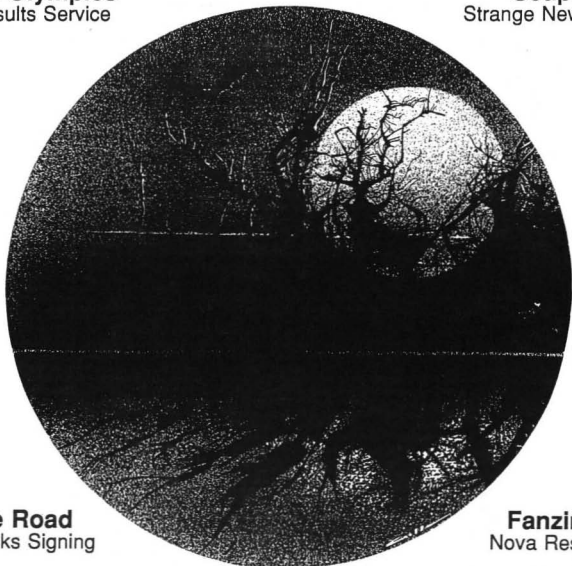


95p *Matrix* 91

*The Newsletter of the British Science Fiction Association*

**Robot Olympics**  
Full Results Service

**Soapbox**  
Strange New SF



**On the Road**  
Iain Banks Signing

**Fanzines**  
Nova Results

**Conventions**

**Clive Barker**

**Reviews** of: *Nightfall*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Robocop 2*, *Frankenstein's Baby*, *The First Power*, *Merlin*, *After the Revelation*.

**Plus** Comics News, Competition Corner and Information Service.

December 1990-January 1991

BSFA membership costs £12 (UK & EC), £15 (non-EC Europe), £18&£25air Australia, \$25&\$40air USA and is available from:

**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:**

Joanne Raine, 29 Thornville Road, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS26 8EW

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS:**

Keith Freeman, 269 Wykeham Road, Reading, Berkshire RG6 1PL

**USA MEMBERSHIP:**

Cy Chauvin, 14248 Wilfred St., Detroit, MI 48213, USA

**BSFA CO-ORDINATOR:**

Maureen Porter, 60 Bourne-mouth Road, Folkestone, CT19 5AZ

**TREASURER:**

Brett Cockrell, 40 Cyprus Road, NW1 7BU  
BSFA AWARDS:

Nicholas Mahoney, 276 Lonsdale Ave, Intake, Doncaster DN2 6HU

**FOCUS EDITOR:**

Kevin Nurse, 49 Station Road, Haxby, York YO3 8LU

**MATRIX EDITOR:**

Jenny Glover, 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP (0532 791264)

**PAPERBACK INFERNO EDITOR:**

Andy Sawyer, 1 The Flaxyard, Little Neston, S. Wirral L64 4BT (051 336 3355)

**VECTOR CO-EDITORS:**

Kevin McVeigh, 37 Firs Road, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7QF  
and Boyd Parkinson, 11 Marsh Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 2AE

**NEWS:**

Dave Hodson, 104 Deben, Gloucester Road, Tottenham, N17 6LN

**MEDIA:**

John Peters, 299 Southway Drive, Plymouth PL6 6QN

**COMPETITIONS:**

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

**CLUBS:**

Tommy Ferguson, 107 South Parade, Belfast BT7 2GN

**INFORMATION:**

Phil Nichols, 57 Grange Road, West Bromwich, B70 8FB

**COMICS:**

Ian Abrahams, Higher Treskerby Farm, Treskerby, Redruth, Cornwall

**SMALL PRESS/MAGAZINES:**

Roger Waddington, 4 Commercial Street, Norton, Malton, N. Yorks. YO17 9ES

This issue printed in 8pt Times Roman, with headings in 12pt or 18pt Helvetica Bold. Production by Jenny and Steve Glover. Thanks to Mike Ford for eleventh-hour rescue from computational doom!

Printed by PDC Copyprint, 11 Jeffries Passage, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4AP.

## BSFA Members Changes of Address:

BEALE, Deborah, Century Random, Century House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, SW1V 2SA  
BENTLEYSTONE, Susan, 24 Park Hill, Moseley, Birmingham B13 8DT

BERTIN, Eddy C, "Dunwich House", Maurits Straatzen 69, B-9050 Genbrugge, Belgium  
BUCK, Daniel, 184 Bexley Lane, Sidcup, Kent

DAY, Dr. Paul, 66 Yew Tree Road, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 0BN

FENSIN, Ellixbeth, 7533 Jeanette Place, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118, USA

HUSK, Gareth "Pooh", 24 High Street, Welford, Northants NN6 7HT

JEFFREY, Stephen R, 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2XA

KELLY, Grant, Flat 2, 23 Havelock St., Sheffield S10 2FP

NIKEL, Suzanne, c/o J. McNaughton, 22 Sighthill Loan, Edinburgh EH11 2JX

PAINTER, David J, 37 Liwyn Mawr Close, Tycoch, Swansea SA2 1JF

PATERSON, Graham R, 16 Angle Park Trc., Edinburgh EH11 2JX

STANFORD, Anne M, c/o 52 Windsor Road, Enfield EN3 6RF

TUTTLE, Lisa, 9 Torinurk, by Tarbert, Argyll PA29 6YE

## New & Rejoined Members

ASSELDONK, Bertie van, Heuvelstraat 33, 5388 Nistelrode, The Netherlands

BARTON, Andrew, Flat 2, 70 Egmont Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5JS

BASS, Daryl G, Hoskine Cottage, Lower Bloors Lane, Kent ME8 7TR

CARRICK, Robert, Finca Pirolja, Llano de Acebuchal, La Alqueria, Abanar de la Torre, Malaga, Spain

CLARK, Neil  
FRANCIS, Ms Marvarine, 11 Balcombe House, Claremont Estate, Streatham Hill, SW2 4AP

HELSINKI Univ. SF Club  
JONES, Stephen P, 37 Heather Close, Langney, Eastbourne, E. Sussex BN23 8DF

LEICHER, J  
LEWIS, Andy, Barleycom, School Road, Hurst, Reading RG10 0DR

MIDDLEY, Carl  
NELSON, Mark  
SHEW, T.A.

TRICKETT, Ms A.  
TUDOR, Martin, 845 Alum Roche Road, Ward End, Birmingham B8 2AG

WHITEHEAD, Gavin J, 36 Meadowside Road, Pangbourne, Reading RG8 7NH

WOOD, David, 1 Priory Close, Marine Hill, Clevedon, Avon BS21 7QA

WOOD, J.A.

## Determinants

If I ever had the faintest, tentative feeling that members did not care much about the BSFA, then the results of the Survey have bludgeoned it out of existence. I was amazed by the offers of help and the mountains of constructive help and advice. Here are a few statistics to tantalise you until a full analysis next time - of the 270 fact filled responses, 231 (85.5%) said that SF formed a major part of their reading; 201 (74.4%) preferred reading SF to fantasy and 151 (55.9%) had been reading SF for more than fifteen years (which, when correlated to age, means that you lot started awfully young).

The debate on *Total Recall* rumbles on in the letter column, the film itself raises the question of whether SF is an essential part of genre thrillers or a commercial decoration. With books like John Varley's *Millennium* or Fred Hoyle's *Orion's Ride*, the SF seems tacked on, as inappropriate as a happy ending for *Total Recall*.

But, as the editorial desk reels from the departure of Paul Kincaid as News Columnist, now replaced by Dave Hodson, Moly Brown and lots of others, John Peters has now reached the end of his two year stint as Media Columnist - two years seems to be as long as a hard-working columnist can retain his lust for word processing. John wants to spend more time with his

excellent fanzine, *Flickers 'n' Frames*. I sympathise: my own fanzine, *Maverick*, has been drooping in neglect since I took over *Matrix*. However, to see only thirty ballots cast to decide the "best" fanzine, swiftest and fanciest of the year at a convention traditionally rich in fanzine distribution, was disappointing. As with the demise of the dinosaurs, there are many possible reasons. Most readers at Novacon simply said that they hardly received fanzines any more: most fanzine editors said they were too expensive to produce for minimal response. Distribution at cons seems to produce even less than minimal feedback; and the cost of postage is a more severe cutter back of words (and weight) than the most mighty editor.

## Contents

News	Paul Kincaid et al.	3
Association News	Keith Freeman The Magazine Chain On being the US agent Cy Chauvin BSFA Awards Nicholas Mahoney	8
Mighty Metal Mechanicals Meet!	Sandy Brown	9
"Movement Measured with a Micrometer..."	Steve Grover	10
Cry "Fanaac"	Rob Meades	10
Media File	John Peters Clive Barker in Person Ian Nathan Reviews Kevin McVeigh, Ian Nathan, Gavin Boyter, Jessica Yates	11
On the Road	Andy Sawyer	15
The Periodic Table	Spend 5 Days Sitting Behind a Table For Less Than £400 M.J. Simpson Cardiff: The New Hot Spot Nigel Parsons	15
1992, here we come!	Conour Mappings	17
Information Service Update	Roger Waddington Phil Nichols	17
Comics News	Ian Abrahams	18
The Transatlantic Fan Fund	Robert Lichtman, Christina Lake, Lillian Edwards	18
Noticeboard	Tommy Ferguson	19
Clubs Column	Tommy Ferguson	20
WriteBack	Paul Beardsley, Peter Tennant, Alexander Vasilkovsky	21
Fire and Hemlock	Farwell, Awards and Fanzines	21
Fan Groups in Eastern Europe	Bridget Wilkinson	23
Soapbox	Steve Rothman	24
Competition Corner	Roger Robinson	24

The artists in the issue are Lesley Ward (pp 12, 13), Andrzej Dubrinsky (pp 8, 23) and Kevin Cullen (cover and the fantastic fillers).

ADVERTISING: Cover (back, ibc, ifc) £40; full page £35; half page £20; quarter page £15. Rates for multiple insertions negotiable. Distribution of loose flyers with BSFA mailings is negotiable. Details from Maureen Porter.

Any opinions expressed are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of either the editor or the BSFA.

Copyright © BSFA, 1990. Individual copyrights are the property of authors and editors. ISSN: 0307 3335. British Science Fiction Association Ltd. Company No. 921500. Registered in England. Registered address - 60 Bourne-mouth Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5AZ. Limited by Guarantee.

**DEADLINE**  
**19th**  
**January**

## NEWS

### Paul Kincaid (and a few others)

Paul Kincaid has reluctantly stepped down from the News Columnist position, due to work demands. After doing a dummy column for Paul's critical eyes to inspect at Novacon, I consider that it is a big job for one person, so there will now be a News Team, led by Dave Hodson, who will handle the new and reprint books, news from the book and publishing worlds and the million and one items of news about science fiction. Dave may be familiar to readers as a hard working Mexican committee member and author of the popular column in *Critical Wave*. The other main news hound is Molly Brown, who will handle the writing aspects which are not covered by *Matrix's* sister magazine, *Focus*. She edits a newsletter for an impressive network of female writers (details in the clubs column) and will be searching for details of competitions of SF interest and other SF news. Both are enthusiastic. Welcome to *Matrix*. [Dave Hodson 104 Debdon, Gloucester Road, Tottenham, London N17 5LN. Molly Brown, 100 Brook Road, South Brentford, Middlesex TW8 0PH]. Miscellaneous News to the editorial address, please.

Help with News and contributions came from Ian Brooks, Steve Glover, Roy Grey, Kev McVeigh, Alexander Popov, Maureen Porter, Ben Roimola, SF *Chronicle*, Charles Stross, Jessica Yates and your editor.

### Errata

A gremlin crept in while files were being transferred internally on our temperamental computer. The winner of the Hugo for Best Novella was Lois McMaster Bujold with "The Mountains of Mourning", while the Best Novelle Hugo went to "Enter a Soldier. Later: Enter Another" by Robert Silverberg. Congratulations to James Grey for pointing this out (he's an admirer of both Ms Bujold and Mr Silverberg). Apologies to all parties concerned.

### Zenith Transformed into New Worlds

*New Worlds*, the most important science fiction magazine ever published in Britain, is to be reborn from the ashes of *Zenith*. The revived *New Worlds* will be edited by David S. Garnett with Michael Moorcock as Consultant Editor, and four issues will be published by Gollancz over the next two years.

Garnett was editor of the original anthology series, *Zenith*, which was originally published by Sphere. However, when Sphere was taken over by Macdonald, it meant that Garnett was responsible for two anthology series from the same publishing house, since he also edits the *Orbit SF Yearbook*. After the second volume of *Zenith* appeared, Orbit decided to cancel the series. Garnett then started looking for another publisher. He reports: "Richard Evans of Gollancz was interested in continuing the series, and then Mike Moorcock suggested that we could revive a publication you may have heard of: *New Worlds*".

The first volume will be published in August 1991 in B-format paperback. Richard Evans intends to publish four issues at intervals of approximately eight months, so that the fourth volume will appear in August 1993. This will be the first regular publication of *New Worlds* since 1976, although occasional A4 magazines have appeared from Manchester.

Garnett adds: "With *New Worlds*, I will be continuing the same editorial policy as *Zenith*: I intend to publish the best contemporary science fiction that is now being written. I don't want horror, I don't want 'fantasy'. Story length will be from 2000 to 20000 words, and payment will be £45 per thousand words.

Moorcock, who retains the rights to the title, says: "Impressed by Dave Garnett's track record as an editor and frustrated that publishers weren't doing enough to encourage the wealth of new talent emerging from the SF field, I offered Dave the editorship of *New Worlds* if he could find a publisher willing to commit themselves fully to the project. Richard Evans of Gollancz was enthusiastic and positive from the beginning and in very little time offered the kind of commitment needed. I think David Garnett's *New Worlds* is going to set the standards for the nineties - and we might even produce something that looks as if it were designed in the nineties! I see *New Worlds* becoming the tip of an iceberg consisting chiefly of the semi-professional magazines represented, for instance, by the New SF Alliance. While David will be the sole editor of *New Worlds*, I shall be available to help with presentation ideas and so on and I'll be contributing. I have a feeling my first guest editorial will have something

to say about the present caution and cynicism of the literary world, including the SF world. See you in *New Worlds* next year!"

### Midnight Rose in Dispute Over Redfox

Midnight Rose, which is producing three series of shared world anthologies for Penguin, has split up over one of the three proposed titles, *Redfox*. The split appears to be acrimonious, and lawyers have apparently been consulted on both sides.

Midnight Rose was established earlier this year by Neil Gaiman, Mary Gentle, Roz Kaveney and Alex Stewart. Through Penguin they were to produce three shared-world anthologies. *Temps*, a British super-heroes anthology in the manner of the American *Wild Cards* anthologies but with a more cynical and humorous tone, has already been completed and is nearly ready for delivery to the publisher. *The Weerde* is a collection of stories concerning the survival throughout human history of races of shape-changers. The middle anthology was to be *Redfox*, based on the characters created by Fox and featured in his comic of the same name. Now, only two months before the collection was due to be delivered to the publisher, Penguin has asked Midnight Rose to drop the anthology.

This is the culmination of a deeper split within Midnight Rose which has come into the open following a dispute about the ownership of the copyright to *Redfox*. Representatives of Midnight Rose claim that the fees paid to Fox were to lease the copyright on *Redfox* for the purpose of the anthology. Fox, however, asserts that the copyright was not his to lease since it is jointly held by himself and Chris Bell, and the fees were normal editorial fees for his work on the anthology. Midnight Rose state that they were not aware of Bell's involvement, and it was the sudden discovery of this which prompted Penguin to drop the project - though the colophon on Volume 2 Number 19 of the *Redfox* comic, dated February 1989, clearly states: "Copyright 1989 by FOX & CHRIS BELL". Where this dispute will end is anybody's guess at the moment.

For now, Midnight Rose has brought forward *The Weerde* anthology - contributions should now be in by the end of December - and has presented ideas for a third anthology to Penguin. Chris Bell, meanwhile, reports that another publisher has already expressed interest in the *Redfox* anthology.

### David Pringle Launches New Magazine

David Pringle, editor and publisher of *Interzone*, has announced a new magazine devoted to popular fiction. Issue one of *Million: the Magazine of Popular Fiction* will appear in December, and will consist of articles about and interviews with writers of all forms of popular fiction including "crime and mystery, family sagas, thrillers, adventure stories, romances, science fiction and fantasy, humorous novels, westerns, horror, historical novels, spy stories, general bestsellers and blockbusting social dramas".

The first issue includes a new Inspector Morse story by Colin Dexter, an interview with Dick Francis, and a profile of James Ellroy.

The magazine will be bi-monthly, with David Pringle as Editor and Publisher, Kim Newman as Associate Editor, and Mike Ashley, Clive Bloom, Mary Cadogan, Kathy Gale, Maxim Jakubowski and Brian Stableford as Advisory Editors.

### New Censorship of Children's Books

Christian fundamentalist and evangelical groups are campaigning to impose censorship on children's books. They claim that any mention of witches, goblins or magic could encourage children to dabble in devil worship, and are trying to persuade publishers and schools to remove all reference to these things in any books they deal with. As the children's writer, Helen Cresswell, says "This leaves C.S. Lewis with *The Lion and the Wardrobe*. Ludicrous as this campaign may seem, it does not mean that it is not having an effect. *The Independent on Sunday* reports a list of subjects drawn up by parents about which their children should not be taught. The list was presented to the headmaster of a primary school in Hampshire. The satanic items on this list include: Space Invaders, role-playing games, religion, ET, Superman, The Beatles, horror movies, CND, Care Bears and The World Council of Churches.

## World Fantasy Award Nominations

The World Fantasy Award Nominations have been announced as:

### BEST NOVEL:

Jonathan Carroll *A Child Across the Sky* (Doubleday); Charles L. Grant *In a Dark Dream* (Tor); Tim Powers *The Stress of Her Regard* (Ace); Dan Simmons *Carrión Comfort* (Dark Harvest/Warner); Jack Vance *Madouc* (Underwood Miller/Ace); Gene Wolfe *Soldier of Arctis* (Tor)

### BEST NOVELLA:

Michael Bishop "Apartheid, Superstings and Mordecai Thubana" (Ziesing); John Crowley "Great Work of Time" (Novelty/Bantam-Spectra); Joe R. Lansdale "On the Far Side of the Cadillac Desert with Dead Folks" (*Book of the Dead*, Bantam); Lucius Shepard "The Father of Stones" (*Asimov's*); Howard Waldrop "A Dozen Tough Jobs" (Ziesing).

### BEST SHORT FICTION:

Scott Baker "Varicose Worms" (*Blood is not Enough*, Morrow); Ed Bryant "A Last Sad Love at the Diner of the Damned" (*Book of the Dead*, Bantam); Jonathan Miller "Mr. Fiddlehead" (*Omni*); Stephen Millhauser "The Illusionist" (*Esquire*); Michael Swanwick "Edge of the World" (*Full Spectrum 2*, Bantam Spectra); Chet Williamson "Yore Skin's Jes's Soft 'N Purty...He Said" (*Razored Saddles*, Dark Harvest/Avon)

### BEST ANTHOLOGY:

ed. Ellen Datlow *Blood is not Enough* (Morrow/Barkley); ed. Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling *The Year's Best Fantasy: Second Annual Collection* (St. Martin's); ed. Joe R. Lansdale & Pat LoBrutto *Razored Saddles* (Dark Harvest/Avon); ed. John Skipp & Craig Spector *Book of the Dead* (Bantam).

### BEST COLLECTION:

John Crowley *Novelty* (Bantam-Spectra); Harlan Ellison *Harlan Ellison's Watching* (Underwood-Miller); Joe R. Lansdale *By Bizarre Hands* (Ziesing); Robert R. McCammon *Blue World & Other Stories* (Grafton/Pocket); Richard Matheson *Collected Stories* (Stream/Press).

### BEST ARTIST:

Tom Canty, James Christiansen, Don Maitz, J.K. Potter.

### SPECIAL AWARD - PROFESSIONAL

Dark Harvest, Paul Mikol & Scott Stodolsky; Ellen Datlow; Underwood-Miller; Mark V. Ziesing.

### SPECIAL AWARD - NON PROFESSIONAL

Richard Chizmar (*Cemetery Dance*); Peggy Nadramia (*Grue*); David B. Silva (*The Horror Show*); Joe Stefano (*Charnel House*).

### LIFE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

There are five nominees, but their names are not released. The judges will name the winner only.

## Other Awards

Aatorx is the most famous Finnish SF award, given annually to the best Finnish SF/fantasy short story in the previous year, and is presented by the Turku SF society. It honours the Finnish SF author Aarne Haapkoiski (1904-61), who wrote under the pen name *Outsider* and the award is named after the robot Aatorx, one of his heroes.

This year it was won by Ari Tervonen for his short story "En Route to the Inverted Universe" (trans). The story starts as hard-core SF but towards the end it evolves to a psychological inner space drama.

Japan's Seiun Awards for Best SF in translation were:

Foreign Novel - Barrington J. Bayley *Collision Course/Collision with Chronos*; Best Short Story - Cordwainer Smith "Think Blue/Count Two"; Best Non-Fiction - Robert L. Forward *Future Magic*.

Holland awarded its special King Kong awards at the Worldcon (further mention of King Kong in Roger Waddington's piece). The winners were: Paul Harland "The Winter Garden"; Jan Ber Landman "The Mound"; Thomas Witzer "The Desirable Lot of the Slender Ones"; Gerben Helinga "Knowfather"; Jan J.B. Kuipers "Their Descriptive God, Softly Weeping".

The 1990 Mythopoeic Awards were presented to *The Stress of Her Regard* - Tim Powers for the Fantasy Award while the Scholarship Award went to *The Annotated Hobbit* - J.R.R. Tolkien annotated by Douglas A. Anderson.

The 1990 Gryphon Award, sponsored by Andre Norton, for the best unpublished fantasy novel by a woman writer, has gone to *A Dream of Drunken Hollow* - Lee Barwood, who was the runner-up last year.

Judges for the 1991 Philip K. Dick Award have been announced. They are Peter Fitting, Mel Gilden, Richard Kadrey, John Kessel and Walter Jon Williams.

The Rhysling Award for SF poetry has been awarded as follows: LONG POEM: *Dean Spaceman* - Patrick McKinnon. SHORT POEM: "Epitaph for Dreams" - G. Sutton Breiding.

## People

**Lisa Tuttle** has announced that she is expecting a baby in February. Meanwhile, she and Colin Murray have moved to Scotland, their new address is 9 Torinurk, by Tarbert, Argyll PA29 6YE.

**Ian McDonald** has written a fantasy novel, *King of Morning, Queen of Day*, which will be published by Bantam in the USA in June, and he has sold a SF novel, *The Inarticulate Speech of the Heart*, plus an untitled short story collection to Bantam USA also.

**David Wingrove's** massive *Chung Kuo* sequence, already announced as seven volumes, seems to be growing all the time. His second volume alone grew to unmanageable length and has had to be severely cut back. Wingrove himself announces it will be a 750 page hardback, though other rumours suggest that it might be two volumes making the series now at least eight volumes long. And the other volumes have still to be written.

Meanwhile, Wingrove is apparently making plans for some private publishing. In an interview in *Locus*, he announces "an anthology, just five writers, Ian McDonald, Eric Brown, Bill King, Mike Cobby and myself, and we're going to bring out an anthology a year".

**Fred Hoyle**, who seems to have given up science fiction to become the over-aged *enfant terrible* of science, is at it again. With several colleagues, he has published a paper in *Nature* attacking the generally accepted theory that the universe was born in the Big Bang. The authors declare that quasars are not so distant as they are generally believed to be, and they dust off Hoyle's own favoured theory of the origin of the universe. However, the new article provides no new evidence to support this theory, and no predictions which would allow it to be tested.

**S.M. Baxter** is attracting attention from US publishers, who have provided a \$15,000 advance on his new novel.

*Is Locus to disappear?* Editor Charles N. Brown writes that he is interested in someone "who has aspirations to take over my job someday". But he doesn't want his magazine to be used as a stepping stone. Charles started *Locus* just over twenty years ago, and is in his early fifties. *Locus* is now a much respected landmark in the sticky world of news magazines, it would be a shame for it to go.

**Liz Holliday's** article on women science fiction writers appeared in *The Guardian*, October 4 issue. Women to watch out for are Americans Karen Joy Fowler, Connie Willis and Pat Murphy and Britons Mary Gentle and Gwyneth Jones plus new writers Sherry Coldsmith, Susan Beestlestone and Nicola Griffin.

Colin Greenland reported on the Worldcon for *The Sunday Times*, September 9 issue and provided a user's guide from Ray Bradbury to Storm Constantine. This was divided into thematic sections, studied with witty quotes. Samuel R. Delany is described as "sexy boy-wonder turned Ivy League Professor...he makes an excellent tutor, apparently", Lucius Shepard's stories convey "a Conradian moral sensibility in a style both hallucinatory and terse", Geoff Rymen, one of "the British A-team" is "luminous", the female writers, Mary Gentle writes "aromatic, carnal, Jacobean dramas", while Storm Constantine "charms ... the earnest new hippies, with apocalypses of her own design, in lots of purple and black".

Tom Shippey interviewed veteran SF fan Peter Weston for *The Guardian*, September 17 issue. Peter Weston comments that science fiction is about things. "Making things and changing things".

Jessica Yates comments on the amount of science fiction in *the Guardian*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Bookseller* and the *New Statesman*, which, this year, have included an interview with Ray Bradbury (*Guardian* 24/8), an article about P.K. Dick with not entirely serious comments on the film *Bladerunner* "as an icon of post-modernism" (*Guardian* 24/7), comics articles, like "Police powerless to halt sex comics" (*Sunday Telegraph* 21/10) and "Sex and violence give birth to a new comic craze" (*Daily Telegraph* 23/9).

Alexander Popov wants to found a publishing house in Bulgaria and will launch a magazine also. It will be A4, 32 pages, glossy, SF and fantasy and maybe horror. It will be called *OtheXtWorlds* and Alexander asks if BSFA readers would be kind enough to send any spare copies of UK or US SF magazines, which are impossible to buy in Bulgaria. He can be contacted at 7000 Rousse, Alexander x Petrov St 19B, Bulgaria.

## Contests

THE TURNER TOMORROW AWARD offers publication and a \$50,000 promotion campaign for the winner and four runners up in their competition for unpublished works of fiction set in the near future with "themes ensuring the survival and prosperity of all life on our planet". Details from The Turner Tomorrow Awards, c/o Turner Publishing Inc., One CNN Center, Box 103566, Atlanta, Georgia, 30348-5366, USA, closing date 31 December.

THE BULMER-LYTON FICTION CONTEST is an annual event that asks entrants to compose the worst possible opening sentence to a novel. Anyone anywhere can enter. Entries should be submitted on index cards, the sentence on one side, the entrant's address on the other and will be judged by categories (including SF). Deadline April 15, 1991, chosen because Americans associate it with another painful submission. Send entries to Bulmer-Lynton Fiction Contest, Department of English, San Jose University, San Jose, CA 95192-0090, USA.

THE IAN ST JAMES AWARDS are now accepting entries for the 1991 awards. Short stories of 5-10,000 words on any subject except children's stories may be entered by a UK/Irish resident over 18 who has not had fiction previously published in book form. Top prize £12,000. Entry forms from bookshops or from The Ian St James Trust, PO Box 13711, London W5 2PN, closing date 31 January 1991.

LYRE MAGAZINE short story competition offers cash prize and publication for winning short (under 7500 words) SF, fantasy or horror story. Entries to Ian Sales, 56 Southwell Road East, Mansfield, Notts NG21 0EW.

Northwest Playwrights are invited to send two copies of their play with name and address to be assessed. Six plays will be workshopped in the summer with a professional cast. It is open to anyone whose play has not had a professional appearance and should be sent to Melanie Harris, Co-ordinator, NWPW, Contact Theatre, Oxford Road, Manchester M15 6JA with a large sae by January 14, 1991.

EUROPE AWARD FOR LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS is aimed at promoting excellence for young readers between the ages of 8-16 within the EC. Winning manuscript will be published by four European publishers in addition to a prize of 15,000 ec. Details and entry form from The Children's Publicity Department, Harper Collins Publishers, 8 Grafton Street, London W1X 3LA. Closing date 31 March 1991.

## Science Fiction Plays, Courses, Days Out

The Writers Guild will be holding a meeting on the craft of writing genre fiction (crime, SF, horror, etc.) in London early in the New Year. The date and venue are still to be confirmed. For further information, contact The Writers Guild at 071 723 8074 or Mary Scott at 071 263 3514.

*The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* will be shown by Contact Theatre Company at the Contact Theatre, Oxford Road, Manchester M15 6JA, from December 5 to January 19, 1991. It has original music by Akintayo Akintode. Contact 061 274 4400/4747.

Southeast Writers are a group of writers who meet regularly in each other's homes and have spaces free for new members. They started from a science fiction and fantasy writing workshop and have expanded their field of interest to include horror and crime. Details from Jenni Goss, 55 Sandwich House, Sandwich Street, London WC1H 9PP.

*Fantasy in Fiction* is a writing event at the Link Centre, Whitehill Way, Swindon on Saturday 9 March 7.30-9.30pm. Tickets are £3.50 (concessions £2.50). Mary Gentle, Brian Stableford and Christopher Priest will answer questions and discuss their work.

Brian Stableford will conduct a Science Fiction writing workshop (1.00-5.00pm) at the above Link Centre. Tickets are £5.00 (£4.00 concessions), but check in advance, as there are a limited number of places.

*Furtive Nudist* is the latest Ken Campbell show, to be shown at the Riverside Studios, January 10-26, 1991, no Sunday performance. It is "a treasure of wild improbabilities, bizarre coincidences and weird manifestations". Tickets are £7.00, concessions £5.50, details from 081 748 3354.

There is an Ian Watson day school at Keele University, Saturday March 2, 1991, 10.30-3.30pm, chaired by the energetic Phil Emery. Ian Watson will talk about his work, speculate about the future of science fiction and then host a discussion with the audience. It is organised by the Adult and Continuing Education Department of the University of Keele, 0782 625116.

## Obituaries

Jacques Demy, French film director, best known for *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*, whose work included the adaptation of the Charles Perrault fairy story *Peau d'âne* (1970), a version of *The Pied Piper* (1972), a fantasy called *A Slightly Pregnant Man* (1973) and a variation on Orpheus titled *Parking* (1985) died on October 27, 1990, aged 59.

Lawrence Durrell, the novelist and poet, died at his home in Provence on November 7, 1990, aged 78. His fiction, which frequently included elements of the fantastic, was not usually well received by critics in this country w<sup>h</sup>Xre his very rich prose ran directly against the norm of English literature, but his reputation on the continent was very high indeed. Although he had published several earlier books, including the novel *The Black Book* (1938) which was denied publication in this country for some thirty eight years because it was considered obscene, he first found fame with his extraordinary sequence of novels, *The Alexandria Quartet* (1957-60), each of which deal with the same sequence of events from different perspectives, including the perspective of time. *The Dark Labyrinth* (1947) was a retelling of the legend of the Minotaur set in modern Crete, and in the two novels which made up *The Revolt of Aphrodite*, *Tunc* (1968) and *Numquam* (1970), he turned directly to science fiction with a story about corporate interference in private lives centring upon a super computer which could predict the future and an android replica of the lover of the head of the multi-national corporation. The scientific elements of these two books were not rigorously thought out, and they are not generally considered among his best work, but they show a willingness to use and explore the tropes of science fiction which was unusual for mainstream fiction of the period. His most recent fiction was the *Avignon Quintet* (1974-85) which features a quest for the gnostic secrets of the Knights Templar and in which supposedly fictional characters mingle freely with supposedly real characters so that the barriers between fantasy and reality are broken down.

Donald A. Wollheim, founder and publisher of Daw books, died in early November after a long illness, reports Chuq von Rosbach over FAPA. He was 76. A leader of the Futurians in the 30's, he was founder of FAPA, the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. He edited *Stirring Science Stories* and *Cosmic Stories*, edited the SF line at Ace for twenty years and was responsible for the Ace Doubles and Terry Carr's Ace Specials series. In 1972, he started his own imprint and published, among other things, his "Best SF of the Year" anthology until this year.

Don Wollheim, along with the Ballantines, were instrumental in making the field of Science Fiction a viable part of publishing. Don did his part to also make it good with the Ace Science Fiction series.

Ugo Tognazzi, Italian actor best known for *La Cage aux Folles*, who also appeared in *Barbarella*, died on October 27, 1990, aged 68.

## Publishing

1991 is shaping up to be an excellent year for SF reference books. After news last issue that the Nicholls/Clute Encyclopedia will be appearing from Orbit next autumn, there follows the news that St. James Press will be publishing the third edition of *Twentieth Century SF Writers* next year also. The plan appears to be to significantly expand the work to include fantasy and horror, as well as to include many new writers who have emerged since the second edition appeared in 1986.

*Intersone* and the American magazine, *Aboriginal SF*, have arranged an unusual swap. The contents of the June issue of *Intersone* will be published as the July-August issue of *Aboriginal*, while the May-June issue of *Aboriginal* will be published as the July *Intersone*. Contributors will be paid for both American and British publication.

Orson Scott Card is the author of one of the first two books in a new series from Robinson. "Writer's Workshop" is a new series of books that are being described as "Practical guides on every aspect of better writing". Card is the author of *Characters and Viewpoint*, while the companion volume also has science fiction connections since the author of *Plot* is Anson Dibell, the pen name of a writer credited with a "five novel science fiction series *The Rule of One*". Forthcoming volumes in the series include: *Dialogue, Revision, Theme and Strategy* and *Manuscript Submission*.

*Pulphouse*, the US hardback magazine, has decided to shut down in a manner of speaking. The hardback will end as from issue 12, then *Pulphouse: A Weekly Magazine* will appear as a newsheet magazine.

Baen Books have purchased an untitled novel by Lois McMaster Bujold, tentatively described as being a "Miles Vorkosigan's preening adventures". One wonders if Miles was born with that Chinese curse of living in interesting times.

## Anthologies and Collections

Alex Stewart has announced the contents of the first *Tempus* anthology due out from Penguin: "The Rose Garden" - David V. Barrett, "The College Spirit" - Storm Constantine, "Nothing Special" - Colin Greenland, "The String Man" - Graham Higgins, "Third Person Singular" - Liz Holliday, "Lonely Impulse" - Roz Kaveney, "Leaks" - David Langford, "Frog Day Afternoon" - Marcus L. Rowland, "The Oedipus Effect" - Brian Stableford, "Someone to Watch Over Me" - Alex Stewart, "Pitbull Britain" - Jack Yeovil, plus linking material by Neil Gaiman.

Isaac Asimov has already had one trawl through his robot stories in the recent *Robot Dreams*, now he's back on familiar territory again with *Robot Visions* (Gollancz), a collection of eighteen stories going back to the first robot story he ever wrote, and only three of which have not previously been collected, and with sixteen essays on robots added. The contents are: "Robot Visions", "Too Bad!", "Robbie", "Reason", "Liar!", "Runaround", "Evidence", "Little Lost Robot", "The Evitable Conflict", "Feminine Intuition", "The Bicentennial Man", "Someday", "Think!", "Segregationist", "Mirror Image", "Lenny", "Galley Slave", "Christmas without Rodney"; Essays: "Robots I have known", "The New Teachers", "Whatever you wish", "The Friends we Make", "Our Intelligent Tools", "The Laws of Robotics", "Future Fantastic", "The Machine and the Robot", "The New Profession", "The Robot as Enemy?", "Intelligences Together", "My Robots", "The Laws of Humanics", "Cybernetic Organism", "The Sense of Humor", "Robots in Combination".

The fifth and final volume of Philip K. Dick's *Collected Stories* has appeared from Gollancz under the title *The Little Black Box*. It contains: "The Little Black Box", "The War with the Fnools", "A Game of Unchance", "Precious Artifact", "Retreat Syndrome", "A Terran Odyssey", "Your Appointment will be

Yesterday", "Holly Quarrel", "We Can Remember It for you Wholesale", "Not by its Cover", "Return Match", "Faith of our Fathers", "The Story to End all Stories for Harlan Ellison's Anthology *Dangerous Visions*", "The Electric Arm", "Cadbury, the Beaver who Lacked", "A Little Something for us Tempunauts", "The Pre-Persons", "The Eye of the Sibyl", "The Day Mr Computer Fell Out of its Tree", "The Exit Door Leads in", "Chains of Air, Web of Aether", "Strange Memories of Death", "I Hope I Shall Arrive Soon", "Rautavaara's Case" and "The Alien Mind", plus an introduction by Thomas M. Disch.

*Digital Dreams*, edited by David V. Barrett (NEL) is described as "the first-ever all-British anthology of computer stories". It contains: "Bronze Casket for a Mummified Shew-Mouse" - Garry Kilworth, "Digital Cats Come Out Tonight" - Ben Jeapes, "What Happened at Cambridge IV" - David Langford, "The World of the Silver Writer" - Anne Gay, "Forgotten Milestones in Computing No. 7: The Quenderghast Bullian Algebraic Calculator" - Alex Stewart, "#ifdef DEBUG 'world/enough' + 'time'" - Terry Pratchett, "The Great Brain Legend" - Josephine Saxton, "The Reconstruction of M'ingus" - Phil Manchester, "Twister of Words" - Michael Fearn, "The Mechanical Art" - Andy Sawyer, "Last Case Assimilation" - Storm Constantine, "Virus" - Neil Gaiman, "Measured Perspective" - Keith Roberts, "Where He Went" - Paul Kincaid, "The Coleridge Bombers" - Paul Beardsley, "Dependent" - David V. Barrett, "Nad and Dan adn Quaffy" - Diana Wynne Jones, "The Machine it Was that Cried" - John Grant, "The Lord of the Files" - Ray Girvan & Steve Jones, "Speaking in Tongues" - Ian McDonald.

Women's Press has produced a new collection of short stories by the Canadian writer, Candace Jane Dorsey, *Machine Sex and Other Stories*. This introduction to a writer who is virtually unknown over here contains: "Sleeping in a Box", "Johnny Appealed on the New World", "Death and Morning", "The Prairie Warriors", "War and Rumours of War", "Black Dog", "(Learning About) Machine Sex", "You'll Remember Mercury", "Time is the Fire in Which We Burn", "Columbus Hits the Shoreline Rag", "the white city", "By Their Taste Shall Ye Know Them" and "Willows".

Stephen King, who seems to be producing longer and longer books as each year passes, has filled his latest massive offering with four novellas, a couple of them long enough to pass as novels in any other circumstances. The four novellas in *Four Past Midnight* (Hodder) are: "The Langoliers", "Secret Window, Secret Garden", "The Library Policeman" and "The Sun Dog".

Robert Aickman has a new posthumous collection of stories, *The Unsettled Dust*, out from Mandarin. It contains: "The Unsettled Dust", "The Houses of the Russians", "No Stronger than a Flower", "The Ciceroes", "The Next Glade", "Ravissans", "Bind your Hair" and "The Stains".

And since we are on the subject of horror, this seems to be the in-thing at the moment with three new collections edited by Stephen Jones. The first is an original collection co-edited with David Sutton, *Dark Voices 2*, otherwise known as the re-venant *Pan Book of Horror Stories* and available, unsurprisingly, from Pan. It contains: "Behind the Wheel" - Brian Stableford, "Gino's Bar and Grille" - Tony J. Forder, "The Pleasure of Her Company" - Thomas F. Monteleone, "The Invocation" - Ramsey Campbell, "Choose!" - Norman P. Kaufman, "Duty" - Roy Clifford, "Moths" - John Brunner, "The Baby" - Guy N. Smith, "The Man Who Drew Cats", "Michael Marshall Smith, "Face to Face" - Adrian Cole, "Southbound Interruption" - Conrad Hill, "The Vulture" - Marcus Gold, "The Halloween Man" - William F. Nolan, "Alive in Venice" - Cherry Wilder and "The Sun, the Sea and the Silent Scream" - Brian Lumley.

Stephen Jones and David Sutton are also co-editors of *Fantasy Tales 5* from Robinson, now well along its transformation from small-press magazine to regular bi-annual anthology. Contents this issue are: "Invisible Boy" - Roberta Lannes, "The Changer of Names" - Ramsey Campbell, "Night Bloomer" - David J. Schow, "On the Wing" - Jean-Daniel Bregue, "Family Ties" - Elsa Beckett, "Black the Water" - Jessica Amanda Salmonson, "Dead on Time" - Nik Morton, "The Bridge People" - J.N. Williamson, "The Gnarl" - Randall D. Larson, "Scoop" - Samantha Lee, "The Cabinets" - Gary William Crawford, "Honour Bright" - Lee Barwood and "Networks" - Garry Kilworth.

One is tempted to wonder how many of those will appear in next year's edition of the third outing from Stephen Jones, this time co-edited with Ramsey Campbell. *Best New Horror* from Robinson is the first best of the year

anthology in horror to appear in this country and its selection for the cream of the crop for 1989 is: "Pin" - Robert R. McCammon, "The House on Cemetery Street" - Cherry Wilder, "The Horn" - Stephen Gallagher, "Breaking Up" - Alex Quiroba, "It Helps if you Sing" - Ramsey Campbell, "Closed Circuit" - Laurence Staig, "Carnal House" - Steve Rasnic Tem, "Twitich Technicolor" - Kim Newman, "Lizaveta" - Gregory Frost, "Snow Cancellations" - Donald R. Burleson, "Archway" - Nicholas Royle, "The Strange Design of Master Rignolo" - Thomas Ligotti, "... To Feel Another's Woe" - Chet Williamson, "The Last Day of Miss Dorinda Molyneux" - Robert Westall, "No Sharks in the Med" - Brian Lumley, "Morte au Monde" - D.F. Lewis, "Blanca" - Thomas Tessier, "The Eye of the Ayatollah" - Ian Watson, "At First Just Ghostly" - Karl Edward Wagner and "Bad News" - Richard Laymon. Nice to see that nine of the contributors are British - we seem to be doing pretty well at horror at least.

Brian Lumley, who has been using H.P. Lovecraft's Dreamland as the setting for three novels so far, has now produced a collection of five stories set there. *Iced on Aran* (NEL) contains: "Iced on Aran", "Augeren", "A Day in the Life ...", "A-mazed in Oriab" and "Tale's Tail".

For younger readers, there are two recent collections from Gollancz. *Frontiersville High* by Stephen Bowkett contains four linked stories set in the first high school in space and contains: "The Jump", "Something Lost, Something Found", "The Jolly Juice Incident" and "Captain Cosmos and the Timebomb Ransom Scam". While for more supernatural and macabre tales, there is *A Fit of Shivers* from Joan Aiken which contains: "Number Four, Bowstring Lane", "Earrings", "An L-shaped Grave", "Something", "Birthdays Gifts", "The Rose-Garden Dream", "Watkyn, Comma", "The Shrieking Door", "Cousin Alice" and "The Legacy".

And younger readers are also the intended audience for the new collection of short stories from Garry Kilworth. *Dark Hills, Hollow Clocks*, from Methuen, is subtitled "Stories from the Otherworld" and contains fables and fairy stories. It consists of: "Dogfaerie", "Dark Hills, Hollow Clocks", "The Dragon Slayer", "The Goblin Jag", "Warrior Wizards", "The Sleeping Giants", "The Hungry Ghosts", "Changelings", "The Orkney Trows", "Scarecrows".

## New Books: October-December 1990

Jerry AHERN *Final Rain* (NEL pb £2.99) 1st UK edn of The Survivalist 19 Robert AICKMAN *The Unsettled Dust* (Mandarin pb £3.99) 1st edn of posthumous collection of stories  
Joan AIKEN *A Fit of Shivers* (Gollancz hb £8.95) 1st edn of new collection of spinechilling stories for children  
Gill ALDERMAN *The Land Beyond* (Unwin hb £13.95) 1st edn of new novel by the author of *The Archivist*  
Piers ANTHONY *Unicorn Point* (NEL hb £13.95, pb £7.99) 1st UK edn of what may be the final part of his Adept series  
Isaac ASIMOV *Robot Visions* (Gollancz hb £12.95) 1st UK edn of collection of robot stories and essays  
David V. BARRETT *ed. Digital Dreams* (NEL pb £4.50) 1st edn of original anthology of computer stories  
Gael BAUDINO *Strands of Starlight* (Orbit pb £7.99) 1st UK edn of fantasy novel  
George BEAHM *Ed. The Stephen King Companion* (Macdonald hb £13.95) 1st UK edn of collection of articles, reviews and trivia about King  
Ben BOVA *Voyagers III: Star Brothers* (Methuen hb £14.99) 1st UK edn of final part of *Voyagers* trilogy  
Stephen BOWKETT *Frontiersville High* (Gollancz hb £8.95) 1st edn of collection of linked stories set in the first high school in space  
Orson Scott CARD *Character & Viewpoint* (Robinson pb £5.99) 1st UK edn of part of "Writer's Workshop" series  
Joan CLARKE *Take Your Time* (Cape hb £7.95) 1st edn of SF novel for teenagers  
Adrian COLE *Labyrinth of Worlds* (Unwin pb £6.99) 1st edn of Star Requiem 4  
David COOK *Horstlorde* (Penguin pb £3.99) 1st UK edn of 1st part of the Empires Trilogy, a Forgotten Realms fantasy  
Annie DALTON *The Afterdark Princess* (Methuen hb £7.95) 1st edn of fantasy novel for children  
Ansen DIBELL *Plot* (Robinson pb £5.99) 1st UK edn of part of "Writer's Workshop" series

Philip K. DICK *The Little Black Box* (Gollancz hb £14.95) 1st UK edn of 5th & final volume in his collected stories  
Stephen DONALDSON *The Gap into Conflict: The Real Story* (Collins hb £12.95) 1st UK edn of 1st part of 5-volume SF adventure  
Joe DONNELLY *Stone* (Barrie & Jenkins hb £12.99) 1st edn of horror novel  
Candas Jane DORSEY *Machine Sex and Other Stories* (Women's Press pb £4.95) 1st UK edn of collection by new Canadian writer  
Doris EGAN *The Gate of Ivory* (Mandarin pb £3.99) 1st UK edn of novel subtitled "A Spellbound World"  
Rhys GARNETT & R J ELLIS *Eds. Science Fiction Roots and Branches* (Macmillan hb £35, pb £9.99) 1st edn of anthology of academic criticism of SF  
Joe HALDEMAN *The Hemingway Hoax* (NEL hb £12.95) 1st UK edn of new novel about interdimensional problems that arise from a literary hoax  
David HENSHALL *Starchild and Witchfire* (Macmillan pb £4.99) 1st edn of fantasy for children  
Shaun HUTTON *Renegades* (Macdonald hb £12.95) 1st edn of horror novel  
Peter James *Sweet Heart* (Gollancz hb £13.95) 1st edn of horror novel  
Mike JEFFERIES *Hall of Whispers* (Fontana pbk £3.99) 1st edn of sequel to *Glitterspike Hall*  
Stephen JONES & David SUTTON *Eds. Dark Voices 2* (Pan pb £3.99) 1st edn of revised Pan Book of Horror Stories; *Fantasy Tales 5* (Robinson pb £2.95) 1st edn of collection of horror and fantasy stories  
Stephen JONES & Ramsey CAMPBELL *Eds. Best New Horror* (Robinson pb £6.99) 1st edn of new best of the year anthology series  
Garry KILWORTH *Midnight's Sun* (Unwin hb £12.95) 1st edn of "A Story of Wolves"; *Dark Hills, Hollow Clocks* (Methuen hb £8.95) 1st edn of collection of fairy stories for younger readers  
Stephen KING *Four Past Midnight* (Hodder hb £14.99) 1st UK edn of massive (nearly 700 pages) collection of four novellas  
Richard A KNAAK *Kaz the Minotaur* (Penguin pb £3.99) 1st UK edn of Vol 1 of Dragonlance Heroes II  
Richard LAYMON *The Stake* (Headline hb £13.95) 1st UK edn of horror novel  
Ursula LeGUIN *Tehanu* (Gollancz hb £9.95) 1st UK edn of long awaited Last Book of Earthsea  
Roy LEWIS *The Extraordinary Reign of King Ludd* (Patten Press hb £10.25) 1st edn of alternative history novel by the author of *The Evolution Man*  
Penelope LUCAS *Wilderness Moon* (Bantam hb £12.99) 1st UK edn of fantasy novel  
Brian LUMLEY *Iced on Aran* (Headline pbk £3.50) 1st edn of collection of stories which continue his fantasy series set in H.P. Lovecraft's Dreamland  
Anne McCaffrey *The Rowan* (Bantam hb £12.99) 1st UK edn of novel about attempts to rescue a rare telepathic child trapped in a mudslide; *The Renegades of Pern* (Bantam pb £7.99) 1st UK edn of latest Pern novel  
Phillip MANN *Wulfsyarn* (Gollancz hb £13.95) 1st edn of new novel about investigation into the disappearance of a shipload of refugees  
Ardath MAYHAR *A Place of Silver Silence* (Hutchinson hb £7.99) 1st UK edn of novel for children  
Grant NAYLOR *Better Than Life* (Viking hb £13.99) 1st edn of 2nd Red Dwarf novel  
Douglas NILES *Ironhelm* (Penguin pb £3.99) 1st UK edn of Book One of The Maztica Trilogy - how can you resist a book set "in a corner of the world far removed from the known Forgotten Realms"?  
Jane PALMER *Moving Moosevan* (Women's Press pb £4.95) 1st edn of sequel to *The Planet Dweller*  
Frederik POHL *Homegoing* (Gollancz hb £13.95) 1st edn of new novel about a human raised by aliens and now returning to Earth  
Terry PRATCHETT *Moving Pictures* (Gollancz hb £12.95) 1st edn of new Discworld novel  
Fred SABERHAGEN *Berserker Blue Death* (VGSF pb £3.99) 1st UK edn of latest Berserker novel  
Bob SHAW *Orbitville Judgement* (Gollancz hb £13.95) 1st UK edn of concluding volume of the Orbitville trilogy  
Susan SHWARZ *Silk Roads and Shadows* (Pan pbk £3.99) 1st UK edn of fantasy novel  
Keith TAYLOR *Raven's Gathering* (Headline pb £3.50) 1st UK edn of Bard IV  
Patrick TILLEY *Earth Thunder* (Sphere pb £3.99) 1st edn of book 6 of The Amtrak Wars  
Tim UNDERWOOD & Chuck MILLER *Eds. Fear Itself* (Pan pb £4.99) 1st UK edn of collection of essays on Stephen King

Ian WATSON *The Flies of Memory* (Gollancz hb £13.95) 1st edn of new novel about contact with aliens

Margaret WEIS & Tracy HICKMAN *The Prophet of Akhran* (Bantam pb £4.50) 1st UK edn of vol 3 of *Rose of the Prophet*

Jack WILLIAMSON *Mazeway* (Mandarin pb £3.99) 1st UK edn of new novel by a grand master of SF

David WINGROVE *The Broken Wheel* (NEL hb £14.95) 1st edn of Bk 2 of *Chung Kuo*

## Reprinted Books: October - December 1990

Gill ALDERMAN *The Archivist* (Unwin pb £3.99) Rep (Unwin 1989) of acclaimed first novel by new British writer

Piers ANTHONY *Heaven Cent* (NEL PB £3.99) Rep (NEL 1989) of 2nd vol in latest *Xanth* trilogy

Isaac ASIMOV *Azazel* (Bantam pb £3.50) Rep (Doubleday 1989) of collection of fantasy stories

Clive BARKER *The Great and Secret Show* (Fontana pb £4.99) Rep (Collins 1989) of the 1st Book of the Art, which mysteriously manages to exclude all reference to the publisher from the cover

Octavia BUTLER *Wild Seed* (VGSF pb £3.99) Rep (Sidgwick & Jackson 1980) of novel about a struggle between two immortal telepaths

Arthur C. CLARKE *The Wind from the Sun* (VGSF pb £3.50) Rep (Gollancz 1972) of collection of stories from the 60s

Richard COWPER *The Twilight of Briareus* (VGSF pb £3.99) Rep (Gollancz 1974) of novel by Cowper at his very best

David EDDINGS *Sorceress of Darshiva* (Corgi pb £4.99) Rep (Bantam 1989) of Bk 4 of *The Malloreon*

Charles L. GRANT Ed. *Night Terrors* (Headline pb £3.99) Rep (Headline 1989) of collection of horror stories by David Morrell, Joseph Payne Brennan and Karl Edward Wagner

John GRIBBIN *Father to the Man* (VGSF pb £3.50) Rep (Gollancz 1989) of his first solo novel

Joe HALDEMAN *The Long Habit of Living* (NEL pb £3.50) Rep (NEL 1989) of novel about an immortality process

Dean R. KOONTZ *Darkness Comes* (Headline hb £13.95) Rep (W.H. Allen 1984) of horror novel; *Shattered* (Headline hb £13.95) Rep (Arthur Barker 1974, as by K.R. Dwyer) of horror novel

Richard LAYMON *Flesh* (Headline pb £3.99) Rep (W.H. Allen 1987); *Furand* (Headline pb £4.50) Rep (W.H. Allen 1989) two horror novels

Mark MORRIS *Toady* (Corgi pb £4.99) Rep (Piatkus 1989) of horror novel

Roberta MURPHY *The Enchanted* (Mandarin pb £3.50) Rep (Heinemann 1989) of horror novel

Jenny NIMMO *Emlyn's Moon* (Mammoth pb £2.50), *The Chestnut Soldier* (Mammoth pb £2.50) Rep (Methuen 1987 & 1989) of parts 2 & 3 of *The Snow Spider* trilogy; *Tatty Apple* (Mammoth pb £1.99) Rep (Methuen 1984) of children's fantasy about a green rabbit

Terry PRATCHETT *Guards! Guards!* (Corgi pb £3.99) Rep (Gollancz 1989) of 8th Discworld novel

Kim Stanley ROBINSON *Escape from Kathmandu* (Unwin pb £3.99) Rep (Unwin 1980) of linked humorous stories set in the Himalayas

Richard SANFORD *The Calling* (NEL pb £3.50) Rep (NEL 1990) of horror novel

Dan SIMMONS *Song of Kali* (Headline pb £3.99) Rep (Headline 1987) of World Fantasy Award winning horror novel; *Carrion Comfort* (Headline pb £4.99) Rep (Headline 1990) of Bram Stoker Award winning horror novel

Antony SWITHIN *Princess of Sandstare* (Fontana pb £2.99) Rep (Fontana 1990) of Bk 1 of *The Perilous Quest for Lyonessa*

Sheri S TEPPER *The Gate to Women's Country* (Corgi pb £3.99) Rep (Bantam 1989) of novel about a war between sexes

Jack VANCE *Showboat World* (VGSF pb £3.50) Rep (Coronet 1977) of novel set on the waterways of his Big Planet

Freda WARRINGTON *The Rainbow Gate* (NEL pb £3.99) Rep (NEL 1989) of fantasy novel

Tad WILLIAMS *The Dragonbone Chair* (Legend pb £4.99) Rep (Century 1989) of Bk 1 of *Memory, Sorrow and Thorn*

## Association News

BSFA readers often ask about BSFA committee members and about the BSFA services. Last issue described the Orbit system of writing workshops, this time Keith Freeman writes about the Magazine Chain.

### The Magazine Chain

Keith Freeman

The magazines circulated at present are: *Amazing*, *Analog*, *Magazine of Fantasy and SF*, *Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine* and *Weird Tales*. Members are requested to send an initial subscription of not less than £1, from which 10p is deducted for each magazine when it is sent out on the part of the chain including the member's name. A reminder is sent out when the credit is nearly exhausted, but the member's name is not removed from the circulation list immediately, to avoid issues being missed while the renewal is in the post.

Each member is requested to send on the magazine(s) to the next member after them on the list inside the front cover (ignoring the numbers preceding the names which are for my use) within a week. Each member should also put the dates of receipt and despatch by their name. The appropriate postal charge is stated at the head of the circulation list. Unless only later ones are asked for, new members will be sent the next issue available of whichever magazines they specify - more recent issues come subsequently. How old the "back issues" are cannot be stated - they usually vary from six to eighteen months earlier. As a new member is put on the "end of the queue", it is normally a fair while until the first magazine arrives if "recent" copies only are requested.

Any cheques or postal orders sent in connection with the magazine chain should be made out to the B.S.F.A. Ltd. If you have any other queries, please contact Keith Freeman, 269 Wykeham Road, Reading RG6 1PL. (Tel: 0734 666142).

At Novacon, Roger Robinson carefully lay in wait for BSFA Committee members to photograph them in preparation for future appearances in this magazine, but in the meantime, Cy Chauvin, the US BSFA agent, wrote a little on himself and his motivation.

### On Being the US Agent

Cy Chauvin

I took on being the US agent, because I have always been fond of *Vector* and British SF and it seemed to be a great way to help out. I wish more North Americans read *Vector* and other BSFA publications, but there is a lot of competition and serious discussion of SF has become a rarity. I suppose it is hard to be too serious when so many other matters deserve more serious attention - although if SF were more actively involved in changing the real world, perhaps we wouldn't feel that way. [Cy adds that he used to write book reviews, in the days when he had time and that his favourite authors are now Barbara Pym and Gene Wolfe].

### The BSFA Awards

Nicholas Mahoney

It is the time of year to survey what has been published. What novels have you read first published this year? Short stories? What original artwork have you seen on or in books and magazines from 1990? Media presentations?

It is time perhaps to slink off and read that book you bought last month that you were sure would be the best of the year, to sample the field of contenders for those five best short stories wherever they might have been published. To ask yourself the question: What artwork has stuck in my mind and stayed with me for months (or since last week when it first dropped through the letter box). What films were best? What TV programmes? What plays/opera?

Then if these potential nominees are Science Fiction (or Fantasy) then it is time to inform me of your five favourites for the year in each category. Perhaps you have sampled less than you planned and have only one nomination in one category. Even if this is the case, I want to know.



Do not think that you need to have read every magazine and anthology going to feel eligible to vote in the Short Story category. One of the primary functions of the BSFA awards is to reflect what is being consumed and enjoyed by British SF readers. Do not be so ashamed of inellectual reading that you do not vote. However much you have read, you must choose what you judge to be the cream and then stop. If everybody chooses the same also rans, they will make the short list.

Nominations can be sent up to January 13, 1991. You only need use a first class stamp if you leave it till the last minute. It is interesting to watch the ballot develop, but there need be no counting on my part until the last day has passed, so it only matters that I get your vote, not how quickly. A majority voted early last year perhaps while the thought to do so was fresh in their minds. Don't forget. BSFA Awards are world awards which can be won by anyone in the world. Only you, a select thousand or so can nominate for the short lists. [Nic then asks BSFA readers to please read the instructions on the form].

#### Eligibility

**NOVELS** - anything published in the UK during 1990 for the first time.  
**SHORT STORIES** - Anything published for the first time in either the UK or the USA for the first time during 1990. Stories from American magazines have long been eligible since they are thought to have been notionally published in the UK, even though actual distribution of magazines such as *F&SF*, *Asimov's* and *Analog* is small. There is no realistic chance of these stories being tracked down as potential nominees on their real first British publication. Equally, stories from original anthologies published in America have lost their newness by the time they are genuinely published in the UK, these too are eligible. No country other than the USA has any significant imports reaching our shores, hence real first UK publication can be considered for these.

**ARTWORK** - Specific pieces of artwork (including intimately connected pieces such as those illustrating a particular story) first published in 1990 are eligible. Rules are as they are for Short Stories.

**MEDIA PRESENTATION** - Anything requiring actors or performers can be considered a Media Presentation. Those first performed/released during 1990 are eligible. A ballot form is enclosed in this mailing.



## Mighty Metal Mechanicals Meet! Steve Grover

Fifty years from now, when wo/men and machines sit between the pool and the oil pool in the Combined Olympics village under a rock sky beneath Tranquillity and swap anecdotes about just how had the Three Lads really were ... I'll be able to say "I was there in Glasgow at the start". And so will most of the current world's press.

Because one of the most surprising things about the 1st International Robot Olympics, held on 27-28 September at Strathclyde University, was the number of reporters and TV crews there, especially considering the near complete lack of prior publicity. (I live only ten miles from the venue and I'm a technophile, but the first I heard of it was when asked by the Editor). [Ed: I saw it in the Glasgow Year of Culture publications, tucked away in an obscure corner. As I couldn't get there and as Steve could ... well, the rest is history]. Though the competition was open to the public, it seemed that at least half of the attendees sported a press badge. But then you only had to flash a notebook at the door and say "BSFA" and they pinned one on you, so maybe that explains it.

The venue was a sports hall, about the size of two basketball courts, and, to be honest, it wasn't exactly packed with competitors. There were about fifty altogether, but a couple of events attracted only two, er, athletes. Behaviour Demonstration (don't ask me, I don't know either) was the most hotly contested, with fourteen.

Most of the robots were from England and Scotland but ten other countries were represented and many of these won medals (see below). There was only one entrant from Japan and I would guess - and one Welsh "parent" told me as much - that they might have swept the board if they had turned up in greater numbers.

Security, especially at the beginning, was almost non-existent and all the "parents" were friendly and communicative, so close-up viewing and a little hands-on was possible and, in a few cases, encouraged. This undoubtedly helped keep the atmosphere close and congenial and, even with a couple of thousand of spectators over the two days, nothing got broken.

The opening ceremony was conducted by Sylvester McCoy in his Dr. Who best, and a Dalek and a Cyberman, who was rather short and a little ragged round the edges, also showed up. They kept all the cameramen busy, but easily the most visually interesting robot was Robug II, a Portsmouth Polytechnic student's (first year project, which reminded me in equal measures of *Alien*, *Saturn 3* and (Carpenter's) *The Thing*. It would probably also have won second place in the wall-climbing, but it trod on one of the Russians and was disqualified.

Another big surprise was how quickly a robot could be built. Inverkeithing Primary School (!) put together Xybot, a programmable/remote control combined vacuum cleaner and tea tray carrier (?) in two weeks. Dr. Dave Bisset of the University of Kent (and distant relative to Ja... but I wasn't supposed to mention that so don't tell anybody) built "Alpha Photon" in only two ("...til 3 in the morning type...") days - and the first prototype in just six hours.

The press conference was more interesting that I expected, mainly because the panelists refused to trivialise their subject, even under pressure. There was some debate on what a robot was and how much external human control was "allowable" while still using the term. Dr. Peter Mowforth of The Turing Institute, and organiser of the event, pointed out that even the actions of the astronauts on the Moon were directed by Mission Control so "control" needs to be defined first. He also said that different countries defined robot in different ways and that this partly explains why ("...anything that moves...") Japan has such a high proportion of the world's total. Though he immediately added that they had more than any other country by any definition.

According to him, the fanfare that accompanied the introduction of the first wave of industrial "robots" was inappropriate because, by today's standards, they weren't really robots at all. (No one challenged him on his definition though Jim Alty, also of TTI, said later that the demonstrated advance since then is "perception linked to action"). But now, they are being introduced for real, delivering "Meals-on-wheels" in hospitals in the USA and Japan and as

IR-equipped security robots in US prisons. (With robot warders around, guess the term "screw" will acquire a whole new meaning).

The usual things were also said about use in hostile environments and how things that humans and other animals find easy, such as balance and object recognition, computers and robots find extremely difficult and, to an extent, vice versa. According to Jim Alty, there is now a much better understanding among researchers of what can be tackled and what can't be, and that expert systems must be expert enough to say: "Go ask a real expert".

The "largest" robot project in the World, apparently, is Prometheus, a computer-controlled car that has already been tested on the German autobahns at 100kph. It has a budget in the hundreds of millions of pounds and is being "driven" by the insurance companies.

When asked (by this correspondent) how much current AI and robotics research was actually aimed at discovering more about the human condition, the press conference was drawn rapidly to a close.

I had a moderately good time there. Like most things - and certainly the human Olympics, I imagine - there were long stretches of relative tedium punctuated by short bursts of very interesting activity. A 2nd International Robot Olympics is already under discussion and I'd advise you to be there. Gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded, except, of course, where there were only two competitors. My scribbling isn't that fast, though so only the first and second placed are listed. (I can't help thinking that robots, being mostly metal, should be awarded bone, cartilage and dried flesh medals).

#### OBSTACLE AVOIDANCE

1. Asterix (University of Toronto) - Canada

2. Oscar (Edinburgh University) - Scotland

#### WALL-FOLLOWING

1. Yamabico (University of Tsukuba) - Japan

2. SAM (University of Kent) - England

#### WALL-CLIMBING

1. RVP2 (Portsmouth Polytechnic) - England

2. RVP2 (Institute for Problems in Mechanics, Academy of Sciences, Moscow) - USSR

#### BALANCING

1. "Pendulum" (University of Salford) - England

2. "Lanky" (University of Lancaster) - England

#### TWO LEGGED RACE

1. no name (University of Wales College of Cardiff) - Wales

2. Robbie (Paisley College of Technology) - Scotland

#### MORE THAN TWO LEGGED RACE

1. Penelope (Edinburgh University) - Scotland

2. Genghis (MIT) - USA

#### PHOTOTROPIC

1. Alpha photon (University of Kent) - England

2. Icarus (Shadow Group) - England

#### MANIPULATION

1. "Hand" (Universities of Belgrade, Novi Sad & Southern California) - Yugoslavia and USA

2. BCI (St. Patrick's High School, Coatbridge) - Scotland

#### JAVELIN

1. Archer (Museum of Automata, York) - England

2. Wilberforce (Polytechnic of East London) - England

#### TALKING

1. Richard I (Turing Institute) - Scotland

2. Shadow Walker (Shadow Group) - England

#### BEHAVIOUR DEMONSTRATION

1. Genghis (MIT) - USA

2. "sheep & sheepdog" (University of Strathclyde) - Scotland

The school's prize, of a cup and £100, went to Inverkeithing Primary School and other special prizes went to BCI (a £25 book token) and Genghis (glass bowl and £250). The overall winner was Yamabico from Tsukuba University. Its "parent", Shouji Suzuki, received a glass statuette in the shape of an android.

## "Movement Measured With a Micrometer..."

Sandy Brown

I went along to the 1st International Robot Olympics in order to compile this report, not actually expecting to see R2D2 racing Robbie the Robot, or Robocop arm-wrestling Terminator, but at least expecting to see movement. But generally speaking, movement had to be measured with a micrometer. Also, it was hard to determine whether you were observing a test run or a contest, but this was probably due to the organisers, rather than the contestants.

Events included wall-climbing, 4-, 6- and 8-legged races, obstacle avoidance, pole-balancing, and talking. The exhibitors, mostly university teams, were only too pleased to respond to questions, pausing only to wield screwdrivers or to right falling-over robots. But most answers were of the type like "It's only the first time it's been out of the laboratory" or "You see, a wheel's fallen off and that's why it's so slow".

The most visible race was the wall-climbing. A two-metre four-legged spider, by its size, easily outdistanced a handle-less lawnmower about half-a-metre long without visible means of support, both having a safety rope to stop them smashing into the deck in case of a power failure.

The most popular exhibit wasn't even a robot, but a radio-controlled dustbin with blue plastic eyes and a speaker, sponsored by the NatWest Bank, a business singularly absent from the High Streets of Scotland as it is solely an English bank. The kids flocking round it were not aware of the operator lurking conspicuously about with his hand over his mouth, covering the microphone through which he gave instructions to them: "Move aside, please".

Probably the most out-of-place entrant was for the javelin-throwing - a 19th century automaton of a Japanese archer who picked up and fired his arrows a distance of four metres, easily outdistancing the real javelin thrower, Wilberforce, whose hand had been mislaid somewhere.

I left with the impression of - if that's all the progress that's been made in robotics in the forty years since computers became less than house-sized, the future looks bleak for R. Daneel Olivaw. Indeed, do we need real robots? Do we want to scrap seventy years of production line development where conveyor-belt fabrications pass a static operator, be he human or mechanical, in favour of a plug-in movable construction? Do we need a decision-making robot to clean and repaint the legs of North Sea oil platforms, or is it better and cheaper with an automatic preprogrammed strap-on machine which does the same job without the necessity of an expensive programmer/engineer watching it all the time? Is it a necessity to have a learning robot to decommission nuclear power stations, or simply a remotely-controlled device?

It can easily be argued that a Mars robot is a necessity for planetary exploration, due to the long message time involved, rather than a radio-controlled device, but as for Earthbound robots of the self-guided, learning, multipurpose type, I don't think that even our grandchildren will see them.



## Cry "Fanac..."

This is a series on the things BSFA members can do apart from just reading science fiction. Rob Meades, who was awake, bright and enthusiastic for the Friends of Foundation AGM at Novacon (along with, surprisingly for 9am on Sunday morning, some 70 other people) talks here about his secret lives:

The group of people that I seem to spend most of my time with are ConRunners. ConRunners are those fans who put together SF conventions all around the country in all sorts of fields. They spend all their free time working harder than they do between the hours of nine to five, because ... well, umm ... err ... I don't know. No reason, really, other than because it's there. We just happen to be a collection of people who enjoy organising.

The organising has many aspects; there are operations staff who deal with problems as they occur at the convention, programme staff who develop the programme of events and then run them on the day, technical staff who pull the equipment together before the convention and run it on the day, gophers who do all the bits that everyone else has forgotten, etc. etc. They each apply a different approach and have different workloads during different parts of the convention, but at the bottom line they are all organisers of some sort or other.

Why do I do it? Because I feel that organising is something I am good at and I crave the responsibility that I don't get at work. Some fans who do a great deal of what might be called "people management" for conventions (i.e. persuading people to take part in this, sort that out, take on a shift in that other) don't have any staff at all during the course of their normal work. Others are in search of the machismo, the ego-boo, the respect of their fellow fen.

And after all, regular committee meetings, though they soak up weekends, give you the chance to have a quiet drink with friends.

The ConRunner has to be very professional in outlook, or face the music later. In the process of negotiating with a hotel during the early stages of convention organisation, many hotels express surprise at the level of detail that ConRunners want to discuss - Real Ale? Coffee behind the bar? A contract??? But we have no company finance to fall back on and the responsibility to our friends in fandom - we cannot afford to make any major mistakes.

While I read SF whenever I can, I do not claim to be very knowledgeable about it. I am rather a slow reader (by fannish standards) and after I have finished my *New Scientist* on the tube, I can sometimes squeeze in a book over, say, a two week period - a bit here, a bit there. I can't spend all my time reading. I like to be building something or fiddling with something. ConRunning, or any other sort of committee work within SF fandom is an ideal outlet for me as it involves me in a vital role connected with SF and does not necessarily require any specialist knowledge of SF.

The convention programme, which requires a good knowledge of SF, is put together by the committee as a whole with ideas fed in from outside. The sum total of the inevitably disparate experiences of up to ten SF fans, with the people they each know and can ask opinions of, can build a coherent and comprehensive programme without the committee members each being experts in themselves. When programming a convention, it is often as important to know the personalities involved and how they would balance on a panel or on adjacent programme slots in separate programme streams, than to know the latest works of X.

And there are SF organisers in other areas. Last year, I was involved in starting Friends of Foundation. The Science Fiction Foundation is an ailing SF resource that must be (should long ago have been) aided by fans and SF readers. I co-ordinate the Friends and, with others, liaise with Foundation and attend their meetings, etc, but the body of knowledge in SF we need to tap lies in the very capable hands of the rest of fandom. We, as a committee, have a reasonable knowledge of the genre (I mention no names - Roger Robinson, Bridget Wilkinson, John Clute ...), but our main function is to organise and bring together the membership of Friends, the Foundation, Fandom and SF readers as a whole.

On an entirely personal level, I am beginning to think that I should be spending more of my energies in finding a better place to work that requires more of my time and give less to conventions and committees. Perhaps what I want to do when I'm not reading SF is to work for a living, but I just haven't found the right way to go about it yet.

## Media File

### John Peters

**FILM** - Director Jonathan Demme spent a great deal of time before filming *The Silence of the Lambs* going through FBI files on serial killers and their techniques, as well as learning ways to catch such killers - so this promises to be one of the most accurate films of its type when it opens here early next year. A documentary film about H.P. Lovecraft has just been completed - *The Last Disciple* features Clive Barker, Ramsey Campbell, Sam Raimi, Stuart Gordon and many others talking about this influential writer; shot in New England and New York City, the film seems destined for the convention circuit rather than your average fleapit so con organisers should contact Fernwood Films who produced it. Barker has signed to make two films for Universal studios, one should be a remake of *The Mummy* while the second will be a SF project.

Kevin Costner's *Robin Hood* has become *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves* and Maid Marion has also changed - with the departure of pregnant actress Robin Wright, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio is now the Green Man's moll, Christian Slater has also joined the cast. Other news from Sherwood is that Mel Gibson has left the John McTiernan version, and at least two other productions are planned, one based on the *Robin of Sherwood* tv series with Jason Connery, and another will be a tv movie due for broadcast next February. In the current trend of re-making 60's tv hit shows as major movies, Robert Evans has optioned the rights to *The Saint* novels - this could be the comeback hit he desperately needs after the critical and commercial failure of Jack Nicholson's *The Two Jakes*. Following his financially rewarding time on *Look Who's Talking*, Bruce Willis repeats his vocal performance in the sequel, joined this time by Roseanne Barr and Richard Pryor. Ex-cradle rocker David Cassidy has a couple of films due out next year, one of them, *Spirit of '76*, is a time travel comedy, where a couple from the future land up in 1776 instead of 1776. Walter Hill will direct *The Fugitive*, Alec Baldwin starring in the film version of the legendary tv show. Baldwin is also to reprise his character of Jack Ryan from *Red October*, though producers are undecided which of Tom Clancy's other books to film. With *Die Hard II* behind him, director Renny Harlin has passed on *Alien III* and will shoot *Gale Force* instead. Sam Raimi's *Darkman* has followed most of the summer fantasy titles and dropped down the US film charts as its gross takings tailed off after a few weeks - though *Ghost* and *Flatliners* seem to be holding on.

Timothy Dalton leaves the secret service for a while as his soul becomes a battleground for good vs evil in *The Visitor*, the producers hope that Walter Matthau and Michael Caine will be demon and angel. Meanwhile *Bondman* John Glen directs *Night of the Leopard*, starring Jean-Claude Van Damme, Chevy Chase makes his dramatic debut in John Carpenter's *Memoirs of an Invisible Man* - this thriller replaces *Pin Cushion*, thought to have been Carpenter's next film. Michael Douglas' next film is *Shining Through* which also stars Melanie Griffith. After the pressure by film-makers over the last few years, the US film censors have finally agreed to a new certificate for films once given a "X" even though they were not pornographic; the NC 17 will be applied to non-porn films, and the horror genre should benefit from this decision. Mr. Frost stars Jeff Goldblum as a mental patient who has killed and buried twenty four people. Lou Diamond Phillips has written his next film, *Mind Game*, where he plays a writer who uses a serial killer for personal vengeance. Stephen King seems to be back in favour, plans for films based on his novels *The Dark Half*, *Thinner*, *The Stand* and *Night Shift* (renamed *Graveyard Shift*), have been announced and he is represented in *Tales From the Dark Side* due out soon and the newly announced sequel; meanwhile, *Misery* is to be released in the US for Christmas - Columbia hope that this Rob Reiner production could have a chance in this year's Oscars. Coming soon - *Alligator II*, *Last Tango in Paris*.

**TV Scene** - The US Fox Network's *Alien Nation* series has been cancelled, despite having scripts already prepared for a second series. Other series that have recently been cancelled include *Mission: Impossible*, *ALF*, *War of the Worlds*, *Friday the 13th: The Series*, *Freddie's Nightmares*. ABC have not ordered a series based on the pilot movie, *Plymouth*, and the project is now sadly considered dead. Series that have been renewed by the US networks include *Quantum Leap*, *Twin Peaks* (with 13 nominations for this year's Emmy awards), *Star Trek: The New Generation*, *Superboy*, *The Munsters Today*, *Out of this World*, *My Secret Identity*. New series include *The Flash*, *Big*, *The Pink Panther*, *The Family Dog* and *IT* the Stephen King doorwedge due for tv

adaptation will be directed by *Halloween 3* director Tommy Lee Wallace, Tim Curry stars. And River Phoenix will reprise his role as *Young Indiana Jones* in a tv series that should have started filming by now. Harrison Ford will appear in early episodes as his father. Original producer Verity Lambert and Dalek creator Terry Nation are to return to *Dr. Who* and rumours suggest there will be a new actor as the Timestorm.

**Video Scene** - Here are some of the titles on rental and sell-through leading up to Christmas: *Bano - Deathstone*; *Braveworld* go for gunge in the remake of *The Blob*, *Freddie's Nightmares II*, *House III: The Horror Show*, *The Lamp, One by One*, *Open Hours*, *Bloody New Year*, *Evil Ainger*, *Slaughterhouse*; *CBS/Fox - Leviathan*, *Prom Night 3: Dead Rings*, *The Last Kiss*, *Transformations*; *CIC - Amazon Women on the Moon*, *Revenge of the Radioactive Reporter*, *Prophesies*, *Malediction*, *Videodrome*; *Disney Touchstone - Who Framed Roger Rabbit and The Lady & the Tramp*; *Entertainment in Video - Trancers*, *Killer Klowns From Outer Space*, *Phantoms*, *X-Gen Witch*; *Guided - The Killer*, and on January 21, 1991 - *Total Recall*; *Hollywood Collection - My Stepmother is an Alien*, *Critters III*, *Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, *Willow*; *Legend - The Exterminator*; *Medusa - Argento & Romero's Two Evil Eyes*, *Enemy Unseen*, *Bernies*, *Blood Ransom*, *Ewok: Battle for Endor*, *Outer Limits* (3 tapes of the original tv show), *Poltergeist I, II, III*; *New World - Pin*, *Apprentice to Murder*, *Flowers in the Attic*, *Sweet Murder*, *Outcast*; *RCA/Columbia - Ghostbusters III* special edition - both films on one tape, *Watchers II*, *Demon Wind*, *Blind Fury*, *Twice Dead*, *Rising Storm*, *Psychoop*; *Warner - Lethal Weapon 2*, *Relentless*.

As this is the last column for the year, I'd like to wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year and remind you to check the tv schedules - you never know what genre material is likely to appear hidden away in the small hours of the festive season.

John Peters concludes by saying: "I have to admit that after doing this column for two years now, I'm beginning to grow a bit stale. It's only fair to warn you that I shall cease providing the column after issue 92 - this should hopefully enable you to find a replacement to take over. I am finding that as *F'n'F* expands, it is taking up much more of my time and something has to give. As *F'n'F* is my own mag and the product of a lot of blood, sweat and tears, I am not prepared to reduce my standards on it, despite the much smaller readership. I've also come to realise that I haven't written a word of fiction in over eighteen months, and this is also unacceptable to me. I have to set some time aside for myself".

So there is a vacancy for a Media Columnist. Interested parties, please contact the editorial address! The work involv'Xs finding out what is happening in the film and video world and tracking down press releases of what will happen, plus writing occasional reviews. John Peters has been an excellent columnist - always regular, always interesting - but, as a fanzine editor myself, I know the loyalty you feel to your own creation.

## Clive Barker in Person Ian Nathan

Barker, when warmed to his subject, and to its nature you will all be accustomed, speaks with a feeling and eloquence, but above all, you are surprised by a normality and basic friendliness. It seems a bizarre and somewhat unnerving concept that such an amenable bloke could create such nightmares both in books and in films. In comparison of the merits of both creative outlets, movies were the escape, writing he termed as a very solitary business, his analogy was somewhat explicit: the making films was an orgy, books, well you can guess.

"Fantastical stuff has always been appealing": all his books and, to date, his two films have been intricate deviations from the norms of the genres they are in. As for reality? "I've never had any interest in the real stuff". The look was one of subtle contempt. But why horror, the question was referred in main to his work in films. "We live in a very homogenised society, very bland. Television is all soaps and game shows. Horror movies are an intense delirious escape from TV banality". He admitted they were only welcome for a certain audience, but an audience which "seems to be growing".

*Nightbreed* is his latest creation, and although a massive disappointment Stateide, Barker seemed confident about the imminent UK release, he obviously believed that there is a faithful audience ready and waiting. A large contingent are those who have read the books and are already "followers" of Barker. He then surprised me with the fact that the audience tends to be very catholic, he didn't venture as to the reasons. A great deal of the audience will wait for video "it has made his films accessible to a large undercurrent". His answer, though, had remained ambiguous.

*Nightbreed* was unusual in that it laid the sympathies upon the monsters. "There is an argument we've always been on the side of the monsters, even Dracula. Monsters are paradise, they represent something we long to attain, power. We go to see the monster". The film contains a dichotomy of horror styles. "*Nightbreed* marks a point of collision of two very different traditions - slasher and a fantastical quasi fairy tale-esque side". He wanted to comment on the Michael Myers tradition, without sexually titillating the audience: "It is a nice rounded middle class family which is first slaughtered". This, though, is only an element of the film, although he admitted he was "walking a fine line", perhaps in the US he has slipped. "Fox" (the film's distributor) "sold it as a stalk and slash movie, which it was not, so it was a failure, aimed at the wrong audience".

He obviously treats horror very seriously. "Yes, it is a serious subject, but I can take the mick. *Bride of Frankenstein* is a movie I love. I don't dislike the idea of humorous, but I think mingling them is best". He gives the character Narcisse (a wry actor with a skinless skull) as an example of a humorous vein in *Nightbreed*. With the spate of the endless series of horror films, how did *Nightbreed* compare? "Recent horror series have been one idea films, *Nightbreed* is somewhat overabundantly rich in characters and story threads". This is perhaps a consequence of the origins being in his own book? "Cabal is very sketchy about the *Nightbreed*. Movies go into far more detail, there are certain pressures from the special effects team!" All the creatures had originated from Barker's own sketches, but he remained modest. "It's the actors which change the creatures, bring them to life".

How did he manage to get such a name as David Cronenberg, another of horror's great traditions, to feature so strongly? "I'm a great fan of his movies. I was the first person to ask him and he said yes". He continued with his respect. "He brings to the movie the trail of his reputation, he has this urban, dry, cool detached manner". He had apparently enjoyed it immensely. Did he ever worry about the loss of ideas, he laughed. "I have a pretty fevered imagination". A talent for the understatement had become apparent. "I'm doing some varied movies in the near future: one based on the mummy and a science fiction one". These films, though, will be based on original screenplays: "I don't want to continue filleting out my own written prose".

The proceedings being called to cessation, raised the tone for the final question: had he ever been to an analyst? "No, never, but there have been some who have asked to analyse me. I have healthy and sweet dreams, doing what I do is highly therapeutic!"

## Media Reviews

FRANKENSTEIN'S BABY (BBCI, September 9, 1990, 75 mins)

Emma Tennant's debut screenplay attempted to tackle one of the ancient problems of sex discrimination by describing a man having a baby. Although much of the proto-feminist satire was a bit limp (surely modern feminism has developed beyond simplistic role reversal scenarios?) it had its moments of real insight. The father, a yuppie Nigel Planer, has the embryo surgically implanted without anyone knowing except the strange Dr. Frankenstein, bizarrely resembling US sexologist Dr. Ruth Westheimer. The "mother" (Kate Buffery) returns from business abroad having decided to give in to her boyfriend's (Planer) wish for a child. Her response is the most interesting; despite her successful career, she feels bitter at losing her unique function. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding Planer losing his job and, after a hurried marriage, being abandoned by Buffery, everybody seems to take the bizarre news very calmly. Nobody suggests an abortion, and it's all very nice. The jokes are limited to Planer's swollen belly impeding his passage, and his craving for pickled gherkins; and the final scene of Dr F. surveying a row of men holding their newborn babies is merely a token. Planer and Buffery perform well, of course, but most of the subsidiary characters are simply ridiculous.

Sue Townsend is reported to be writing a series based on a similar premise with Julian Clary in the father's role. It surely must be better than this contrived rubbish. All the more ironic, was the showing twenty four hours earlier of David Pirie's powerful play *Rainy Day Women*, which hit so much harder with its points of feminism and the degradations of war. The BBC can do it right, but *Frankenstein's Baby* was a failure in every sense. (Reviewed by Kev McVeigh).



#### NIGHTBREED (18)

*Nightbreed* takes all the formulaic ingredients of the horror genre and turns them on their head. This is monster film in mirror image, for here Clive Barker has once more shaken off the tethers of precedent and given us a tale in which the ghouls are the good guys and it is us humans who bear the scent of evil. And Barker should be justly commended for such invention, but beneath all the gloss and originality *Nightbreed* is surprisingly simplistic and ultimately quite bland a story.

The eponymous hive of the monstrous exist in hiding, the remnants of former tribes hunted to near extinction by their greatest foe: man. Taken from his own novel, this is the main, if perverse, moral tone Barker has adopted; man destroys what he fears, and, so we are told, destroys even what he envies. Aaron Boone, the young protagonist, finds himself driven to this unique niche, only to lead the destructive wave of mankind straight to their door. So he, becoming, via resurrection, a member of the extraordinary circle, enters into a climactic battle to save the place called Midian, from the bad guys (us) led by the charmingly collected Decker (David Cronenberg, himself an suspicious creator of horror). Decker also, in a fine parody of the film's generic fellows, happens to be a hack'n'slash killer, in a rather ambiguous sub-plot. And here we have the extent of the plot.

The film does, though, have one primary strength; *Nightbreed*, if nothing else, is visually superlative. We are presented with a feast of colours and textures, a virtually tangible portrayal of the fantastical. The creatures in their gothic setting are a myriad of the bizarre, through the jovial and comic, the daring and sensual, to the hideous and repulsive. In a central four and a half minute sequence, we traverse the labyrinthine network of Midian, seeing out its wondrous and freakish denizens; a carnival of creative delight. The breadth of Barker's imagination seems boundless. A parade of the unreal, yet hauntingly realistic, for this alone, the film has credibility as a piece of work.

The monsters and their twisted nest are the highlight, besties ranging from a rotund and anaemic nasty to a cross between woman and deadly porcupine: it seems no two occupants are alike.

Yet, despite all this decoration, this film is flawed by its plot, there is little in definable events - the points of progression for the story - as we gain momentum it just becomes all the more confused and becomes a blur to cover

up the basic vacuum underneath. This incomprehensibility reaches its peak amidst the chaotic and nigh on indistinguishable destruction at the climax.

The nature of Barker's gestures is worthy; a pastiche of biblical, gothic and contemporary styles amalgamated with his own flair for turning imagination into design. But *Nightbreed* is an empty shell, we have all the storyteller's pieces without the story to tell. Perhaps in its entirety the trilogy (of which this is but the first part) may gather what this initial episode so obviously lacks. (Reviewed by Ian Nathan).

#### MERLIN by Fergus Kennedy (performed by The Matchbox Theatre Company for the Edinburgh Fringe)

We are ushered into a world of Dark Age Celtic Britain by a group of singing druids performing a song that sounds like an out-take from a Rick Wakeman 70's concept album. In fact, it's actually worse than that. Instead of that traditional acoustic folk melodies, perhaps performed live and accompanied by vocals in Gaelic or Welsh that one might expect, we are treated to electronic drums, keyboards distorted through speakers and accompanied by the actors variously warbling and whimpering their way through clichéd songs with banal lyrics entirely devoid of poetic mystery or imagery. The music makes the largest impact - actually embarrassing the audience or inspiring fits of giggles in those more susceptible to the incongruity of it all. Why on earth did Matchbox decide to pair the story of a fascinating mythical figure who has endured in the collective imagination for fifteen centuries with music that makes Andrew Lloyd Webb seem the epitome of art?

The unseason text of *Merlin* weaves together Geoffrey of Monmouth's *British History* with Mary Stewart's *Crystal Cave* and sundry bits of folklore, or so the programme says, but how the final treatment stands as a representative of the myth, I would leave to one more expert in the field. The script makes no attempt to mimic archaic language, which in a sense is praiseworthy, but instead errs the other way. When Merlin's mother berates him on staying out late in the hills and moors, we half expect her to petulantly remark *you could have at least phoned!* Much mention is made of stars that *glisten in velvet skies* and Merlin's first teacher Galapud, lispingly and comically played by Michael Fry, suggests that they *listen for the songs of moonlight* together.

The acting is largely substandard, but occasionally, and with a less cringeworthy script, the odd minuscule element of promise presents itself. The set consists of wooden pallets draped in material, painted chairs and sheets torn and hung from the ceiling. Actually, it is reasonably suggestive of a mood of myth and evil, but the effect is destroyed by ludicrously obvious squirts of dry ice which chokes audience and actors alike, together with sound and lighting effects as subtle as a saturation bombing.

The show can be quite hilarious. I particularly remember the ashy tray held aloft by Merlin as a mystical crystal, the all-singing, all-dancing druids and the portly, lisping Ambrosious (Michael Fry again). And read as a play about a theatre company without taste or style performing a play thrust upon them, as a favour to its author, it would be admirable indeed. But I fear that it was not intended that way.

Therefore it is an unqualified failure on all but the most accidental or incidental of levels. And a better sense of the character of Merlin really can be found on the Wakeman track from his 1975 *Arthur ...* album! (Reviewed by Gavin Boyter).

#### THE LITTLE MERMAID (U) - director-animators John Musker and Ron Clements, Disney Studios

Although the film-makers changed the ending of Hans Andersen's classic fairytale, I can't find it in me to complain, having been thoroughly caught up in the film's exuberance and drive towards a happy ending. I'd suggest, instead, that viewers regard this heroine as a different little mermaid - born perhaps fifty years after Andersen's little mermaid. In fact, many elements of the original story are present in the film: it's simply that so many other Disney-style motifs have been added as well.

Ariel, the youngest of King Triton's daughters, who has a beautiful singing voice, is obsessed by humankind, and together with her friend, the cubby fish Flounder, explores wrecked ships (her flight from a "Jaws"-type shark is breath-taking) and discusses human culture with a comical albino (I think - or seagull?) She saves a prince's life in a seastorm, disappearing back into the sea before he revives, though he sees and hears her sing when half-unconscious. Back under the sea, she adores the prince's statue, which was being transported on the ship and has come to rest in her private boudoir. Sebastian the crab, Triton's major domo, attempts to cheer her up with the calypso *Under the Sea*, with many of her fishy friends joining in the chorus.

When Triton finds out about Ariel's love for the prince, he gets in a rage and smashes the statue with his magic trident. Ariel resorts to Ursula the sea-witch (with an octopus-bottom instead of a fish-tail) who obtains her voice in return for human legs. If, after three days, Ariel has not won the kiss of true love from the prince, she will become Ursula's slave - a shrunken flower in the sea-witch's garden.

And so Ariel, Sebastian, the fish and the albatross set out for the prince's court. So far the plot has followed Andersen quite closely - with the exception of the comic fishy creatures and the songs! not to mention the mermaids' brassieres! Now, fearing that Ariel will win that kiss of true love, Ursula intervenes in person by casting a spell to disguise her as Ariel's double. Using her new voice to bewitch the prince, she pretends she rescued him from drowning, and their marriage is imminent. Before purists scream, let them remember that the motif of the False and Forgotten Brides occurs frequently in Grimm, so that the film's happy ending is not just a commercial device, but validated in folklore.

I was pleasantly surprised to see how many criticisms of Disney's sentimentality had been taken on board by the film-makers, in this return to the classic quality of early Disney. Not since Cruella de Vil has there been such an effective villainess; not since Snow White itself, such a powerful supernatural villain, whose transformation scene from Ugly to Beautiful pays tribute to the Queen-to-Hag scene in Snow White. There's an excellent use of fishy creatures *en masse* to advance the plot or make music. Racial harmony would appear to be a background theme: Sebastian is voiced in a West Indian accent, sings calypoes, and complains of Ariel's crush on the prince: *Somebody gotta nail dat girl's fins to de floor!* Ariel's complexion is dark pink, not peaches-and-cream, and she crosses the race-species barrier to wed her prince. She is a strong decision-making heroine who fights alongside her prince in the final battle against the witch. I mustn't forget Sebastian's slapstick chase scene with the prince's chef who wants to make him a dressed crab, or the menace when the witch's sinister plan is revealed: to use her hold over Ariel to ensnare King Triton instead...[Reviewed by Jessica Yates].



## ROBOCOP 2 (18)

When *Robocop* was released, it surprised a good many people, it managed to create an extreme of violence and yet retain a market intelligence. It was both visionary and darkly humorous, a wit which played on the sickening reality of our uncaring society. *Robocop* was also highly intuitive. It was a massive financial success, a sequel beckoned. The producers turned to comic book writer supreme Frank Miller to reinject the air of topical approach and blatant social satire of the first film, and also to burgeon a fresh approach, a task which from the onset seemed impossible.

The result, although well conceived as an idea, is stilted, choked beneath a desperation to emulate the qualities from the original. The blandness of the plot is countered by flashy production; where *Robocop* had verve and wit, its sequel has sparkle. The original director, Paul Verhoeven, who has since given us *Total Recall*, fashioned his film with the now renowned euphoric destruction, it was coupled with a keenness, a delight in the nature of his creation. His replacement Irvin Kershner, director of *The Empire Strikes Back*, obviously lacked such drive, he has turned down the violence and upped the sentimentality, the aim to give greater depth was credible, but to little effect. What has been retained, and perhaps even improved upon is an attention to detail, we are doubtlessly convinced of the environment. A near future of social breakdown and corporate dominion, the nightmare vision is the film's main drive, can we be looking into our own future?

Reprising his role, Peter Weller dons his shiny suit and takes on a drug addicted city. He gets to show his angled face to a greater extent, although for him it must have been somewhat offputting to be frequently replaced by some superb models. The problem: he (or as the story contests "it") is faced with a man-made super narcotic "Nuke", a rather dry moralising undercurrent is swiftly evident. Behind this mass corruption are two factions: the manufacturer and supplier Cane (a sort of religious fanatic believing in his own deltic hype), and, of course, the corporate king-pin O.C.P., led by the ruthless Old Man. The plot slowly brings these separate evils together, amidst a maze of interconnecting sub-plots. An effort in corporate dominion by the big company through an effort to privatise Detroit in its entirety, the obsolescence of *Robocop* due to his unfortunate regaining of memory, a crime swelling police strike, all the varying threads are carefully worked into the whole, but never seem to bring the film to life. The necessity of explaining the narrative through lubberly, dogged passes of dialogue weigh the film down, dissipating any excitement.

It is not until the final climactic quarter that at last the plot sorts out its confusions and gives us something to grasp. This comes as a palpable release. The varying factions at last amalgamate into the creation of a replacement for *Robocop*, a giant robotic law enforcer, complete with Cane's psychotic mind implanted. In what could be described as "hard-wired", this uterine crescendo to the movie gave the special effects team a chance to show their skills, they rise to the occasion. We are swung and thrust through the titanic confrontation between *Robocop* and his drug addicted, cyborg replacement. The destruction is precisely choreographed, a marvellous combination of real-life and studio models. It gives the entire proceedings a tangible lift, it has, though, come too late.

Perhaps predictably, *Robocop 2* entirely lacks the effects of its predecessor, it sadly never touches upon the inspiration, the money has been spent and the polish achieved, but nothing more. And adding further dissatisfaction is a tenuously open ending, all ready for another installment, and so the sophistication of the original dims even further.

Without penetration, verve or any telling humour, *Robocop 2* shows the theme is starting to go more than a little rusty. [Reviewed by Ian Nathan].

## AFTER THE REVELATION (Ursa Minor Theatre Company in the Edinburgh Fringe)

The DeMarco Gallery is possibly the epicentre of pretension in Edinburgh's cultural life - and there is something about the off-the-Royal-Mile location and renovated church appearance that suggests that a show with the above title presented by a company with the above name may be just a little incomprehensible. Well, it wasn't incomprehensible although it was by no means coherent either.

Two men play one character: "character one". Two women play "character two". That's the cast. The setting is some sort of future or alternative present in which character one has chosen to escape the insanity of the restrictive city life - character two's world - into the country represented by a pot plant and a ladder.

The stylistic elements in this production are more interesting than the content. The plot, that of escape from a suffocating friendless society to an

environment that allows individual freedom and movement, is familiar stuff. It's never entirely clear what requires the story to be set in the future, since so little "future" is used. No futuristic technology intrudes, since the whole thing is set in the "country" environment, and character two's job is that of property developer, whereas character one is a nomadic gardener, neither of which require much extrapolation.

The "science fiction" is contained, if anywhere, in the methods of presentation - having two actors interchanging into only two roles i.e. playing half a role each, and swapping for no obvious reason in apparently arbitrary moments. Perhaps this is to stress that the characters are stereotypes, not actual individual people, but unfortunately two members of the cast are far more convincing than the other two. The playlet (it lasts a mere 45 minutes) also contains sporadic bursts of speechless, rhythmical mime-movement - it could hardly be called dance - which seems to contain suggestions of constriction within a role and of conflict between roles, but only just, and which seems largely unjustifiable since it is obvious the cast are not experienced in this particular dramatic direction.

Other than the plant pot, the ladder, some wooden swords, a blackboard and wheel for measuring distances, there is no scenery. The music used is actually quite good - sympathetically synthesised and well reproduced. But trappings aside, *After the Revelation* is severely flawed. Character two too readily transforms into another version of character one. Character one spouts dubious maxims which verge on the didactic and clichéd. The whole thing lacks coherence and a sense of direction or conclusion - it's like a Tarkovsky film without the compelling, yet unidentifiable sense of importance, and although there is the odd memorable line of dialogue, they are all delivered too simply and without real feeling. It seems to be going for a Samuel Beckett absurdity but in a half-hearted way and whilst clinging to a desire to be philosophically profound. This all left me rather cold, and with a feeling that I'd seen it all, and better said, before. It's not embarrassingly bad - it's just not very good. (Reviewed by Gavin Boyter)

#### THE FIRST POWER (18)

The producer of *The First Power* has been pretty shrewd in his disposal of their not overly large budget. By using fast rising names, Lou Diamond Phillips and Tracy Griffith (half-sister of Melanie), instead of costly established mega-stars, he has enabled money to go where it was most required. This is particularly evident in the production design, the film, if nothing else, looks authentic and on occasion is visually captivating.

What we have is a kind of amalgamation between horror and cop genres. It has been done before - *Wolfen* springs to mind, but there is enough freshness and a palpable vitality about the way *The First Power* has been made that give it life. Of course, the story concerns death. Phillips, a harshmannered, rather typical homicide detective, successfully catches a crazed serial killer, Patrick Channing (a suitably loathsome Jeff Kober), the foul miscreant is then executed. This, though, is only the beginning, for Channing returns from the grave in a spiritual form to continue his slaughter through the use of others' bodies, in particular he singles out his old adversary and starts to haunt his every move. Both men give strong enough performances to overcome the falsity of the proviso, from the off, Phillips is troubled, caught between blatant disbelief and facing a twisted reality. And Kober? Naturally unlikeable.

Into the plot enters Tess Seaton (Tracy Griffith, attractive in a strangely atypical fashion), a psychic who can trace the movements and is intuitive to the motives and plans of the now disembodied killer. A combination of childhood disaster and contact with the devil have resulted in the current bizarre state of affairs. The religious angle is filled out by a local catholic nun (Elizabeth Arlen) who has "homed in" on the local Satan contact. She, being ruthlessly utilised by the plot, informs us to the meaning of "the first power". And to keep us running along with the evil doing, Channing regularly teases his opponents, through the nearest available source, varying from a police radio to a confessional priest. This rather contrived method of explaining the narrative can be forgiven in that it succeeds in giving the whole coherence a clear understanding of the flow of the story.

*The First Power* is effective within its rather banal theme. Director Rober Resnikoff has enriched a basic script (in form, not of quality of writing) with a visually eye-catching style. Adorning the violent (subdued in comparison to most of the kind) events with memorable images; a body found hung implausibly from beneath a suspension bridge, a leap from ten stories by the supernatural foe, only for him to wave and run off, the editing of this sequence leaves little room for doubt. The film stumbles in that the genre itself suffers from clichés, episodes that are vital to the plot, but at times are laughable; when Phillips grasps a dying buddy, the whispered last words are "It was him...I saw

him..." When the action takes pause for a passage of informative dialogue, both to extend the plot and fill out the characters, the tension lets up and these breaks come across as sloppy and tiresome.

*The First Power* rewards the viewing, there is a balance of action, suspense and ritual, each rather humdrum in their portrait, but together effective. There is an air of confidence from Resnikoff's debut picture, maybe not a classic, but in a genre suffering from a plethora of duff product, this comes as a breath of gloomy air. (Reviewed by Ian Nathan).

## On the Road Andy Sawyer

If you can't afford to go to conventions and still want to meet and hear a favourite author, there are, of course, alternatives, the main one being that old tradition: the Bookshop Signing Session. Very often you are restricted to TV celebrities and local worthies, but it is worth looking for SF names as well - and not just at the specialist bookshops.

London fans, and those in one or two other conurbations, know all this already, but for those of us who aren't so lucky (*The author lives in Little Neston - Ed.*) it is always worth remembering that bookshops have always used the "author appearance" as a way of attracting customers who like to have new signed copies of the latest books. Some chains have taken this on more aggressively and systematically; for example, check to see if you have a branch of Waterstone's within reach. My local - Liverpool in this case - Waterstone's regularly has authors reading from and signing their books and - for those with a bit of money and a taste for the posh life - sponsors "Literary Dinners".

The first signing session I attended was the result of an invitation to interview David Brin. Honesty impels me to admit that it was hardly well-attended - but there was a World Cup match on at the time, and it was Liverpool, after all. However, I learned more about the programme, with the result that I attended Iain Banks' appearance on 14 September. The event began with Iain Banks (under the influence of a late-night cards-playing session and a large curry, he admitted), flicking through *Use of Weapons* looking for the section he had intended to read. "It must be before page 200" said one of the store staff helpfully "I've only got that far". Correct page found, the reading commenced (pp 205-209 actually) and, afterwards, questions were invited.

Sure enough, it came: "What illegal drugs were you on when you wrote...?"

Once that was fielded, it was uphill all the way, with some interesting points about writers editing reality (the torrid sex in the tower on the Borders mentioned in one book actually happened, but without the torrid sex: "My girlfriend was in the car reading a Dorothy Dunnett novel") and the importance of dams in the development of technology: "Forget the wheel, or writing, the construction of dams and irrigation is the true sign of civilisation".

Well, it made sense at the time: perhaps it was the free glass of wine which was on offer...

Later, Martin Baker of Waterstone's explained some of the programme. Waterstone's attach great importance to getting people into their shops and have worked out that one of the best ways is by organising such events. A couple of weeks previously, rock singer Nick Cave (described somewhere, so I was told, as "the new Iain Banks") had packed the shop out when he came to publicise his new book.

Though not being a SF fan himself, Martin was interested to hear about the BSFA and fandom, and took on board some suggestions about publicising the events. The next Liverpool author appearance of likely interest to SF/fantasy readers was Tad Williams (Friday 26 October), who plugged the paperback edition of *The Dragonbone Chair* and the hardback of its sequel *Stone of Farewell*. Some time ago, I described *The Dragonbone Chair* as "masterfully carried out" and I see no reason to retract that opinion. It's traditional LOTR-influenced fantasy, but different from most under that heading because - well, because it's good, hear me?

Meanwhile, if you don't live near Liverpool, check out a Waterstone's branch near you; if you never know who's likely to be there. [Ed: I did, and got Terry Pratchett, after queuing for 40 minutes!].

## The Periodic Table

ConFiction ended with the Dutch mouse mascot drooping to the strains of "To be or not to be" as two Chicago waitresses sashayed on to remind everyone that it will be Chicago next year (details from PO Box A3120, Chicago, Illinois 60690, USA). M. J. "Simo" Simpson had spent the con promoting Octarine, the society for SF and Fantasy humour, and reports how to:

### Spend Five Days Sitting Behind a Table for Less Than £400

Remarkable, isn't it? This year's Worldcon had ten programme streams, plus films, videos, signings and reading. That 14 x 5 days = 10 weeks (count 'em) of SF-related things to go to, and in all that time I saw one film, one talk and one masquerade. So what was I doing for the rest of the time?

Well, drinking actually. But when I wasn't propping up a bar, I was stuck in the "fan market" manning the Octarine sales table.

If you have been to a con, you will have seen people like me. Sat like Joe Egg behind a table while all around them, people have fun. What possible incentive could there be to do something like that? You would be surprised. Despite the fact that we all have something in common, SF fans, nevertheless, seem to be a fairly retired bunch when it comes to actually starting a conversation with a stranger. ConFiction presented particular dangers as there were so many (whisper it) Perry Rhodan fans wandering about.

But if you've got something definite to talk about (e.g. "How much is that T-shirt?") it makes things a whole lot easier. So if you want to meet people, sit behind a table and sell 'em stuff. Or rather, don't just sit there. Grab their attention. Most people who wander past will at least glance your way. If you ignore them, or just raise one eyebrow at them in a "R\*ger-M\*\*re-having-a-coronary" sort of way, they will probably pass you by.

Basically, if somebody says to you "Here's a gab. Take it, it's a gift", then you're made. And, of course, you don't have to thank up something new, to say next time. Once the last customer is out of earshot (or even before) you can launch into exactly the same spiel for the next punter. I lost count of how many times I said "What else can you get for a guilder nowadays?" Also, it's amazing the people you meet. I spent five minutes trying to persuade an American couple that they really should buy one of our T-shirts, before noticing that the guy's (partially obscured) badge said "...even". Larry who?

Running a table at a Worldcon has the added advantage that you meet people from all over the world. I sold a Red Dwarf-style holographic H to a Pole, and a "Do not Disturb" sign (printed with a Blake's 7 joke) to a Czech. I'm sure neither of them had the slightest idea what they were buying, but I don't think I would have conversed with either of them if I hadn't been manning the table.

So the message here is clear. If you want to mingle without all that tedious walking about, and if you want to persuade other people to go and queue at the bar for you, then sit yourself down behind a sales table.

*There are signs of increased regionalisation with cons next year - three in Manchester alone. But Wales is not exempt from this clumping effect, as Nigel Parsons explains, there is now:*

### Cardiff: The New Hot Spot

For two weeks from 29 September, Cardiff held its Literature Festival; culminating (for our purposes) on 6 October with a "Science Fiction & Fantasy Convention". Whilst some congoers might not agree with the given description, it did provide a good afternoon's entertainment.

The afternoon started with four thirty five minute lectures: *Why we cannot live without Fantasy* by Brian Stableford, *Tenuous Frontiers* by Lionel Fantorpe, *Horror: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* by Guy Smith and *Bury my heart at W.H. Smith* by Brian Aldiss. These were followed, after a suitable break for refreshments, by an Any Questions? session with all four authors on the panel.

The final item on the programme was a showing of the ever popular film *Forbidden Planet*, which played to about sixty people.

Numbers built up during the day, providing a fair audience for the participants. The bar enjoyed a good trade, as did the book table provided by the local branch of Forbidden Planet. Copies of *Bury my heart at W.H. Smith* were, however, not available. As the convention came to a close, those members of the literati not there solely for genre material, could repair to the bar and look forward to a reading of Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood*, which brought the whole festival to a close.

Having spoken to the organisers, it appears that a similar event is planned for the 1991 literature festival. A tentative suggestion has been made that it might include the return of Brian Aldiss with his popular session of readings, *S.F. Blues*. Altogether, with ConCussion (December 1-2), Reconnaissance (February 22-24) and the Cardiff Literature Festival (dates to be arranged), Cardiff is again taking an active part in fandom.

## Contour Mapping

### TREBLE

(February 1-3, Burlington Hotel, Eastbourne, £15 attending from G. North, 18 Glynde Road, Brighton BN2 2YJ)

This will, of course, concentrate on folk singing, but there will be workshops on the voice and on stringed instruments other than the guitar. Guests are Bill Sutton and Zander Nyrod.

### RECONNAISSANCE

(February 22-24, Park Hotel, Cardiff, £18 attending from 5 St. Andrews Road, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 2DY)

The theme is "New Works and New Ideas in SF". It will be a weekend of panels, talks and games, plus the odd party, all centred around a bar and lounge. There will be a number of Special Participants (so far, Gill Alderman, Lionel Fantorpe, Mary Gene, Colin Greenland, John Gribbin, Dave Langford, Lorna Mitchell, Terry Pratchett, David Pringle, Alex Stewart, Charles Stross, Dean Wayland) who will take part in the programme and air the views of the new creators in SF. Programme items will include the future of computers in fiction and fact and the forgotten heritage of SF - a discussion of writers whose SF work has been forgotten, like E.E. Nesbit, A. Conan Doyle, J.M. Barrie and W. Churchill.

### LUCON III: THE SEARCH FOR... PUBLICITY

(February 8-10, Leeds University, £7 attending from A.A. Adams, 73 Richmond Avenue, Leeds LS6 1DB)

Colin Greenland is the Guest of Honour in this latest Lucon, held in the University Union. On the other hand, the beer is cheap. The programme will include serious and not so serious items from the realms of fantasy, sf, role playing, live role playing.

### PICOCON 9

(March 2, Imperial College, London, details from Alex McLintock, c/o Department of Computing) Imp. are diffident about running a con the same weekend as Microcon; the problem being that there are so many cons that occasional clashes are inevitable. I'd say go ahead and have a good time with Imp. students and anyone else in the neighbourhood.

### MICROCON ELEVEN

(March 2-3, Exeter University, £5 attending from Susannah Drazin, 110 Ladysmith Road, Exeter EX1 2PP tel: 0392 75155)

Guests, panels, videos, logos are all part of Exeter University's utterly brilliant annual convention. Guests to be announced (but there are normally plenty).

### MANOPTICON

(March 30-31, Sacha's Hotel, Manchester, £25 attending from 22 Seven Acres Lane, Norden, Rochdale, Lancs OL12 7RL)

Confirmed Guests include Jon Pertwee, Colin Baker, Sophie Aldred, David Banks, Nicholas Courtney, Steve Gallagher, Don Henderson, Sarah Sutton, Debbie Watling, Stephen Wyatt - it is, of course, a major Dr. Who event.

### SPECULATION

(March 29-April 1, Hospitality Inn, Glasgow £25 attending from 35 Buller Road, London N17 9BH)

This con, with Guest Rob Holdstock, aims to restore the primacy of the programme. There will be ten "modules", normally consisting of three items, on subjects like how to rebuild our planet using technology after we've terminally polluted it, the relationship and relevance of mythology to SF and Fantasy, British comics, organised in conjunction with Igor Goldkind of



Fleetway. There will also be a competition to construct original masks inspired by those made by Tallis in *Lavondyssa*.

#### MEXCION

(Changed Date and Hotel: May 3-6, Cairn Hotel, Harrogate, £15 attending from Mike Ford, 27 Stanmore Crescent, Burley, Leeds LS4 2RY)

The Mexican philosophy concentrates on SF as a written genre and normally has a strong programme - how SF got to where it is today and why; and what has the genre taken from the past and what is it storing up for the future. A major item will showcase the re-launch of *New Worlds*. Confirmed guests include Howard Waldrop and Paul Williams.

#### PROTOPLASM

(June 21-23, Sacha's Hotel, Manchester, £14 attending from 1 Shoemith Court, Merchant's Place, Reading, Berkshire RG1 1DT)

The emphasis will be on choice of programme rather than quantity and the Saturday night Cabaret is a regular feature. The room rate starts at a surprisingly low £20 per person per night.

#### CONGREGATE II

(July 5-7, Most House Hotel, Peterborough, £16 attending from Chris Ayres, 118 Cobden Avenue, Peterborough PE1 2NU)

The theme of this con is "heroes" with Guests David Gemmill, Adrian Cole and Freda Warrington. All facets of the theme will be discussed including poetry, psychology and stereotypes of the hero. On the lighter side, there will be a "Design your own Superhero" and the Rocky Horror Time Warp Warm-Up. Buster Crabbe will be appearing several times daily. The hotel's leisure centre has a heated pool, jacuzzi, sauna, solarium and mini gym free to residents.

#### 4TH SCIENCE FICTION DAYS NRW

(July 6-7, Conference and Teaching Centre, Dusseldorf, £9 attending to December 31, £11 thereafter from Oliver Gruter, Physics Dept, RGBN College, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX)

Guests are Anne McCaffrey, Ian Watson, Terry Pratchett, Angela and Karlheinz Steinmüller; there will be discussions, workshops, exhibitions and talks.

#### MANCON VI

(July 12-15, Sacha's Hotel, £30 attending from c/o Chapter One Bookshop, 6 London Road, Liverpool L6 5NF, please send sae)

The committee aim to provide a wide range of activities, with Guests Harlan Ellison and Iain Banks, to allow everyone concerned to have a good time in relaxed and pleasant surroundings. There will be 16mm and possibly 35mm films and a Guests' favourite/worst film choice, providing the basis for a debating panel. It is Harlan's first visit to the UK since Albacon '85 where he "dazzled and amazed people".

#### MABINOIGION

(July 26-28, Neusaid Rathbone, UCNW Bangor, details from 9 Friars Avenue, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 1BB)

This is Unicorn XII, latest in an ongoing series of university and college SF cons. This one has Anne McCaffrey as one of the Guests. The themes will be Welsh - Celtic myth (including dragons) and music in SF & SF in music among others. There will also be the "traditional" Unicorn programme items - food tasting, turkey readings, auction, odd silly game. Who knows - you may also see SuperTed in Welsh.

#### FINNCON '91

(August 10-11, Old Student House, Helsinki, free details from Ari Veintie, Harjukuuta 6A2A, 00500 Helsinki, Finland.). A SF con in a country called SF. Some programming in English. Iain Banks is Guest and items range from technology catching up with cyberpunk and sub-titled movies. Don't move around with a glass of beer in your hand: it's a no-no in Finland.

#### WINCON II

(August 16-18, King Alfred's College, Winchester £18 attending from 38 Outram Road, Southsea, Hants PO5 1QZ tel: 0705 754934)

Accommodation is plenty and very reasonable in price. With Guests Gene Wolfe, Brian Stableford and Josef Nesvadba, the programme will have the twin themes of "Images of the Future" and "The Art and Science of Storytelling".

#### ALBACON '91

(September 27-30, Central Hotel, Glasgow, £15 attending from Karen Hoenan, 1155 Pollokshaws Road, Glasgow G41)

The aim is to have an Albacon like the old ones, with a bit of everything - unfortunately the publicity is very sparse. (But the hotel is lovely).

#### EROTICON SIX

(October 4-6, Donnington Manor Hotel, Dunton Green £22 attending from Ms. C. Briarley, 17 Guildford Street, Brighton BN1 3LA)

No single rooms currently negotiable. This con aims to feature an in-depth coverage of eroticon within SF and Fantasy. All attendees must be 18 or over.

#### HILLCON 2

(November 22-24, Atlanta Hotel, Rotterdam, £11 attending from Johan Flaton, van Eggenstraat 93, Amsterdam)

This is the first major Dutch convention after ConFiction, the room rate is about 75 guilders pppn.

## 1992, Here We Come! Roger Waddington

With memories of the recent WorldCon in mind, it might be a good time to stand back and consider the present position of European SF; and why we don't see very much of it. It just might be our prejudice showing, that we can only accept WASP SF (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) that unless it comes from America it isn't any good - even British SF can suffer from that type of attitude, so we know what it's like to be a minority - but science fiction isn't just an American province. Indeed, for those historians seeking our origins, where else do they start but with Lucian of Samosata; and with those claiming a more recent birth, with Frankenstein and Mary Shelley, where else was that but on the shores of Lake Geneva, with a houseparty at the Villa Diodati? Even just on the evidence of the last issue of *Matrix*, with a fanzine listing including those from Finland, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Belgium and Germany. European SF is alive and well.

There have been earlier attempts to bring a less self-centred vision in SF: in the Sixties, the Galaxy group of magazines managed two issues of international SF before folding, and the exotic world of Russian SF found an outlet in Collier Books. Stanislaw Lem almost became an adopted author, with appearances in *The New Yorker*; Gollancz tried their best, reprinting titles by the Brothers Strugatsky, Arkady and Boris; but somehow, we just didn't want to know.

Of course, these others believe in the American dream as well; but they also have their native writers of SF, their own creators, and as one Europe comes closer, hopefully that SF will become more freely available, more open for appreciation. In fact, the WorldCon might well have been an unvalued opportunity to see this different SF, and the notices displayed might well have included *Please Adjust Your Prejudices Before Leaving*.

Of what was on offer at the WorldCon, *The Mound* (and other stories from the *Low Lands*), a special production of the Dutch fanzine, *Shards of Babel*, could perhaps give the best impression of the host country's SF. Not just "other stories", all these were winners of the King Kong Awards, their equivalent of the BSFA gongs. They share an equally wide view of SF; the failed utopia of *The Winter Garden* by Paul Harland; the brutish future of the title story by Ian Bee Landman; a robot story (with echoes of Comic Inferno), *The Desirable Lot* of the *Slender Ones* by Thomas Winter; the solid *Analog* approach of *KnSfather* by Gerben Hellings, Jr; and the very personal vision of *The Descriptive Gods*, *Softly Weeping* by Jan J.B. Kuipers. In their introduction, they point to the parlous state of Dutch SF, how their best authors have to be published abroad; but on the evidence of these stories, when the revival comes, at least they will have the authors.

As if to counter such pessimism, the Dutch publishers Meulenhoff also provided a sample of their home-grown authors. Like many a British publisher, their main strength is in their reprinted American authors; but more local talent is also represented, in this instance with Wim Gijzen (*Beware of Protocols*) and Peter Schaap (*The Marker of Medesarch*). The Gijzen is intriguingly new and old-fashioned at the same time, something H.G. Wells, in a good mood, might have written; the Schaap, a nicely different tale of gnomes and elves in a fantasy landscape. Both are well-established, professional authors who could well hold their own in British editions; the publisher's intention?

From Hungary, there's a pleasant little novelty, two stories by Hugo Preyer, *The Bet* and *Anachronistic Bigamy*, published back-to-back in the style of the old Ace Doubles, but with full-colour interior illustrations. *The Bet* is a full-bodied dose of extrapolation, set in the framework of the very traditional gentlemen's club story; the second, as the title suggests, a time-travel story, and maybe not to be taken too seriously.

Though the whole question of these English translations is, how true are they to their originals? *Traduttore, traditore* as the Italians say, or "translator, traitor";

and how can we be sure that we're getting the whole flavour, every nuance of the original, in depending on the translator? Of the stories in *The Mound*, three seem to be successfully translated; the *Wintner*, awkwardly so; and I suspect that there aren't the words in the English language adequate enough to fully translate what Jan J.B. Kuipers had in mind. Likewise, the translation of Hugo Preyer is a little more stilted as where "the young, exotic, royal Egyptian beauty offered them sublime fun and entertainment", which must surely have read better in the original Hungarian. Indeed with the Meulenhoff list, from Brian Aldiss to Gene Wolfe, it might be instructive to see how they translate from the Dutch and back into English again. But until we can become a little less insular, start learning other languages instead of demanding that everyone else learn ours. I suspect that most of the subtleties of foreign science fiction will be forever lost to us.

## Others

For contacting these other, foreign fandoms, fanzines and publishers, the latest venture from Steve Sneyd might be most appropriate. Yes, it's SF poetry; but this time, his poets (Andy Darlington, Pete Cox, John Francis Haines, etc) are displaying their wares as postcard-size poems, either for pinning to the wall or popping in the postbox, and certainly more user-friendly than having them laid out in book form, like specimens on a slab. One of these sent abroad might have more impact that the usual, tourist-centred shots of Buckingham Palace or Big Ben; and, at the same time, convert your local postman?

And a postcard might be very useful in tracking down Hilary Hayes. Her collection of three stories *How to do Magic with Mirrors*, show an assurance and maturity that fandom really needs, especially considering her *Foot's Knot - An Interlude*, which could well be developed further than the present vignette. Though one, *Dear Lucy*, has previously been published in the small press, in *Lightning Flash* magazine, hiding behind a BCM box, the best-known accommodation address in London, her confidence should be greater than this. Perhaps a deluge of cards might be necessary to draw her out and welcome her into fandom; a talent like this deserves a more public recognition.

## For Further Information

Babel Publications: c/o Roelof Goudriaan, Caan van Necklaan 63, 2281 BB Rijswijk, The Netherlands  
 Meulenhoff Science Fiction and Fantasy: PO Box 100, 1000 AC Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
 "Vega" Publishing House: Hugo Preyer (Literary Editor), H-1203 Budapest, Helsinki ut 5, Hungary  
 Postcards from the Future: 10 for £1.15 inc. p&g (USA \$2.50) Steve Sneyd, 4 Nowell Place, Almondsbury, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD5 8PB  
 Hilary Hayes: BCM OMENTIDE, London WC1W 3XX

## Information Service Update Phil Nichols

I get some strange questions. A number of people, presumably planning or plotting a story, have written to me in the past asking scientific - as opposed to science fictional questions. I've nothing against such questions; I merely have a devil of a job answering them.

For instance: do you know how many stars are in the same plane as the orbit of Jupiter, give or take a few degrees? (If yes, let me know immediately!) Or how to prevent skin cancer? Some questions, to be answered fully, would require Nobel prize-winning technical knowledge. All I can do is guess, and try to make it sound as intelligent as possible. Or rely on my "panel of experts".

However, among the many who have volunteered to help provide information to this Service, there are few who offer scientific subjects as their field of expertise. Noone offered "astronomy", for example. Which I find a little surprising, given that so much SF is set in space. Could it be that the profound expertise of SF fans in the science subjects, and maybe the scientific wisdom found in SF, is just bluff? Surely not ...

Plea for help: I need assistance from anyone knowledgeable in any of the sciences.

And now for a complete change of subject. Are there any radio buffs out there? Are you a member of ORCA - the Old-Time Radio Show Collectors Association? ORCA is run by Barry Hill, a professed SF fan, from his two houses in Leeds. He has what is believed to be the world's largest collection of radio programmes, and makes some of them available to ORCA members through a library scheme. Included are many British, American, and even Australian SF series from times past. I recently met Barry, to produce a fund-raising video programme, and hope to come up with an article about him in the near future. But in the meantime, I have a whole pile of leaflets about ORCA. If you think you'd like to join, or if you'd like further information, write to me at the usual address. Enclosing a SAE, of course.

Since this is the last of these columns for 1990, I shall wish a Merry Christmas to all, especially those who helped to answer those impossible questions.

Don't forget, if you have a question you'd like answered, or would like to volunteer to help answer some, write enclosing a SAE to: Phil Nichols, 57 Grange Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands B70 8PB.

## Comics News Ian Abrahams

Penguin Books have replaced Titan as the UK publishers of the classic independent comic *Love & Rockets* and will issue their first collected editions during 1991. They have also acquired the UK reprint rights to the First Comics compilation volumes of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. However, Penguin's thunder in originating new graphic novels appears to have been stolen by MacDonald-Futura who are currently putting together a set of books featuring writers Angela Carter, Kazuo Ishiguro and Doris Lessing. Although dates and project details are vague at time of writing, it seems that the idea is to encourage retailers to cross-market graphic novels with more respectable literary works by using high-profile writers from outside the medium. With the diverse approach to graphics publishing of these two major houses, it will be interesting to see who eventually emerges as the market-leader. It certainly represents an exciting new phase in the Dillons/Smiths/Penguin *et al* graphic novel marketing expansion!

Last issue I mentioned the danger of retailers being left with vast numbers of unsellable semi-porn comics when the current trend inevitably dies. A further (and possibly more financially damaging) market trend has been the proliferation of expensive hardcover deluxe reprints from the big US publishers. Marvel are currently expanding their "Masterworks" books: reprints of classic 60's comics and DC have joined in with Superman and Batman 1940s compilations. Rarely offering change for less than £20, smaller specialist retailers are forced to order very tightly whilst risking loss of sales to other stores if unable to supply copies when required. With both Eclipse and First (independent publishers) moving out of traditional formats and into higher quality editions, the market is becoming increasingly dominated by costly collector editions in preference to the comics we knew as kids.

British creators have continued their domination of the US section of the Eagle Awards (the results were announced in September). Neil Gaiman, Grant Morrison, Brian Bolland and others had favourable placings against the US talent both in creator categories and with their various comics titles and characters.

We appear to be in a quiet period in comparison to previous month's proliferation of worthwhile titles, but the following may be worth looking out for:

PRIMAL (Apocalypse, Prestige Format): Neptune Distributor's publishing ventures should receive a healthy injection of readers with their announcement of the first original comics work by Clive Barker.  
 BATMAN - BRIDE OF THE DEMON (DC, H/B): DC's previous Batman hardcover *Son of the Demon* sold in respectable quantities so this sequel was an inevitable offering. It might finish up as a trilogy, ending with *Mother-in-Law of the Demon*. Cynical? Me?

FROM HELL. (Tundra, b/w): Don't Panic! This Alan Moore/Eddie Campbell comic will be collected from below by your usual source. You only need wander to your local retailer for it. Initially reprinting material from *Tuboo* this title will appear annually.

CAGES (Tundra): Tundra Publishing Ltd is brought to you by Kevin Eastman of Teenage Mutant etc. fame. Nice to see those tedious turtles financing something worthwhile! This one is Dave McKean's long awaited return to comic-book interiors after his wonderful *Hellblazer* and *Sandman* cover paintings. This one is about the creation myth: beware of fundamentalist burnings!

ELEKTRA LIVES AGAIN (Marvel h/c): Frank Miller revival of his successful *Daredevil* supporting character. See *Bride of Demos* cynicism.

BLEEDING BLACK (Marvel): Doug Moench revives his Shang-Chi character (son of Fu-Manchu, poor boy) which was quite a trailblazer in the 1970s under the title *Master of Kung-Fu*. One of comicdom's neglected classics by a sadly under-rated writer.



**SKYRACK**  
BOOK SERVICE

Yorkshire's oldest in SF, Fantasy & Comics. Science Fiction Paperbacks and Magazines. Marvel & DC Comics from Golden Age to Advance Imports. Thousands of back issues always in stock. Film posters & Magazines.

Open daily 9:30 - 5pm  
(Wednesday 9:30 - 1pm)

51 The Superstore,  
Merrion Centre, Leeds LS2 8LY.

New Autumn catalogue contains rare pulps, first editions, paperbacks, thousands of hard to obtain back-issue comics. Special Edgar Rice Burroughs section.

95 pence post-free.

## The Transatlantic Fan Fund

Robert Lichtman, Christina Lake & Lillian Edwards

Robert starts: I guess you know the basic history of TAFF. Grew out of the special fund to bring Walt Willis to the '52 Worldcon in Chicago. The first winner was Vinc Clarke, who never took his trip. The first actual trip was Ken Bulmer in 1955. My trip to Contraceive in 1989 was the 30th trip to be funded by TAFF. Of the thirty winners, nineteen have done at least some sort of trip report (and if you haven't seen one, the best person to ask is Vinc Clarke, who has copies of practically every fanzine ever published in his Heritage Library, 16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent DA16 2BN - Ed).

How does someone know if (s)he is eligible to vote? Voter eligibility is quite easy. One has to have been active in some form of fanac for at least a year or so before the election under consideration. There is a space on the ballot for providing a reference if one is unsure if (s)he will be known to the administrators. A minimum donation of \$1 or £1 must accompany the vote. To run, one must provide a platform of a hundred words or less, post a small bond and sign a statement saying you'll take the trip if elected "barring acts of G\*d". Realistically, to be a successful candidate, it helps to be well known in the fandoms of both hemispheres. Mostly, to date, this has been accomplished by being active publishing and/or contributing to fanzines; but some candidates over the years have won without heavy fanzine fan connections and TAFF is not an exclusive fanzine fan preserve as many who criticise it like to assert. The one thing all TAFF candidates of whom I have any personal knowledge have in common is a good number of years of presence in fandom. This does not necessarily mean decades.

Christina and Lillian add: Nominations close on December 31, at which point the two European administrators breathe a sigh of relief and set to work on hand-stencilling the TAFF ballots in readiness for the official release date of January 15, when a crack team will set out on their special TAFF dispatch rider motorcycles to personally deliver the ballot papers far and wide round Britain and continental Europe (Australians can vote, but not stand: they have their own fan funds, DUFF and GUFF).

Nowadays, with a purist interest in fanzines perhaps not as popular as once it was (and not so likely to bring in lots of luverly cash) your ever ingenious administrators set to thinking what fans REALLY like to read about (and pay money for) and came up with ... FOOD. What you really want is a guide with lots of recommendations for all the really enjoyable, accommodating, quirky, stimulating and mouthwatering little bistros, pubs, Indians, fish'n'chip shops, whatever, that you've had to search out in your own area the hard way. What you want is ... the TAFF Good Food Guide! Deadline May 3, 1991.

European administrators are Lillian Edwards (2 Spring Valley Terrace, Edinburgh EH10 4QD) and Christina Lake (47 Wessex Avenue, Horfield, Bristol BS7 0DE); US administrator is Robert Lichtman (PO Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442, USA).

## Noticeboard

### DOCTOR WHO ITEMS FOR SALE:

Selection of well-known Who fanzines i.e. *DWB*, *Frame*, *Private Who*, *CMS*, *In-Vision* etc. Also selection of comics *Hellblazer*, *Justice League*, *2000AD* etc. Other related items, see for list. Ian Abrahams, Higher Treskerby Farm, Treskerby, Redruth, Cornwall.

### FOR SALE: FOUNDATION 5, 7-49 INCLUSIVE

Plus Index 1-40 and *SFF: A Report* (March 1976). Offers to Brian Cox, Little Crede, Crede Lane Bosham, Chichester PO18 8NX.

### WENTWOOD FOREST RETREAT

Secluded forest-edge smallholding, glorious views. Self-catering flat sleeps six from £150 per week. B&B by arrangement. Creative writing workshops available. Women's groups, green issues, new directions. Details from Anne Cluysenaar, Little Wentwood Farm, Llantrisant, Usk, Gwent NP5 1ND (Tel: 02913 3797).

### SONIC ENERGY MUSIC

The Sonic Energy Authority (Paul Preston and Cardinal Cox) are pleased to announce the release of their eagerly awaited third cassette album, *Sailors on the Sea of Fate*. They attempt to combine fantasy and SF poetry with music with a contemporary feel. The tapes are only £3 each, cheques payable to Paul Preston (4 Baxters Bridge, Thorney Road, Borough Fen, Peterborough).

### SCHEHERAZADE

Coming soon! Fantasy, Gothic Romance, Science Fiction. Writers wanted, excellent word rates. For our specifications contact Liz Counihan, St. Ives, Maypole Road, East Grinstead RH19 1HL.

### HONG KONG SPACE MUSEUM

This museum has films such as *Passport to Mars*, showing the great Olympus volcano and *Uranus: I will see such things* which includes a computer animated tour of Miranda. The museum also has seminars, souvenirs, publications, lectures and a school programme. Details 10 Salisbury Road, Twickenham, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Please note the museum is closed on Tuesdays.

## PSYCHOTRONICS: A PLEA

My SF club is interested in parapsychology and psychotronics. I would like to get some information about these things, about knowledge of it in the world. Please, BSFA members, write me, what the British know about it, what are their activities. For example, now Czechoslovakia has many problems with Transcendental Meditation of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Long live Science Fiction. Filip Skaba, Pod leskem 363/4a, 109 00 Praha, Czechoslovakia.

## MONTPELLIER SF/FANTASY WRITERS GROUP

This group has vacancies for two writers. We meet regularly in the Brighton area to discuss our work, which includes novels and short stories. If interested, write to Celia Tarkowska, 47 Old Steine, Brighton BN1 1NW, enclosing a typed sample of your work.

## FOR SALE: SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

Paperbacks, magazines, pulps, hardcovers, comics. Send wants. Free search. Buying - SF/F magazines, books, 50s British SF/F paperbacks, TV/film annuals, paperbacks, comics. Write to John Schneider, 1500 Main Avenue, Kaukauna, Wisconsin 54130, USA.

## COLLATING WEEKEND

This will take place February 2-3, 1991 - the first collating weekend of a fresh New Year. It will be at the Statistics Department Annex at Reading University with the expert Keith Freeman (tel: 0734 666142). This is a good way to meet other BSFA members, help the BSFA and have a good pub lunch and get an extra month on your subscription, all at once.

## EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION?

I would like to offer that BSFA readers and I make exchanges of information about SF and fandom. I think it will be useful and helpful to our fandoms both. I need what is being issued in Great Britain of books, zines, films etc. What about SF events having place there. I'd like to receive information of this kind continually. I can be sending as well - and I would like to know addresses of people who would like to change SF materials with me. Our SF club will issue its first fanzine in English, called *Chernobylisation* as soon as possible, maybe someone will be interested. Good SF&F to you. Boris Sidiuk, Chairman of the Zoryany Shlyah SF Club, Kurchatov St. 18-287, Kiev 252156, Ukraine, USSR.

## LABEL CODES REVEALED

Memberships (renewal etc) is done on a monthly basis in theory - and the date for renewal printed on member's labels is, for example 990 etc - in practice anyone joining (renewing) in an odd month is treated as if they'd joined in the previous month (because our mailings are sent out in even months). This means that someone joining in October of this year (shown as 1091) and someone joining in November (1191) will both receive a membership renewal form (and a Standing Order Form) in the AUGUST 1991 mailing (and their label will be "Sub Pis" on it (top right hand corner)). If I hear nothing from them, then they will get a membership renewal form and a SO form in the OCTOBER 1991 mailing (and their label will have "\*\*\*\*\*" on it (top right hand corner)). If I still hear nothing from them, they will be removed from the BSFA list just prior to my printing out the labels for the DECEMBER 1991 mailing (eg late November). Both the renewal and SO forms are small, but I can't imagine they could be overlooked (and if they go left in the envelope when the mailing is removed, the envelope is transparent!) - Keith Freeman.

## WHAT DOES THE BSFA READ?

When was the last time the BSFA did a poll of favourite authors? Do any of our members still read and enjoy Asimov? If they do, have they read Dick or Bradbury or Shepard? If they have, why do they still read Asimov? I'd be very intrigued to know the answers. Steve Rothman, 49 Burney Bit, Pamber Heath, Basingstoke, RG26 6TL.

## CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR KIDS

Special Hyperspatial pockets; Unseen University library cards; Bug Hunter outfit for Barbie doll (ammunition included); Radio Shack Genetic Engineering kit; Galactic Patrol standard distress beacon; Pocket Babbage Machine; Mitsubishi Cyberdeck; Meccano Desk Drive kit (with screwdriver and spanner). James diGriz jr, c/o Dorans Military Boarding School and Penitentiary.

## FRIENDS OF FOUNDATION

It costs £12.50 a year to subscribe as an individual, which includes the subscription to *Foundation*. (£4 if already a *Foundation* subscriber). It's a way to support a valuable science fiction resource and, hopefully, build it into an essential database - Rob Meades, 75 Hecham Close, Walthamstow, London E17 5QT (Tel: 081 531 1703).

## Local Fanomena

### Tommy Ferguson

Before I begin the column proper, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Keith Mitchell for his sterling work over the past two years. When I first joined the BSFA, there was no such thing as a clubs column, at best a very infrequent one. Now I have the fairly easy task of updating the extensive list Keith has gathered and continuing to develop and upgrade the column.

Me? Oh, all right, because you insisted ... I am 23, a graduate of Queen's University in Belfast, with an honours degree in Politics and am currently working in the insurance field for Royal Insurance UK. This last year has seen me in various jobs from selling insurance to doing research for a local publishing company. As a fan, I'm responsible for running the Queen's University SF Society, the NICON series of conventions and some fanzines whose bad points far outweighed their good. At the moment, I'm in the "love" stage of a love/hate relationship with The Organisation spa, plan to publish another issue of my fanzine *TASH* and am putting together Nicon V. Oh, I also write this column now ...

I'd like to continue the development of the column that Keith started, whilst maintaining his very high standard in the "basics". To this end, I've come up with a list of aims for my tenure in the column:

1. Core Role. To maintain and continuously update a list of local clubs and SF related organisations. Here, I'd like to highlight the so called "fringe" groups of SF; did you know, for example, that 6 of 1: The Prisoner Appreciation Society has three times the membership of the BSFA? Did you know of the British Fantasy Society or even Fanderson? I thought so.
2. Starting a Club. Another major feature of this column is the amount of people who would like to start their own local club or group but don't know how to do so. I'm currently putting together an advice and information package for these people, but would like to see a fanzine appear which encapsulates these various ideas of starting your own group. Something along the lines of *ConRunner*; a one-off that would still be as useful ten years from now.
3. A UK Clubs Network. This is an idea whose time has come and I'm particularly keen to see some sort of formal communication developing upon recent convention panels and workshops. There would seem to be a consensus that a talking shop is the best way to bring about a debate. I would like to see this column being a focal point for people to get in contact with each other and discuss ideas. [Details of the University SF group network from David Wake, 160 Beaumont Road, Birmingham B30 1NY tel: 021 451 2287].
4. Articles. I would like to print short articles on various aspects of clubs and groups in the UK. For example, are pubs better than hotels for meetings? Are formal events necessary for a successful club? What does it take to sustain a University/Poly society? The idea is to generate discussion and an exchange of information, not all of which has to be printed. With an article in print, there is a platform for discussion, a basis for panels and workshops on the issues raised. In short, I want to raise members' consciousness about clubs.

This is not all I would like to do with the column, there are many other areas that I would like to explore. However, I feel that keeping the original aims and purpose of the column firmly in mind, whilst trying out some of the other items mentioned above, is more than enough for the present. It also means that I've got something other than a pint of Guinness to focus my mind on each month or so!

I hope this brief introduction has given you an idea of what to expect over the coming months and I also hope that the issues and topics raised will elucidate a response. If I don't hear from you, I can't write anything and no-one is going to know anything about you and you'll turn up on the night (Terry Pratchett in tow) and no-one else is going to be there ... So what's happening in your neck of the woods: as we say over here, what's the crack? Remember, WRITE EARLY AND WRITE OFTEN.

#### PROPOSED BATH CLUB

I want to set up a local SF group in the Bath area with as wide a range of people and SF tastes as possible. Advice would be appreciated and also if anyone in the Bath-Bristol area is interested, please get in touch with Simon Binson, 3 Arundel Road, Camden, Bath BA1 6EH.

#### GAYLACTIC NETWORK

This is an international organisation for gay SF readers, it aims to promote SF in all its forms, especially that which deals with and is of interest to gay people and to help gay SF readers contact and develop friendships and share their interests. Out of the closet and into the Universe! Details from PO Box 1051, Back Bay Annex, Boston, Massachusetts 02117-1051, USA.

FANIMATO! is the official Jittlov fan club and provides the Jittlov compilation tape (including the original *Wizard of Speed and Time* and several other shorts), officially approved by Mike himself, price \$2.40 plus blank tape or \$12.40 and no tape from FANIMATO!, 18 Dix Road, Maynard, MA01754, USA.

#### ZZ9 PLURAL Z ALPHA

This is the semi-official *Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* Appreciation Society. Meetings for members around the country, a quarterly newsletter, range of merchandise. Details from Noel Collyer, 17 Guildford Street, Brighton BN1 3LA.

#### BWA

This is an international women's Amateur Press Association (APA), which wants to contact women out of the US to correspond with. Details from Amy Thomson, 4014 Latona Ave, NE, Seattle, WA 98105, USA.

#### HORIZON

This is a Blake's 7 club which offers newsletters, a free colour photo of your favourite B7 character, merchandise and information on anything remotely connected with B7. It's a friendly club which welcomes members and contributions. Details from Kevin and Floss Davies, 53 Vaughan Road, Birkdale, Southport PR8 4BX.

#### STARNET

This is a network for *Star Trek* fans to keep in touch through conventional methods (paper, mail and telephone). Details from Mark H. Anbinder, 1063 Warren Road, Apt. 6, Ithaca, NY 14850, USA.

#### IRISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

This was formed in 1976 to promote SF and fantasy appreciation in Ireland or, more precisely, in Dublin. It publishes a monthly newsletter and the magazine, *FTL*, quarterly. Write to 30 Beverly Downs, Knocklyon Road, Templeogue, Dublin 16, Ireland.

#### NCSF (Nederlands Contactcentrum voor Science Fiction)

This Dutch club publishes a bimonthly magazine and works with the Belgian SF Club SPAN to organise a "Beneluxcon" annually held alternatively in Belgium and the Netherlands. Details from PO Box 35061, GK Utrecht, The Netherlands.

#### LEEDS UNIVERSITY SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY SOCIETY

This club produced a welcome pack to entice new students, listing the committees and events, publication and annual con. Meetings on Wednesday evenings, 8pm-onwards at the Packhorse, with fortnightly films at the Rupert Bear Lecture Theatre, as it is affectionately known, including *Robocop*, *The Lost Boys*, *Bladerunner*, *Barbarella* and a Christmas spectacular showing of the Rocky Horror. "Remember" says this pack "this is a big screen stuff and not poxy videos where you need a telescope to see the screen". There is a free library at 27 Cromer Terrace open weekdays 1-2pm with books from Asimov to Zelazny. Details from Andrew Adams, 73 Richmond Avenue, Leeds LS6 1DB.

#### PRESTON SPECULATIVE FICTION GROUP

The new venue is the Bear's Paw on Church Street. It has a large function room with bar and its own separate entrance which can squeeze up to 200 people (luckily, since Guests next year will include M. John Harrison, Alan Grant, Richard O'Brien, Kim Newman, Dave Gibbons and Frank Miller). The bear is Bass. The group's newsletter, *Kimota*, includes an interview with Diana Wynne Jones. Contact Keith Marsland 0772 865672.

#### OCTARINE

This is an organisation for the appreciation of humorous SF and fantasy. Membership (£4 UK, £5 EEC, other £6) entails a badge, card and quarterly fanzine *Tales from the Broken Drum*, which contains news, reviews, fiction and artwork (and is hilarious). Details from 46 Arnsdale Road, Bestwood Estate, Nottingham NG5 5HE.

#### WOMEN WRITERS' NETWORK

This was founded to help women writers further their professional development. It is an independent organisation. The newsletter is published nine times a year; membership is £18 a year - details from Mary Scott, 23A St. John's Grove, London N19 5RW. There are monthly meetings at the American Church, 70 Tottenham Court Road, London W1 (near Goodge Street Tube) - contact Cathy 071 794 5861. Next meetings are Dan Pedersen, London Bureau Chief of *Newsweek* on December 10, Everything you wanted to know about writing, a special networking evening on January 14, Alan Rusbridger, Features Editor of *The Guardian* on February 11, Darley Anderson, Literary Agent on March 11 and Cherry Cookson, Commissioning Editor, BBC Radio Drama on April 8.

## Writeback



You are invited to write to *Marrix* about (virtually) any subject. The address is:

Jenny Glover,  
16 Aviary Place,  
Leeds LS12 2NP

by the deadline:

**January 19, 1991**

### On Total Recall

I was very surprised at the praise received by *Total Recall*. Yes, the sets are marvellous. Yes, the (great) original story is recognisable. But these virtues are mere garnish sprinkled upon the true meat of the movie, which is a piece of violence-pornography that's as moronic as this attempted food metaphor. The scene where the Rekl director tries to convince Quaid the whole thing's a paranoid fantasy does indeed work. Why? Because it would explain why the film's been so unconvincing up to that point! There's no feel for logic (people commit murder and walk away; someone has to press a button to reveal a punctured dome), no feel for living on Mars (the wonderful sets are just paintgun playgrounds with no sign of reduced gravity), glass is incredibly easy to break (and never cuts anyone), and the ending is ridiculous to the point of childishness.

It's sci fi for *Sun* readers. Ballard once observed that SF cinema may, at its lowest level, offer the thrill of a rollercoaster ride. Well, when I want that, I take two days' holiday and visit Alton Towers! *Total Recall* may be like "We can remember...", but that's not the same as being faithful to it. I think Verhoeven would treat anything the same. Say, for instance, the Brontes:

"Assholes" grunted Rochester, as he gunned down the soldiers with his repeater musket. He turned to his beloved, who was struggling with the fiend from the attic. Gritting his teeth, he put a bullet in the fiend's head. His beloved rose and looked down on the haggard woman's corpse. "That your wife?" said Jane Eyre.

The 1975 film *Rollerball* was considered violent in its day, but it also had a believable setting, characters you could relate to and excitement. Could Verhoeven get these things into a film? I don't think so. [Paul Beardsley, "Westerlies", 100 Southleigh Road, Havant, Hants PO9 2PR].

Peter Tennant continues: *The Total Recall* controversy seems concerned with two issues: (1) should a film be faithful to its source material and (2) is speculation about the likelihood of this permissible in the pages of *Marrix*.

I enjoyed both the film and the Dick short story on which it was based, though for different reasons. The link between the two was obvious but this central concept was developed differently, hardly surprising, given the different media and their respective strengths, concerns etc. Films, to state the obvious, are a visual media intended to appeal to a mass audience. They emphasise colour, movement, spectacle. Reading is a solitary pursuit and by its very nature, writing has greater scope for character, philosophy, depth of thought (which is not to say that films can't be profound or books spectacular). A film and a story can complement each other, reveal separate aspects of the same idea. There's no reason to expect one to slavishly follow the course of the other.

Jon Moran is right to insist that *Total Recall* be allowed to stand or fall on its own merits as a film, rather than condemned out of hand simply because it isn't "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale". However, his apparent anger at Tommy Fergusson's views seems uncalled for. Speculation beforehand and discussion afterwards of a film's fidelity to its source seem perfectly legitimate to me; futile, perhaps, that we all have our ideas of what the characters and sets should look like, but certainly as valid a topic as, say, what the

government will do next, who will win the cup etc. Seems like Jon's going to end up with an awful lot of toilet paper. Isn't a lot of science fiction itself speculation of this sort, extrapolation of present trends into the future. [Now, there's a thought! Will the future be true to its source material? I look at the world today and hope not]. Okay so Tommy got it wrong and *Total Recall* wasn't a turkey. He's entitled. No harm done. For Jon to talk about Tommy's "review" spoiling his enjoyment of *Total Recall* simply doesn't make much sense to me, I'm afraid.

The thing I find sad is that after seeing *Total Recall*, few people will seek out Dick's original. Instead most of those left wanting more will read Piers Anthony's adaptation, about which I have yet to hear a good word. [Peter Tennant, 9 Henry Cross Close, Shipdham, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 7LQ].

## Science Fiction as Music

I like British SF especially for its own charm. One can usually distinguish between British and American SF from the text itself. Using a musical analogy, I can say that American SF is like a symphony orchestra, but British SF is usually like a chamber music ensemble. The sound is not so loud, but very delicate. Yes, there are writers placed vice versa on the sides of the Atlantic, but I've described only general tendencies. Among British authors of the period since the 1950s until today, I prefer such authors as John Wyndham (I have almost all of his books - they distributed his books here), J.G. Ballard, Brian Aldiss (his story "Who Can Replace A Man?" was among the few which converted me to science fiction), John Brunner ("Factsheet No. 6" is another such story), Christopher Priest (excellent style; I've read three novels and *Fugue for a Darkening Island* reminded me in some pages of *Doctor Zhivago*) and Bob Shaw.

I know nothing of the British SF of the 1980s, I haven't even read the *Helliconia* novels. The reason is - there is nowhere to get them here in the USSR. Recently, I've received several copies of *Interzone* from Joseph Nicholas. They represent the present day of British and not only British SF, but it is hard to cross the gap between 1970s and the present day in one jump. [Alexander V. Vasilkovsky, 8 Zankovetsky st., apt. 13, 252001 Kiev-1, USSR, who thanks BSFA readers who sent him books, Steve Grover in particular, and would be most grateful for any spare books BSFA readers might donate to his club].

## Fire and Hemlock

Mike Gunderloy operates a fanzine exchange, though it depends on what he has available and publishing *Factsheet 5* takes priority. Fanzine editors - send as many copies of your zine as you want him to distribute to "people who don't even know you exist". The rest - send an addressed envelope, say 10x13 inches, with a dollar note - \$2.40 should cover postage on two pounds' weight.

*Overspace* sales raised £82 for CLIC (Cancer and Leukaemia in Childhood) with a further £118 raised by the editorial team disguised as an Aztec priest, gun totin' cowgirl, ancient Irish caveman and rather sumptuous Egyptian queen, who patrolled the streets of Chippinham and Melksham.

*ConRunner* editor, Ian Sorensen, would like to pass on the editorship of his fanzine. After a couple of sleepless nights getting *ConRunner* ready for Novacon he meditates "If old fanzine fans vanish to raise families and old conrunners just keep running cons, I wonder what old conrunning fanzine editors do? They go to bed".



## Farewell, Awards and Fanzines

Members of Novacon voted for what they considered to be the best fanzine, fan writer and fan artist of the year. Thirty ballots were cast and the results were:

### BEST FANZINE

1. *FTT* edited by Joseph Nicholas and Judith Hanna (5A Frinton Road, Stamford Hill, London N15 6NH) - 40 points
2. *Pulp* edited by John Harvey (8 The Orchard, Tonwell, Herts. SG12 0HR) and Rob Hansen (144 Flasher Grove, East Ham, London E6 1AB) - 33 points
3. *Reading Matters* (Tibs, G/R 10 Caird Drive, Glasgow G11 5DS) - 26 points

### BEST FANWRITER

1. Dave Langford - 51 points
2. Abigail Frost - 34 points
3. Judith Hanna - 26 points

### BEST FAN ARTIST

1. Dave Mooring - 40 points
2. Shep Kirkbride - 19 points
3. Ken Cheslin - 14 points

There were 30 ballots, twenty three fanzines mentioned, twenty fanwriters and twenty fan artists. Harry Bond now takes over as Nova Administrator with a committee of three people to count the ballots annually and confirm the validity of the votes. It should be noted that with only thirty ballots, that was a distinct minority of the convention - many people just said that they were not qualified to vote, not having received the pre-requisite six or more fanzines during the year. Since Novacon is normally one of the more "literary" cons of the year, this shows a disturbing trend concerning the future of fanzines.

Congratulations to the winners, the last words belong to Joseph Nicholas, who wrote on October 11 to modestly deny the possibility of being honoured with the Nova. "I appreciate Nic Farey's review of *FTT 10* too, although his suggestion that Judith and I should be in line for a Nova Award before too long strikes me as audaciously unlikely. To judge by the past few years' results, you have to live in Leeds even to make the final ballot, and since we live in the Socialist People's Republic of Haringey, we are therefore completely out of the running. And we won't even be at this year's Novacon..."

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF OLAF 7, 8 & a reprint of No. 1 (Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 1LA). Charming mix of letters, stories, articles and Olaf, the Viking time traveller who always appears in the wrong (or right) place at the right (or wrong) time. These are kind, gentle fanzines: also a very good read.

### A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE CONGRES-GEBOUW

(Fiona Anderson, 129 Colegrave Road, Stratford, London E15). This is given out by whim only - which means you will have to ask very nicely. It shows what went on behind the scenes at the Worldcon - the lighter side of how the Ops team, all thirty three of them, managed.

### ARROWS OF DESIRE

(S.V. O'Jay, PO Box 29, Hitchin, Herts SG4 9TG). Next issue in April 1991 will be concerned with Religion; this one prods Death gingerly with delicate fear; the most sensitive article comes from Moira Shearman.

### CHICKEN BONES

(Abigail Frost, 95 Wilmot Street, London E2 0BN). This argues the case for a British *Locus* before launching into a comprehensive review of fanzines; a rambling con account which captures shattered chaos, a fanzine fan's fanzine.

### COLLAPS

(Jacek Pelczar, Diamantowa 10/25, 80-028 Gdansk, Poland). Conreports, fiction - this fanzine is most accessible through its excellent artwork.

### CONRUNNER 14

(Ian Sorensen, 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton ML3 7HY). The letter column dominated by reactions to D.West's "little effort" in the last issue. Ian struggles to remain neutral and dodge the rather confused flak, concluding in agreement with D.West and Martin Easterbrook that some conrunners should consider whether their energy could be better spent.

## DOXA!

(Roman Orszanski, PO Box 131, Marden, SA 5070 Australia). Europe and the Worldcon - preliminary notes - besides Roman reckons that "the fans I met are part of the story and should have a part in the telling of the trip (share the blame, right?)"

## DOXY

(John Foyster, PO Box 3066, Grenfell Street, Adelaide, S. Australia 5000). This is an acquired taste; here John discussed fanfunds and *The New York Review of Science Fiction*

## FACTSHEET FIVE 38

(Mike Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Ave, Rensselaer, NY 12144-4502, USA). Press run: 7300 copies; a (rough) estimated 2500 zines listed mostly US, but a constant exciting surprise.

## FLICKERS 'N' FRAMES £1.25

(John M. Peters, Bertha Press, 299 Southway Drive, Southway, Plymouth PL6 5QN) Pot pourri of reviews, slides, fiction, commentary, with a smooth tape attached as bonus; also Olaf, ubiquitous captain of the Fjord trans-spacial longboat *Ragnarok's Roll*.

## GALACTICA 9

(Fanzin Klub Fantastyki, KD "Macius I", ul. Opolska 2, 80-394 Gdansk, Poland). Bulky 79p fanzine crammed with articles and pictures.

## HOT WAFFLES: Capricorn Summer and 22 Bikini Friday

(Phil Probert, 20 Birch Tce, Birley, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham DN3 1JL). Sad and nostalgic; it may be just Phil's style. I hope so.

## HOW TO DO MAGIC WITH MIRRORS and other fiction

(Hilary Hayes, BCM Omentide, London WC1N 3XX). High quality mood fiction, slightly detached, strong on description.

## INCEPTION - the Storm Constantine Information Service Letter

(Steve Jeffery and Vikki Lee France, 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 2XA). An interview with Storm Constantine, letter column bristling with conversational hooks; formatted to the music of Albanian throats, the Sisters of Mercy, Cocteau Twins, Richard Thompson and Fields of the Nephilim.

## MIMOSA 8

(Dick and Nicki Lynch, PO Box 1270, Germantown, Maryland 20875, USA). Vignettes of alternate lives with a strong, but cordial letter column. An examination of medic's shorthand reveals the truth behind the optimistic CURE (Clinical Unit for the Recently Expired) or the euphemisms for dying. "He boxed", "he caught the bus", "he was transferred to the Eternal Care Unit" - I liked Richard Brandt on the absurdities of US courts better. At least the innocent only went to gaol.

## OTHER REALMS

(Chuq von Roshach, 35111-F Newark Blvd, Suite 255, Newark, Calif. 94560, USA). Accounts of vacations in Turkey and green Washington State; reviews; interesting articles.

## OVERSPACE NINE £1 incl. p&amp;p

(Sean Friend, 25 Sheldon Road, Chippenham, Wilts. SN14 0BP). Interesting fiction, let down by an unimaginative typeface; the plot also has to contend with distracting descriptions.

## SALIROMANIA

(Michael Ashley, 9 Brakeley House, Kelmore Grove, Woodside, Bradford BD6 2RD). The duplication quality is superb, however the editor is not as spotty (or as young) as the cover photo and interior prose would indicate. EDITORIAL HEALTH WARNING: this is what not people mean when they talk about a "fanzish" fanzine. Perhaps.

## TAFFDOOR 1.1

(Robert Lichtman, PO Box 30, Glen Ellen, Ca. 95442, USA). The TAFF race will extend until December 31, 1990, by which time one or more European/UK volunteers should have stepped (or been pushed) forwards to travel to the 1991 Chicago Worldcon. Classic fanzines available for postal auction: bids by January 15, 1991.

## TALES FROM THE BROKEN DRUM

(M.J. Simpson, Flat 5, 52 Bernard Street, Carrington, Nottingham NG5 2AE). Official Octarine clubzine, well up to its usual high standard - especially the cartoon on the back cover which depicts the Committee. Octarine specialises in SF humour, with particular reference to one Pratchett, Terry.

## TAND

(Mark Manning, 1400 E. Mercer #19, Seattle, Wa 98112, USA). Pictures, long letters, poetry - like the computer haiku "Systems failure/Please erase the disk/and reformat". Experimental and enthusiastic.

## THE HARDCORE £1.50 plus large sase or 30p&amp;p

(Jaël Nul, 1st Floor Flat, 212 Croydon Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 4DE) A cyberpunk special which underestimates Charles Stross and Kim Newman (only a hero can appear on tv at 0745 looking good); it looks good.

## Fans Groups in Eastern Europe

### Bridget Wilkinson

Fans tend to be organised in clubs, that was the best way to get around the authorities, and to get grants in the past. Most of the clubs have libraries. They might be interested in fanzines, they would almost certainly be interested in books. Fans Across the World (17 Mimosa, 29 Avenue Road, Tottenham, London N15 5JF) is sending books to the clubs. If you send anything at all valuable, including books, register it. You'd be surprised how many customs officers are apparently closet SF fans.

### Polish Clubs

Podlaskie Towarzystwo Miłośników Fantastyki, ul. Piastowska 11a, D.K. "Zacheta", 15-207 Białystok, Poland (This is the mail address for the UBik, TAURUS, ORION and GANDALF clubs. Orion and Gandalf are for teenagers and children respectively. There is also a Role Playing section to this club). Silesian Science Fiction Club, 40-956 Katowice, PO Box 502, Poland. (This is the oldest of the Polish science fiction clubs). Gdansk Klub Fantastyki, PO Box 76, 80-325 Gdansk-37, Poland. (This is a federation of seven clubs).

### Bulgarian Clubs

Club "Ivan Eremov", Boris Basmadjiev, 1463 Sofia, 28B Dospatsir, Bulgaria. Nicolay Bliznacov, 4 Vasil Marcov str. 7000-Plavdiv, Bulgaria.

### USSR Clubs

Savchenko, Ju. O. (KLF MGU), Moscow University Science Fiction Fan Club, MGU, Leninsky Gory, Moscow, USSR 117234. Anatoly Tatchkov, Alley Trudast 54/3 - 72, Komsomolsk, USSR 681003. This place is particularly interested in children's fantasies and wants contact with British authors and books. InfoSFers (Bulletin of the Vilnius Science Gediminas Berensnevičius club "Dorado" and Kaunas club Antakainio 65-33 "Phoenix"), Vilnius, 232040, Lithuania, USSR.

## Obituary: Roald Dahl

As *Matrix* went to press, the news of Roald Dahl's death was announced and the newspapers quickly constructed laudatory obituaries. I can't match them - nor do I wish to. He was a vastly imaginative author, with a black sense of humour, he seemed to take an idea and twist it to the logical conclusion, so that a betrayed housewife could take her revenge and murder her faithless husband with the first weapon that came to hand: a frozen joint of meat, which the investigating sympathetic policeman could then eat. Or the flurried wife, tormented once too often by her unobtrusive husband, who seemed to get stuck in the lift deliberately. She could so easily take that one step away from "civilised" behaviour and go off on a long vacation leaving him stuck.

Roald Dahl used this knowledge of ulterior motives when he turned to writing for children - though he started by writing down the stories he told as bedtime stories to his own family. In his stories, children were badly, often savagely, treated, encouraged to rebel against their obviously cruel parents. I often wondered if the hag caricatures of these books derive from the harsh memories of his school days. Though I had a sneaking sympathy for one Mrs. Pratchett, trying to make a living selling sweets, who antagonised the boys until they dropped a stinking dead mouse into a jar of Gobstoppers. She got them camed, four real whoppers each, while she watched, leaping up and down, cackling in glee.

And Roald Dahl did not take the easy routine of happy endings to his books: in *The Witches*, his boy hero is turned into a mouse for reasons which are too intriguing to explain (you will have to read the book and find out). But, unlike the wimpish conclusion to the film "based on" the book, he stayed a mouse for ever and ever. There was no escape, only adaptation to survive for him. Roald Dahl provided a merciless introduction to the real world where horrible things do happen, where children can be abused, where even parents can be punished, where talking to strangers (even female strangers) can have dire consequences which can never be retrieved.

Although, like many another assimilated writer (Conrad comes to mind here), he became superficially more English than the English, he never lost touch with the Northern Gloominess of his Norwegian roots.

## Soapbox Steve Rothman

90% of everything is crap - but that doesn't mean that 90% of SF that is crap has to be bought or read. But someone, somewhere is buying it, else the publishers wouldn't be churning it out by the ton. Who wants all this crap, and why?

Obviously, most of the buyers of inferior SF are not SF fans in the sense of belonging to the BSFA or attending conventions. The majority of SF readers - including the proverbial train traveller - pick up the latest Asimov or Niven from shops or bookstalls where this is all the choice they have and therefore they are not likely to be tempted to try a Roberts, Shepard or Ballard. This begs the question of why the publishers - who often claim to have educated and discriminating tastes but must nevertheless bow to the demands of the market - do not treat, say, Geoff Ryman as a "best seller" and print tens of thousands of his books and expend the same resources on publicity and marketing as they would for, say, Niven. If Philip K. Dick's books were as readily available as Clarke's, would they necessarily sell less?

However, even specialist SF bookshops are filling up with second-rate SF so, presumably, even those who have access to the cream of SF are disdaining it.

I'm going to stick my neck out and make some sweeping generalisations now. It seems to me that there are three categories of SF and fantasy which breed bad books like sewers breed rats. My apologies to the writers who produce honest work in these fields.

First, there is hard SF where style and characterisation are unfortunately traditionally subordinate to technological gimmickry and simplistic action-adventure plots. Frequently there is a Libertarian or militaristic slant. Next comes derivative "In the Great Tradition of J.R.R. Tolkien ..." quest fantasy. Finally, the many-headed beast of trilogies, series, shared-worlds, TV and film novelisations, etc.

In the case of hard SF, if this is the science or technology that is important, then why dress it up as fiction? If you want science, you're better off with *New Scientist* or *Scientific American*. (There is a possibility that, in the absence of good "popular science" writing, SF is taking on this role. This is a little worrying as fiction is the very antithesis of science, which deals in facts, and it conjures up a picture of readers with little or no basic scientific knowledge eagerly learning about inertialless drives and pi being equal to three).

If, on the other hand, the characters are important, as they surely are, then surely it is better that they be credible, realistic and well-portrayed. So why read *Beserker* novels when you could be reading *Man Plus*, *The Martian Inca* or *Helliconia*?

Sword and Sorcery fantasy I should not really comment on, as I avoid it like the plague as a result of the many unfavourable reviews that I have read. There is excellent fantasy available by Jonathan Carroll, Tanith Lee and Tim Powers, so why anyone wants nothing but dragons, elves and Dark Lords is beyond me. I have heard it said that such fantasy, commonly with a feudal setting, provides reassurance that there is an underlying order to the world and that good naturally prevails over evil. Is it really just a form of psychotherapy?

The last category I believe is too conducive to hackwork. If *Star Trek*, *S&S*, *Perry Rhodan* or *Nightfall* are popular, there is the temptation to crank out a sequel/the *inrip* off and make a quick, easy profit, whether it be by a lazy author returning to a well-used setting or by a hack being presented with characters, setting, and sometimes plot, lock, stock and barrel. There is a common thread here and that is: more of the same, cosy, familiar, unadventurous works.

With science fiction being unbounded by space and time and being written by such a diversity of authors in such a richness of styles, I cannot understand why some people seem to want to restrict themselves to only one sort of reading matter. If SF is the literature of ideas, why is so little imagination shown by the readers?

If you want to travel to other worlds, why limit yourself to "Known Space"? What is wrong with the "Instrumentality of Mankind"? If you are interested in alien life, then why should you want to read about the space marines blowing it away? If you are dissatisfied with 20th century Earth, then why are re-hashes of Earth's legends in pseudo-historical settings better? Read *Tales from the Flat Earth* or read a history book. If you want to "seek out new life and new civilisations" then why be only interested in doing so in the company of the same few familiar faces from the crew of one particular starship?

Years ago, I started reading Clarke and Asimov. Through the lists of other books by the same publisher that were to be found in the backs of these first books, and through the prominent yellow Gollancz covers, I soon discovered Pohl and Dick and Bradbury, and so on. I now find Asimov and Clarke and Niven unreadable and look for books by those I've mentioned above plus Blaylock, Gibson, Kilworth and Banks, to mention just a few.

Yes, I do look for familiar authors, but I do look out for new ones who are recommended (in *PI*, *Vector* and *Interzone*). I buy magazines and anthologies so I can sample stories by different writers. Above all, I look for the surprises and variety which SF is exceptionally fitted to provide.

Basically I learned to recognise and appreciate better SF by reading it. I don't see why anyone else shouldn't be able to do likewise. Next time you are tempted to buy a Star Trek novelisation, try an Aldiss instead. If you want fantasy, buy a book by Tanith Lee. Whatever your current reading preference, there must have been a first time you tried it. Do you regret having tried something new then?

## Competition Corner Roger Robinson

A small but select entry with once again, at least one "new" entrant. In spite of saying that he preferred competitions which required originality, the £5 book token goes for the second time running to Nigel Parsons. He was the only entrant to score a maximum 50 points, but was run close by both Caroline Mullan and Andy Mills with 45 each. Thanks also to John Dallman, S.C. Hatch, John Howard, T.J. Mason, Rosemary Scott, Neil Summerfield and Peter Tennant, who also entered, making the overall average score 39 out of 50.

Correct answers were:

A1-B2-C8	Hugo Gernsback	A7-B10-C12	R.L. Fanthorpe
A2-B4-C6	Alfred Bester	A8-B12-C11	James Gunn
A4-B6-C7	Andrew Stephenson	A9-B11-C10	Christopher Priest
A5-B3-C5	Algis Budrys	A11-B9-C4	E.C. Tubb
A6-B1-C9	Brian Aldiss	A12-B8-C2	Harry Harrison

This left the following un-matched items - A3, A10, B5, B7, C1, C3.

## Matrix Competition #91 - Christmas Presents

\*\*\* Extra Prizes for Christmas \*\*\*

In the following list of books, all by Ursula LeGuin, is hidden the letters of the phrase XMAS CAKE, all the letters being in the following order.

planet of eKile  
the coMpASs rose  
roCannon's world  
the left hand of darKnEss

The list consists of four titles, thirteen words and sixty two letters. Although the list seems short, I am sure that, possibly with a different choice of author, an even shorter list containing the letters in the same order can be created. This year's *Matrix* Christmas challenge is to produce three "shopping lists" of SF or fantasy books, each list having a different author! Each list should contain the letters or numbers of a different one of the following (seasonal?) presents in the correct order.

A LONG WOOLLY SCARF  
A PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR TREE  
YET MORE HANKIES

As indicated above, there are extra prizes for this competition. Book tokens of £10, £6 and £4 will go to the senders of the shortest overall set of lists, one for each "present". Shortness will be determined by the total number of letters in the three lists. The only books allowed are SF and/or Fantasy novels and collections by an author (not "edited by") and the titles must be in full (with all the required articles etc!!)

GOOD LUCK - AND HAPPY CHRISTMAS SHOPPING!

Entries, and any general or specific comments about the Competitions, should be sent to the usual address - Roger Robinson, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG, to arrive by January 17, 1991.

Enter now and try to stop Nigel winning his third successive competition!