to resume the "Structural Fabulation" said:

"We are now so aware of the way that our lives are part of a patterned universe that we are free to speculate as never before. Where anything may be true - sometime, someplace - there can be no heresy. And where the patterns of the cosmos itself guide our thoughts so powerfully, so beautifully, we have nothing to fear but our own lack of courage. There are fields of force around us that even our finest instruments of thought and perception are only beginning to detect. The job of fiction is to play in these fields. And in the past few decades fiction has begun to do just this, to dream new dreams, confident that there is no gate of ivory, only a gate of horn, and that all dreams are true.....

We require a fiction which satisfies our cognitive and sublimative needs together, just as we want food which tastes good and provides some nourishment. We need suspense with intellectual consequences, in which questions are raised as well as solved, and in which our minds are expanded even while focused on the complications of a fictional plot.

These may be described as our general requirements - needs which have existed as long as man has been sufficiently civilised to respond to a form that combines sublimation and cognition. But we also have to consider here the special requirements of our own age - our need for fictions which provide a sublimation relevant to the specific conditions of being, in which we find ourselves. The most satisfying fictional response to these needs takes the form of what may be called structural fabulation. In works of structural fabulation the tradition of speculative fiction is modified by an awareness of the nature of the universe as a system of systems, a structure of structures, and the insights of the past century of science are accepted as fictional points of departure. Yet structural fabulation is neither scientific in its methods nor a substitute for actual science. It is a fictional exploration of human situations made perceptible by the implications of recent science. Its favourite themes involve the impact of developments or revelations derived from the human or the physical sciences upon the people who must live with those revelations or developments."

It is interesting that in the early part of this quote, Scholes points out something which is not frequently observed - that science fiction has an advantage over all other forms of traditional fantasy, in that it actually permits far more to happen - it permits one to imagine anything at all, whereas all the other forms of fantasy are actually rather restrictive in the vocabulary of ideas that they permit authors to use. Although Scholes does recruit arguments similar to those used by Campbell and Tremaine his main argument is that it promotes an awareness of the kind of universe which modern science requires us to believe in.

Those are only a sample of views but they are adequate to allow us to extract what are, I think, five general lines of argument that are commonly used as apologies for science fiction. These are not definitions of what science fiction is, or statements of why

people write science fiction, but rather attempts to explain what science fiction actually does. The five main threads of argument are:

1. that science fiction functions as a didactic medium - either by conveying straightforward information or, more generally, by inspiring people to take an interest in science.
2. that science fiction can act as a "cushion" against Future Shock - that in some way it inculcates in its readers a preparedness for change.
3. that science fiction might be a medium of "thought experiment" - that it might anticipate possible socio-technical problems and suggests hypothetical solutions.
4. that science fiction may be an aid to a new way of seeing the world - that it enables its readers to put things in a different perspective.
5. that science fiction is simply one more way of feeding some kind of innate need for mystery and that its virtues as science fiction are simply that, by using the vocabulary of science, it makes the marvellous more plausible.

It seems to me that the first argument, that science fiction is a didactic medium, certainly can't be taken seriously if it refers to the communication of actual information. However, the second part of that argument - that science fiction inspires an interest in science - looks much more plausible. There is some evidence that Rocket Scientists, for instance, became Rocket Scientists because they read science fiction in their youth and were inspired by the notion of spaceships travelling to the here and beyond.

The second line of argument, that science fiction acts as a cushion against future shock seems to me to be the weakest of them all. I cannot think of any evidence that favours this case. One point which seems to suggest that this is wrong is the innate conservatism of the Science Fiction audience with respect to science fiction itself. Science fiction fans, especially those who have remained loyal to the genre for a long time, are notoriously opposed to innovation within science fiction and would like to return to the "good old days". If reading science fiction over a long period of time doesn't even prepare one for change in science fiction, it is difficult to argue that it prepares one for changes in the world at large.

As to science fiction being a medium of thought experiment, this again appears a weak argument; the powers of prediction of science fiction writers are poor. Many recent inventions have been anticipated in science fiction, but most of these hits have been scored on the basis that if you predict everything, some of it is bound to be proved correct. In terms of the effects of innovations on society, the predictive powers of science fiction have been negligible, except in the rather curious way in that certain science fiction stories have themselves helped to create the cultural response to certain inventions.

The fourth line of argument, that science fiction can be an aid to a new way of seeing and puts the world in a different perspective, seems to me to be convincing, a priori, although it is difficult to establish this by experiment or empirical evidence.

This fifth argument, that science fiction serves an age old need for mystery, depends entirely on whether there is such a psychological need but, again, it appears to me to be a plausible line of argument. This would help to explain why there should be such an insistent interest, especially in contemporary science fiction, in metaphysics.

One of the interesting things, however, about these various lines of argument is that only one of them points to a function which makes science fiction an alternative resource to other kinds of fiction. The first four lines of argument cannot be applied to forms of literature other than science fiction - if there are other communicative media which serve these hypothetical purposes, they are popular science magazines and other media providing information about technology and science; they are not other kinds of fiction.

Therefore, if any one of those four arguments is true, this establishes a good argument that if one wants to study science fiction, figure out what it is all about, examine its merits, etc, one cannot do so simply from the basis of literary studies, using only the tools that are traditionally used by literary critics. It one wants to examine the Science Fiction phenomenon one has to step outside that straight-jacket and use other ways of assessing its significance and its merits. This argument then becomes my apologia for my own interest in science fiction - not simply as a literary genre, but as a social phenomenon.



Sitting here in what passes for my study (the corner of my room with a large cushion on the floor and an anglepoise lamp beside it) I am looking through that large and venerable tome, the LIFE ON MARS file, and I see that it's some time since I talked about the Leeds group. Well, well, what with the Yorcon 2 convention coming up in a couple of months (don't forget to sign up for this splendid event - details, no doubt, will be found elsewhere in this issue) and my obvious local prejudices, it seems an appropriate time to give us a mention. (Thank you Simon). That's quite all right.

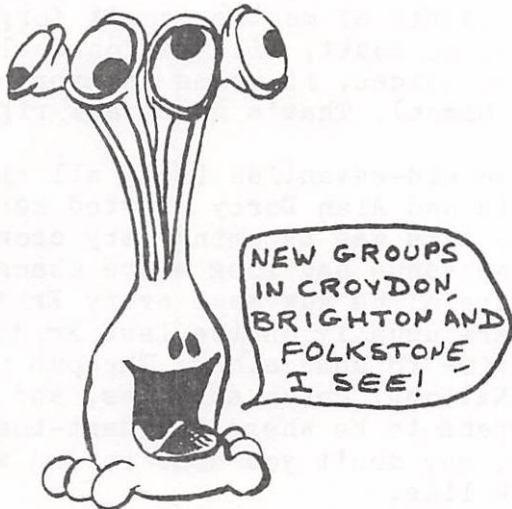
The group dates back to the misty past of the mid-seventies (well all right, about 1977) when Mike Dickinson, Dave Pringle and Alan Dorey started meeting together in a pub called the Victoria. Since this was becoming very crowded, and in any case didn't have a dart-board, the venue had long since changed to the good old West Riding, where rather more of us now meet every Friday night from about 8pm. The busiest meetings are usually on the last Friday of each month, so that's probably the best time to come along. The pub is in Wellington Street, near the railway and National coach stations, and we meet in the room at the back which also happens to be where the dart-board is. So all you BSFA members who live nearby, why don't you drop in and see us some time? We'd like to see what you look like.

The beer at the West Riding is hand-pulled Tetley's and though I have tasted better it usually serves to lubricate our minds and tongues into feverish activity, which most often results in a query as to whose round is it next. The sercon (i.e. non-darts-playing) wing of the group is represented by such luminaries as Dave Pringle, editor of FOUNDATION and the world's leading authority on decade-lapse, and Tom Shippey, who's SF critic for THE GUARDIAN and knows a lot about most things from Leeds United to the latest SF novels to wet afternoons in *Scottie*, and is prone to make comparisons between them. Come to think of it, Tom plays darts as well, which just goes to illustrate the dangers of categorisation.

The rest of us are similarly versatile: well-known editor Graham James is an expert on Bob Dylan and Space Invaders; famous artist John Collick on spaghetti westerns and the American Civil War; while Paul Oldroyd, besides being Novacon 11 chairman, knows all about video recording and fending off alcoholics with broken bottles. D West.... (I can hardly write an article on the Leeds group without mentioning West - in fact I find it difficult to write any article at all without mentioning him, such are his mysterious powers) D West is an expert on darts and dominoes and how to win money at them, and newcomers will most likely be challenged to a game. This can be an expensive form of entertainment but it's worthwhile in that it keeps Don in beer and fags so that he's able to devote the rest of his time to valuable artistic activities, such as denouncing the BSFA etc.

I could go on with these potted biographies, or whatever they are, but the West Riding seems to have a cast of thousands (though thankfully they never turn up all at the same time) so I can't talk about everybody. But I'm sometimes surprised - though, I must admit, not all that frequently, by how many people manage to get to Leeds. Last meeting, for instance, we had a visit from Phil Stephenson-Payne, whom most BSFA members will remember as the original editor of PAPERBACK PARLOUR, forerunner of the present INFERNO. Phil is globe-trotting these days and called in on his way back from eighteen months working in South Africa. By the time you read this, he'll have been off to Holland and back and be ready to set out for a long stay in Washington, USA (the DC one, I think). You see what a spell of BSFA work can do for your career?

Along with Phil came former VECTOR editor Mike Dickinson, who himself has just returned from a holiday in Spain. Mike was looking fit and well, giving lie to the popular misconception that he's been dead for six months. He has, however, suffered a recent set-back - he's been forced to abandon the novel based on Romany mythology he was planning. Mike says "the stuff is too squalid. It's obsessed with death and menstruation". It still sounds like a commercial proposition to me though. I think I'll take up the idea.



Also putting in an appearance after a long spell of absence was former BLACK HOLE co-editor John Nixon. (We seemed to be going through a retired editor phase that evening). John came hot-foot from Brighton with the news that the new group there, which I mentioned last issue, is now holding regular monthly meetings. (Notice the subtle way I shift almost subliminally from Leeds to Brighton). Since we're on the subject, I'll mention again that the contact address at Brighton is David Penn, 23 Queens Approach, Uckfield, Sussex, TN22 1RU. Good luck to David & Co.

Another new group I've heard about is the Croydon Science Fiction and Fantasy Club, which meets on the last Friday of the month at the Tavern In The Town in Croydon and on the second Friday of the month at the Railway Tavern in Purley.

This is a small informal group which "would be more ambitious if more members were forthcoming", so why not get in touch if you live in the area? John Hunt is the secretary and can be contacted at 39 Stoneyfield Rd, Coulsdon, Surrey. Tel. Downland 55262. Thanks for writing, John.

Since I've given some fairly extensive coverage of life in Leeds, I'm glad to be able to provide a bit of balance with some news from across the Pennines. Thanks to Bernard Earp for writing in with tidings of the Bolton group's Christmas party. "We either wrote or phoned up every BSFA member in our immediate area" says Bernard, "though not everyone who agreed to come did turn up. Where were you, you deadbeats? You missed a smasheroo! ((Language note - 'smasheroo' is Boltonese for a good party - S.O.)). It was held at the home of the lovely Carol Goodridge and of course we had Steve Higgins ((Steev's apparently changed his name to Steve but otherwise remains the same, as you'll shortly hear)) and the writer Steve Gallagher."

Much to Bernard's relief, Steve Gallagher had not read his review of Gallagher's SATURN 3 novelisation in PERIHELION and so he's promised to come to future Bolton group meetings. DR WHO fans will probably recognise Steve as the writer of the WARRIOR'S GATE story, which was transmitted in January. At the time of writing, the WARRIOR'S GATE story is three-quarters of the way through its run, but already looks like being the best adventure in the present series. It's a bit confusing, but then so were most of the others.

All in all, the Bolton party sounds to have been pretty good, what with Higgins being traditionally sick and plenty of booze available (the two perhaps not entirely unconnected). Five gallons of home-made beer were supplemented by some elderberry wine, which according to Bernard "outclasses the Glaswegian 'lanny' as an anti-personnel weapon, though giving far more warning".

I'm not sure what Bernard means by that, but I'm waiting eagerly for someone from Glasgow to write in and refute it. Any takers?

Speaking of not understanding things, Ian Goffin of Sheffield kindly wrote in to explain the Dave Langford letter I printed last issue. The trouble is he only explained the bit I understood and ignored the bit I didn't. John Fairey was rather more helpful: "If you are still suffering from Dave Lanford's version of Nominalism, I recommend the entry in the Dictionary Of Philosophy - it is simple and clear. (The entry on 'Nominalism' that is, not 'Dave Langford')."

Er, thanks John. Actually, John had a perfectly sensible reason for writing, namely (sic) to announce the launch of another south-coast group, this time in Folkstone-

"Due to the recent influx of fans to South Kent (increasing the known population by 60%) ambitious plans have been laid to hold a regular monthly gathering in Folkstone. In the spirit of awesome radicalism so prevalent in fandom, this is to be held in a pub. Specifically, 'The Jolly Fisherman', starting 7-30 to 8-00 on the second Friday of each month. The pub is conveniently near the bus station - convenient, that is, since I can give directions from this local landmark.

"Adjacent to the bus station is a four-lane road - turn left along this road and continue straight ahead for approximately 400m. The pub is then easily spotted by looking down the side street on the left, where a welcoming sign saying 'The Jolly Fisherman' will be seen. If, by any chance, difficulties are experienced, approach a local resident and ask - it is quite well known. However, do not be put off by the response "Oh! You mean where the queers hang out!" This is not referring to the fans, but to another minority group entirely.

"Having located the pub, the problem then arises of identifying us. As this problem only arises once, we recommend asking the barman.

"If anybody has a query (or is just feeling lazy) they should write to, not me but, Paul Kincaid, at 17 Radnor Bridge Rd, Folkstone, Kent.

"Which is enough of boring details. Now comes the much more interesting matter of a name. Because the present group has a high proportion of philosophy graduates i.e. Paul and myself (which occasionally depresses Geoff Rippington, the third member of this enormous S. Kent gathering) we immediately avoided the pitfall of Dave Langford's and ignored all nominalist suggestions. Indeed we decided on a Wittgensteinian approach of accepting the word or phrase that a consensus agreed meant the group/meeting.

Unfortunately no consensus has yet been reached, although I still like the name so relevant to the origins of the meetings: 'We are no longer depleting Paul Kincaid's booze store'."

Here we go again. I'd be inclined to join in and call the Leeds group 'D West's pockets are getting so heavy he can hardly stand up' but I wouldn't want to mention West again. Even so, if any of you would like to re-title your group by the application of nominalist, wittgensteinian, or indeed any other school of philosophy, you're cautiously invited to write in and tell me about it.

I'm not sure what kind of outlook on life persuaded Geoff Boswell of the West Midlands Group to change the name of his news-sheet to SLACKENCLOST for Christmas and to start calling himself Gebby Brenwergal but I'm afraid that he did. SLACKENCLOST was written in a - ahem - facetious style: "President Elect Dorey has announced his engagement to either Rochelle Reynolds or Graham James". It claimed to come from the BSFA and cost "50p if you live in Leeds".

Although I appreciate the regional name-check, it did come as a relief to find that Geoff has since reverted to being sensible again, so we won't have to sue after all. Apparently the group held their first meeting in December and plan to meet regularly on the last Friday of each month, for the time being at the George & Dragon, Ryder St, Wordsley. They're planning a book pool and a tape library and as well as the news-sheet they produce a fanzine called EVENSTAR. Geoff can be contacted at 59 Sorrel Walk, Stour View, Brierley Hill, DY5 2QG.

More news from the Midlands comes from Steven J. Green -

"The Solihull group got off to an amazingly terrific start.... when no less (or more) than six SF fans turned up at the Golden Lion pub. Things began to deteriorate: someone mentioned SF and before long everyone joined in. As soon as I've found a way to stop SF fans talking about SF, I'll hold another meeting. It'll be on the second Friday of each month at a Solihull pub - despite the free dose of botulism with the corned beef cob. I'm looking elsewhere for a venue."

Steve can be contacted at 11 Fox Green Crescent, Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 7SD. Thanks for the info.

And now.... it's time for some more news from the Midlands (aren't these links superb?). Thanks to Chris Morgan for sending me the latest Birmingham SF Group news-sheet, complete with news, reviews, a quiz, and a piece on artist Peter Jones. Forthcoming events include talks by Ken Slater, billed as "the well known SF fan and book-seller" and Dr Jack Cohen, "an expert on alien biology", plus Garry Kilworth, Andrew Stephenson and Hugh Walters. There's also a special event planned to celebrate the group's tenth anniversary in July.

The Brum group meets on the third Friday of each month at a pub called the Ivy Bush in Edgbaston. Full details from Margaret Thorpe, 36 Twyford Rd, Ward End, Birmingham 8.

An interesting piece of news is that the Brun group are also starting informal meetings, to be held on the first Tuesday of each month in Willie's Wine Bar (!), next to the Andromeda Bookshop in Summer Row from about 6pm.

And now, a piece of news from somewhere other than the Midlands (that was a sort of nihilist link), ~~2x66x~~ Steve Higgins writes to say that I got it wrong

last time when I called him the founding father of the Imperial College SF Group:

"The ICSF Soc were not too pleased to have been attributed to an upstart first year. In fact, so I'm told, it has existed in some form for many years now. Indeed, Chris Priest is said to have given a talk there once to which only the president and his girl friend turned up. According to the official blurb, the group was founded by H. G. Wells through a time-warp (H. G. was a distinguished graduate of IC, as were members of Queen, though I'm told they were a little later). The present exec have dragged it out of the doldrums since last year and shown three films so far, with two more to come this term (including SANTA CLAUS CONQUERS THE MARTIANS, no less!) and, along with sundry ordinary members, doubled the attendance at a number of recent Bosfa meetings. There is also a society fanzine, which, despite its extreme similarity to a one-time independant sercon fanzine, is paid for entirely by them, so it must be theirs. This is the fanzine of which Chris Priest (that man again) said "I've already got one of these" and which has garnered accolades from the far corners of the world.



Steve continues with a blatant advert for the said fanzine, which I've omitted as a protest against such crass commercialism. What he doesn't say is anything about where or when, if at all, the group meets, so if you're interested in that or even a fanzine called PERIHELION which costs £2 subs a year for four issues (!) - perhaps £2 for four issues real soon now might more honest, but we shall see - and is quite good if you can live with the typing, reproduction, etc, then you'd best write to Steev (agh! I'll never kick the habit) at 412 Mining House, 55 Evelyn Gdns, LONDON SW7.

Thanks for the info, Steve. By the way, Steve is looking for beer mats, so it's best to include a few with every enquiry.

And that's about it for this issue. Next time, it'll be the club listing for 1981. Response has been good so far, so thanks to all of you who've written in. I should have entries for just about all the groups who've been featured in this column since I took it over, but if you're in doubt, or think the info I have may be out of date or innaccurate (like my spelling), please get in touch as soon as possible. Thanks for your co-operation!

The issue after next, of course, it'll be back to the normal column again, so if you've got something interesting to say, either about or emanating from your group, then don't hesitate to write in and say it. Or if you're trying to find or to start a group in your area, I'll try to help with that. Don't forget the address - 13A Cardigan Rd, Headingley, LEEDS LS6 3AE. And don't forget the postcode, like I have for the past eighteen months!

::: COMPETITION ::: COMPETITION ::: COMPETITION :::

Competition M33: 'Awful Lines from Science Fiction' Dave Langford reports

The turnout this time was slightly reduced by the rival attractions of great drunkenness and gluttony over Xmas, I suppose—it would be just unthinkable to assume that BSFA members don't read lots of SF or that they don't notice the awful lines with which it's bespattered. Let's peep into the files: Richard Bean sent three clerihews which are not only insufficiently awful but also a late entry for competition M32—oops. Kevin Smith reminded me of certain delights from Badger Books, eg. R.L.Fanthorpe's *Negative Minus*...

'He slept the sleep of the tired, he slept the sleep of the weary, he slept the sleep of the exhausted, for he was tired, and weary and exhausted.'

(In the same book RLF refers to 'the great 20th century science fiction writers, Zeigfreid, Muller and H.G.Wells'—no prizes for guessing whose pseudonyms the first two were.) Martin Hoare, who can't have a prize because he isn't a member of the BSFA, transcribed part of the original *Flash Gordon* radio series (1934):

'In the meantime down in the torture chambers Flash and his friends have been put to work stoking the great atom furnaces of the Hawkmen. Driven nearly mad by the terrible heat and the anxiety of wondering what is happening to Dale, Flash is all for rebelling. He throws a shovel full of flaming radium at a guard. The Captain of the Guard reaches for a switch which will electrocute Flash by passing a current through a wire attached to his leg irons...'

Roelof Goudriaan, the cad, actually cites a contemporary British author:

'And the informat had stated that it could not be detected by any instruments thus far developed by human science: however, so many other fields, forces, space-continua, rings, sets, conditions and plena were already known that it must certainly lie within the limits set by n aleph* and the pi-to-the-e space of the go-board. Over six thousand seven hundred spaces were suspected which could occupy those parameters.' (*The Dramaturges of Yan* by John Brunner)

Dave Power may have been deceived by an author whose tongue was in his cheek: 'Suddenly Dave understood! Doctor Dread was being attacked by a giant radish.' (*What Entropy Means To Me* by George Alec Effinger) And Rob Freeth offered several examples of clumsiness like 'Off to the left a gaggle of unimpressive buildings jutted irregularly' (*A Maze of Death* by Phil Dick) and 'A tower at a corner of the walls to his left thrust up like the hand of a traffic cop signaling for a stop.' (*Stations of the Nightmare #3* by Philip José Farmer) Try setting the last two to music. After long intellectual struggle I've decided the winner must be Michael Ashley, a fine connoisseur of the letter G, who warms up with 'Cirocco... groped for a towel and wiped the greenish goop away.' (*Titan* by John Varley) His winning suggestion, for which I gather he shares credit with his brother Graham, is:

'The gripping grab of its gravity waves tugged at our guts.' (*Gateway* by Fred Pohl) Congratulations, Michael—when the book token arrives I'll leave you and your brother to fight it out for possession...

Competition M34: set by (oh, you'd guessed?) Dave Langford

For a change, a competition where you don't have to be 'creative' (this creativity business having been deplored by Steve Ince in the M33 letter column). I ran a version of this competition in my own fanzine *Twill-Ddu*, but disguised it so well that only Roz Kaveney attempted it. Roz is hereby debarred from entering, on pain of not being bought a drink at the next One Tun meeting... The competition, then. Below are ten titles of works which have one massive peculiarity in common. When you've worked out what the peculiarity is, remembering that it concerns the works rather than their titles, you'll be in a position to score one point for each correct identification of an author. Highest number of points wins the usual vast prize... to make it more difficult I've included one non-SF and one borderline item. Ho ho.

The titles: (1) *Blood and Loot*; (2) *Concerning Spring*; (3) *The Higher Common Sense*; (4) *The Holy Metamorphosis*; (5) *The Inexorability of the Specious*; (6) *Negations*; (7) *Problems of Creativeness*; (8) *Profiles in String*; (9) *Tentative Restoration of the Lost Books of Elephantis*; (10) *This Bees Speech*.

Deadline: one week after the copy date on the inside front cover. Address for entries: 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG2 7PW, UK.

ALL-OUT SUPER-POWER CONFRONTATION

FLASH GORDON (dir. Mike Hodges, 114 mins) and
HAWK THE SLAYER (dir. Terry Marcel, 93 mins),

reviewed by JOSEPH NICHOLAS

reviews

Christmas comes but once a year and, to judge by the surfeit of family entertainment spectaculars released to coincide with the holiday season, film-makers are perhaps more aware of it than anyone. There's a certain air of desperation about it all, each movie being hyped so much that (apart from wondering whether they can really live up to their publicity) you feel that the intent is less to entertain than to make the profits which will carry them through the fallow periods of the year....

Certainly, the omens for Flash Gordon were not good. Its producer, after all, was Dino de Laurentiis (who gave us the sex-in-space fiasco Barbarella and the multi-megabuck flop remake of King Kong) and the reportedly huge amounts of money being spent on it could, in view of his previous track record, only be devoted to the acquisition of expensive sets, costumes and special effects rather than a decent script or competent actors. And when the posters began appearing on the walls of London Underground stations depicting a wedding-cake-like flying city and a couple of brass-brassiered courtesans all apparently stolen from the cover of an old Planet Stories, my vague suspicions that it would be less of an SF film than a high camp comic strip romp began to feel justified.... but they did advertise the presence in its cast of that fine and much underrated actor Max von Sydow.

And it must be said straightaway that von Sydow makes an absolutely splendid Emperor Ming: - with his shaven head, arched eyebrows, flowing robes and swaggering demeanour, he dominates the screen, seeming at times the very incarnation of evil and easily carrying off the top acting honours. Not, mind you, that he has much competition in this regard - Sam Jones as Flash is merely required to stand around looking handsome and muscular (not necessarily in that order); Brian Blessed as Vultan, leader of the Hawkmen, does a boisterously exaggerated version of the Augustus Ceasar role he played in the BBC's I, Claudius series a few years ago, Melody Anderson as Dale Arden and Ornella Muti as Princess Aura show lots of breast and thigh and look like plastic sex objects, Timothy Dalton as Prince Barin, Leader of the woodmen of Arboris, has lots of dash but no depth, Chiam Topol as Professor Zarkov does a tongue-in-cheek portrayal of the stereotyped mad scientist of a thousand comic-books, and Peter Wyngarde as Klytus is simply unrecognisable behind his mask.

So much for the cast - what about the story? Well, it's the usual old nonsense about Ming the Merciless being out to destroy the Earth. (When asked why, he eschews complicated rationalisations and replies, simply, with a casual "Why not?"). Earth itself doesn't know what's happening to it, while Flash, Dale and Zarkov go charging out into space to investigate and, after much pell-mell, hither-thither, intrigue-ridden plotting, eventually unite all the different inhabitants of Mongo against him. With mere seconds to spare the Earth is, of course saved). Inevitably, some sequences and scenic backdrops are better realised than others; the special effects work in particular is poor, with the matte lines around the spaceships and the flying hawkmen being clearly visible. Probably the best parts of the film are those set in Ming's palace, populated with the denizens of a hundred space operas and drenched with a camp lushness that stuns the eye and overrides the credibility -- a lushness whose origins are specifically acknowledged by the in-joke attached to Princess Aura's first appearance, when she walks on pulling a dwarf on a leash behind her and murmuring "Come along, Fellini, come along".

That in-joke demonstrates just what's wrong with Flash Gordon. The decision not

to update the original comic strip (but to simply transfer it unchanged to the screen, idiot science, winged spaceships, plaster-of-paris mountains, Ruritanian costumes and all) was in some senses entirely correct. The producers knew that it would forfeit all its original verve and glamour if it were updated, particularly in the light of such "modern" high-tech space fantasies as Star Wars and Alien. Thus they had to make a comedy of it all, consciously exaggerating into outright parody its every single aspect. The result is to rob it of any artistic or creative heart which it might have had. It has turned into a hollow, facile shell whose slickness of execution cannot cover for its essential lack of substance and, indeed, utter vacuity. You might cheer the heroes, boo and hiss the villains, laugh at the jokes and tense with anticipation during the set-piece battles, but this is all subjective of-the-moment response- it's when you stop and think about it afterwards that the bitter realisation of being well and truly coned finally sets in.

The conning of the reader or viewer into a "willing suspension of disbelief" is of course just the thing an SF novel or movie requires for its success, but this can really work only when the writer or film-maker has (as George Lucas did in Star Wars) invested some part of himself in the process. Somewhere inside him he should "believe" in the truth or worth of his own creation but such isn't the case with Flash Gordon. De Laurentiis and his team are emotionally and intellectually distanced from their creation, knowing that they're purveying no more than a line of goods and laughing up their sleeves at it all the while. As a result the film is a conspicuous failure: it knows it's junk, and thus negates itself.

Perhaps, more importantly, it's going to set SF films back by several decades. In terms of the literature, Star Wars was pretty ancient, but it was, at least, an immeasurable advance over the stuff that had gone before. However, since it first burst upon the world, all SF films since have constituted a steady retreat from the base-camp it established. They have drearily rehashed the clinched themes and plots of the even more distant past. Occasionally, particularly in regard to Alien, this has been in an outwardly more sophisticated form. Flash Gordon, not only because it rehashes the antiquated and basically infantile comic strip, but also because of its jolly knockabout laff-a-minute approach, represents the ultimate regression to date. Once again, it reduces SF to the level of the juvenile escapist trash the wider public mind has for long regarded it as being. And if it is a success (as I have a horrible fear it will be) - it's unlikely that any other film-maker will ever wish to try anything more sophisticated or adult for many years to come.

Hawk The Slayer isn't particularly sophisticated or adult, but for various reasons it's a better and more worthwhile movie than Flash Gordon. It's the story of two brothers, Hawk the good (played rather woodenly by newcomer John Terry) and Voltan the bad (played by Jack Palance in his usual over-the-top ultra-ham manner) who pit themselves against each other because of their mutual hate. Voltan has killed both their father and Hawk's betrothed, Eliane, while Hawk has the Mindsword, a magical broadsword with "the last elfin mindstone" set in its hilt. Voltan feels this should rightfully have been his. They are also the unwitting pawns of opposed magical powers beyond their comprehension! they are brought into final conflict by the abduction of the Abbess of Caddonbury. For her safe return, Voltan wants a ransom of 2000 pieces of gold (which Hawk, in a Robin Hood-like gesture, steals from the slavers on the River Shale) and will quite cheerfully send in his entire army to slaughter the nuns if he doesn't get it. (The said army being already engaged in the wholesale pillaging and looting of the surrounding villages.) To stand against him, Hawk has but five companions: the elfin Bowman Crow, the dwarf Baldin, the giant Gort (played rather incapably by "Carry on" actor Bernard Bresslaw, who brings off the "typical" giant's dimwittedness and love of food but can't do much else to flesh out his character) and Ranulph, a villager caught in one of Voltan's raids who escapes with a severed hand to vow eternal vengeance.

And if you hadn't guessed, HAWK THE SLAYER is a fantasy in the (supposedly) classical sense and the producer, Harry Robertson, is well aware of what he and his team were doing with it. Interviewed on location in Barry Norman's FILM 80 TV series, he described how they'd first conceived of it as a straight medieval romance but, as the script developed, they had decided to spice it up with a little magic.... and eventually doing it as an outright sword-and-sorcery story. This casual, off-hand remark would appear to indicate that they are pretty familiar with such fiction and is evident throughout the film, as it gallops along with the minimum of explanations, in the same manner, I suppose, as STAR WARS. Never mind the how, why or where - things just are. Only the least possible details of its world are sketched in, in the interests of keeping its plot moving and its action flowing. Incidentally, the 'world' is called the 'land', which suggests that Robertson has read Donaldson as well as Howard and Tolkien.

Where the film does fall down is in its obvious lack of funding. While the exterior scenes set in the thickly wooded countryside of the Land have a nicely grimy air of authenticity to them, and the special effects required for the blind witch's speels are perfectly adequate, many other scenes (in particular, the obvious glass painting used for the church's main fortress) show a distinct lack of production values and the script as a whole is fairly plodding and banal. There are a number of 'well-known' actors in walk-on parts; a cowardly Roy Kinnear as an inn-keeper, and Harry Andrews & Patrick Magee who, despite having only a dozen lines between them, are otherwise pretty good in their respective roles as the head of the church and the leader of a bunch of weird Druid-like priests who worship a spirit living in the lake.

The faults which arise because of the lack of funding is, I suspect, not because things have been deliberately skimped, but because, bar its two leads, it is an entirely British Film: we all know just what a parlous state the British film industry is currently in. It remains a source of wonder to me that British financiers are prepared to ignore obviously talented directors like Alan Parker and Ridley Scott and pour their money into such third-rate turkeys as RAISE THE TITANIC rather than underwrite genuine all-British ventures. If this was done, it would prevent our studios from being exploited as a source of cheap labour and technical expertise for American productions. HAWK THE SLAYER is a good example of the inevitable result of these policies, for with a little more money behind it, I feel sure that all its problems could have been overcome. However, money wouldn't have rectified the mistake made in filming the swordfights, which are either ludicrously speeded up (so that they seem like an excerpt from a production-line Kung-Fu film) or ludicrously slowed down, so that the audience has time to fall asleep between every cut and thrust.

Fantasy fans will probably hate HAWK THE SLAYER for very much the same reasons as they loathed Ralph Bakshi's THE LORD OF THE RINGS: because it doesn't do what they want it to or cleave true to their image of what sword-and-sorcery should be. I wouldn't say that one is necessarily better than the other but, returning to my earlier comment, it is better than FLASH GORDON; whereas that fails for the reasons already cited, HAWK THE SLAYER is basically a much more honest film. For one thing, it knows the limitations of its subject matter and is content to work within them without trying to make everything seem either more portentous or more comedic than it either has to be, or already is: it refuses to overtly prod its audience into a reaction and instead, allows them to respond naturally, of their own accord, to the events of its story. For another, and more importantly, its makers, such as George Lucas, have invested something of themselves in their creation, having some 'belief' in its truth and worth; and thus, unlike FLASH GORDON, it has a heart.

It's not a great film, but it is an entertainingly escapist and imaginative one, deserving of a better press than it has had - and with both it and FLASH GORDON seeming, by their endings, to promise sequels, I know which one I'll be most looking forward to.



FILM & TV NEWS: SIMON BOSTOCK
FROM THE BOOK WORLD: JOSEPH NICHOLAS
OTHER NEWS ITEMS: JOSEPH NICHOLAS
& THE EDITOR

FILM & TV NEWS: Yet more news for the ones amongst you who prefer films and TV to books. Slightly more, I think, due to the receipt of countless scores of publications at Christmas. This time the main sources for news are STARLOG and its sister magazine FANGORIA. Right, on with it then.

A new film entitled Outland should be released some time this year. No spaceships or futuristic weaponry, so I'm told. Sean Connery is to play the leading role and John Mollo who performed some of the Empire Strikes Back designs will be doing a similar job. Apparently it's to be one of the many to be churned out from the ALAN LADD Company. Gosh!

The proposed lawsuit by FOX on Battlestar Galactica for copying from Star Wars was won by Universal. Pity, 'cause in my opinion it did infringe. The lawsuit had been going for two years.

Bursts of news on the new Heavy Metal film currently in production. The film should be released in Summer 1981; it's being financed, chiefly, by Canada; over 200,000 drawings are to be done for it, with 60-odd people for 20 minutes of footage; Rich Corben, ace artist, is employed, though if it takes as long as I anticipate it does for him to do one drawing, he'll be sketching forever! and most of the voices for the stories will be done by unknowns, though maybe with Donald Pleasance as an exception. Doubtless there'll be countless tie-ins to cash-in (as usual).

Superman '11 will be out at Easter, with the man of steel himself battling the infamous Phantom Zone criminals who accidentally land on earth and attempt to dominate the world. Amazingly, Britain is to get the film before the Americans get hold of it in June.

No Jaws in For Your Eyes Only, yet another Bond film! Filming is due to start in October - 1981, I assume.

Star Wars sequel 2, The Revenge of the Jedi, will start off where the last film ended and then, after resolving many mysteries, will go back to even before the first film, with Luke a baby, I bet! And Darth as Luke's father, eh....?

The Hitch-Hikers Guide to the Galaxy is now thrilling the TV audiences; it's script has kept fairly faithfully to that of the Radio.

Bits Und Bobs Department: Gene Roddenberry is to make a film entitled Don't Stay After Dark; Aliens arrive on Earth is the US title for the Italian film Contamination, and is somewhat similar in concept, I think, to Alien; Ridley Scott could be attempting to adapt Philip K Dick's Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep into a film; the producers of Sheena, Queen of the Jungle are hoping for a mid-1982 release on a budget of over ten million dollars; and The Dragonslayer is a new project from Disney!

FROM THE BOOK WORLD: Thomas Doherty Associates, the firm for which James Baen has gone to work as editor, has announced its first few titles: Andre Norton's Forerunner and Fred Saberhagen's Water of Thought for May 1981; Poul Anderson's Psychotechnic League and Keith Laumer's Breaking Earth for June 1981; Poul Anderson's New America for July 1981; although these dates are still tentative. Both the Anderson titles are reworkings of older material and the Laumer is a re-working of the earlier Catastrophe Planet. Other manuscripts in the inventory: Harry Harrison's Planet of No Return, Anderson's and Gordon R Dickson's Hoka! , Roger Zelazny's and Saberhagen's Colls, Steve Barnes' and Larry Niven's The Dream Park Builders, John Lovejoy's Star Hunters, Gordon R Dickson's and Ben Bova's Gremlins Go Home!, Anderson's Guardians of Time, Keith Laumer's The House in November and Farmer's The Cache from Outer Space. That's an awful lot of reprints.....

Alexis Gilliland, noted fan artist, has sold a 70,000 word novel, The Revolution from Rosinonte, to Del Rey for March 1981 publication.

Jerry Pournelle and Larry Niven have delivered their latest collaboration, Oaths of Fealty, to pocket Books; no publication date has yet been set.

John Shirley has given up SF for mainstream, where the money, critical rewards and artistic freedoms are much greater, and sold two novels, The Brigade and Cellars (sic, although I think it must be a typo) to Avon for 1981 publication. He's also the lead singer of a small-time rock band called FirstTongue who've released a single on Park Avenue Records and have been signed by the man who discovered Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen. Who said that Sf and rock music didn't mix? Only Robert Heinlein and Jerry Pournelle and all them other hard-liners....

Keith Laumer has sold a novel, Star Colony, to St Martin's Press, the people who gave us Joe Haldeman and this really terrific prose from Garry Bennett's The Star Solitors, a novel which (certainly after reading the following) you will be pleased to learn has been rejected up and down the land:

"The ship had severed its field lines with the station and was now
"easing away from the station on the repulsive power of its invis-
"ible pellor rays, the complement of a tractor beam. As soon as
"sufficient clearance was obtained, the ergon impeller would be
"activated, accelerating the ship to luxon speed."

Stanton A Coblentz, a dinosaur left over from the days of Hugo Gernsback, and author of such resonantly-titled tomes as After 12,000 Years and Into Plutonian Depths, has completed his first SF novel in several decades. The title is, as yet, unknown - no publisher has been approached and nothing else is known about it at all. Golly. That was your statutory shot of utterly forgettable non-news for this issue...

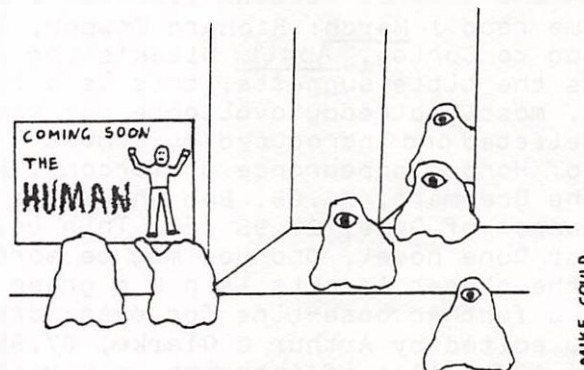
Harlan Ellison was approached to re-write the screenplay Frank Herbert had turned in for the projected movie of Dune - and refused. If nothing else this snippet reveals just how much money the producers feel they have to throw around; they paid Herbert no less than \$1 million for writing the screenplay in the first place.

There's an all-out bidding war going on for the movie rights to Herbert's non-SF novel, Soul Catcher, about a renegade Indian who leaves his reservation in search of better things (I think); on one side is Robert Redford, and on the other, Jane Fonda, her brother Peter, Marlon Brando and the Confederation of American Indian Nations.

The film rights for Farmer's 'Riverworld' series have been sold to Metro-media Producers Corporation, which I believe is the TV production arm of MGM; certainly, my news source adds that it will be done for TV (presumably as a mini-series, although I can't see how it could all be compressed into the scope of one film): no production dates have been set. In another shock/horror film sale, Philip K Dick's The Man in the High Castle has been picked up by producer Charles Swartz and director Stephanie Rotham for filming in the autumn of 1981. There's no indication of how they will cope with the subtle reality shifts of Dick's novel, and I suspect that neither they, nor Berkley, know how they'll manage it either. Only one thing can be certain - they'll ruin it.

Dick will have a couple of new novels out in 1981: Volis from Bantam and Volis Regained (presumably a sequel) from Pocket (which makes one wonder why the one publisher hasn't taken them both): exact publication dates are unknown.

From Daw Books (scheduled last month) is Jack Vance's The Book of Dreams, the fifth and final volume in the 'Demon Princes' sequence. It better be good, or we'll feel terribly let-down by it ... Daw will also be publishing a collection of four novelettes, Dust of Far Suns, at the same time.



Jacqueline Litchenberg fans should hold themselves in readiness for the gifts that she will bestow upon them in 1981: not one, but two Sime novels! First Chunnel is due from Playboy Press in January and Chunnel's Destiny from Doubleday sometime later in the year, both co-authored with one Jean Lorrh. Can her legions of star-struck fans stand the waiting, I ask myself. Well, I can't speak for Kev Smith, but....

FORTHCOMING BOOKS:

PAN: Alfred Bester's Golem 100 is due out on 13 February '81 for the price of £1.75, and the publicity material wrongly announces it as "A Pan Original in the UK" - a statement which, if repeated on the copyright page, is unlikely to please Sidgwick & Jackson who have actually published a UK hardback edition (see short review in Vector 100).

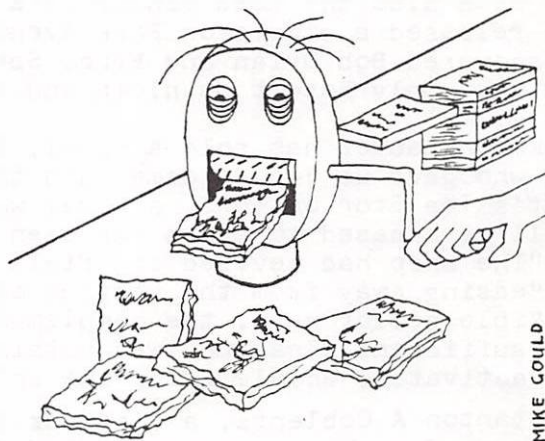
CORGI: William F Nolan's Logan's Search is due in late January, price £1: it's the second sequel to the earlier Logan's Run, co-authored with George Clayton Johnson, who can hardly be blamed for not wanting to put his name to this lifeless cashing-in.

GOLLANCZ: Feb: Ian Watson & Michael, Under Heaven's Bridge, £6.95 (Ed. The blurb describes it as "The first science fiction novel collaboration spanning the Atlantic", but there again, it also hails the book as "...a novel that is a landmark in the science fiction field...", so I suppose we can't believe everything which we read.) March: Richard Cowper, A Dream of Kinship, £5.95 - a sequel to The Road to Corloy. April: Disch's (or rather Delany's) Fundamental Disch, £6.95 (Ed. As the title suggests, this is a collection of short stories etc. - eighteen in all, mostly already available but some hard to obtain now. The collection has been selected and introduced by Samuel R Delany, and co-incides nicely with Disch's Guest of Honour appearance at Yorcon). Frederick Pohl, The Cool War, £5.95. James Gunn The Dreamers, £6.95. Bob Shaw, The Ceres Solution, £6.50. May: Frank Herbert, God-Emporor of Dune, £6.95 (Ed. This is, apparently set three thousand years from the last Dune novel, and you may be sorry to hear that the sand worms have now gone; the planet Arrakis is now a green and hospitable world, which no doubt will ensure a further base-line for even more supplies of 'Dunalia'.) July: Sf Hall of Fame 4, edited by Arthur C Clarke, £7.95 - Nebula-winning short fiction from 1966 to 1971. Also of interest is Christopher Evans' The Making of the Micro, Feb, £5.95: a history of calculating machines from the counting frame to computer.

SHERE: Despite my statement to such effect last time, Dave Langford's War in 2080 would now appear to have been put back again; no date is available. (Ed. It would have been a smart move by Sphere to use April as a publication date for the paperback version, to coincide with Langford's FGoH appearance at Yorcon, but maybe they're not quite as smart as Gollancz?) A book which will appear in February is Richard Monaco's The Groll War, the sequel to his earlier Parsival (which was published in late 1979 by Futura), price unknown. In March they'll be publishing a reprint of Roger Zelazny's Nine Princes in Amber, originally published by Corgi in 1973 or thereabouts.

ALLISON & BUSBY: Promise to enliven 1981 with Chandler's When the Dream Dies and The Rim of Space - part of the 'Rim World' series published in the early sixties.

GRANADA: Good news for hard-up fans, Pete Nicholls' The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction (Hugo winner) will finally be published in paperback on 14 May; the price, £4.95, seems pretty reasonable. The same date sees Doris Lessing's Shikasta



the first in her new novel cycle, CANOPUS IN ARGOS: ARCHIVES. For April, Ursula LeGuin's MALAFRENA appears, with no SF tag, at £1.50, plus Science Fantasy novels including Fritz Leiber's A SPECTRE IS HAUNTING TEXAS, £1.25. Also promised are several Moorcock reprints, including THE OAK AND THE RAM and other blood and lust sagas.....

ROBERT HALE: March: Jenny Randles, UFO STUDY: A HANDBOOK FOR ENTHUSIASTS, £7.95; Is there a cover-up by Governments? What is the link between UFOs and psychic phenomena? Do UFOs come from outer space...? etc, etc, the author tells all.

Isaac Astral's 'beer money' magazine and Analog, both now owned by Davis Publications, will now appear on a four-weekly rather than a monthly basis, both to fit in with other Davis magazines and to help the printers, who are apparently rushed off their feet by the large number of magazines which hit them at the beginning of the month. The change will be in mid-summer, when both magazines will appear at the beginning of the month.

Galaxy, sold to the Galileo people only earlier this year, is now finally dead - and for that matter, so is Galileo itself, having failed to appear in 1980. The culprit is, or seems to be, inflated dreams of empire fostered by the short-lived SF boom; originally sold only by subscription, its publisher tried to break some newsstand distribution for it in late 1979 via a financial link-up with Dell Books, but the deal flopped disastrously, leaving publisher Vincent McCaffrey (no relation) with a mountain of debts and no resources with which to repay them. If Dell decide to push for repayment, his oldest operation will be forced to close down - namely "Avenue Victor Hugo Bookstore."

Another suffering financially is Savoy Books who have now gone bust, leaving several 'high and dry'.....

LOCUS has undergone some further minor staffing changes - I don't know whether or not this has caused the November issue to be somewhat shorter than usual, and to contain nearly 10 full pages of advertisements out of a total of 20 pages - not really good enough, eh? LOCUS continues to be a month behind schedule, but no real complaints because it does provide (perhaps unknowingly) sources of information for this column. Also behind schedule (in its best traditions) is FOUNDATION, now due out in March; apparently, they are a little short on reviewers, but the next issue promises the usual high standard articles, including West in top demolition form.

++++ Information sources: LOCUS, SFR, conversations in The West Riding, etc. +++++

CONVENTION LISTINGS:

Should you want your Convention listed, please provide me with full details, including Progress Reports, etc. (Editor.)

YORCON 11: 17-20 April 1981. The British Eastercon. GoH: Ian Watson & Thomas M. Disch. Fan GoH: Dave Langford. Rates: Attending, £6.00; Supporting, £3.00. Hotel accommodation: Dragonara, LEEDS. Progress Report 3 now out, with Hotel Booking forms. Further details from 12 Fearnville Terrace Leeds LS8 3DU (enclose large S.A.E.)

STAR ONE '81: One day Con at The Wembley Conference Centre for Blake's Seven Fans. £5.00; from 2.00pm-10.30pm. Apply 21 Hargwyne Street Stockwell SW9 9RQ (SAE).

FANTASYCON 7: 10-12 July 1981 at The Grand Hotel, Birmingham. Supporting membership, £1.00. This is The British Fantasy Society's Convention. Details from Mike Chinn, 1 Buttery Road Smethwick Warley West Midlands.

FAIRCON '81: 24-27 July 1981 at the Ingram Hotel, Glasgow. GoH John Brunner. Special Guest, Ken Slater. Membership: Supporting, £4.00 (£5.00 after Easter). Attending, £8.00, going up to £9.00, and then £10.00 on the day. Details from 200 Woodlands Road Glasgow G3 6LN (SAE).

BECCON 81: 31 July-2 August 1981 at the Essex Centre Hotel, Basildon. GoH: Barrington J Bayley. Supporting, £2.00; Attending, £5.00. Details from: 191 The Heights, Northolt Middx UB5 4BU.

BAREL-CON: 8-9 August 1981 at the Grand Hotel Birmingham. Hitch-Hikers Con. £2.50 for Supporting Membership. Joy Hibbert, Knouchley, West Bank Winster Matlock Derby.

STUCON '81: 14-16 August 1981. Con members will live in Stuttgart (West Germany) and travel by bus to the nearby Kursaal Stuttgart (a palace!). GoH Marion Zimmer Bradley. Other writers attending include McCaffrey, Lundwall, Campbell (Ramsey!), Wilder. Membership: Attending, DM 20 (about £5.00), going up to DM 30. However, local fan custom allows a Genuine Fan (sic) to bring a non-fan partner free of charge. Cherry Wilder tells me that the definition of a 'Genuine' Fan includes a member of the BSFA - (now you realise what benefits there are in the good 'ole Bosfa) and that 'non-fan partner' includes, wife, husband, lover, etc. Details from Denis Scheck, Falkenstr. 25, 7061 Berglen 4, West Germany. (I suggest you enclose an International reply coupon)

BENELUXCON: 28-30 August 1981: Rotterdam, Holland. GoH - the unlikely combination of Jack Vance and Stanislaw Lem. Further details will appear in the next issue. This is a very popular convention, held, alternately between Holland & Belgium. It usually has an international programme, fannish and serious, with items in English and other languages. The committee would very much like to welcome more English fans.

DENVENTION 11: 3-7 September 1981. The World SF Convention at the Denver Hilton, Denver, USA. Membership \$35, attending, \$15, supporting up to 31 March, when the rates go up. GoH: Clifford D Simak & C L Moore. FGoH Rusty Hevelin. Info: Box 11545, Denver, Co 80211, USA.

UNICON 2: 11-14 September 1981 at Keele University. GoH: John Sladek, FGoH: Alan Dorey. Memberships: £5.50, Attending, £3.00, Supporting. Contact Chris Davenport, 'Bridge End' Shawbury Shrewsbury Salop. (A good bunch these Keele people.)

NOVACON 11: No details yet, but presumably at the usual place. Chairman is Leeds fan Paul Oldroyd, and the committee includes Joseph Nicholas.

FILMCON 81: 20-22 November 1981 (doesn't say where, but presumably in Birmingham since it is organised jointly by the Brum SF group and the Brum SF Film Society). Cost is £5.00. As the title suggests, this is an SF film con (incl. fantasy and horror). Details: Chris Smith 49 Humber Tower, Francis Street Birmingham (SAE).

CHICON IV: 2-6 September 1982 in Chicago. The 1982 Worldcon. GoH: Betram Chandler & Kelly Freas. FGoH: Lee Hoffman. Membership; \$15, supporting, \$30, attending - the rates go up. Info: Box A3120, Chicago Il. 60690, USA.

British Eastercon 1982: No news of any further bids: Channelcon remains the front runner. Proposals are for The Metropole Hotel, Brighton. Pre-supporting membership at £1.00 is available from Pat Charnock, 4 Fletcher Road, Chiswick, London.

Following some considerable debate in these columns - and elsewhere - further ideas have been put forward to launch a bid for EUROCON in 1984. John Brunner has offered to be ex-officio Chairman of a possible bidding committee; it is planned to have a debate on the matter at YORCON, when some time will be allocated in the Programme to discuss the formation of a bidding committee and further plans.

GUFF, the fan fund which will send a UK fan to Australia in 1981 for the Australian National convention in Adelaide, has a deadline for final voting, of 14 February. By the time this issue reaches you, you should have time left to vote; any fan, active in fandom prior to Jan 1979, is eligible to vote. The runners are Malcolm Edwards, noted fanzine publisher in previous years, past editor of Vector, organiser of Conventions (including SEACON), and formerly editor of foundation; and Joseph Nicholas, noted fanzine publisher/Loc writer, present editor of Paperback Inferno, oraniser of conventions, and Reviews editor of Vector. Guff is a really good idea, and you may vote, if you haven't already got a form, by photo-copying the form below and sending it to Rob Jackson, 8 Lavender Rd West Ewell, Epsom Surrey.

I VOTE FOR: MALCOLM EDWARDS... JOSEPH NICHOLAS... HOLD OVER FUNDS... _____
Signature..... Name(caps).....
Address.....

I enclose my donation to GUFF of (£1.00 minimum) Reproduced from MATRIX.

Whilst in Poland, John thought up a new Polish joke. "How many Poles does it take to run a science fiction convention? One, but he is not on the committee this year. This sums up the chaotic situation in Krakow. There is nothing better than a group of enthusiastic volunteers who form a committee and organise the event of their desires, be it a science fiction convention, a folk and craft festival or a revitalised C.N.D. group. When such groups are organised through more formal bodies such as Students Unions, internal arguments can cause things to go wrong, and they do. This convention was set up in Warsaw under the auspices of the Chief

Foreign Affairs Section, Socialist Union of Polish Students, but the first thing the students of Krakow University did on re-assembling for the autumn term was to dissolve their official Students Union, the body responsible for financing this event. The banks thereupon declined to honour its cheques. The result was a re-shuffling of the programme and the convention started more than a day late. We received our copy of the programme, a single typed sheet, after we arrived back. In any case another copy had been torn up symbolically in our presence at the Student Union office.

We arrived exhausted and hungry after a hazardous drive through Czechoslovakia in the pouring rain with the help of our Czech student passenger, Jiri Marcus, and eventually found the students' office at 10.30 p.m. There was a disco dance going on and nobody was there to receive us and nobody knew anything about our anticipated arrival. We ended up to the consternation and delight of our friend at the luxurious Cracovia Hotel which fortunately took Barclaycard tourists.

The next day, having been settled in primitive accomodation in the University Hostel and having fed quite adequately at the University canteen (we were all given meal tickets but did not use ours after the first day as the canteen seemed to be too far away from the centre of town - that gave us the opportunity of trying a variety of Polish foods which we found to be cheap and very good in a number of restaurants; I enjoyed a variety of beetroot soups) we ended up at the Union office with our friendly Czech, Jiri, and another friend who had arrived - the Swiss contingent, Pascal Ducommun. Together with the Polish student in charge we wrote out directions in four languages to be placed in an outside window for all to see. Later we met up with Gian Franco and Liliana Viviani the publisher from Milan, and much later still Wiktor Bukato from Warsaw joined us at the first room party with Bob and Sarah Shaw. The convention was under way!

By mid-day, Wednesday 18 September, the convention officially met. All the delegates from Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Switzerland, East Germany, Jugoslavia,



Italy, Britain and Russia were greeted with much hand-clapping. The first item was a discourse by a very earnest young Pole who spoke at length. His thesis was doubtless erudite and stressed the philosophical and psychological importance of science fiction with references to Marx, Freud and Jung etc. etc. We received our English translation through ear-phones. I wish I had taken notes. Later, John gave his Guest of Honour speech. Alas only one question, very formal. No lively discussion on this occasion. Simultaneous translations were laid on into English, Polish and Russian according to who was speaking. It was very well done and we should try it in Britain.

As there was no programme in the hand which one could refer to, it was a matter of keeping one's ear to the ground to know what was happening, where and when. Thus we missed a number of the talks which were held on the usual s.f. convention subjects. There were no debates. Unfortunately we missed Bob Shaw's dissertation on fandom in Britain but Sarah had assured me that under these circumstances it was not to be one of Bob's brilliantly humorous addresses. Simultaneous translation of appalling puns would certainly be tough.

Wiktor Bukato had requested us to take a British film to the convention. Our original offer had been the WAR GAME, but having seen it again recently, we did not consider it suitable for showing in Poland (it had been shown at the Glasgow Con) as there is too much voice-over and man-in-the-street interviews and too little explicit action for a non-English speaking audience to appreciate. We did not wish to disappoint Wiktor, so we obtained through our friend Milton Subotsky a copy of his film the MIND OF MR. SOAMES. It was a success in Krakow, we were told. We did not see it - we did not discover in time where the films were being shown.

Stanislaw Lem, who was due to arrive on Saturday evening, did



not. He was still in Munich.

We were lucky. Roman Czekaj arrived from the British Council, Warsaw. Krakow was his home town so he was happy to take us around and show us the sights we would have otherwise missed, including a 'Bloomsbury' type cafe where all the artists and writers once met. (Shades of the Fitzroy for those Londoners who remember stories of the Bloomsbury group). Then he took us off to a musical recital at one of the student venues. All the fans, writers, and organisers whom we had met were there. On a table, cross-legged, bearded, wearing a Castro cap, was one of the students playing guitar and singing what were obviously his own satirical and provocative songs. The audience in this packed-out room was delighted. Without being able to speak Polish it was quite clear that here was a talented young man whose performance made one think of our own Jeremy Taylor or France's Brassens. (Where were the secret police? How dare he?) One song which was translated for us was about the lover of Lenin who deserted him for another love - Socialism.

We were also grateful for the guidance of Andrzej Pruszyński who speaks fast and fluent French. He joined the room parties at the hostel where the real discussions took place. He and Wiktor Bukato brought in friends so that the room was like a hall in Babel with a number of languages being spoken and our linguistic friend Pascal spoke several at once. We heard that there are 25 published S.F. writers in East Germany plus scientists and astrophysicists who write articles and stories on the side. But of course these never reach the West. The Bulgarians are holding a convention next May and would be happy to welcome visitors from the West.

On the Saturday night there was a final ball where loud music was played for the students who packed the floor - not all fans. The more earnest fans, writers, editors, who wanted to talk crept down two floors to the caverns below where it was nominally quieter - and there was a bar. We heard Pascal's voice over the hum and John joined him together with a group of English-speaking Jugoslavs.

Finally, the most interesting and important meeting of the week was on Saturday at the Club Pod Jaszcurami, where there was a broad discussion with Polish and other publishers. The Poles described their difficulties: Gian Franco Viviani was asked to report on publishing in Italy. When a questioner from the floor asked if there was any censorship in Italy and G.F. said definitely NO there was a great deal of applause. John was then referred to for his impression of the scene in America and Britain. He put the problem of having books translated and suggested that manuscripts should be submitted with a fairly long resume of the story which would help Western publishers to decide whether or not to publish as there were few linguists working in most publishing houses. There is an over-all enthusiasm for science fiction and the Bulgarians and Hungarians present added their comments at some length. In Poland amongst other problems is that of getting an allocation of paper of which there is reputedly a shortage. (Evidence of this shortage was to be found in lavatories everywhere where we discovered it was safer to go armed with serviette sheets taken from the cafes!

For us, on a personal note, the bonus after exploring this beautiful old city of Krakow was the first week-end of a folk and craft festival held in the enormous square which is cut off as a pedestrian precinct. So we left with a

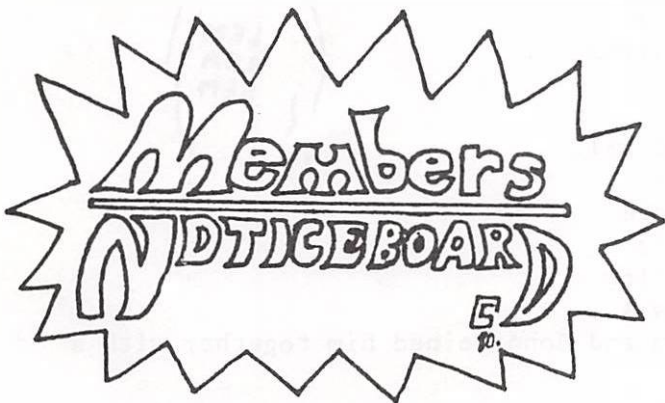


feeling of festivity, with people blowing bird-calls, carrying decorative flowers and feathers and balloons, and the sound of singing in the background. We were happy to have made new friends and to have had the opportunity of discussing all our problems. After the initial chaos it turned out to be a great science fiction convention.

As a P.S., a number of people were still hovering around the University on Sunday morning awaiting the promised arrival of S.Lem. Alas, he was still returning from Munich so eventually we had to go our separate ways - to Warsaw, Budapest, Switzerland and Linz.

We had been invited to Linz in Austria as we were 'en passant' to call and see Dr.Hannes Leopoldseder of Ars Electronica with regard to the Bruckner festival in 1981. It is suggested that Wold S.F. should hold the next meeting there around the 10th September during this marvellous annual event. For those interested in a trip to Linz at that time we would suggest that it would be a terrific experience. Apart from the festival of Bruckner, the sound of electronic music in all directions, with luck the sight and sound of that most brilliant of modern composers, Klaus Schulze the Austrians are the most helpful, considerate and generally sympathetic people you could hope to meet. The writer Dr.Herbert Franke is very involved with this project and Dr.Leopoldseder is all set to greet science fiction writers, publishers, editors, et al. What a compliment. Somehow, science fiction like christianity has now achieved universal respect. Three cheers for H.G.W. (See you in Linz, 1981).

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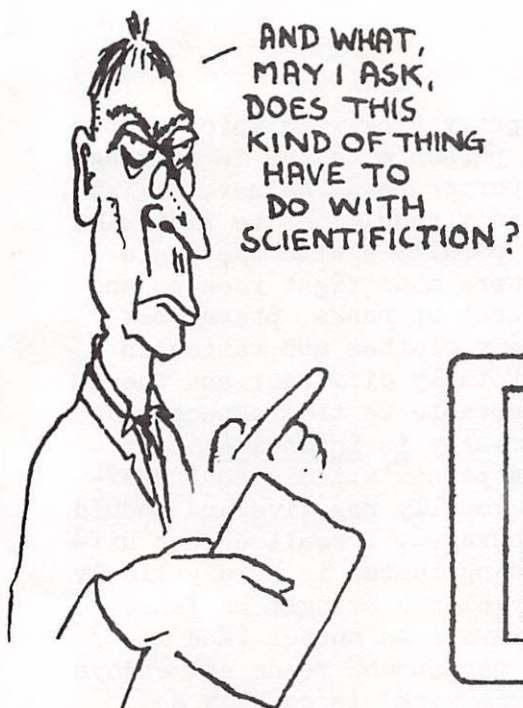
LASER BOOKS: Peter Croucher, of 42 Holmead Road, Fulham London SW6 is looking for past copies of Laser Books, a numbered series of SF novels. He requires issue Nos: 37, 40, 42, 44, 50 & any issue after, but not including 54. If you have these, and wish to sell, please write to him.

WANTED: Roelof Goudriaan (see letters col for address) wants The Collected Ghost Stories of M R James (no relation) - the Second Edition (Edward Arnold '74) A good price is offered, if in good condition. Please write, stating details.

COMPUTER GAMES: Jacqueline Comben (see letter col for address) wants to know if anyone is interested in computer games and if they have a good program. She is looking for a game which a number of players at different terminals interact eg as commanders of ships fighting a space war. The program needs to be in Fortran, Basic, Pascal or (something else, but I can't read her writing); If compiled, it should be compatible with a DEC 20. Should anybody be interested, Jacqueline suggests that you could get a list of names and circulate details of the games, and arrange trades. Please write for further info. (Ed. Yorcon 2 will be having a computer games room, organised by Ron Bennet's son - maybe you could develop the idea there?)

CONTRIBUTIONS DESPERATELY REQUIRED: for SUPERNOVA, Simon Bostock's zine. Virtually anything is permitted - fancish, sercon, and any length. Simon guarantees he will read your submissions and print them if they are good. (For address, see letter col.) Simon is also forming an APA, called APA-SF&F. You can phone him on Ilkeston 326918 for further details; the main rules are: At least 2 A4 pages; 27 zines to be made; Bi-monthly schedule; 30p to cover mailing etc.; SF/fantasy material only.

Ed. I also received an advertisement from a member about his thoughts on forming a society re. the reconstruction (materialy) of ~~causated~~. This was truly tasteless and really offensive. Ring Brian Parsons on 021 707 5841 & he'll tell you all about necrophillism, if you really want to know. There ends my obligations.



LETTERS

First off, that wonderous presentation of your letters, last issue, is temporarily defunct since my 4-month old electric/portable/semi-golf-ball type-writer managed to hurl itself off my table (while typing page 22 in case you hadn't noticed). Grrrrr, the estimate for repair (if it can be fixed) is £100 - that's right - £100 - should anyone wish to start up a fund in my honour, Meantime, I've borrowed a typer with a small type-face, so there's no need to reduce this column. Back to normal next issue, I hope. Maybe I can claim off the BSFA?

My editorial in M33 didn't exactly provoke an avalanche of response, but it did unearth some fans from their hide-outs. A small stream of 'unsolicited' articles has begun to appear - keep 'em coming. I said, last time around that I didn't intend to cancel letters, but David Watkins (below) seems to have missed this point, amongst others. There again, who reads magazines/newspapers etc from cover to cover?

DAVID WATKINS
'FIRMOUNT'
LALESTON
BRIDGEND MID-GLAMORGAN
CF32 0LD

I can't say I'm impressed by your ready concession of Joseph Nicholas' impudent claim to all the letters you receive which deal with reviews. Did it ever occur to you that letters addressed and delivered to you are your property, and that nobody else has any claim whatsoever to them?

Anyway, the effect of your spinelessness is that, for the foreseeable future, no letter critical of Joseph Nicholas will appear in any BSFA publication, except by permission of him. We can be sure that any such letter which is published will either have been selected for its clumsiness and naivety, or else edited so as to destroy the point of any damaging facts and arguments it contains. Nice for Nicholas! Not so nice for those who feel that anyone as fond of handing it out as he is should sometimes be obliged to take it.

No doubt Nicholas is pretty good at making unpleasant scenes when he doesn't get his own way. However, as you must know in your heart, the survival of liberal civilisation depends on people like yourself finding the moral courage to tell people like Nicholas to piss off.

(Ed.) Hmm, doesn't seem all that 'liberal' to tell someone to "piss off". Matrix is the forum for members' to air their views on any subject they wish; however, if someone wishes to comment, in detail, on a particular review in Paperback Inferno, or Vector, then it is reasonable to assume that Joseph and Kevin will want to receive and comment on that correspondence. All letters sent to Matrix get read, and if they are suitable, printed. Joseph may be considered 'out-spoken', but he does put in a great deal of work for Inferno, Vector, and Matrix, which is more than can be said for the vast majority of members.

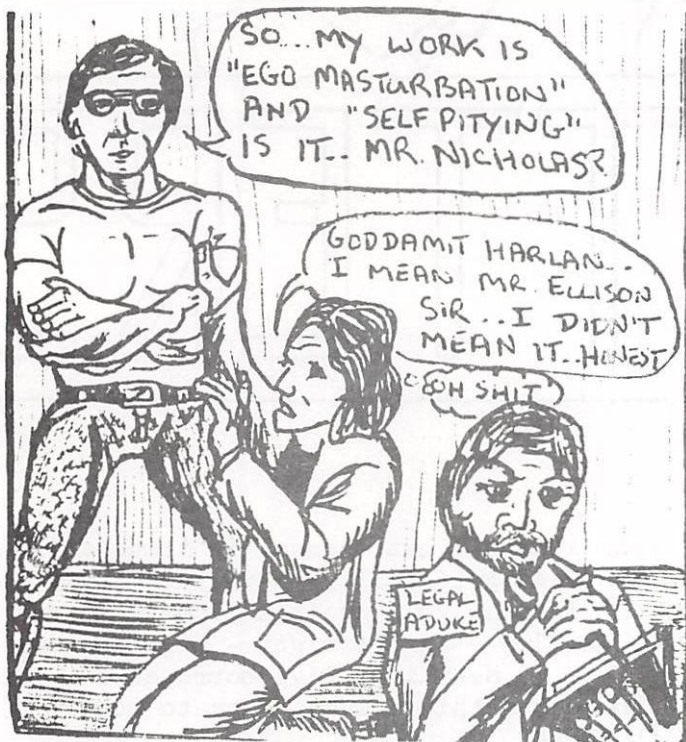
And, just to show that no-one gets censored:-

PHILLIP GREENWAY
38 9th AVENUE
GALON UCHAF
MERTHYR TYDFIL
MID GLAMORGAN SOUTH WALES

Let's put an end to the petty bickering which arises due to the condemnation of a person's tastes in reading. It is unimportant whether a person reads Asimov, Ellison, K Dick or whoever - he certainly should not be ridiculed for doing so. You could draw parallels with the music

industry where mods fight rockers and skinheads beat up punks, presumably because their clothes and tastes in music are totally different and therefore unacceptable to the respective cults. It really is infantile; to criticise a person's individual preferences is totally negative and should not be encouraged. I realise that different reading tastes is hardly likely to incite violence amongst SF fans, but to denigrate an author (and in effect the person who reads and enjoys that author's work) is equally as childish and unconstructive - and could also engender a lot of bad feeling in fandom. By all means encourage constructive criticism - but don't make the blanket generalisations that dismiss an author's work out of hand.

(Ed.) The rest of Phil's letter appears later; but now to L. Brown, on a similar point.



L BROWN
56 GRANADA ROAD
THORNLEY PARK
DENTON
MANCHESTER

I've just finished reading Matrix which I quite enjoyed. I'm a new member of the BSFA and I found it both interesting and informative. One note of discord, however, is the tendency to use

the letter section as a personal attack column. Whilst I appreciate reading other people's views on SF, I find disappointing the petty bickering and personal rivalries between what appears to be separate elitist factions within the genre. I'm all for practical criticism - it's the personal angle I find irritating.

(Ed.) P Dembina doesn't quite agree - in fact, he wants blood! He adds some comments on this, plus an 'alternative' view of J N, before turning his attention to the question of art-work, which seems to have attracted a lot of mail this time around,

P DEMBINA
29 HOWCROFT ROAD
FINCHLEY
LONDON N3 1PA

Definitely a good idea to expand the letter column because this is the life-blood of a fanzine. But, where is the vitriol of yesteryear? Let's see a bit of mudslinging and back-stabbing - we want blood! Blood, do you hear! A bit of the red stuff....!

Sorry about that, must be the full moon. Anyway, as usual, the news section was most informative and was livened up by Joseph Nicholas' caustic comments - keep 'em coming.

WE ARE
THE ELITE



THE MOST
EXCLUSIVE
GROUP
KNOWN
TO EXIST

MERE NONENTITIES

- OUR GROUP IS
EVEN MORE
EXCLUSIVE

- NOT EVEN
THE MEMBERS
KNOW WE
EXIST



I think that your policy of avoiding 'spaceships' and the usual hardware illustrations from the cover is right; after all, we get enough of this phallic symbolism on book covers: also, the cover illos of MATRIX seem to give the zine a character.

As to some general comments on the contents, I thought they were good and varied and covered a spectrum of interests within SF. The Chris Priest Interview was interesting and informative - I didn't realise that he began so humbly (editing Tangent no less, you can't get much humbler! No offence to ex-editors.) I liked John Collick's cartoon about JN's cat, but I feel that a few of the in-jokes were a little beyond me: by the way, what does K.T.F. stand for? (ED. see DRL's letter below). The Noreascon report was also stimulating - it gave a real insight into the organisation of a really big con and what goes on; this was interesting to me since I have yet to visit a con. That's all for now.

DAVE LANGFORD
22 NORTHUMBERLAND AVE.
READING BERKS RG2 7PW

Matrix was much better - the patient continues to improve. After the effect of my last comments on your bank balance I don't think I dare say anything whatever about your typefaces. (Ed. Dave's suggestion led, indirectly, to my acquisition of the demised typewriter!)

Even Hazel loved the Collick strip, though I dunno what the membership at large will think...(I mean, how many of them will know about the fucking immense randy ginger tom cat, or that KFF stands for 'Kill The Fuckers'?) Noreascon rep good fun.

I suspect L Gathercole is a hoax. (There used to be a death sentence for stealing sheep too: D better not draw any cartoons of that vile act either.) Thankyou for defending your humble competition-setter from the slings and arrows of outrageous Steve Ince. Ken Mann sounds extrememly silly re PFMA; Chuck Connor always did. In his first letter, Ken mutters about how media fans know all and do all, but doesn't say anything about how. Presumably the films and comics discussed in MATRIX weren't media, which makes me wonder what media are. Poetry? Non-SF?

SIMON BOSTOCK
18 GALLOWES INN CLOSE
ILKESTON
DERBYSHIRE DE7 4BW

MATRIX improved tremendously from ish 32, especially the reduced type; though it should have had two columns per page. The only fault I could find was that ON THE CARPET wasn't reduced and reviewed little, and the art-work on Collick's strip was appalling. I'm sorry, but some of the art-work I've so far witnessed isn't up to scratch: one exception is Pete Lyon. I'm glad to see that Jim Barker will be returning in M34. Even though I thought of D West's cover as trash, I had no idea anyone would think of it as a rape scene. Allan Sutherland was pretty harsh assuming it as that.

I'm glad to see SF fandom (at least through the BSFA) recognising SF art and SF comics as acceptable forms of the genre. Art should be feasible in fandom - after all, it is only stories in the form of pictures and the monotonous speech balloons.

So Andrew Sutherland requests fiction. This is not a good idea; I, for one, would prefer fannish or sercon material. (Rob Jackson is bound to hate the notion.) FOCUS was a mediocre publication, although it will, most likely, be missed by fans who fancy their chances as authors. The brain-wave of author bibliographies is O.K. - I'll look forward to them, but how about resurrecting the Yearbook?

Incidentally, I thought Ken Mann was quite cruel in his handling of the article; should put quite a few of his potential members off!

(Ed.) And that cover of M32, and the reactions to it, are still receiving much attention. Cherry Wilder wrote to say..."Matrix is going particularly well of late; however, I agreed with Alan Sutherland but never mind, here's to more SF and less rape in 1981." Pete Lyon observed..."D West is excellant at his 'Feifferesque' cartoon strips - the quibble I have with the cover is that it was derivative; there is a cartoon by Charles Adams (of Adams family fame) to be found in his collection in hard-back, with a similar idea - though I'm prepared to believe it was a coincidence (such happens to me). I didn't find it offensive - but then I'm not female either." However, rather than "I liked it/it was offensive etc", there were some pretty astute observations made, on a far wider viewpoint:-

GWYNFOR JONES
34 BRYN GWYNT
AMLWCH PORT ANGLESEY
GWYNEDD NORTH WALES

I have to agree with the objection to the cover of M32; well, I see the point that was being made, or at least I hope was being made and being satirised. As you remember the moral dilemma freelance and newspaper photographers were put in during the Vietnam conflict.

Should they, or should they not calmly photograph innocent civilians, children, being burnt alive by Napalm. Well, the photographs remain to shame a nation and probably the whole human race. Maybe the means justify the end; maybe in certain situations it pays to be detached and objective, concerned with nothing more than the aperture setting, shutter speed and the 'good shot' - it's usually those good shots which are the only blunt reminder that politics doesn't, but should, have a conscience and a sense of shame.

JOSEPH NICHOLAS
ROOM 9 94 St GEORGE'S SQ.
PIMLICO
LONDON SW1Y 3QY

Congrats on your handling of the comments on D's cover. L Gathercole's letter probably doesn't call for a response, but I might add that it truly amazes me that anyone in this day and age can still take, even half-seriously, all that tedious old medieval crap about witches and deviltry and whatnot. In passing, I might add that I even wonder what such a person (who clearly believes in the hell-fire-and-damnation idea of the Power of Evil Incarnate, or whatever other mumbo-jumbo they're passing off as the Truth these days) is doing reading such a potentially challenging literature as SF which, if it has any purpose at all, is dedicated to the questioning and subversion of our pre-existing world-views, not their supporting and reaffirmation... "Very few thoughts of God in modern science fiction"? ...No, of course not; the idea of God or gods or any devine being at all has been steadily on the wane since the thoughts of Darwin, Marx and Freud were unleashed upon the world. Order and logic have replaced chaos and superstition and for this we should all be profoundly grateful, since the capacity for enquiring thought is the only thing that makes and keeps us as we are. To fly from it, is to deny this capacity, to deny the power of reason, to abdicate entirely all responsibility for ourselves, and for all that the Second Law of Thermodynamics will eventually do us all in, regardless of what we get up to in the interim. We should make the best use of that power and potential while we are still able if we are not to be overwhelmed by it sooner, rather than later.

(Ed.) Joseph also added that he found the Chris Priest interview "Ace", but he was not exactly enamoured with Collick's strip, the art-work being "Appalling".

In respect of his observation that Order and Logic have replaced Chaos and Superstition, I would add that there is little order or logic prevailing, either in current 'civilisation', or in terms of Modern Thought; superstition existed only in the minds of 'uneducated' or repressed people - the theological ideas of the intelligensia, from the Koran, to Blake, William James and (even) Suzuki, relegate Darwin, Marx & Freud to the SF-equivalent of Buck Rogers. And, anyway, Marx (who was himself influenced by the christian philosopher, Hegel) never attempted a refutation of mysticism - he attacked the institution of the church and its support for the social order. Hmm, seem to have got slightly carried away; I do agree with Joseph's basic point, though. All good clean fun, eh what? - as Andy Sawyer sees it:-

ANDY SAWYER
59 MALLORY ROAD
BIRKENHEAD
MERSEYSIDE L42 6QR

Congrats on getting the BSFA mailing out before Christmas! I'd like to keep up the tradition of the last MATRIX and criticise the cover of M33 which I found grossly insulting to Postmen (implying that they read the mail they deliver, which is an offence under the Official Secrets Act) and BSFA members, (implying that they have warty skin and hairy arms)!

M33 was very entertaining, especially the interview with Chris Priest, the fan, and John Collick's rendition of 'IF'. I don't know about Andrew Sutherland's call for "real SF" in Matrix. I'm certainly not in favour of fiction in Matrix (not because I'm against it as such, as I have defended it in the past) but, the tone of Matrix should be fairly light and chatty; eg the kind of satirical lunacy which Dave Langford writes (if you can twist his arm). Generally, fiction should appear

in its specialised outlets. There's plenty of room in Matrix for interviews, news, debates etc which are equally a valid part of a 'LITERARY SOCIETY', if that is what the BSFA is. (As Andrew says, he joined the BSFA only recently and I suppose he's not aware of the fiction magazine, TANGENT, that we did have, and the aggro over that!) Matrix should be more or less evenly split between news and features about the SF world itself and the fannish sub-world. How about following up the Priest interview with a series of interviews with those prominent fan personalities who are always being written about in con-reps, etc, or long-running fan editors like Terry Jeeves? A sort of 'who are they, when they're not being fans' approach.

(Ed.) Yes. Now back to Phil Greenway's letter. He added that he agreed "wholeheartedly" with another of Andrew Sutherland's points - namely that BSFA members are "depriving themselves of some truly great literary classics outside the genre" and that the "vast majority of SF novels aren't worth reading". Now, go away and feel 'deprived'. Phil then turns his attention to the standard of art in SF fanzines and concludes that most of it is sub-standard. He refers to Comics fandom where he says that many artists have attained exceptionally high standards. (High standards of drawing, maybe, but a paucity of significant ideas.)

By strange coincidence, Stephen Gooch makes exactly the same point. (What would Eric have to say about that?) Meanwhile, Ashley Walker has some strong views on art:

Ashley Walker
RIVER BEND
22 WORSALL ROAD
YARM-ON-TEES
CLEVELAND

I was much relieved to see the vast improvement in art-work in M33, particularly the front cover. However, I still think that the art-work in all the BSFA publications leaves much to be desired. There is not nearly enough and most is poor and inconsequential. Of the few excellent pieces, almost none are serious SF - this is acceptable for Matrix, since it is a fannish zine, but not at all acceptable in VECTOR or FOCUS. If these have serious articles and discussion on SF, then they should have a few serious SF orientated pieces of art as well.

Take the cover of VECTOR 99....Ugggh, I thought when I saw it, a mass of abstract black shapes? No wait! - it's actually two reclining female figures - or maybe it was one of those clever optical illusions - I looked again, slight improvement, but still nothing whatsoever to do with Science Fiction.

The cover of VECTOR 100 was just disappointing, even the change to blue ink hasn't done anything for it. Very professional layout, but what has happened to those marvellous covers that used to dorn VECTOR when it was A4 size?

(Ed.) Ashley goes on to complain that "several" artists have submitted art-work to BSFA publications and have not seen or heard of it again. Obviously, I can't comment on that, but he adds that I should acknowledge art-work sent to me, in the same way in which one acknowledges that a letter has been sent. I shall do this. It is odd, that if I am sent a Loc which I feel is not good enough for publication, I have little qualms about not publishing it; but if I am sent some 'art'-work, I feel extremely guilty if I don't use it. Why is this? Maybe people who deem to call themselves 'artists', and who can't even draw a strait line, claim some special status - a divine right to be published, without any regard to the standard of their work. But, as you will see from this issue, I'm not against the use of 'art'-work.



A number of other comments were made on the suitability of certain columns in MATRIX; it was particularly interesting to hear from BSFA members abroad.

HARRY ANDRUSCHAK
PO BOX 606
LA CANADA-FLINTRIDGE
CALIFORNIA 91011 USA

As regards the format of MATRIX, I do hope you continue both Rob Jackson's fanzine reviews and Simon's club news. In fact, if the fanzine reviews were dropped, I'd drop the BSFA. The reviews are the main reason I joined the organisation.....to get a central source of information on the UK fanzine scene. I'm also glad to use the information published in its pages...such as the new APA mentioned on page 7 of M32.

ROELOF GOUDRIAAN
POSTBUS 90255
1006 BG AMSTERDAM
THE NETHERLANDS

Congrats on your second issue, which contained the most irritating lettercolumn I've read for months. I won't hesitate to join in the altercation on which columns should and which shouldn't be included in MATRIX.

The ones who should benefit in the first place from a clubs column or fanzine reviews are neofans who are not into fanzines yet, and who have no knowledge of any nearby clubs. If you want to reach that group, you'll have to publish these columns in a widely distributed magazine, the existence of which is actually known to neofans. If the BSFA doesn't do the job, who will?

And so, while it may be perfectly true that these columns interest only a fairly small number of people at any given time, every BSFA member will have gone through a period in which he craved for this kind of info as a first start into active fandom; and when, after half a year or so, they can get the same info by (ideally) the bar gossips of various clubs, others will be stamping to get over that 'wonderful' feeling, being a neofan.

These columns are springboards, nothing more, but nothing less either, and as such indispensable. People who regard the BSFA as a divine terminus in SF fandom, and seem to think that through the BSFA it is possible to experience every aspect of fandom (or even REAL SF) can only be looked upon with a mild form of contempt.

Above this, where would people stand who're trying to organise a NEW club or fanzine without the free publicity in MATRIX. Even the proud though paranoid editors of some ficzines could only reluctantly do without it.

Where club news and fanzine reviews can be comprehensive, publishing a large number of pages of fan fiction in MATRIX wouldn't do the job: the total amount of fiction written in a country like the UK is staggering. I've got a feeling that given the opportunity, most fan writers would be able to fill the pages of MATRIX all by themselves year after year after year.....

It's entirely up to the editor if he wants to publish fan fiction in a BSFA publication, but it certainly aint a duty. I wonder if people like Andrew Sutherland have taken the trouble to read the fanzine column and get some of the ficzines that are in it. For that's where the outlet is that he's looking for. Even if ficzine editors refuse his prose (which should be an indication that a reevaluation of his own stories might be sensible) he can always start his own ficzine: the BSFA will give free publicity and reviews, as usual.

(Ed.) Agreed. I did receive a poem for inclusion (fannish), but since it was on the subject of 'you know who', I decided to give it a miss. After all, I can always hold it in reserve, for blackmail purposes! Anyway, do we want to expand the BSFA still further, to foreign lands? Russel Stewart seems to think so:

RUSSEL STEWART
10 BRAEHEAD GROVE
EDINBURGH EH4 6BE

Reading Cy Chauvin's loc in M33, I found myself involuntarily nodding my head. How right he is!

It's about time the BSFA widened its horizons and exported itself with



WHAT'S ALL THIS
STUFF ABOUT
RECRUITING
FOREIGNERS?

NEXT THING
WE'LL BE
LETTING IN
WOMEN

more effort. His suggestion that VECTOR subscriptions should form the spearhead of this 'invasion' is an excellent idea. As a new recruit to the BSFA, I know how confusing MATRIX can be if you haven't already read the last six issues and there's no-one to explain all the 'in-jokes'. Most people are interested in book reviews and critical comments, making VECTOR more acceptable to transatlantic tastes.

So, you faceless ones on the committee, how about a bit more cash, time and especially vigour towards an expanded BSFA, after all, a large membership ensures the longtime survival of the Association.

(Ed.) Grrrr. 'Faceless'....!more time'..... Blood will flow! Dorothy Davies, at the end of her letter, answers this. As for expansion, let me know what you think, but please read first what Chris Priest had to say on the subject in the last issue. In that piece, quite a bit of nostalgia seems to have been invoked:-

DOROTHY DAVIES
3 CADELS ROW
FARINGDON OXON

I have a lot of memories I want to invoke in others, and some things I want to say about fans and fandom generally, so here goes.

About 21 years ago I fell into fandom, and I think, because it's a long time ago now, with marriages and emigrations generally to disrupt the memory process, that it all started with an ad in one of the mag-

azines, F&SF perhaps? not sure, anyway, I wrote for this fanzine, and from then on found myself in the middle of it all. Where are you now, Ellie Parker, Alan Rispin, Paul Andrews, (somewhere in Kent - posing for photographs wearing Japanese helmet and face mask), Peter Davies (and I ended up with the same name after all), Pete Deckinger, (over there in the states - who never wrote to me after I slated one of his stories in a fanzine), ... where's Dave Prosser (who could draw onto stencil like others onto paper, creating beautiful nudes that got some fanzines stopped in the US mail, remember?)

Malcolm Edwards incautiously started this trip down memory lane with his references to the Globe; I used to go there, 20 years ago, and I remember going there showing off, proudly, my signed John Wyndham book I'd found in Foyles! (Gave it to said Peter Davies.....)

I produced my own fanzine at that time. It was called TRIAL (a trial run for a fanzine, to see what reception it got, and I worked for Solicitors at that time!) Bright orange covers, practically all the contents written by me, I bet no-one remembers it. There is though, a copy in the British Museum, I sent one there for registration. Go look it up some time!

And the point of this nostalgia? Well, reading Simon's column, there seems to be a lot more groups around, but reading the fanzine reviews, there seems to be a lot less fanzines now than there used to be. Are people using BSFA groups as drinking excuses, perhaps? I remember being flooded with zines, good stuff too, good artwork and pretty good duplication (not like mine).

The update section in the mailing shows that the list of those leaving gets longer each time. Are people only looking for what they can get out of it? Do they perhaps go through the mailing and think 'oh well, so what?' instead of what I do, which is go through it, and then start again. I've just received my third mailing. The first produced a 2-page letter to FOCUS, the second, a 2-page letter to the Harveys, at MATRIX, the third, a letter to VECTOR and MATRIX.

All right. There are lots of you out there, like me, who can't make Reading for the Great Weekend Mailing Game, or the monthly meetings in London, but you



can, all of you, write a letter! Kevin got 12 letters out of a total membership of 800. Didn't it occur to anyone to write and say, "well done, Kevin, keep up the good work, mate" or did you all think someone else was doing it, so didn't bother?

You get no more out of an organisation than you put in. If you get your mailings, read them and store them, what are you getting out of it? Not a lot. You probably disagree violently, as I do, with the reviews, but do you ignore them or do you write and say so? For heaven's sake, people, contribute something, even if it's only a 'ta for the mailing'!!!

I know from experience that the burden of work falls on a very few - I know how hard it is to provoke interest in the 'rank and file' membership. I hope you get enough out of the job to make it worthwhile doing. Bouquets to the Harveys for a lovely printing job, doesn't it make life pleasant to have your own litho machine? Brickbats to the people who only knock - the last Matrix cover I found amusing for heaven's sake! Stop soapboxing at every opportunity. If you don't like the work being done, contribute something yourself!

(Ed.) So, that's where everyone has been lurking these past years. Personally, I never went to the Globe, but there are people who still refer to the one Tun as the globe! Good to hear from you, Dorothy, and maybe your views might get through to the largely apathetic members. (The active ones will now write in and slag me for calling them apathetic. Huh.

PETE LYON
2 NEW ROW
OLD MICKLEFIELD
LEEDS LS25 4AJ

I've decided to commit a few random thoughts to paper on your 'very wonderful' second ish. I agree with Chris Priest that fan-fiction is both dire, and worthwhile - at least there is a forum for various creative attempts. After all, such activity is preferable to sitting around picking your nose, watching sitcoms or vandalising phone-booths. (Some would disagree tho') What I can't understand is the purist attitude towards duplicating, prevalent in certain quarters; "If Ghod had wanted fans to photocopy he would have given them the right reproduction equipment" seems to be the way the logic runs. Surely paste-ups offer greater freedom of expression, speaking as a visually orientated person that is.

As regards the letter column, I am, for my sins, affiliated to the PFMA in a very minor way, but I think that Ken and Chuck have gone over the top in protecting their dignity: I just fail to see what all the fuss is about. It is curious to see the effects of people taking themselves too seriously. Poor Chuck, it's his conditioned response to authority figures...he's being led astray; left to his own devices he's a nice chap really. Ken seems determined to attack that which seems to move against his interests (but only on paper), a ploy likely to be dropped when he feels his position is secure. Such sabre-rattling histrionics being a classic method of establishing corporate identity. These storms are definitely on a teacup scale.

"I'm all for '84.... I don't see why "Eastercon as we know it" (DRL - ANSIBLE) should necessarily conflict with EUROCON; the venue and programme will just have to be chosen to accomodate all interests. Translations are a problem, perhaps we could ignore them and languish in our well known Linguistic Chauvanism!

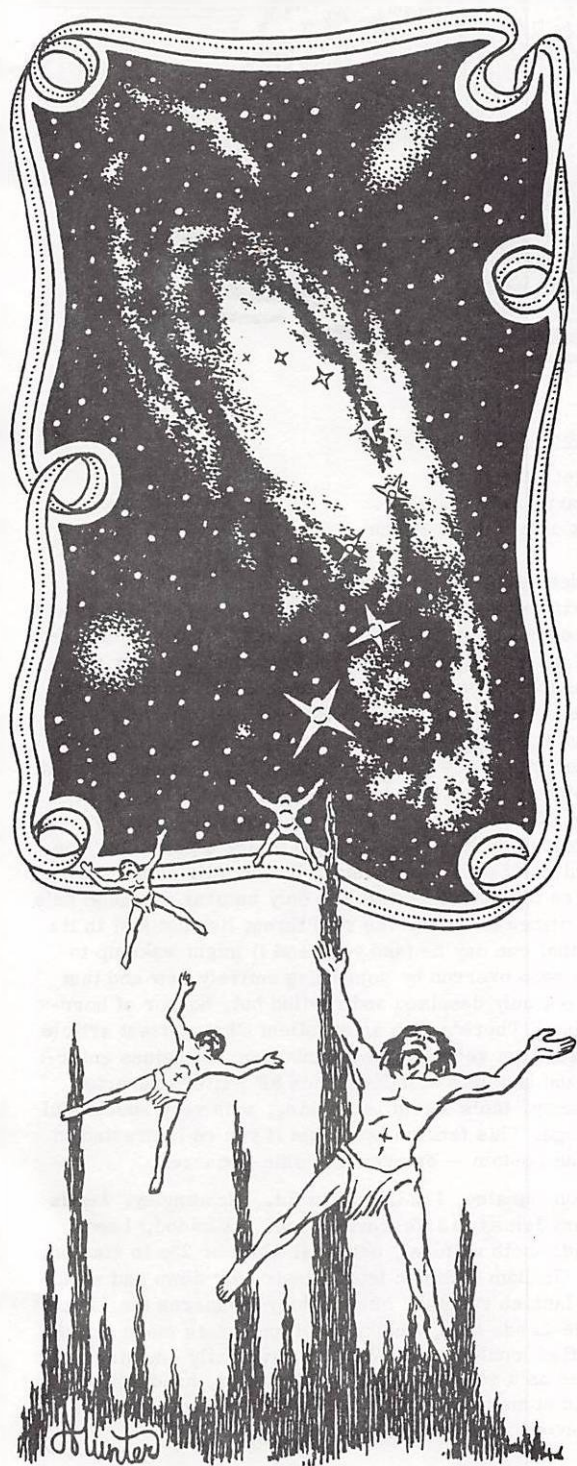
(Ed.) Jacqueline Comben wrote on this last point, adding that the cost of translation facilities would be prohibitive; we'll leave the question of EUROCON to be discussed at YORCON - see comments on the info pages.

I also heard from: ANDREW SUTHERLAND, who was encouraged to write again as his first loc was published; he enjoyed the Priest interview and Paul's conrep: JOHN KERR, who's one of the 2,500,000 people unemployed: PAUL THORLEY: MIKE BRAIN, who made some suggestions for the info pages: CHRIS ANDERSON, who parodied L. Gathercole's last letter:and, lastly, CHUCK CONNOR, who wrote two smashing letters, and promised a third, but whose points have been covered, more succinctly, elsewhere. Oh, KEITH FREEMAN also sent me a postcard from FLORIDA!

Thanks to all those who wrote, please continue.

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# ON THE CARPET



Rob Jackson's regular look at recent fanzines and other SF-related small press publications. This time zines received during November and December 1980 are covered. For review post to: Rob Jackson, 8 Lavender Rd., West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT19 9EB.

Abbreviations by recommended zines mean the following:

A\*: Outstanding art, graphics or visual production. C\*: about comic or visual SF. F\*: fannish fanzine. Fic\*: containing fiction. G\*: with general contents. N\*: containing news. P\*: with personal contents. S\*: about written SF or fantasy.

The Usual: Available for trade (exchange) with other fanzines, letter of comment, or contribution of written or artistic material. If the editor gives a price, it is listed; if not, an initial sample is available free from most editors (provided they've got copies left): just write politely and ask.

Page sizes: FC (foolscap): 13" x 8". A4: 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Q (quarto): 10" x 8". A5: 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ ".

Printing methods: D: duplicated. L: lithographed. X: Xeroxed (photocopied). R: reduced typesize (like this, giving more words per page).

## SMALL PRESS PUBLICATIONS

S\* Foundation 20 (SF Foundation, ed. David Pringle, N.E. London Polytechnic, Longbridge Rd., Dagenham, Essex RM8 2AS; editorial correspondence only to David at 21 The Village St., Leeds LS4 2PR; subs to the Poly: £4 or \$10 US & Canada for 3; A5 RL; 112pp.) The only British publication devoted to SF and published under the aegis of an institute of higher education, it's still readable, intelligent and filled with eminent names under its new editor. Contributors include Ellison, Aldiss, Lafferty, Spinrad, Sladek and a thoughtful, visionary editorial on the new decade and the changes SF may address itself to.

N\* Locus 238 (ed. Charles N. Brown, Box 3938, San Francisco, CA 94119, USA; in UK, 12 for £6.00 seairmail or £9.50 airmail from A.C. Atkinson, 28 Duckett Rd., London N4 1BN; USQ RL; 24pp.) One of the two main US zines reporting news of the pro SF field. Galileo & Galaxy's demise is headlined, plus columns by Leiber, Spinrad and the usual other features.

A/S\* Starship 40 (ed. Andrew Porter, Box 4175, New York, NY 10017, USA; in UK, send £4.75/year or £9/2 years to Ethel Lindsay, 69 Barry Rd., Carnoustie, Angus DD7 7QQ; USQ RL; 52pp.) The pretty semiprozine. Harlan Ellison introduces and praises Michael Whelan, Frederik Pohl has another quite witty GoH speech printed, and a Susan Wood overview of Kate Wilhelm shows us how much she (Susan) will be missed as a readable and perceptive critic.

A/Fic\* A Romance of the Equator (by Brian W. Aldiss; published by Birmingham SF Group for Novacon 10 as a commemorative booklet; for other availability write to Rog Peyton, Andromeda Book Co. Ltd., 57 Summer Row, Birmingham B3 1JJ; A5 RL; 16pp.) Very nicely produced booklet containing a new Aldiss short story that I found to have an enchanting fairy tale quality, and an illuminating afterword by the author, who was of course Guest of Honour at Novacon 10.

S\* Science Fiction Review 35,36,37 (Richard E. Geis, PO Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211, USA; in UK, send £ equivalent of \$7.50/year to Wm. Dawson and Sons, Cannon House, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5EE; USQ RL; 64,64,68pp.) Full, as usual, of punchy, opinionated reviews, letters, interviews, articles and a news column. 35 has a Wollheim interview, Brunner on how civilised South Petherton is, and Bob Shaw on themes he can't write about. 36 has an excellent Philip K. Dick interview (by Charles Platt) and a brief, blustery Heinlein one, and Chris Priest's Outside the Whale from Vector (wrongly credited as having first appeared in SF Commentary). 37 has frosty replies by Pournelle and Chalker to the Priest article, and a more restrained one by Jack Williamson; also a review of Warhoon 28 by Terry Carr that goes just as wild about it as my Matrix one and is far better written.

## FANZINES

### United Kingdom

N\* Ansible 13,14 (Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave., Reading, Berks. RG2 7PW; new rates 6/£1 UK, 5/£1 Europe, 4/£1 elsewhere; or news; Q RL/D; 4,6pp.) The usual — loads of little snippets, generally quite amusing, about the British SF and fan scene. Novacon and last year's Milford Writers' Conference are reported; the saddest item is of course the Susan Wood obituary.

Beyond the White Gates 1 (Mat Coward, 7 Arkwright Rd., London NW3; the usual or 40p; A4 D; 22pp.) Pleasant genzine with Mat & various friends writing readable but undemanding recommendations of books such as Rumpole of the Bailey, Gnomes & Serpico. Also a piece on Alan Garner, notably the radio adaptation of The Weirdstone of Brisingamen, and a suggestion that someone set up a library of fandom.

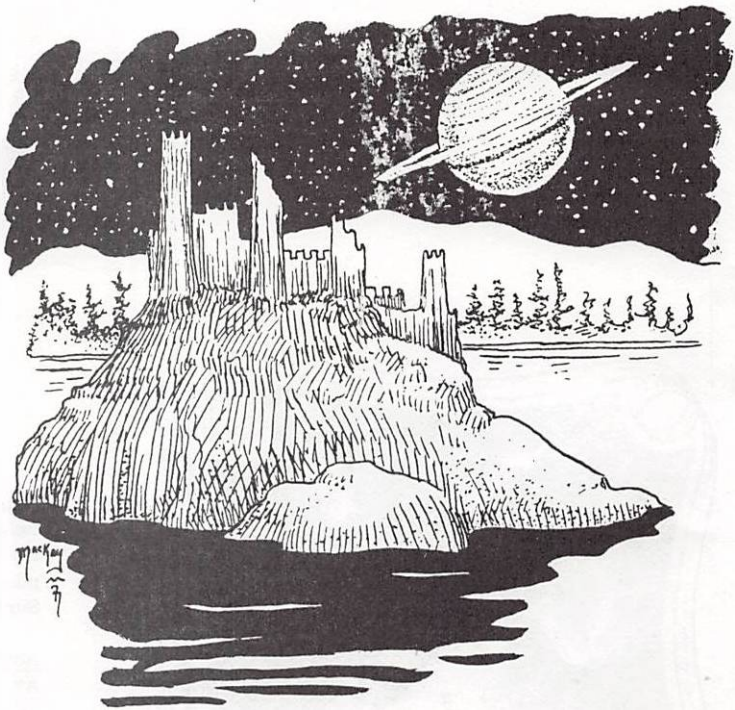
Drygulch 2 (Jimmy Robertson, Sandy Brown & Bill Carlin, c/o 78 Abbeycraig Rd., Glasgow G34 0DN; the usual; FC X/D; 8pp.) Fun-poking left-wing fanzine. SF is mentioned in passing, twice. They report Jim Allan's haunting pub tale of Black Frank, whom Jim met in the wild November mists of Glencoe — "the mankiest man in Scotland."

Evenstar 4 (ed. Geoff Boswell for West Midlands SF Group, c/o 59 Sorrel Walk, Brierley Hill, DY5 2QG; the usual, or club membership; A4 X; 12pp.) A plain profile of John Wyndham, a strange Paul Harris story of a future vampire searching space for the vanished race of Earthmen, and various odds and ends. Xeroxed in a slightly darker shade of grey than last issue.

In Defiance of Medical Opinion 4½ (Chuck Connor, c/o Sildan House, Chediston Rd., Wissett, Nr. Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 0NF; A4 D; 12pp.) Interim issue announcing that the editorial partnership that produced previous issues has broken up. Letters, plus one short story by Byron Shields about a horrible Monday with a disappointingly trite shock-horror ending.

Magus 8 (Phil Greenaway, 38 9th Ave., Galon Uchaf, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid-Glamorgan, South Wales; the usual, I think; A4 RX; 8pp.) Pale reduced 3-column Xerox; not very easy to read. Contents about Umcon 80, an interview with Chris Priest, Midnight Express and One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, & letters.

A/F\* Nabu 10 (Ian & Janice Maule, 5 Beaconsfield Rd., New Malden, Surrey KT3 3HY; the usual; Q D; 38pp.) Even more preoccupied with fanzine fandom than usual, particularly its past (in Ian's reminiscence of his ten years in fandom, which



### On the Carpet artwork credits:

Previous page: Alan Hunter

This page: Barry Kent MacKay

Next page but one: Helmut Pesch

this issue celebrates) and its future in Chris Evans's and Joe Nicholas's articles and the letters. Joe writes a very generalised and convoluted essay on the need to maintain standards of fan-nish writing, and in doing so verbosely accuses Jamus writers and U.S. apahacks of verbosity and humourlessly accuses Mike Glycer and others of failing to see when he's trying to make a joke. (At least it looks humourless: I may be wrong. To be fair to both Joe and Mike, Joe sometimes does have humour in mind, but it's sometimes difficult to tell sarcasm from pedantry in Joe's writing.) Chris Evans's piece is a beautifully clearly thought out exposé of the inconsistencies of Joe's position: "Joe may regard himself as a progressive, but he still wants the current empire to survive — which is only natural, because he's a prominent citizen of it. But the real threat lies not just in its decline, but that one day he (and you, and I) might wake up to find that he's been overrun by something entirely new and that he's become not only despised and reviled but, horror of horrors, redundant." There's also an excellent Chris Priest article on buying a train set recently, the symbolism of engines entering tunnels, and how lots of half-famous SF writers reverted briefly to infancy. Ian's layout is striking, with very successful article headings. This fanzine is a must if you're interested in fannish fanzine fandom — or even its come-uppance.

Ocelot 4 (Simon Ounsley, 13a Cardigan Rd., Headingley, Leeds 6, and Graham James, 12 Fearnville Tce., Oakwood, Leeds LS8 3DU; trade (both editors), editorial whim or 25p in stamps; A4 L; 20pp.) Graham & Simon letting their hair down and spouting readable fannish rubbish. Mike Ashley compares the Limpwrists and the Leeds mob, finding the Limpwrists more flaccid and self-satisfied: could be. D. West in a typically amusing cartoon draws me as a shapeless fanzine reviewer, handing out lollipops. And some people see me as unwarrantedly nasty! I can't please everyone, it seems.

Periphery 4 (Jeff Suter, 18 Norton Close, Southwick, Fareham, Hants. PO17 6HD; the usual or stamps; A4 D; 20pp.) Blander than before, though well enough written. Jeff makes a start on winding down his feud with Joe Nicholas, reports on Novacon, a Pink Floyd concert, fanzines, The Black Lion, and whales.

Ra Brig 1 (Owen Whiteoak, Jim Darroch, & Phil Dawson, c/o 17 Royal Tce., Edinburgh, Scotland; the usual or 50p; A5 RL; 30pp.) First issue of a FORTH clubzine. About attending cons, how TV SF shouldn't be done, the Edinburgh Film Festival, & "Swearing is Fxxxing Good For You." Artwork by the ubiquitous and obliging Pete Lyon, who does an encouraging amount of content-related work, not just fillos; and when he does do illos that stand by themselves, as his back cover here, they have a real point to them. He's been so prolific and developed so rapidly that he deserves to win next year's Checkpoint poll as fan artist.

Rule 42 2 (Chris Hughes, Dept. of Psychology, Keele University, Keele, Staffs. ST5 5AE; the usual; A5 RX; 20pp.) Quite readable but not stunning hotchpotch of a fanzine. News, of SF and weird mundane happenings such as the birth of a two-headed baby in China; Arnold Akien writes interestingly to defend Heinlein's critics, and there are letters and a Unicorn report.

G\* Secondhand Wave "42" 4 (Alan Ferguson & Trev Briggs, 26 Hoecroft Court, Hoe Lane, Enfield, Middx; the usual; A4 X; 26pp.) A more serious issue than last time, but still the only one of this month's crop so far to make me collapse in a heap of laughter every few pages. A Dave Bridges ripoff ("Kitchen Sink Fandom"), Aunt Sybil's Pol (a parrot reporting on the year's fannish bests and worsts — third best fanagram is "D. Swet"; they give the answer to this anagram as Rob Holdstock — duhhh, Marilyn Monroe and the FBI, Flann O'Brien (the two serious articles), how to fail to care for plants, and "Classifieds" with silly bits from papers, like the Finchley Gaumont ad showing The Deer Hunter along with Bambi. Excellent Pete Lyon art, including a Heinlein-esque stormtrooper armed to the teeth but saying "Fluba dub ickle WEEED!" — and the arms themselves don't bear close examination either if you want the illusion to last.

Fic\* Self Abused but Still Standing 2 (Chuck Connor, address as for In Defiance...; the usual, I think or 40p; A4 D; 46pp.) Literate fiction zine, with only very slight SF/fantasy bias. Production now neat and unfussy. Well written lead story by John Fraser, The Island, about an artist's attempt to escape the pressures of a totalitarian state while on a tropical island. Ken Mann has a long story entitled Jessica, featuring a gas station attendant called Emerson Rybotham: "The gas gurgle gurgled into the tank. Emerson heard the splashy echoes resounding in the dry tank as the fuel dropped." Despite the clunky style, the ending is effectively horrible without being overstated. The story I enjoyed most, however, was Jocelyn Almond's The Fantasy Function, which I haven't space to describe. There's an interesting typographical poem appropriately called Not For Mills And Boon.

Siddhartha 10 (Ian Williams, 6 Greta Tce., Chester Rd., Sunderland SR4 7RD; the usual; A4 D; 10pp.) Ian writing about Ian, Ian and Ian again. Interesting if you like Ian. He's seen some local rock gigs, some films, been to the Costa Packet on holiday, received some fanzines and bought a video recorder. So now you know. There's also some comment on Novacon's registration cutoff date and on the urge to collect.

Supernova 1 (Simon Bostock, 18 Gallows Inn Close, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 4BW; 35p or £2.10 for 6, or a free issue for a contribution or letter; A5 D; 44pp.) Lots and lots of brief newsy items all crammed together. Goshwow attitude to two London specialist SF bookshops. A plot summary of Lord of the Rings, in case you didn't already know it or didn't feel like reading it all the way through, perhaps; and reviews of The Empire Strikes Back and The Martian Chronicles. Best bits are Andy Sawyer on children's SF, and Alan Dorey on H.G. Wells.

This Farce 2 (Glen Warminger & Alan Marshall, 72 Linacre Ave., Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8PG; the usual or beer; A4 D; 14pp.) About being on the dole, a consciousness-raising group therapist at Glen's engineering firm, and gradually moving towards fannish fandom via Seacon and Albacon, and on the way being puzzled by Norwich fandom's previous reputation with fan-

nish fans (which was gained over three years ago, before their arrival). A fanzine for the sake of doing a fanzine.

Twentythird 2 (Jimmy Robertson, 64 Hamilton Rd., Bellshill, Lanarkshire ML4 1AG, Scotland; the usual; FC D; 8pp.) He says "This ish not as good as last." I disagree. Better writte. Subjects include insights into himself after reading The Stand, and happenings on a trip to Paris. Still politically conscious. Short sentences like this.

The Usual 2 (Chris Lewis, 4 Southfield Rd., & Nic Howard, 5 Grays Lane, Downley, both High Wycombe, Bucks; the usual; A4 D; 18pp.) Better organised than last issue, which doesn't say all that much. Contents include an HHG fan writing about the second series, Nic on poetry, a long thin poem on Space Invaders, and Chris's Noreason report which is quite competently done and fannish in slant. There's also an ad for the Alan Dorey Appreciation Society with wording strikingly similar to a certain poster BSFA members should be familiar with.

#### North America & Canada

Another Remarkable Fanzine 1 (Pope Guilty 1, alias Arthur D. Hlavaty, 250 Coligni Ave., New Rochelle, NY 10801, USA; apas & editorial whim; USQ RL; 2pp.) Personalzine arguing in favour of an outward-looking approach, but also saying "Equal Rights for the Hyperlexic." — That must include anybody who keeps up with Arthur Hlavaty's output.

A\* Benzine 3 (Ben Zuhl, 1224 Elmwood 1E, Evanston, IL 60202, USA; the usual; USQ L; 28pp.) Little personal material. An Andrew Offutt Spayed Gerbil burble; a 1977 Mike Glicksohn article on fandom 5 (now 2) years hence, which isn't entirely inaccurate; and Bob Shaw's Seacon speech, Eau de Clone. Pleasant Bathurst, Foglio and Hanke-Woods illos. Neatly produced, but with the feel of being a mere compilation.

A/G\* The Bimonthly Monthly 13 (The Gang of Four, c/o Robert Runté, 10957-88 Ave., Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 0Y9; \$6 per year or the usual (2 copies of your zine in trade); USQ D; 28pp.) This co-edited fanzine has a really lively group feel to it. They've changed from monthly to bi-, as you'll have noticed. Dave Vereschagin's four-page cover is a graphic essay titled "Post-Modernism Simply Explained." There's a Dieter's Guide to Weight Loss during Fanac, a guide to SF and fandom in Yugoslavia by a fan from that country, and the usual book and film reviews.

The Diagonal Relationship 15 (Arthur D. Hlavaty, address above; \$1 or the usual; USQ RL; 16pp.) About the least-of-three-evils choice in the U.S. (yawn) election; the best quote: "vote for me, I don't wet the bed." Then 4½ pages of historical stuff about literary approaches in SF culminating in a review of The Number of the Beast, and letters.

DNQ 32 (Saara Mar & Taral, c/o 1812-415 Willowdale Ave., Willowdale, Ontario, Canada M2N 5B4, and Victoria Wayne, PO Box 156 Stn D, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6P 3J8; 4/£1 from UK (send cash) or 4/£1.50 when it becomes RSN, or 1-for-1 trade; USQ D; 12pp.) Newszine full of silly hoax reports which are amusing only if you already know the truth, and puzzling if you don't, for example they report Dave and Hazel Langford be-arrested for breaking the Official Secrets Act with War in 2080.

A/F\* Fanhistorica 3 (Joe D. Siclari, 4599 NW 5th Ave., Boca Raton, FL 33431, USA; the usual, \$1.50 or 5 for \$5; USQ D; 50pp.) An essential publication for anyone interested in the history of classical fannish fandom (which in the Fifties was part of a smaller and less splintered fandom than the one that bewilders us now). Much of this issue reprints material by and about F. Towner Laney, a Los Angeles fan of the Forties and Fifties. This may seem irrelevant until one reads the articles particularly for the sheer quality of the writing; this is what is still remembered, because it was the best of its time.

The Gaffation of Miranda Thomson 1 (David Thayer, 7209 De Ville Drive, North Richland Hills, TX 76118, USA; USQ X; the



usual or editorial whim; USQ X; 4pp.) A genuine personalzine, honest but not agonising or mawkish about giving up his regular job to draw a weekly cartoon strip which a distribution service has accepted.

Holier than Thou 8 (Marty Cantor, c/o the Smokers' Den, 117 W. Wilson Ave., Glendale, CA 91203, USA; previous address still valid for small mail; the usual or \$1.00; USQ D; 54pp.) An editorial about workaholism, which Marty has to a high degree (he produced the previous issue in a fortnight as well as doing two apazines and going to work). There are so many words in this issue that some must be good; the good ones are Gary Deindorfer's fanzine reviews, which smack of straight thinking and talking. Marty finishes by defending fillos: "...leaving out the illos will still leave a fanzine with more words than most British (sic) fanzines. And so, about what are they complaining? After all, they do not have to pay the postage to mail out this fanzine."

Lines of Occurrence 3 (Arthur D. Hlavaty again; editorial whim; USQ RL; 8pp.) A not-bad Noreascon report, and signs of a sense of humour: "'Joseph Nicholas reviewed your zine.' 'Oh, what'd he say?' 'Tedious, bland, ignorant, verbose, moronic, offensive...' 'Whew! I was afraid he was mad at me.'"

P\* Love Makes the World Go Awry 4 (Fran Skeene, 207 W. 21st Ave., Vancouver, B.C., Canada V5Y 2E4, Canada; the usual or 4/\$2; USQ L; 18pp.) This zine's previous issues must have had quite an impact — huge quantities of We Also Heard From's, and a very well-edited lettercolumn, particularly about love but also about women with mechanical aptitude undertrained to use it. Also an editorial on the difference between acquaintance and friendship.

Lyriphilia 2 (B. Ware, c/o 313 Bellevue, Cleburne, TX 76031, USA; the usual; USQ X; 10pp.) Neatly produced crudzine on the theme "CybeRock." The editor wisely hides behind a pseudonym.

Pong 1, 2, 3 (Ted White, 1014 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, VA 22046, USA, & Dan Steffan, 823 N. Wakefield St., Arlington, VA 22203, USA; editorial whim or \$5.00 (yes); USQ X; 4, 4, 6pp.) Ted & Dan contribute alternate snippets commenting on fandom as they see it. Mostly silly bits about hunting down the elusive Dick Bergeron, or Harry Bell saying there isn't enough vomiting in American fandom, but with the occasional serious bit on Susan Wood's death and on worldcons. I don't think they've hit their stride yet, but future issues could be really good.

Ruin no. fifty-thing (Mindel-soda Skiffy Society, c/o Sue-Rae Rosenfeld & Stu Shiffman, 19 Broadway Tee., New York, NY 10040, USA; for "one sticky Susan B. Anthony"; USQ D/X; 18pp.) Very silly take-off of the Minneapolis Group's Rune, with all kinds of hoax bits. Funny if you know American fandom.

A/G\* Stefantasy 87 (William M. Danner, RD1, Kennerdell, PA 16374, USA; editorial whim; half-USQ, letterpress; 24pp.) Good illuminating quotes from old Scientific Americans, including an Englishman in 1879 lamenting the decline of British industry at the hands of foreign competition. Plus ca change.... Also a funny bit dated 1990 about the banning of pencils because they were carcinogenic. A fanzine that keeps out times in perspective beautifully, and is produced in an almost unique way for fandom.

G\* The Whole Fanzine Catalog 17 (Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Rd. #207, Detroit, MI 48219, USA; 50¢, 4 for \$2, or 2-for-1 trades; half-USQ RD; 20pp.) Lots of fanzine reviews like mine (or cataloguing, if you don't want to call it reviewing). Also letters and small ads. Get it if you want to get into US fandom.

G\* Women and Men 7 (Denys Howard, 1013 N. 36th, Seattle, WA 98103, USA; the usual (arranged trades) or \$1 per issue; USQ D; 62pp.) A revival of a big late-Seventies feminist gazette. Two reviews of The Dispossessed and an interview with Ursula le Guin; lengthy and mellow fanzine reviews; and a very lengthy lettercolumn. The typical MCP fan view of feminist zines is that they're tense and suspicious, with an axe to grind; this one clearly shows the opposite, being very open and relaxed.

Yandro 250, 251 (Robert & Juanita Coulson, Rt 3, Hartford City, IN 47348, USA; send £1.50 for 5 or £2.50 for 10 to Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Rd., Hoddesdon, Herts., or the usual; USQ D; 48, 52pp.) No. 250 is the Coulsons' Seacon trip report (someone organised a fund to bring them across); it's well produced with photos, they enjoyed it very much (except for the disco music starting up at the Meet-the-Celebrities party as soon as the celebrities had actually been introduced, which I can assure them was definitely not meant to happen — the committee member organising it didn't make his instructions clear enough); and the promptness of their report is a Good Example to other fan fund winners who do belated or non-existent trip reports. No. 251 is a more normal issue, with Dave Locke grouching about the FAAn Awards, a grumpy review of Kubrick's The Shining, book and fanzine reviews and letters.

#### Other Countries

Foreign Fanzine 2 (roelof Goudriaan, Postbus 90255, 1006 BG Amsterdam, The Netherlands; the usual, free for enquirers; A5 RL; 24pp.) Well written for someone whose native tongue is not English — I've read worse by native Englishmen or Americans. He suggests a magazine like Focus in the Netherlands for young writers, kindly reprints the GUFF ballot form, and there is an article about nuclear waste and more cartoons featuring the silly dragon Edgar.

Q 36 D (Marc Ortlieb, 70 Hamblynn Rd., Elizabeth Downs, S. Australia 5113, Australia; the usual; A4 D; 30pp.) Two bits of fiction full of appalling puns, a serious article suggesting that to write of robots superior to men is fascistic, letters, and more cartoons featuring heroic triffids. At least it's neatly printed.

Tanient 11 (Greg Hills, PO Box 11205, Wellington, New Zealand; the usual of £1 in UK; A5, RL; 28pp.) Letters, book reviews, a pronuclear article including a cartoon of an antinuclear protester announcing "Due to power cuts I'll have to keep this speech short." Also a post-Wellcon B report and Southern Fanzine Review, an 8-page zine a bit like this.

G\* Warp 19 (Greg Hills for NZ National Association for SF, PO Box 6655, Te Aro, Wellington, New Zealand; for membership, presumably; A4 RL; 22pp.) Take  $\frac{1}{2}$  Matrix,  $\frac{1}{4}$  Vector, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  Focus and you've got this. Quite interesting, and with a very similar feel to BSFA publications. Write and enquire if you're interested.