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President: Lynn Towson (New) - the Regent one
 Secretary ~~Secretary~~ Vice-President: " " " "
 Treasurer: George (St High's) - the illiterate one
 Competent one

Frank Trowson is still librarian and is now publisher's editor. In between all this, he helps edit *Sphinx* and does his own fanzines... he also works as Oxford "agent" for Comstock and co-chairs the book club.

make nice to Rita Riquelme and David Harris for the last year of newsletters. Harris, Max and Dave for keeping the society on its last legs; and of course Becca and Tim for being indispensable. (But what did you do with them, I want you ask, repelled.)

Competition

Picking up where the legendary newsletter competitions of 1984/5 left off—over the vacation I saw that the BBC showed an Arena programme with the title "How do you solve a problem like Maria?" That's the question—a small prize (we're talking Becca Heddle proportions here, possibly stretching to a Mars Bar if finances permit) for the most obscene/fatuous/amusing answer to reach me by, say, the beginning of September.

to be continued, and subject to attendance holding up in the face of exams. come to New College 12 NR 3 the St Christopher Cox room in N.C., where we actually watch the thing. We hope to have the B.C.'s excellent near thriller Edge of Darkness in 2nd week, and possibly Partners in 4th week (this was Neal's idea) - after that, if you have any suggestions we'd love to hear them. With reason and the dictates of common decency, that is.

Sfink writers' workshop
Sunday 3rd week (10 May) in the library
Time to be announced—see Neal.

On Saturday 30 May (end 5th wk) we will be paying a visit to the joint European forum at Culham (ur. Didcot). There is no charge for this, but you will have to pay your train fare to Culham and back. If you want to go, you must let the President know by 23 May. Since we have to supply a list of visitors beforehand, I'll need to know your nationality if you're not British (sorry, but they demand this).

New College 12 HB 5, every Sunday at 8:15. The pub—we'll be moving to should be St. John's bar throughout the term. For those who haven't been along since we moved back there, it's official Social Leaps to the JCR (by appointment), although we can get drinks from the bar, we have to drink them in the *Philippa Philippa* Preston room at the bottom of staircase 6. Mind you, last year we ended up on the lawn... (ahem) Anyway, after that it's back to the library for articulate literary debate, or more often Neal and Jon trying hopelessly to defend 'The Number One *Physic* Beast', and instant coffee of uncertain description. Last night, sooner mended.

Punt party

Punt party
Somewhere on the banks of the Cherwell, sometime this term (Saturday 4th week?). Last year saw exploding Rainbow Brites (for Live Aid), naval engagements on the river, and a... well... odd performance of a Hitch-Hikers' episode. No doubt Becca will dream up something even more implausible this time round... eek... Oh yes: bring your own bottle, and if you could bring a punt it would be nice—let me know, please.

than normal in the minutes of a 1982 committee meeting: "I can't remember what it was, but it involved doorknobs." —Becca Heddle
"It was one of those parties where — Keith Clement: "The Tongues Of Men And Angels: USMC Observed"
"Excuse me, do you mind if I threaten you?" —Phil Barnes: "The committee look even more depressed because"
"Phil, are you eating the Constitution?" —Samantha Ryan (Eve)
"He was only eating the membership list." —David Lane

editor) Neal, the fourth, of the new series, is out and on sale—see Ivan Toulson or Gene Wolfe there are some people who thought so, so it must be true
in the won't even mention and trying to work out what the editor thought so, so it must be true
he also said he was impressed by the cover, which is another reason to buy one... like
If you'd like to write for practice will probably remember Stink 4 and run a mile
from you but in practice will probably remember Stink 4 and run a mile

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Stinky Robinson.
My is The Street House.
dit you can Green Holiday and
L Frank Baum?
Gene Wolfe? Why not?

Neal
Ivan Toulson or
Gene Wolfe
Stink 4 and run a mile
The idea being
to run from St Hugh's to
to run from St Hugh's to
See Neal.

Race
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Name

Pajamas and dressing gown
(OK, maybe a couple of shoes
too) for the benefit of (a)
tourists and (b) charity.
Possibly something to do with
Just before Christmas week, but probably just

I talked to Colin Greenland at Eastercon, and he will be coming to talk to us on Monday of 3rd week. The subject will be the various things he's done in a futuristic, ex-editor of Interzone, author of Daybreak. On a Different Mountain and Hour of the Thin Ox), and so many more I can't remember any of them... Venue to be announced (watch Daily Information).

Alan Moore, writer of Watchmen and Swamp Thing, the most respected author in comics, is doing a 6-part miniseries session at Rainbow's End at the end of the Watchmen series, and he'll be talking to CUSFC while he's here. We were hoping for end of May, but due to publication delays it may be put back to June. Details when we have them. It should be worthwhile, so I hope it doesn't clash with exams.

And, innards willing, Alan Garner should finally make it here this time...

BOOK	NEWS	BOOK	NEWS
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—the carefully unnamed exile
Horse god who spends his time
hiding in a kitchen fire to keep
warm except when he emerges to
engage in (honored by the author)
activities with the local girls
sticks in my mind, at any rate. The
usual mixture of action, sex and
humour, but if you haven't read any
of the books before try and get
hold of *Peppercorns of Lankham*, which
is much better. —Neil Tringham

Swords and Ice Marle by Fritz
Leiber
The last (and not the best) of
the Palmd/Crey Mouser series, this
book still has some nice moments

of Lies by James Morrow (yes, again)
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"Zaid, from the planet Zaid, in the galaxy of Zaid."

is jolly sort of the service
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— Terry Pratchett

The World of Tiers by Philip Jose Farmer
This is a series of five books

The first contains Maker of Universes, The Gates of Creation and A Private Cosmos, and the second Behind The Walls of Terra and The Lavallite World. Of these, the first three are excellent light adventures with some interesting ideas and several rather fun, if not particularly credible, characters. They are set in a series of artificial alternate universes—'pocket universes'—which have been constructed many millennia in the past by a dying race of universe makers—the 'Lords'—and then peopled with human-like races. The World of Tiers itself is arranged like a giant wedding cake, with totally different societies on each layer separated (in theory) by the 20-mile-high vertical sections. As you may have guessed, gravity does not work quite like it does here... The

actors (most of whom seem to be related) are almost all sadistic, paranoid tyrants who make themselves rulers of their own custom-made worlds ((presumably they then raise their sights and run for OUSWG committee positions —ed.)), at which point Farmer introduces various characters from our Universe who can do battle with the forces of evil. The last two books, unfortunately, go downhill very rapidly ((like this bloody typewriter —ed.)). Behind The Walls of Terra is mostly set on our Earth and a close alternate—eventually we find out that both we and (shock horror) the Lords themselves come from pocket universes (everything beyond Pluto is a fake) constructed (in the case of the Lords) by some mysterious unknown... (gasp). It lacks the sense of humour and inventiveness displayed in its predecessors. The Lavalite World is simply bad—too long, not very coherent.

connected with scenes that are either nauseating or incomprehensible (the latter are probably due to be explained in a totally different series, a habit Farmer seems to be picking up from Moorcock) and in the end the whole thing is more or less abandoned than completed.

--review by Neal Tringham

It did well on the Nebula preliminary nominations list, and I can understand why. The book is not a pleasant book—*it is* unpleasant as some of the scenes in *The Warrior Who Carried Life*, and of any inclination to nice things up—but it is an intelligent and well-written preliminary nominations list, and I can understand why.

—Ivan Towlson

very thing comes along and runs his nose in it. And unless Wizard really thinks the whole community of Seattle street-wizards is for the chop. But when you find out what the Lolly Thing is, the whole thing turns into an admirable exercise in symbolism. Even from the man's writing, settings and characters set her apart from the idiot horde of writers. Despite the almost total lack of plot, the book is a masterpiece.

8 The Marriage Who Carried Life—though I'm not sure why, as neither the writers have that much in common. The set-up is this: Wizard is a streets of Seattle with the power to know the truth—what this means is next to him in buses and pour out their problems, whereupon he tells it solve them. He's a Vietnam veteran who refuses to remember his war.

their right mind would be studiously avoid as another sub-N Tolkien generic new book, Wizard Of The Pigeons, came out fairly recently (I think) in for £2.50, with a blurb that made it look like yet another B.-W. G. C. at this time. This is a pity, since it's a pity that it's not a better one.

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This image shows a vertical strip of a book's endpaper or flyleaf. The main area is a light beige or cream color, appearing slightly textured. On the left side, there is a dark, vertical strip, possibly a binding edge or a piece of tape, which has a rough, fibrous texture. The overall appearance is that of an old or weathered book page.

The Picnavor Tapestry by Guy Gavriel Kay
Going by book 1, The Summer Tree, Kay is a promising
generic fantasy writer—it's not hack stuff, but it
too clumsy to be admirable. Given the 'first-novel
syndrome, I'd suggest waiting, but watching closely

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not as masterfully unpleasant as some of the scenes in *The Harrier Who Carried Life*, but not possessed of any inclination to nudge things up—but it is an intelligent and interesting one. It did well on the Nebula preliminary nominations list, and I can see why. Read this book.

—Ivan Towlson

So far so generic. But when you find out what the Jolly Thing is, the whole thing comes together and turns into an admirable exercise in symbolism. Even from the beginning Lindholm's writing, settings and characters set her apart from the idiot horde of s-d, g-f writers. Denial is the almost universal theme.

alongside Ryan's *The Warrior Who Carried Life*—though I'm not sure why, as neither the stories nor the writers have that much in common. The set-up is this: Wizard is a scavenger on the streets of Seattle with the power to know the truth—what this means is that people sit next to him in buses and pour out their problems, whereupon he tells them what to do to solve them. He's a Vietnam veteran who refuses to remember his roots until the only way to do so is to tell his story.

The first we saw of Megan Lindholm was The Mindliners, "an enthralling fantasy saga" which anyone in their right mind would studiously avoid as another sub-*Nixen* generic fantasy. Her new book, Wizard Of The Pkarens, came out fairly recently (I think) in Gorgy Paperback for \$2.50, with a blurb that made it look like yet another B.-W. G. F., only set in Seattle this time. This is a pity, since it's a book that's

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A vertical strip of textured, light-colored material, possibly a book cover or endpaper, showing a rough, fibrous texture. The strip is narrow and runs vertically, with a slightly irregular edge. The texture is consistent throughout, with some minor variations in tone and small dark spots.

1st week: Arthur C Clarke - Paul Gray
 2nd week: Film and tv as a personal story - Dave Bate
 3rd week: Gene Wolfe: a man with a Skin - Ivan Toulson
 4th week: The wit and wisdom of Mr Philip Barnes
 5th week: Lord Dunsany: At the Edge Of The Frequency Range -
 —Becca Haddie
 6th week: The aliens among us: the case for undulcora -
 Neal Tringham
 7th week: Oron Scott Card - Chris Hughes (TBC)
 8th week: Space for rent: Any takers for a 'theme' talk?
 Also, who wants to host the discussion meeting next year?

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all the rich imagination, - T.A.

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Discussion meetings
CCH Meadows 6:12, every Wednesday at 8:15. Meetings lined up for this term include:

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CONINE

A student-run convention, to be held at Oxford Polytechnic on 5-7 August 1988

Guest of Honour: Terry Pratchett

£4 supporting

£9 attending

Contact Ivan Towson or Maria Hamilton

The last time a convention was held in Oxford was Oxcon: Unicorn 5 way back in 1984. That makes Conine the biggest thing OUSFG has taken on for four years, and there's no reason why it shouldn't be bigger. Of course, the convention is not officially associated with the Group (no point); it has nothing to gain, since it will be turning over money it would take OUSFG five years to get its hands on, and its independence to lose; but when you consider that the steering committee consists of two Presidents and a Treasurer of OUSFG it's clear that we'll be relying a great deal on support from students here.

So what can we offer you for your £9 membership? Let's kick off with the film programme: four, maybe five, at films ranging from the crowd-pullers to the obscure and pretentious (we hope; the actual programme won't be finalised for months yet, but that's what we're aiming for). Going to see that many at a cinema would cost you £8 at least—if you could find that many films. And if we can sort it out there'll be videos to go with them (all-night showings of *The Prisoner*? *Classic Quatermass*? *Dr Who*s from the distant past? Again, we'll see what we can do).

So that covers the media angle for the time being. What else? We have lots of ideas for programme items both serious and silly; in the former category come the standard panels and discussions, workshops on the various aspects of fandom (probably including an instant fanzine) and gaming events such as a speed D&D (for which read role-playing game and possibly a Star Fleet Battles tournament, in the latter a Killer game (Poly permitting), message and cocktail workshops, a filmsinging session (featuring a Rocky Horror show without the film and/or a musical in the tradition of... er, well (ahem)), and of course the legendary breakfast parties.

We already have Terry Pratchett. Those of you who heard him talking to OUSFG last term ain't seen nothing yet. His "Alien Christmas" after-dinner speech at Eastercon was funnier by far (my cheek muscles haven't been the same since). And those of you who left when the meeting broke up missed the chance of a friendly, personal chat in the OUSFG library—till 2 in the morning... But friendly and funny isn't the be-all and end-all of the man; he's quite capable of serious discussion—we hope to put him on a panel or two—and if we can talk him into it he'll be helping out in the role playing department too.

We don't yet have any further guests, but if we get the members (ie. the money to pay for them) we will be trying to attract day guests and special speakers. We don't know who, or how many—that'll depend on how much money we have and who we feel would best fit into the programme—though the name of Geoff Ryman has been mentioned and a media person(ality) of some sort has been suggested.

Not to mention the social aspect (that is, the bar...), the book room, the art show, the fan room, and who knows what else...

We need your support. We are certain you'll find it worth your while to join. Cheap, cheerful and challenging? You bet it is.

This year's Arthur C Clarke award, for the best novel published in Britain during the last year (sf novel, you understand) according to a panel of critics or some such, went to Margaret Atwood for *The Handmaid's Tale*, apparently by the skin of its teeth from *The Ragged Astronauts* (though that could have been made up to pacify our Bob...)

CONSPIRACY CORNER - or, Worldcon Mackiness...
...straight from the Sorenson's mouth...

From Conrunner 6 (April 1987): The programme is deliberately set firmly in science fiction as literature, mainly to increase the set film/tv oriented items, though there will be films and videos showing throughout the convention...

... Here are just some of the items we intend to put on that aren't mentioned in Progress Report 3:

What made the Athenians so smart? - Gene Wolfe

The unnatural history of the vampire - Matheson, Milgrim

Visions of the near future - Roberts, Cooper, Conny

Ethics of organ transplants - Miven, Gould

Tomorrow belongs to the illiterate ((glances sideways at Pione)) - Bayley, Baldeman, Robinson

SF is history's dustbin - Silverberg, Wolfe

All that and the Big Bang too - Gribbin, Pohl

Magical sex - Carter, Garner, Charnas

Whatdunnit? - Miven, MacAvoy, Varley

Building a better man - Clement, Gunn, Dixon

Hacking at the Enterprise - Fort, Hamby, Bear, Dumas

Other celebrities appearing include Ursula Le Guin, Diana Wynne Jones, Louise Cooper, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Norman Spinrad, Kim Stanley Robinson and Ian Banks.

"There has been a lot of speculation as to who will appear at the Friday rock concert. As yet nobody has been booked, but it will not be Peter Gabriel as rumoured a while ago." A pity, but I'm a bit dubious about the idea anyway. I'd much rather have sf: if I want a rock concert, I'll go to one. - Ivan

The more I hear about this convention, the more convinced I become that it is cheap at the price. Pre-registration closes on 1 August, and membership at the door will be £45-50, so do yourself a favour and join up soon.

STOP PRESS (again)

Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons are now confirmed for June 13 (Saturday 7th week). I realise this clashes with exams, but it's a very rare for Moore to do this sort of thing, so please do support it.

Conventions

Unsuspecting parent: Yes, dear. Oh, you're taking your sleeping bag. I never knew you were into hiking.

Insidious USMC member: No—I'm going to be staying in a four-star hotel, actually. Unsuspecting parent: Oh, that's nice. (Pause) Don't they provide beds, then?

new Hall, Cambridge, 3-5 July 1987. EA supporting, £8 attending (£9 from May 1). Unions are: summer conventions held at "establishments of higher education" (often meaning Fordland Poly), and supposedly run by students. This one is run by people associated with CUSERS (Cambridge U. St Soc.), some of whom really are students. A few OUSPC people will be going—come along and share our floor (and out down our accommodation costs...)—it should be a fairly typical union, which means relaxed, pleasant and unchallenging. Guest of Honour is Geraldine Harris.

conspiracy, the 45th World Science Fiction Convention, Brighton, 27 August-1 September 1987. £10 supporting, £38 attending. This is a Worldcon. This is the sort of con that has an opening display that would normally cost £10000. This is going to be attended by 5000+ people from all over the world. This is the sort of con that has 15 concurrent programmes streams (if you count them right). This is the big British convention of the decade, and you would be very foolish to miss it. I know it's expensive—you shouldn't have left it so late—but if it comes off it will be worth it, and then some.

Guests of honour include Gordon & Dickson, Wyneth Jones, Len Veln, Greg Pickersgill, Diane Juane and Peter Morwood. There's no need to hurry to join this one, though you should do eventually.

Another Eastercon. It's having Anne McElfrey and M John Harrison as guests of Honour' and it's going to be held in Jersey, so don't join it until you're sure you can get reasonable travel costs (but do bear in mind it costs a lot less to eat, drink, etc. in Jersey so you'll be saving something there). I'm assured by the committee that travel costs will not be prohibitive, but....

1997 conventions... Others include Congregate (Peterborough) in June—no other details—and Albion, also in June (Colt Brian Stablesford and Josephine Saxton—this is part of a continuing series of Glasgow cons and should be very good indeed). Sorry, cancel that! Congregate is in 1986.

1968 conventions... Congregate. See under '1967 conventions'. Also Continue—see below

Prospective conventions... Wincon is bidding for the 1968 Union to be held in Winchester; presupport costs £1. Holland is bidding for the 1990 Worldcon; presupport costs £4 (1100 people can't be wrong); the opposition is for Los Angeles. A possible bid for the 1990 Eastcon is being mounted by the Convention crew; details when I have them.

PSIM, the Hatfield Poly SP group with whom we hope to arrange some sort of exchange in the near future, are running a tenth anniversary one called X-Com, but I can't find any details of this. STOR PRESS still seems to be October 1987, but I'm not sure, still no other details.

Contacted, see Ivan Tolson or write to Trinity College, Cambridge, CB2 1JQ
 Conspiracy, Pobox 43, Cambridge, CB1 3JY
 Tollyson 88; 104 Pretoria Rd, Patchway, Bristol, BS12 5JZ
 Confrance 89; 65 Drake Rd, Cheshington, Surrey
 Others: see Ivan Tolson, who will try to ferret them out for you.

INTERZONE

a merciless plug by Neal Tringham

What's the biggest SF magazine in Britain, then? (Apart from *SFlix*, of course.) If you're an aspiring young writer, where do you send your material? If you want to see anything nominated for the British SF Association Award in the short story or artwork categories, where do you look?

Interzone is now five years old and on issue 19 (yes, it's a quarterly, you can put your calculators away now). In that time it has published Ballard, Bayley, Benford, Carter, Harrison (M John variety), Moorcock, Shirley, Sterling, Watson, Wolfe, etc. etc. It has also been responsible for the first publication of the people who are (as far as I can tell) the only two good British writers to appear in about a decade—Geoff Ryman and Neil Ferguson. Granted, much of what they publish is pretty bad (the editors themselves complain that all they seem to receive is stories about despairing near-future lovers staring at heavily symbolic baked bean cans in devastated supermarkets) (boogles—ed.) but this is true of any magazine to quite a large extent. The fact remains that at £1.75 an issue you are not paying all that much to read all of what remains of British sci—and some of it is actually very good.

16), but a four-issue subscription is available from 124 Osborne Rd, Brighton, BN1 6LU for £1.50. The next issue features Ian Banks, Brian Stablesford, Geoff Ryan and Gwyneth Jones among others.

So what are you waiting for?

I can add, without wishing to put Interzone down, I would advise caution. The editors' choices will by no means appeal to everyone; their "radical hard sf" is not one of the most accessible subgenres of sf, and they seem to be refusing to—ah—sweeten the pill as a matter of principle. You should read a copy to find out what it's like; but you should not subscribe until you have done so.

Literary Language: a Guide for the confused
For those of you baffled by the high-flown literati-speak used in newsletter reviews, diddiscussion meetings and casual conversations by OUSG gurus, Sfinx Enterprises plc has compiled this little guide to help you get by (now will you buy a copy?). The perpetrators are credited.

Quite fun (Neal Tringham) - awful
Quite fun, I suppose (Neal) - so awful it's funny
Well, I can't defend it, but I quite enjoyed it (Neal) - so awful it's not funny
Critically credible (Ivan Towson) - (i) Tedious crap but Phil said I ought to read it; (ii) Written by Gene Wolfe

Lovely (Becca Heddle) - targeted at a reader with a mental age of 5
Brilliant (Chris Hughes) - written by Orson Scott Card
I don't know, I haven't read it (Chris) - not written by Orson Scott Card
It's excellent, how dare you criticise it? (Max(TM) O'Connor) - ideologically sound
I think it's marvellous-the characterisation, the style, the atmosphere... (Ivan)
- this book has no plot

It's got lots of good ideas (Phil Raines) - this book hasn't got a plot either
It's interesting (Phil) - go away and read it, Ivan
Accessible (Ivan) - trivial